

RIDEOUT, KNIGHT, FERGUSON, CARR AND OTHERS
No.6, Vol.35 TWICE-A-MONTH 15 CENTS

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.
The Popular
Magazine

PUBLISHED
MAR. 7,
1915



W. H. ...

A
TRIAL
CAKE
of
Pears' Soap
(UNSCENTED)

Will be sent
postpaid by us
on receipt of

4^C

in stamps
to cover the
cost of mailing



Everyone knows PEARS
—knows it as the world's
most famous soap—the soap
of refinement for more than a
century. We want everyone to
know PEARS by actual use—to realize fully
all the exquisite charm of this delightful soap.

We offer now this opportunity to try PEARS at our expense
because we are so sure that the use of this trial cake will
form a permanent habit. Once you know the real pleasure of

Pears' Soap

—how refreshing is its absolute purity—how delightfully beneficial
its effect on the skin—how matchless for the complexion—PEARS
will become as essential a part of your daily life as the bathing itself.

You will be delighted also to learn the economy of PEARS both in
its low cost and unusual lasting quality. Pears is all soap—all pure—
there is absolutely no waste—it lasts much longer than ordinary soap.

It is the finest soap possible to produce at any price—yet the
unscented is sold everywhere at not over 15c a cake.

A. & F. PEARS, Ltd.

*The largest manufacturers of high grade
toilet soaps in the world.*

Do not pass this opportunity to bring the pleasure of PEARS' SOAP into your daily life. Send your
address now—enclosing 4c in stamps to WALTER JANVIER, U.S. Agent, 507 Canal St., New York City.

"All rights secured."

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

Victor Record
of "Habanera"
sung by
Farrar

Farrar in the
title role of
Carmen



Photo copy't Dupont

Both are Farrar

The Victor Record of Farrar's voice is just as truly Farrar as Farrar herself.

The same singularly beautiful voice, with all the personal charm and individuality of the artist.

To hear the new Carmen records by Farrar is to be stirred with enthusiasm, just as were the vast audiences—the largest ever assembled in the Metropolitan Opera House—which greeted her performance of Carmen, and acclaimed it the supreme triumph of this great artist's career.

The proof is in the hearing. Any Victor dealer in any city in the world will gladly play for you any of the sixty-two Farrar records, or Victor Records by any other of the world's greatest artists.

There are Victors and Victrolas in great variety of styles from \$10 to \$250.



Always use Victor Machines with Victor Records and Victor Needles —the combination. There is no other way to get the unequalled Victor tone.

Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.

Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors

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

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT

By W. E. SCUTT

Author of "Kings of the Mighty"

A BIG book-length novel recounting the surprising adventures of a man on the trail of a crook—a long trail that led across the Atlantic and took him into the by-paths of Paris.

THIS is only one of a dozen or more great stories by virile writers which will make up the March month-end issue of

TWICE-A-MONTH
The Popular Magazine

STORIES BY

Ralph D. Paine

Vingie E. Roe

Howard Fielding

John Coryell

Henry Beech Needham Arthur Ransom

and other well-known writers

DIAMONDS

ON ~ EASY TERMS



1926 \$25

1927 \$50

1928 \$75

1929 \$100

WE TRUST YOU

Better Than a Savings Bank!

Start Right. Start Now. Buy a Diamond. Beats a Savings Bank four to one, besides daily dividends in pleasure while wearing it.

Big Special Sale!

Greatest Diamond values ever offered in \$25, \$50, \$75 and \$100 sizes. Pure white, perfectly cut, sent on approval, **no money down.**

FREE CATALOG. Write for it quick. Make your selection and when the diamond comes, if you like it and want to keep it, pay for it on our Liberal Club Plan—payments so easy, you'll never miss the money. No red tape, no security—just common honesty among men. Postal will do.

Dept. 1532
Kansas City, Mo.

HARRIS-GOAR CO.



Turn Your Spare Time into Money

Your spare time is worth exactly what you make it worth. Turn it into *money*.

The International Correspondence Schools will help you to make every hour worth *dollars*. They will give you in your spare time the training that will enable you to get and hold a better job.

If you are *really* ambitious, find out what the I. C. S. can do for you.

It makes no difference who you are, where you are, the I. C. S. can help you.

Every year more than 5000 persons of all ages and occupations voluntarily report increased wages and better positions, due solely to I. C. S. training.

Mark the Coupon

YOU can do what others do. YOU can qualify for the position that you want. Learn how you can make your spare time worth the MOST money. Mark the occupation you prefer in the coupon below and mail it today. This is YOUR opportunity—don't let it go by.

SHORTHAND IN 30 DAYS

Boyd Syllabic System—written with only nine characters. No "positions"—no "ruled lines"—no "shading"—no "word-signs"—no "cold notes." Speedy, practical system that can be learned in 30 days of home study, utilizing spare time. For full description matter, free, address, Chicago Correspondence Schools, 976 Unity Building, Chicago, Ill.

DO YOU LIKE TO DRAW?

That's all we want to know.

Now we will not give you any grand prize—a lot of free stuff if you answer this ad. Nor do we claim to make you rich in a week. But if you are anxious to develop your talent with a successful cartoonist, so you can make money, send a copy of this picture with **5c.** in stamps for **portfolio** of cartoons and **sample** lesson plate, and let us explain.

THE W. L. EVANS SCHOOL OF CARTOONING,
835 Leader Building, Cleveland, O.




THIS JOB PAYS BIG

WE positively teach you by mail to earn \$25 to \$50 weekly as Chauffeur or Repairman. School recommended by Auto Companies. Best System. **LOWEST PRICE.** MODELS FURNISHED. Graduates make Big Money. *H. A. Dobbs says: "Received offer of \$100 a month, day I got Diploma."* *R. N. Casanova made \$20 in one day.*

Send for Free Auto Book, with names of students, and salaries they earn. We assist to secure position.

PRACTICAL AUTO SCHOOL
68-F BEAVER ST., NEW YORK CITY



Be a Traveling Man

Hundreds of good positions now open. No experience required to get one of them. Write today for list of openings offering opportunities to earn Big Money selling goods while you learn and testimonials from hundreds of our students who are earning \$100 to \$500 a month. Address nearest office. Dept. 505

NATIONAL SALESMEN'S TRAINING ASSOCIATION
Chicago, New York, Kansas City, San Francisco



INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Box 855 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X

<input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Lighting & Railways <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Expert <input type="checkbox"/> MECHANICAL ENGINEERING <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engines <input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL ENGINEERING <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping <input type="checkbox"/> MINE FOREMAN ADJUST. <input type="checkbox"/> STATIONARY ENGINEERING <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE <input type="checkbox"/> Building Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> PLUMBING AND HEATING <input type="checkbox"/> AUTO RUNNING	<input type="checkbox"/> SALESMANSHIP <input type="checkbox"/> ADVERTISING <input type="checkbox"/> Window Trimming <input type="checkbox"/> Show Card Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Lettering and Sign Painting <input type="checkbox"/> ILLUSTRATING <input type="checkbox"/> BOOKKEEPING <input type="checkbox"/> Stenography and Typewriting <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Law <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD ENGLISH FOR EVERYONE <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers Course <input type="checkbox"/> English Branches <input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL SERVICE <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> POULTRY <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry
--	--

Spanish
 German
 French
 Italian

Name _____

Present Occupation _____

Street and No. _____

City _____ State _____

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Agents & Help Wanted

I MADE \$50,000 in five years with a small mail order business; began with \$5. Send for free booklet. Tells how. Heacock, Box 717, Lockport, New York.

MEN OF IDEAS and inventive ability should write for new list of "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Advice Free. Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 63, Washington, D. C.

AGENTS sell concentrated liquor extracts for making whiskies, liquors and cordials at home. Something new at last. Wanted in every home. Saves over 50 per cent. One taste makes a customer for life. Strictly legitimate—no license required. Big demand, sells fast, coins you money. Send postal today for money making selling plans. Universal Import Co., Dept. 127, Cincinnati, O.

BIG KANSAS COMPANY will start ambitious man or woman in fast growing business; any locality; \$3,000 yearly; spare time; no canvassing; no experience. We furnish everything. Write for unique selling plan. C. W. Eyestone, President, 108 E. 5th, Pittsburg, Kansas.

82 secure sample outfit of our 10 dandy Toilet Articles. These ideal specialties will start you in business and will allow you big profits. Men and women well acquainted can easily build a permanent income handling our specialties. Write today! Be first in your locality. Brooks Specialty Co., Agency Dept. A, 45 W. 34th St., N. Y.

FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK tells of about 300,000 protected positions in U. S. service. Thousands of vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Just ask for booklet S 11. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

AGENTS \$6 TO \$12 A DAY EASY. 250 light weight, fast selling, popular priced necessities, food flavors, perfumes, soaps, toilet preparations, etc. Agents outfit free. Write today—quik—now. E. M. Fellman, Sales Mgr., 703 Third St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

WANTED—Men, Women. Government Jobs. \$70 month. Write for list of positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute, Dept. R6, Rochester, N. Y.

"AGENTS—400 Stagnip Aluminum Specialties and Utensils, means a sale in every home. General Sales Course Free. \$50.00 a week sure. Answer quick. American Aluminum Mfg. Co., Div. S 49, Lemont, Ill."

AGENTS make big money and become sales managers for our goods. Past office sellers. Fine profits. Particulars and samples free. One Dip Pen Co., Dept. 9, Baltimore, Md.

AGENTS—To sell the newest electric appliance on the market; sold everywhere there is electricity, in the home and office; liberal profits; sales-driving sample, weighs a pound, no experience or knowledge of electricity required; it shows how to use one light instead of two and get the same results; sells for \$3.50 and saves the purchaser an investment of \$25; write for particulars. The Handy Light Co., 1923 Handy Light Block, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Agents and Help Wanted—Continued.

BE A DETECTIVE. Big pay; easy work. We show you all. Write Wagner, 1243 Lexington Avenue, New York. Dept. 233.

GOVERNMENT positions pay big money. Get prepared for "exams" by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Free booklet. Patterson Civil Service School, Box Y, Rochester, N. Y.

AGENT—Great opportunity to be permanent representative largest manufacturers high grade soaps and toilet goods. \$25—\$75 weekly. Write for immediate appointment. E. M. Davis Co., R. 21 Davis Bldg., Chicago.

A talented person may earn as high as \$500 a year writing verses for popular songs in spare time. Send samples of your poems. Instructive book free. Dugdale Company, Studio, 1300, Washington, D. C.

Business Opportunities

FREE FOR SIX MONTHS.—My Special offer to introduce my magazine "Investing for Profit." It is worth \$10 a copy to anyone who has been getting poorer while the rich, richer. It demonstrates the real earning power of money and shows how anyone, no matter how poor, can acquire riches. Investing for Profit is the only progressive financial journal published. It shows how \$100 grows to \$2,200. Write Now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 407, 20 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

WOULD you like to own a good paying mail order business? We have a line that gets repeat orders all the time. You can start in spare time. Invest a dollar or two a week and soon own a nice business of your own. Particulars free. Nadico, 1659 Belmont Avenue, Chicago.

Games & Entertainment

PLAYS, Vaudeville Sketches, Monologues, Dialogues, Speakers, Minstrel Material, Jokes, Recitations, Tableaux, Drills, Entertainments. Make Up Goods. Large Catalog Free. T. S. Denison & Co., Dept. 19, Chicago.

Motion Picture Plays

SEND FOR FREE BOOK—valuable information on writing photo-plays. Chicago Photo-playwright College, Box 278, W. A, Chicago.

WRITE Moving Picture Plays. \$75 paid. Experience unnecessary. Send for Free book "How to Write Moving Picture Plays." Lundeen Pub. Co., 202 Fergus Falls, Minn.

I guarantee \$10 for first Photo Play you write by my method. Obtain free booklet "How To Write Photo Plays." Elbert Moore, Box 772 11 P, Chicago.

WRITE Moving Picture Plays; \$50 each; all or spare time; correspondence course unnecessary; details free. Atlas Publishing Co. 313, Cincinnati, O.

Motion Picture Acting

BE A Motion Picture Actor or Actress. Pleasant well paid profession. Send stamp for particulars. The P. A. Booking Offices, B-363 Chicago, Ill.

Patents and Lawyers

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE returned. Send sketch for free report as to patentability. Guide Book and What to Invent, with valuable List of Inventions Wanted, sent free. One Million Dollars offered for one Invention. Patents secured by us advertised free in World's Progress, sample free. Victor J. Evans & Co., 767 Ninth Street, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS, TRADE-MARKS AND Copyrights. Our hand book on patents will be sent free on request. All patents secured through us are described without cost to the patentee in the Scientific American. Munn & Co., Patent Attorneys, 373 Broadway, New York. Washington Office, 625 F Street, Washington, D. C.

MEN with patentable ideas write Randolph & Co., Patent Solicitors, Dept. 218, Washington, D. C., for free books. Send sketch for free search.

PATENTS, TRADE-MARKS. Send for my free book "How To Get Them." It's full of information you should know. Joshua R. H. Potts, 8 S. Dearborn St., Chicago. 929 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, 805 G. St., Washington.

IDEAS WANTED—Manufacturers are writing for patents procured through me. 3 books with list 200 inventions wanted sent free. Advice free. I get patent or no fee. R. B. Owen, 39 Owen Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT AND PAY. Advice and books free. Highest references. Best results. Promptness assured. Send sketch or model for free search. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 624 F Street, Washington, D. C.

PATENT Your Ideas—\$9,000 offered for certain inventions. Book, "How to Obtain a Patent," and "What to Invent," sent free. Send rough sketch for free report as to patentability. We advertise your patent for sale at our expense. Established 16 years. Address Chandler & Chandler, patent attorneys, 904 F Street, Washington, D. C.

Music and Song Poems

SONG POEMS WANTED for publication. Big money writing song poems. Past experience unnecessary. Our proposition positively unequalled. We accept available work for publication and secure copyright in your name. Send us your song poems or melodies to-day or write for instructive booklet—its free. Marks-Goldsmith Co., Dept. 15, Washington, D. C.

Telegraphy

THE Omnigraph Automatic Transmitter. Sends you telegraph messages. Teaches in the shortest time. 5 styles \$2 up. Circular free. Omnigraph Mfg. Co., 39 N Cortland St., N. Y.

Firearms Wanted

FIREARMS—Old-time and Modern. Buy, sell, exchange all sorts. Stephen Van Rensselaer, West Orange, New Jersey.

The Key to Success

Stop forgetting

Increase Your Efficiency

The secret of business and social success is the ability to remember. I can make your mind an infallible classified index from which you can *instantly* select thoughts, facts, figures, names, faces. Enables you to *concentrate, develop self-control, overcome bashfulness, address an audience.* Easy. Simple. The result of 20 years experience in developing memories of thousands. Write today for copy of my book "How to Remember" and *Copyrighted Memory Test Frames*, also how to obtain **FREE** copy of my book "How to Speak in Public."



Prof. Henry Dickson Principal

Dickson School of Memory, 960 Auditorium Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

FREE BOOK ON MOTORING



Explains how we assist YOU in the Auto Business as Repairman, Chauffeur, Salesman or Auto Mechanic with **DYKE'S NEW IDEA WORKING MODEL SYSTEM** of teaching by mail and our new idea **EMPLOYMENT PLAN**. Let us tell you the names of some of our students and the salaries they are drawing. Don't miss it—**SEND FOR BOOKLET NOW!**

Beware of imitators. This is the original and only system of its kind in the world. Models made in London. **DYKE'S SCHOOL OF MOTORING, Box 86, Roe Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.** All electric starters and magnetos simplified.

CIVIL SERVICE PAYS WELL

U. S. Civil Service positions pay well, offer splendid opportunities for advancement, and are life-long. You are eligible to try any Civil Service position if you are an American over 18, and can read and write. You can qualify at home through I. C. S. help. Last year over 700 persons secured positions in the U. S. C. S. through this training. To learn how the I. C. S. can help you, write today for **Free Civil Service Book.**

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 856C Scranton, Pa.

3 1/3c a Day

How buys a dazzling Lachmite Gem. Their brilliance is eternal—they stand fire and acid tests and cut glass like diamonds. Cost but one-third as much. **Set in solid gold.** The newest designs. Sold on Free Trial. See our new jewelry book.

Write for Big Jewelry Book Your name and address is enough. No obligations whatever. Write today—now. **HAROLD LACHMAN COMPANY**
12 N. Michigan Avenue, Dept. 2144, Chicago, Ill.



GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

offer employment for life at a salary ranging from \$400 to \$1400 per year, with short hours under pleasant conditions and no fear of "layoffs" or strikes. American citizens 18 or over are eligible. Our 64-page booklet contains list of positions, requirements, etc., and tells how you can prepare for "Exams" under the personal supervision of a former U. S. Civil Service Secretary-Examiner. Booklet is **FREE**, without obligation. Write to-day.

PATTERSON CIVIL SERVICE SCHOOL
1533 Livingston Bldg. Rochester, N. Y.



MUSIC TAUGHT FREE IN YOUR HOME

By the Oldest and Most Reliable School of Music in America—Established 1895

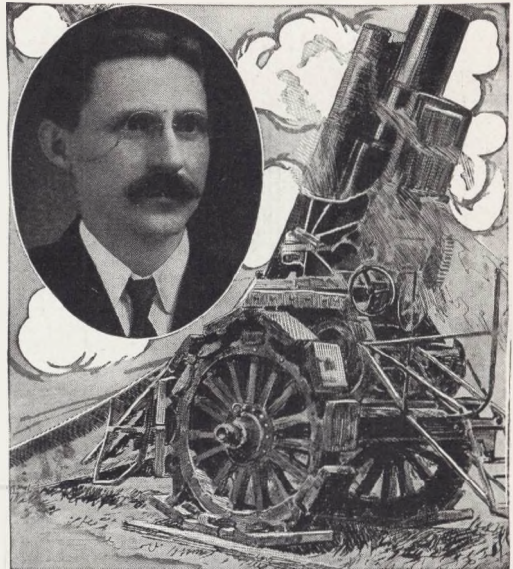
Piano, Organ, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Banjo, etc. Beginners or advanced players. One lesson weekly. Illustrations make every thing plain. Only expense about 2c. per day to cover cost of postage and music used. Write for **FREE** booklet which explains everything in full.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 94 Lakeside Building, CHICAGO

LAW LEARN AT HOME SPARE TIME ONLY

Graduate correspondence students most successful at bar examinations. Our method of instruction same as HARVARD, MICHIGAN and other big Law Schools. **GUARANTEE** to coach **FREE** graduates failing to pass Bar Examinations. Write today for special offer and catalog. Sent **FREE**. Offer limited—Write **IMMEDIATELY.**

AMERICAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL OF LAW, Dept. 1144, Manhattan Bldg., Chicago



Learn Drafting From a Krupp Gun Designer

THE draftsmen who design the great German Krupp guns are known all over the world as leading experts of the profession. I am proud to say that for several years I held the position of designer with this world-renowned works.

I am now Chief Draftsman of a large and well-known company. In my spare time I will train a few ambitious men in practical drafting and designing. **I will give you the practical training that I have found to be essential to success**—and I will continue this training until you are satisfactorily filling a position as a regular draftsman. Learn at home in spare time.

Men Are Needed!

There is an urgent demand for skilled draftsmen. **Positions paying \$125 to \$175 a month straight salary are open this very minute.** I will give you the kind of working training that will qualify you for the highest salary. Send the coupon and I will tell you about the big things other men are doing whom I trained personally.

\$15 Outfit FREE

Yes, I will give you a complete set of regular Draftsman's instruments absolutely free. They are just the kind of instruments the Krupp expert draftsmen use. You could not buy them for less than \$15. All free to my students.

Send the Coupon

For Big New Book Put your name and address on the coupon or on a letter or a post card and send it to me now. I'll send you, free and prepaid, the new book, "Successful Draftsmanship" that tells you about the golden opportunities that await the men who join our profession. Absolutely no obligations of any kind. Send the coupon.

Chief Draftsman Dobe Engineer's Equipment Co., Div. 1144 Chicago, Ill.

Chief Draftsman, Dobe
Engineer's Equipment Co.
Div. 1144 Chicago, Ill.



Without any obligation to me whatever, please mail your book "Successful Draftsmanship," and full particulars of your liberal "Personal Instruction" offer to a few students. It is understood that I am obligated in no way whatever

Name

Address

Maxwell

The Car that Laughs at Hills

The Maxwell is the car in which "Wild Bill" Turner made the world-record climb up Mt. Hamilton to the famous Mt. Lick Observatory

The Maxwell is the car that Billy Carlson drove 9 miles up Mt. Wilson, Cal., over snow and ice, around sharp dangerous curves, climbing 6,000 feet in 29 minutes and 1 second, breaking the previous record of 42 minutes. These are but two of the Maxwell stock car hill climbing records.

Every man that owns a Maxwell is able to laugh at hills.

The "1915" Maxwell has 17 new features, and it is a beautiful car—a powerful car—an easy riding car—and a car that is fully equipped. Its light weight makes it very economical to operate.

The "1915" Maxwell is one of the easiest cars to drive. It has an adjustable front seat which may be moved three or four inches backward to suit the driver's leg length.

If you want a car of ample power to climb hills with speed and pull through heavy going, this is the car

The Maxwell Dealer nearest you will show you the "1915" Maxwell

Maxwell Five-Passenger Touring Car,	\$695.	In Canada,	\$ 925.
Maxwell Roadster,	670.	In Canada,	900.
Maxwell Cabriolet,	840.	In Canada,	1,105.

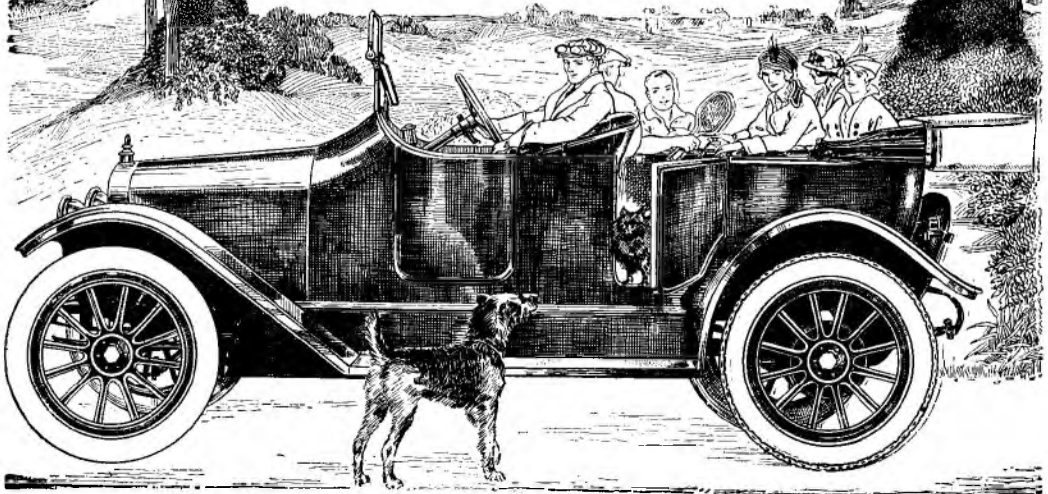
Any model equipped with electric self-starter, \$55 extra. In Canada, \$70 extra.

Write for illustrated Catalogue. Address, Department A. N.

The Maxwell will be exhibited at the Panama-Pacific Exposition

MAXWELL MOTOR COMPANY, Inc., Detroit, Michigan

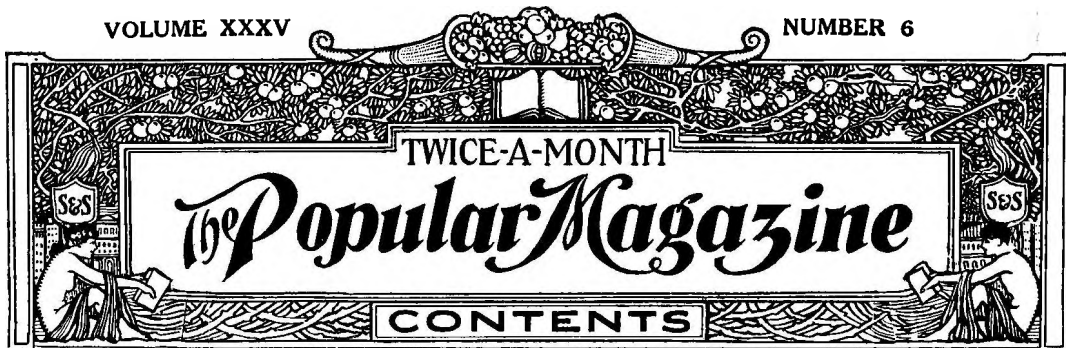
"Every Road is a Maxwell Road"



RALPH D. PAINE BEGINS A NEW SERIES OF COLLEGE STORIES IN NEXT ISSUE

VOLUME XXXV

NUMBER 6



MARCH 7, 1915

COVER DESIGN	W. Herbert Dunton	
THE SILVER CROSS. A Complete Novel,	W. B. M. Ferguson	1
All the stories of buried treasure have not yet been written. Here is a new one, quite unlike any other. A romantic play staged in New York and its environs.		
THE SHADOW OF GRANITE RIDGE. A Series,	Vingie E. Roe	56
The story of the taming of a wolf. I.—The Desperate Bluff.		
A BADGE OF HONOR. A Short Story,	Leavitt Ashley Knight	68
Through the pawnshop to a new life. The curious story of a man of mystery.		
THE MAN'S BOY. A Novelette,	Henry Milner Rideout	80
In the North woods, with an Indian as the moving spirit in a narrative full of color.		
WUNG. A Short Story,	Robert Welles Ritchie	121
Concerning a Chinaman whose religion was as patent as his common sense.		
KITCHENER'S COUP. A Short Story,	H. M. Egbert	132
Told by an ambassador-at-large. A dramatic incident which dates back to the year when Italy attacked Tripoli.		
THAT WORRYING WOMAN. A Short Story,	Robert V. Carr	139
The very funny adventures of a very serious prospector.		
CAUGHT IN THE NET. Editorials,	The Editor	148
ROCK IN THE BOX. Verse,	Berton Braley	152
THE HOUND OF MARAT. A Serial Story,	John R. Coryell	153
It reads like Stanley Weyman at his best. Here are two men who wear the red badge of courage in the days of the French Revolution. Their exploits are stirring.		
THE LOT LOTTERY. A Short Story,	John Holden	190
An incident of the Hudson's Bay Company's lottery sale of three hundred acres.		
INSIDE STUFF. A Short Story,	Donn Byrne	197
Heart work as well as head work in a prize fight.		
THE CANT-HOOK MAN. A Short Story,	Frank A. Latour	207
The loggers at work. The place of heroes.		
DONE IN OIL. A Short Story,	Benjamin R. Sher	217
The artist and the clothing manufacturer.		

Twice-a-Month Publication Issued by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York. CRMOND G. SMITH and GEORGE C. SMITH, Proprietors. Copyright, 1915, by Street & Smith, New York. Copyright, 1915, by Street & Smith, Great Britain. All Rights Reserved. Publishers everywhere are cautioned against using any of the contents of this Magazine either wholly or in part. Entered at New York Post Office as Second-class Matter, under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Canadian Subscription, \$3.72. Foreign, \$4.44.

WARNING—Do not subscribe through agents unknown to you. Complaints are daily made by persons who have been thus victimized.
IMPORTANT—Authors, agents and publishers are requested to note that this firm does not hold itself responsible for loss of unsolicited manuscripts while at this office or in transit; and that it cannot undertake to hold uncalled for manuscripts for a longer period than six months. If the return of manuscripts is expected, postage should be enclosed.

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$3.00 SINGLE COPIES 15 Cents

THE MONTH-END POPULAR ON SALE MARCH 23rd.

You Can Make This Big Jump!



ANY SMALL JOB
\$12 to \$18 Weekly

Yes, you! No matter who you are or where you live, we can show you how to quickly rise from an obscure position to power, independence and big salary. Here is without doubt the greatest opportunity ever offered you to enter a vocation with almost unlimited possibilities of future success and prosperity. A new, uncrowded field of opportunities has just been opened to ambitious men everywhere. If you are holding down a small job with small wages and no possibilities of future advancement, don't be discouraged—don't remain in it—

TRAFFIC EXPERT
\$35 to \$200 Weekly

Become a

TRAFFIC EXPERT

Command a Position of Power and Prosperity!

Recently enacted railroad and interstate commerce regulations have created this great new vocation—have necessitated trained specialists who know how to Route Shipments to obtain Shortest Mileage, Quickest Deliveries, Lowest Rates. Largest shippers

and railroads now need trained Traffic Experts and Managers—newly created positions are open with salaries of \$35 to \$200 weekly. The Traffic Expert is BOSS—Not Bossed—he can advance to big executive positions of power, wealth, influence and dignity.

We Train You By MAIL

No matter what your work now—no matter what your age, how long your hours, how small your pay or what your education, if you can read and write intelligently—the LaSalle Interstate Commerce course will train you expertly at home in your spare

time to qualify for a big position as Traffic Manager. The cost is small—payments to suit you.

Our method is simple, practical, thorough—the work of some of America's greatest Traffic Experts. Anyone with intelligence can quickly master it.

NEW JOBS OPEN

The need for Traffic Experts is, right now, far greater than the supply. If you are ambitious to increase your income and influence

now is the time to let us begin preparing you for this lucrative vocation. Don't think you can't learn—we show you free that you can—prove it by the evidence of others who were in the same position as you are in now. Remember, we are the largest Extension University in America—a powerful, reliable institution. We make no claims we cannot prove.

10 Years' Promotion in One Send coupon immediately for free copy of this remarkable book—learn about the wonderful opportunities afforded Traffic Experts with LaSalle training—see how easy it is for us to qualify you for this great vocation with its power, big income and independent future.

ACT NOW

Don't put it off—don't be satisfied with a small job. Small jobs pay small salaries—offer no possibilities for success. Make up your mind now to win success. Remember we help you—make it easy for you. Send the coupon at once for positive proof. Send no money—everything is free.

LaSalle Extension University, Dept. C-529, Chicago, Ill.

LaSalle
Extension
University,
Dept. C-529
Chicago, Ill.

Send free proof about opportunities now open to TRAFFIC EXPERTS with LaSalle training; also free copy of "10 Years' Promotion in One."

Name.....
Address.....
City..... State.....

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXV.

MARCH 7, 1915.

No. 6.

The Silver Cross

By W. B. M. Ferguson

Author of "The Other Film," "Garrison's Finish," Etc.

Here's a man on whom New York exerted a strange fascination. He thought it far more wonderful than it even is. It seemed to be a sort of Bagdad of the Arabian Nights in which the most fantastic things happened as a matter of course. He walked the streets like another Harun-al-Rashid expecting adventure to jump out at every corner. Only one such adventure materialized—the one adventure of an unadventurous life. But a wonderful adventure it turned out to be. Ferguson tells the story with his usual skill.

(A Complete Novel)

CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN I INTRODUCE MYSELF AND GO FOR A WALK.

AS I was about to drop off into blessed oblivion those infernal little itchings commenced again and it was in vain I kept my eyes tight shut and vowed doggedly not to give in. All in vain! Have you ever tried to resist scratching when your whole epidermis cries aloud for it? First my scalp itched, then the lobe of my ear, then the middle of my back, and finally the favorite spot on my right shoulder blade which the fiend knew I couldn't get at without breaking an arm.

In another moment I was wide awake and busy as the proverbial one-armed

paperhanger with the hives; the next, I had kicked off the bedclothes, switched on the light, and begun wearily to dress, swearing volubly but inwardly, and making as little noise as my displacement allowed so as not to awaken Watkins. This, however, proved unnecessary, for his long, gloomy face showed promptly in the doorway.

"Is it no go, sir?" he asked sympathetically.

I shook my head. The doctor's prescription had put me in high hopes, and indeed brought me nearer sleep than I'd known for some time. To have all the old symptoms reappear just when I thought myself cured made me sore and a bit desperate. I own a very dogged streak handed down by a deceased uncle along with his estate, and the more

sleep eluded me the more I went after it by main force, as it were.

"Is it a blood infection, sir?" asked Watkins solicitously.

"No, nor a guilty conscience," I answered. "I don't quite understand myself all the doctor said, but it comes purely from the nerves. It's a nervous affection, you might say, part and parcel of this confounded insomnia. I never itch during the day, but only at night when I try to sleep. After it gets me up and moving about, it goes away. It's stopped now, but if I lay down again the blamed thing would start all over again. There's only one way I can get sleep, and that's to stay up and keep on the move until I'm ready to drop; then I manage to steal three or four hours."

Watkins shook his head. "And how long has this been going on, sir?"

"Oh, a couple of weeks or more."

"You wouldn't try a sleeping draft, sir?"

"No, I don't believe in those things. That prescription contained bromides, but that's as far as I'll go. I'll get this sleep business if I keep after it long enough."

"Beg pardon, sir, but it will get you before you get it. I've seen it down gentlemen as big as you, sir. If I may make so bold as to suggest, sir, it isn't drugs or medicines you need, but a complete change and rest, sir."

I nodded. "So the doctor said, but I'm not going to knuckle under until I have to. I've an idea we can get most things, Watkins, if we only go after them hard enough."

The perfect serving man's pale eyes flickered. "That's a cheerful philosophy, sir," he said softly. "Will you be gone long, sir?"

"Oh, about the usual time, I suppose. I have the key, so don't wait up; there's no sense in both of us losing sleep. Remember, Watkins, you're to go to bed."

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir."

But I knew, for all the humble respect, that on my return, no matter what the hour, the perfect serving man would be on the job anticipating any unvoiced needs. A wonderful piece of machinery, this perfect serving man! Silent and swift as electricity, and with a stabbing gray glint of eyes under brows that would have honored a cardinal. Uncommon eyes they were, reminding me somehow of the slate-gray waste of Superior in midwinter.

It was nearing midnight when I left my apartments—the Gresham, on lower Madison Avenue—and struck north into a warm night in early June. I had a regular beat, you might say, for these enforced nocturnal promenades. To me, walking seems less monotonous if one has an objective point in view. So I always steamed north at a good clip to Forty-second Street, then west and down Fifth Avenue to Madison Square Park, where I loafed a while on the benches; then over to Fourth Avenue and Eighteenth Street, my starting point. After that, if my nerves told me sleep was still impossible, I repeated the dose, sometimes making the circuit three times.

There was method in restricting myself to this comparatively limited area; it was the only one I knew thoroughly, and if I kept within bounds I could not get lost. It was my first visit to the city, and though I had lived in the Gresham over a month, I knew little beyond the aforesaid area and certain sections of the lower East Side; off these beaten tracks I would have been quite lost, for my bump of location, like many other bumps, is prominent by its absence.

Let me state here that I'm not a clever man; I don't see things in scintillating flashes, but rather after painful and dogged gropings. They used to say at college I needed a blue print and set of directions to grasp the most ele-

mental postulate; and Jimmie McCann, the imported County Cavan rubber-down in the gym, probably hit me off both mentally and physically when he said I was "beef to the heels, like a Mullingar heifer." Good old Jimmie meant it for a compliment, and, of course, I took it as one.

It was beef and beef only that got me through my final exams, for I was the best full back that ever hit the line for old Alma Mater, and all the boys—headed by one in particular called Paul Dellacross—got together and pulled me through by the skin of my teeth. Those were the days when there was no one-year eligibility rule, and a man might play football—if he only *could*—no matter how many conditions stood against him in the classroom. Those were the days when mass plays, guards back and tackles back formations, flying wedges, and hurdling the line were all the go, and beef counted for more than it does in the mild open modern game. Those were the days when football was preëminently king and every other sport took a back seat.

In those days, too, I was a king, and they called me "Whang," as if I were a Chinese emperor or something. There's never much sense in nicknames, and I don't remember why I was known universally as Whang McDowell; either because of the way I hit the line and smeared up interference or because of a historic battle I had in my freshman year with a two-hundred-pound "Cock of the Campus" who lost his comb by the roots.

I'm merely mentioning all this so that if it's understood I'm only top-heavy with pectoral muscles and not gray matter, and that I could always use my hands much better than my head, certain parts of this story may be clearer to the reader than they were to me at the time. For certainly when I left the Gresham that night I hadn't the foggiest notion I was about to

stumble on one of the most singular series of circumstances perhaps ever recorded.

Yet, let me confess, I went out that night with the hope of meeting some such bizarre adventure. I don't think I'm incurably romantic, for, I take it, to be romantic one must have imagination of a sort, and I've never been accused of possessing any. Yet, being reared in the Middle West and far from great cities—except for my four years at college—New York had always exerted a strange fascination over me, and I thought it far more wonderful than it even is. It seemed to be a sort of Bagdad of the Arabian Nights in which the most fantastic things happened as a matter of course, and, since the inception of my insomnia, I walked the streets like another Harun-al-Rashid, expecting adventure to jump out at me on every corner. To my disappointment, nothing of the sort had happened, though I read the most subtle and sinister meanings into what were no doubt the most trivial and commonplace happenings.

Understand that this was by no means my normal state of mind; I had never thought of such things until I began to walk the streets of New York between the hours of midnight and dawn. I dare say the great city in itself had something to do with the sudden awakening of an imagination I never thought I possessed; its highways and byways, with their lights, their houses, their sounds—the whole pulsing of a life that never sleeps—seemed to breathe hidden romance and adventure.

Again, in my attempts to woo sleep, I had been reading far beyond my usual allowance, and it was mainly fiction of a more or less sensational character, this being the only variety that had power to hold my fickle attention which demanded quick development and rapid action.

To cap all, there had been many stir-

ring events since my arrival in New York, occurrences totally unknown to my home town. There had been hold-ups by daring motor-car bandits, a couple of sensational murders, a criminal million-dollar fire, and lastly the great Somers kidnaping case which created a tremendous stir, second only, I suppose, to the historic Charley Ross affair.

The little girl was the only child of State Senator Cyrus K. Somers, of New York City, and, while in her own home in charge of a nurse, had been whirled off in a motor car before any one knew what was happening. The nerve of the thing was astounding, and paralleled that of the motor-car bandits during the recent epidemic of robberies, though none knew if it was the work of one organized band, obeying the orders of a single master mind, or merely sporadic instances having no connection, part of the periodic crime wave which seems to sweep over the country now and then. Anyway, little Phyllis Somers—if I remember rightly she was six years old or thereabouts—was held for ransom, twenty-five thousand dollars being demanded.

Now, Cyrus K. was a fighter, and, though he would have given his fortune twice over for the safe return of the child, he believed force was the only effective way of dealing with such vermin, and that payment of the sum demanded would be merely a preliminary to further extortion. So he engaged a mob of private detectives and kicked up the police of half a dozen States, setting elaborate traps and baits that failed to catch anything.

The final result was what might have been expected, things being made so hot for the kidnapers that they wrote Mr. Somers his child had been put out of the way as per their warning if he attempted force. Perhaps this was only bluff and they were lying low until things cooled off a bit before resuming

their demands, but at all events that was the last heard of them or the child.

Over a month had now passed, but Mr. Somers, despite his frantic efforts, hadn't the slightest idea whether his daughter was alive or dead, or the faintest clew to the whereabouts or identity of her captors. His only satisfaction was in firing the nurse pronto and one or two of the servants who he chose to believe had a hand in the affair, though the police had failed signally to prove it an "inside job."

I mention this kidnaping case, the motor bandits' robberies, the two sensational murders, and the criminal million-dollar fire—all but the first, remember, happening since my arrival in New York—to show merely that I had some cause for thinking the city a modern Bagdad in which anything was liable to happen. Taking it all in all—these remarkable occurrences, my curious and unwonted mental tension due to insufficient sleep, my being fed up with sensational fiction, and my comparative ignorance of the great city and her ways—I think it only natural I should read a sinister meaning into what might be the most trivial and commonplace circumstance, and, in short, be ready to investigate the incident which led to the one strange adventure of my unadventurous life.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE WOMAN WHO WATCHED AND THE MEN WHO FOLLOWED.

It happened when I reached Madison Square on the first lap of my nocturnal Marathon and picked out a bench for a smoke, on the conclusion of which I should know if sleep was to be mine or if I must indulge in another circuit or two before returning to the Gresham.

The fingers of the big golden clock in the Metropolitan tower signaled a few minutes after one, and the park held the usual collection seen at that

hour in summer, those belonging to the "submerged tenth" trying to snatch a few winks in such a way as to evade the eye of the law and the consequent salute of the nightstick on the soles of their weary feet. It was ludicrous, yet infinitely pathetic, to see how they straightened up and sort of presented arms, as it were, whenever the strolling policeman passed through the square. This class has always interested me, and I've come to know it pretty well. I've found in it many a better man than myself.

I'd loaded my old meerschauum furnace and got her going when my idle attention was attracted by a woman who had passed a few minutes before, leaving as legacy a faint, enticing perfume which I recognized as a supposedly Hungarian one called "Dewdrop," though it's not spelled that way at all. En route through the square, she had passed close to me—and I had caught a glimpse of a pale, oval face and tawny hair. She was a rather luxurious sort of person, small, slim, and very fashionably dressed in some dark stuff that shimmered like silk. There were many women about, and this one interested me solely because, though she had passed hurriedly, as if making for a definite objective point, I had a notion she saw and noted everything, and no doubt could give a better summary of my neighbors than I myself, though I'd been sitting there ten minutes. I don't know why I gained this impression. Also, though she had been in a hurry, she was now standing idly on the Broadway corner, almost opposite the Hoffman House. She could not be waiting for a car, I thought, for several had passed without enlisting her attention.

Then, as I watched, a man came from the direction of the Hoffman House, and, after glancing sharply from right to left, darted across Broadway. As

he passed the waiting woman, she dropped her handkerchief, but he kept on through the square, some distance from my bench. From what I could see of him, he was a well-dressed young fellow, and there was something peculiar in his movements, something not normal; he seemed either to be a bit drunk or laboring under some excitement, for he kept darting quick glances here and there as if he suspected some one following him.

And indeed, as I watched, this very thing happened, two rough-looking men rising from a bench farther down the line and swinging into step behind him.

Now, in all this there was nothing very remarkable; the watching woman, the dropped handkerchief might have no connection whatever with the two men who followed the first; indeed they might not be following the other designedly. There was nothing in the circumstances to enlist the attention, or, rather, sustained interest, of a normal sort of person, but, as I've tried to explain, I wasn't a normal sort of person that night. So I got up promptly and followed pursuers and pursued.

The chase led over to Fourth Avenue, then south and again east to a mean and obscure neighborhood in which I'd never been, though I knew it couldn't be far from the Gresham. By this time I also knew my newly acquired imagination hadn't run away with me, but that the two men were following the first with a definite purpose in mind. They had closed up on him as he turned a corner, and, when I crossed the street to follow, a muffled cry rang out and sounds of a sharp scuffle.

I'm quicker than I look, having done the hundred in ten flat, and I was round the corner and among them before they had well begun. At that they had him down and were starting to go through him when my arrival gave them something else to think about.

They made a poor fight of it, and

were off down the street without waiting to count the odds. Pursuit would have been useless in that dark street whose every inch they probably knew by heart, and so I turned to their victim who had not stirred.

He seemed to have been knocked out by a sandbag or some weapon producing concussion without breaking the skin, for I found no trace of blood. I struck a match and had a good look at him, after which I decided the only thing to do was to bring him home with me.

There wasn't a soul in sight, and so I heaved him up and got him to make a show of using his feet, though he hung like a sack of bricks. He muttered incoherently once or twice, but was evidently too far gone to inquire into or protest against my efforts. His weight was insignificant to a man of my displacement, and so, with an arm under him, we made good time out of that dark, dirty little by-street, and when we struck the broader, lighter stretches, I'd the luck to spot a taxi—one of these roving piratical craft that cruise about all night.

The pirate dumped us at the Gresham, where my companion's supposed condition elicited no comment or surprise from the night-desk clerk. The management, in fact, knew I was liable to bring home the queerest oddments of humanity, and, as they always arrived in the middle of the night and never made their presence obvious, no objections were raised. I imagine the Gresham thought I had some very peculiar friends, or that I was a harmless sort of lunatic with more time and money than brains.

Watkins, too, showed no surprise, merely saying: "Drunk, sir?"

"No; knocked on the head. But I don't think we'll need a doctor."

We laid him on the bed in the guest room. All this time he had not opened his eyes or given a sign of life, but now,

as I approached, he suddenly started up with incredible swiftness and whipped from his pocket an automatic pistol, his wild eyes staring menacingly at me. I'm sure he would have shot if I'd not been the quicker, wrenching away the gun and slamming him back on the pillows.

"Paul!" I said. "Paul Dellacross! Don't you know me?"

He stared, and slowly the wild light vanished from his eyes. He passed a trembling hand over his brow, then started up on straining elbow. "Why—why, it's Whang McDowell!" he cried.

"The same," said I.

Our hands met, and we remained some time like a couple of lubberly schoolboys, grinning foolishly and solemnly pumping each other's hands up and down while we couldn't find a word to say.

"Well, I'm hanged!" exclaimed Dellacross at length. "Whang McDowell, of all people! Why, you darn' old beef-eating, broken-winded, fathead——"

"Why, you darn' old little sawed-off shrimp!" And so, speech given us, we went on in the complimentary manner of the male animal when it is overjoyed at meeting with another member of its sex whom it hasn't seen for years.

Then in the midst of half a dozen rapid-fire questions, Dellacross' eyes closed automatically, and he fell asleep before touching the pillows. It was sleep, not coma, as I knew from the regular breathing; the sleep of exhausted nature worn to the breaking point.

And as I looked at my old friend and comrade, I felt a lump rise in my throat. It was Paul Dellacross, but oh, how changed since those happy, carefree days of the campus! The pallor of the face was unearthly, and dark purple shadows rested under the closed eyes; the skin was drawn tightly like parchment over the cheek bones, his wrists were those of a child, and the whole wasted form of him was that of one

consumed by an inward, unquenchable fire. This was the impression one received, though I knew the simple and tragic answer must be insufficient nourishment; in short, my old and valued friend must have been put to the pin of his collar for bare subsistence while I wallowed in the fat of the land.

Truly here was one of the jests of fate which are so brutal and incomprehensible, for surely, of the two, I should have been the one beaten in the battle of life. For these aren't the days of the cave dwellers, and the financial worth of my beef and brawn might be represented fittingly by the daily earnings of the pick and shovel. Physically I was all Dellacross was not; mentally, I was a child of outer darkness compared with him.

He had been by far the brainiest man at college, one of these flaming geniuses capable of great endeavors and glorious failures; the kind to lead a last hope or lost cause. Every one of us expected that nothing short of the British ambassadorship or some such honor would be his ultimate goal. We felt he was made for the great things of life, and that the name of our Alma Mater would be carried on the wings of his fame round the world.

Though not roommates, we had been pals, but, in all sincerity, I never could understand what he saw in me; I suppose, by the strange law of opposites, he was attracted by my brutal good health, as, poor fellow, he had precious little of his own. For that matter, there was really nothing radically wrong with him that I could see, except that he seemed to have cultivated his head at the expense of his body. I never knew much about his folks, for he was a reticent sort that way, and I knew merely there was French blood in him somewhere along the line; I think it showed itself in his quick enthusiasms, his gay, conquering spirit, and his wonderfully keen mental grasp of

things. He was the kind that absorbs knowledge without effort. Yet with all his gayety it seemed to me, back in those college days, there was a hovering shadow, some secret in the life of Paul Dellacross that made him fall suddenly silent in the midst of the most abandoned moment. Perhaps I only imagined this, but, at any rate, he never so much as hinted of such a thing, and, of course, I never asked.

Well, time had certainly brought many changes, and here was the man whom I thought well on the road to fame and fortune lying practically down and out. I saw now that the clothes which looked so well in the charitable light of Madison Square were venerable and threadbare, though spotless and creased. Certainly they had fooled others beside myself, for why should the footpads attempt to rob him? I could guarantee the risk involved wouldn't have repaid them, and that Dellacross carried nothing on his person worth the taking.

This was proved when I made shift to transfer him to a suit of pajamas so that he might rest the easier; his clothes had been mussed up in the row with the would-be robbers, and I searched the pockets before turning over the suit to Watkins to be cleaned and pressed in the morning. And those pockets yielded nothing but seventy-six cents, a pack of cigarettes, a cheap fountain pen, and an old leather wallet which might contain anything or nothing. These articles I placed on the bureau.

Watkins now brought me my usual dose of coffee, and I sat by the bed drinking it, for I never felt more wakeful in my life, and had decided I might as well sit up the rest of the night. Dellacross was sleeping soundly and seemed good for a stretch of eight hours at least. He had hardly stirred while I undressed him.

I wondered what chain of adverse

circumstances had made him a member of the down-and-out club, for the last I had heard of him he was undersecretary or something in the foreign office at Washington, and going strong. We had corresponded off and on until about a year back, when his letters ceased. At the same time I, in my mediocre capacity of mining engineer, was sent by my firm to the cobalt mines of northern Canada, where I was kept much too busy to think of anything but work. Since my return I had thought often of Paul Dellacross, expecting to hear from him 'most any day; here, then, was the strange answer to my thoughts.

At this point, the coffee finished, I went off fast asleep, sitting bolt upright in the chair. My dreams were strange and wild, no doubt attributable to my uncomfortable position and the night's happenings. I dreamed that Watkins—a terrifying and demoniac Watkins in the character of Long John Silver of "Treasure Island" fame—had stumped into the room, and that he and I were engaged in a battle to the death over the possession of some object whose character or identity remained a mystery; I couldn't tell what it was, except that its value was immense, its possession vital. For all his game leg, Watkins-Silver was making a great fight of it, and suddenly he dealt me a heavy blow in the ribs with his deadly crutch.

At that I awoke with a gasp to find Dellacross sitting up in bed, a hand on my shoulder, and his eyes looking strangely into mine. I heard the study clock strike four, and a flawless dawn was struggling through the closed blinds. I had slept less than two hours.

CHAPTER III.

I SCENT THE BEGINNING OF A MYSTERY.

Dellacross, for all his former state of exhaustion, was wide awake and kicking, his eyes burning as with suppressed excitement. He grinned at me.

"You were having an awful time of it, Whang, so I thought it charity to prod you up. You seemed to be having a row with the whole universe. What was it all about?"

I explained sheepishly, apologizing for awakening him. His reply was rather startling, not so much what he said as the way he said it:

"You didn't awaken me. I felt some one was in the room, and I awoke just in time to see him sneak out the door."

"Who?"

"I don't know; it's dark, and I only saw his back."

"Watkins," I smiled. "He's a sort of general factotum."

"Oh!" said Dellacross, with what I thought was relief. "Your man, eh?"

"Yes. I thought he was in bed long ago, but he must have heard the riot and came in. I suppose he decided it was better to let me sleep even if I raised the roof. I'll take my noise somewhere else so you can go off again."

"No," replied Dellacross, with a strange compression of the lips. "If you don't mind, I'll pull up the shade and find something to read. I'm through with sleep. But fire ahead yourself; I'm awfully sorry you lost your sleep through me——"

"Rather, I found it through you." And I mentioned my insomnia. "I'm awake for keeps, too; so let's have a talkfest. If Watkins is up, he may as well rustle some grub. I'm starving, if you aren't."

I left the room before he could object, but, to my surprise, I saw no sign of the perfect serving man. Then, as I potted about the ice box in the kitchenette, he appeared silently in shirt and trousers.

"Beg pardon, sir. I thought you were asleep. By your leave, sir. Thank you sir," relieving me of the frying pan with a look of pained reproach. "If I may be so bold as to suggest, sir, you

should have roused me when you awoke, sir."

I may as well admit here that I could never get it into the perfect serving man's head that I was quite capable of waiting on myself—even anxious. He took it as a reproach if I encroached the smallest on his domain, and, in short, was determined to make a "gentleman" of me at all hazards.

"I'm sorry you heard me pottering about," I grumbled, reluctantly surrendering the frying pan. "If I hadn't known you were up I wouldn't have thought of grub at this hour."

He looked at me in a puzzled way. "Beg pardon, sir; I wasn't up."

"Huh? Weren't you in the guest room a few minutes ago? Didn't you come in to see about the row I was making?"

"I did not, sir. I'm a light sleeper, as you know, sir, and I only got up this minute when I heard some one moving about in the kitchen, sir."

"But my friend Mr. Dellacross saw you, Watkins. He awoke a few minutes ago and saw you leaving the room."

Not a shade came over Watkins' face. "Beg pardon, not me, sir. I was in my bed and asleep. I went to bed right after serving your coffee, sir."

I looked at the perfect serving man, and he looked at me; then, as if by mutual impulse, we went to the hall door, which, as was only to be expected, stood fast shut by its spring lock. Besides, it was absurd to think a sneak thief could have entered a place like the Gresham; also, why leave without taking anything?

Watkins coughed apologetically behind his hand. "Beg pardon, sir, but I think Mr. Dellacross must have been dreaming."

"There's no doubt of it," I laughed.

I returned to the guest room where, in due time, Watkins appeared with a collation such as he, and he only, can serve. Dellacross never took his eyes

off him, seemingly greatly interested in the other's silent efficiency.

"That's a wonderful man you've got," he remarked, when we were alone and he was attacking the grub as if he hadn't seen a square meal in weeks. "And these diggings," scanning the room with keen, appraising eyes. "Bachelor apartments?"

"Yes, the Gresham."

He whistled. "Some style, Whang! And all in half a dozen years! I never knew you had it in you. Forgive me, but you were about the last person on earth I expected to find wallowing in the lap of luxury. Why, all this looks like *money*——"

"It does, but don't get excited; it wasn't ability on my part but dumb luck. You see, an uncle died and made me his heir."

He whistled again. "I never knew you had expectations that way."

"I hadn't. He made me his heir simply because I was the stupidest relative he had. All the others are pretty slick, you know, and they spent a lot of time cooking up various schemes to make themselves solid with Uncle Toby so he'd remember them handsomely in his will. I would have done the same, of course, only I knew darn' well I was too stupid for any stunt like that and that he'd be sure to see through any buttering-up process I attempted. So I left him severely alone, and the result was he left me everything; said he was heartily sick of clever people, and that he left his estate to the only relative who hadn't made a try for it. You see, he credited me with fine, handsome scruples when it was merely lack of brains."

Dellacross lay back and laughed unaffectedly. "I don't know, Whang; your particular brand of stupidity seems somehow to get there just the same. I always had an idea you could see through a brick wall as far as the next."

"Only if some one made a hole for me," I replied. "You know I never was any raging young genius."

"Did you invest your inheritance?"

"Yes. It was about a hundred thousand, and—well, I had another slice of bull luck; I stumbled on some cobalt property up in Canada, and my hundred thousand was able to buy a half interest. It was nothing but the rankest gamble, of course, but the thing panned out great, and is now paying me twenty-five thousand a year and will till doomsday."

Dellacross laughed again, and there was a touch of bitterness in it. "And so at the ripe age of thirty—I remember that you and I are the same age, Whang—you are able to retire? Not so bad for a 'stupid' man. I suppose you quit the mining firm that sent you North in the first place?"

"Yes. I never had any head for that sort of thing or business, either. Twenty-five thousand a year is good enough for me, and all I'll ever want. If I tried to increase it, I'd only lose it."

"It's a good thing to know when to quit," nodded my friend. "Then you're doing nothing at present?"

"Nothing for the past two months or so."

"That doesn't gee with your insomnia," said Dellacross shrewdly. "That came from overwork of some sort, and you can't tell me otherwise. Come, what have you been doing with yourself?"

"Well," I confessed apologetically, "it's just a hobby—something to keep me out of mischief and my mind occupied. I've been trying some of this social-settlement stuff on the East Side. You see, I've more time and money than I know what to do with, and—then it amuses me. You don't know the fun I get out of it."

"You old humbug!" said my friend affectionately. "Just the same old Whang, I see; always doing something

for everybody, and then trying to hide it or make out it's an eccentric hobby. I don't wonder your Uncle Toby left you that hundred thousand; I guess he knew you better than you'd like to have people know."

I tried to side-step these beautiful lies, but Dellacross continued: "You've been working yourself sick trying to reclaim the unwashed. I bet you chase around all day trying to find jobs for the down and outs, and that all your surplus money goes into the settlement—"

"I blush," said I. "If you don't mind, let's switch the conversation to yourself; then we may be able to talk sense. I'd like to know what you've been doing and why you stopped writing."

Dellacross then told me he was no longer in the service of the government; that, in fact, like myself, he was unemployed, but with the uncomfortable addition of possessing no income. It seemed that about a year previously he had been thrown heavily while riding horseback. The following six months had been spent in the hospital, and when released he was forbidden to resume work of any kind.

"As you know, I never had much health," said he, treating the whole matter very lightly, "and that fall, which wouldn't have fazed you, gave me a Harry of a time. I seemed to be like a cat with a broken back, and good for nothing but to crawl about and whine. Luckily I had some money put away, and so I was able to live after a fashion, but—" He pointed to his effects on the bureau, and smiled whimsically. "There's the sum total of my earthly possessions—as I guess you've suspected already."

I nodded. "So that's why you stopped writing—because you were in the hospital? And afterward because you were hard up and your darn' rotten pride wouldn't let you? What kind of friendship do you call that, anyway?"

And I suppose I never would have heard of you again but for last night's affair."

He laughed, though a bit shamefacedly. "You'd have done the same yourself. Oh, yes, you would! I'd no right to impose myself on you, and—and—well, I've found out that a whole lot of folks are quite ready to be friends if you don't ask them to make sacrifices. Besides, I hadn't seen you since we graduated, Whang——"

"And you thought I might be that sort of person? Thanks. Well, anyway, here you are, and here you'll remain until you're fixed up physically and financially."

"I'm all right physically," he said earnestly. "I've quite recovered from that fall; that isn't why I'm unemployed. You must know that when one's been out of a job for six months or so it's mighty hard to get another."

Why it was I don't know, but somehow I gained the impression from this conversation that Dellacross hadn't been quite frank with me, or that, at least, he was holding back something. And more than once I surprised him looking at me in a strange, appraising sort of way.

"I haven't thanked you yet for last night's affair," said he at length. "How did you happen to be in that beastly neighborhood? It was all right for me, because I've a room there—all I could pay for."

I told him of the waiting woman, the dropped handkerchief, and my following the two men. Then I tried to explain something of my queer mental state which had prompted my following his assailants.

His expression had become thoughtful and grave, but he spoke carelessly—too carelessly, I thought.

"Yes, lack of sleep and too much sensational fiction have given you an over-vivid imagination, Whang. Of course, there was no connection between that

woman and the men; the latter were just ordinary roughs who saw me pass through the park, were deceived by my clothes, and thought perhaps I was half shot and ripe for picking. Thanks, however, to your imagination and beef, I've been able to keep my precious seventy-six cents."

Outwardly I concurred in this opinion, but I did not forget for a moment that Dellacross the previous night had certainly, to my mind, acted as if he expected to be followed. Indeed, I firmly believed there was some mystery back of it all, and that the dropping of the handkerchief was a preconcerted signal. But I did not intend to force Dellacross' confidence, knowing of old his characteristic reticence about his private affairs. One could never get anything out of him by questions. All the same, I felt a bit sore.

By this time he was up and about, saying, for all the ungodly earliness of the hour, sleep was beyond him. Quite casually he now picked up his wallet from the bureau and glanced through it; then his expression changed suddenly and he made another hurried, frantic search.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

He turned, his eyes blazing, his face white and convulsed; indeed, at that moment he looked almost like a madman. For all his slight physique, he caught my arm in a grip of iron, proof positive of his complete physical recovery.

"Where is it?" he demanded fiercely, shaking me again and again. "What have you done with it?"

"Done with what?" I stammered.

"The silver cross!" he cried. "By Heaven, McDowell——" With the same incredible swiftness I had had cause to note the previous evening, he turned and seized the automatic pistol from the bureau. But I had taken the precaution of removing the clip of cartridges from the handle.

"Sit down and cool off," I advised. And, being rather tired of having pistols suddenly presented at my anatomy, I slammed him none too gently on the bed and proceeded to sit on his chest.

"Look here, Paul," I added, "you've got to get a grip on yourself and quit acting like a confounded fool or a crazy man. I'm getting tired of this thing. What do you take me for, anyway? I never opened your wallet, and I don't know anything about a cross, silver or otherwise. Anyway, it strikes me a trinket isn't worth the sort of row you're kicking up. Do you realize you'd have come mighty near blowing holes in me if that thing had been loaded? Yes, and you'd have done the same last night if I hadn't jumped you quick. Now stay quiet a moment and just think that over."

CHAPTER IV.

DELLACROSS AIRS HIS SUSPICIONS.

After a time Dellacross' eyes cleared and he got up, looking very spent and haggard but contrite.

"I'm a beast, Whang," he said impulsively and frankly. "Please forgive me. You don't know what that thing you call a trinket means to me and what I've been through for its sake. I tell you there are those who would have my life for it!" He passed a thin, trembling hand before his eyes, as if he were dazed. "For the past month I've been watched, tracked, spied upon, and eternal vigilance has been my only salvation! I've had to regard every one with suspicion—*every one*, I tell you!—and so that's why I thought for a moment that even you——" He broke off, then exclaimed: "Those fellows hadn't my wallet out when you arrived? They hadn't had time to go through me? Are you *sure* of that?"

"Yes," I replied. "They hadn't more than bowled you over when I got there; otherwise couldn't they have gone off

with the wallet? Why stop to replace it? No, they hadn't time for anything, and very likely they took me for a detective. I'm quite sure that wallet never left your pocket until I placed it there on the bureau."

Without a word he stepped to the windows which gave on the fire escape, the guest room opening on a court and being three floors up. It being early summer, these windows were open wide—and had been the previous night—but the inevitable screens were in place.

"Whang, you remember me awaking and finding a man leaving the room? You said it was your servant."

"So I thought naturally, but it wasn't. I asked Watkins, and he said he went to bed after bringing my coffee. He wasn't in this room, and he's the only other person in the apartments."

Dellacross darted a swift glance at me, then raised both screens. They squeaked abominably.

"A clear drop of twenty feet from the bottom rung of the fire escape," said he, looking down into the court.

"Yes," I nodded; "they unhook the last section and lock it in the cellar for fear of burglars making use of it. Nothing short of a pair of wings could overcome that twenty feet of space. Besides I don't see how any one could get into the court without detection."

"And the noise of those screens would have awakened me, if not you," added my friend dryly. "And, by the way, you didn't intend going asleep in that chair, did you?"

"No. I felt wide awake, but dropped off before I knew it. I must have been dog tired."

"Probably—and probably not," replied Dellacross. "I wish I'd sampled that coffee you had. Where's the cup?"

"Watkins took it out when he brought in the breakfast. What are you driving at? Are you inferring Watkins drugged my coffee and then went through your wallet?" I finished incredulously.

"Well, is there any other answer—though I hate to say your servant is a thief?" countered Dellacross grimly. "That trinket, as you call it, was certainly in my wallet before I was attacked, and you're ready to swear those fellows hadn't a chance to go through me. Also that it's practically impossible for an outsider to have entered this room. Now that leaves you and Watkins—for certainly I didn't rob myself. *You* didn't take it, so that leaves your servant. Can you suggest any other explanation?"

"No, I can't. At the same time I'm ready to take my oath on Watkins' honesty. But leaving that aside, how could he know there was such an article in your wallet or its value—whatever that may be?"

Dellacross' eyes glittered. "I told you several people knew about it and that there's been an organized attempt to steal it, last night's affair being merely one of several instances. How long have you had this fellow Watkins?"

"Less than two weeks."

"Did you get him through the regular channels? Where are his references? Let me see them."

In the old days Dellacross had always wielded a sort of mental dominance over me, and now I did not think of resenting his peremptory questions.

"Why," said I, meekly enough, "Watkins hasn't any references. Of course you won't let this go further, but, as a matter of fact, he was fired from his last position without a character, as they call it. I don't know where he was last employed or why he was discharged, for I haven't asked him. You must have seen that he's a past master of his business and could only have worked in the best houses. My getting him was just another piece of my confounded good luck, for such a man isn't to be picked up every day,

and I don't pay him the wages he should command."

Dellacross eyed me with mingled astonishment, pity, and anger. "And you call it 'good luck' to have a man whom you know absolutely nothing about? A servant without references, one discharged for dishonesty—if not something worse! Whang, you're beyond me! I always knew you were an easy mark, but this is certainly going the limit! Upon my word, you're not fit to be alone, especially in a place like New York. You should have a guardian. It's a wonder to me you haven't been robbed wholesale long ago by this perfect servant. How did you come to engage him?"

"I picked him out of the bread line one night at Fleischmann's," I confessed, "just as I've picked out many a good man temporarily down and out. He told me he'd been discharged from his last place as butler on a false charge. He knew no other trade, and, without a character, couldn't find work. He'd been walking the streets for days and was practically starving." I added, ignoring my friend's skeptical shrugs and grimaces. "I offered to find him a place, but when he learned I needed a servant he begged me to let him stay here, offering to work for nothing——"

"Why?"

"Because he said I was the first person who had shown him kindness and faith. I tell you, Paul, his gratitude was touching, and there isn't anything he wouldn't do for me."

My friend groaned. "And of course you believed him wholesale. You believe this moth-eaten story about his being discharged on a false charge?"

"I believe in the man," I replied. "I'm not clever like you, Paul, and so I have to rely on instinct. I relied on instinct when I believed in the man in Canada who offered me a half share in that cobalt property. Of course my instinct isn't infallible by a long shot,

but it's led me pretty straight so far. And, anyway, I've found there's such a thing as being too clever, cautious, and suspicious; if I'd been all that I'd have missed this cobalt investment.

"My instinct approves of Watkins, and so I believe in him, no matter how black circumstances may appear against him. Perhaps some day of his own free will he'll tell me where he was last employed and why he was discharged without a character. But until that day comes I'm going to respect his silence and ask no questions, for I accepted him on trust. In my opinion he's a very superior sort of person, and even butlers have their right to pride of place and tradition. Whether he fell from grace deservedly or not is beside the question; the fact remains that the fall means as much to him as it would to you or me if we lost caste among our own. I would like to help Watkins regain his lost caste."

"Well," said Dellacross slowly, eyeing me askance, "every one's entitled to his own peculiar beliefs so long as they don't hurt his neighbor. I mean, Whang—and I know you'll forgive me for drawing your attention to the point—that your trusting faith has enabled Watkins to rob *me* if not you. For the fact remains that the silver cross is gone, and that none but he could have taken it. If he is still on the premises, will you inquire casually if he has seen it, and will you impress the fact on him that it *must* be found? If you owe a duty to your trust in him, I think you also owe a duty to your guest and friend."

For all his quiet, studied speech I saw that Dellacross was laboring under much excitement, impatience, and perturbation which would have excused hastier and warmer words. Thus my responsibilities of host and friend were brought home to me, and I rose with alacrity, saying: "I'll never forgive myself if you've been robbed while under

my roof, Paul, and you may be sure I'll make every effort to recover your property."

"If it's been stolen, its recovery won't be so easy as you seem to think," he replied grimly. "But fire ahead, for we should be acting, not talking."

So I went to the kitchenette where Watkins was methodically sweeping up, and, as I expected, he denied all knowledge of the trinket.

"What does it look like, sir?" he asked.

"I don't know, Watkins, for I haven't seen it, but it's small enough to be kept in a wallet. I thought perhaps it fell out somehow when we were bringing Mr. Dellacross in and that you might have found it. Its recovery means a very great deal to Mr. Dellacross; very great, indeed."

Watkins promptly laid aside his broom and dustpan. "I'll help you look for it, sir," he volunteered with alacrity. "Was Mr. Dellacross' wallet removed from his pocket last night, sir, after he was put to bed?"

"Yes; I placed it on the bureau."

"Then, with your leave, sir, let us look in the guest room, for I don't see how it could have fallen out anywhere else. The carpet in the guest room being very thick, sir, you wouldn't have heard it fall."

"Good idea!" I exclaimed. "I hadn't thought of that."

So we returned to the guest room, where Dellacross sat on the bed and watched our efforts in a grim, cynical sort of way, as if he knew they would be fruitless and the search an elaborate farce. He never removed his eyes from Watkins, and I felt if the trinket were not found he would attempt stern measures with my servant. I did not intend, however, to have Watkins brow-beaten or insulted.

I was saved this unpleasant contingency by Watkins, who had been quartering the room on hands and knees,

suddenly making a dive under the bed and crying: "I've got it, sir!"

Dellacross leaped from the bed as if hardly crediting his ears, while I, too, crowded forward. Watkins had arisen, holding a little silver cross and looking at it intently with, I fancied, a rather strange expression in his pale, deep-sunk eyes.

"Is this it, sir?" he asked slowly, after a moment.

"Yes," cried Dellacross, snatching it without ceremony from the other's hand. He was flushed with pleasure and excitement. "Thank you, Watkins," he added, a trifle more graciously. "Of course, it's only a trinket, but its sentimental value to me is very great. I'll remember you finding it."

"Not at all, sir," replied the perfect servant colorlessly. And he left the room slowly and with that strange expression still in his pale eyes.

"I think you owe Watkins a mental apology, at least," said I, when we were alone. "You see, he had nothing whatever to do with its loss. The cross must have fallen out when I removed your wallet, and then inadvertently I must have kicked it under the bed. It just goes to show how a person may be accused wrongfully."

Dellacross eyed me steadily for a moment. "And what about the man I saw leaving the room? Can you explain that?"

"Yes. You imagined it. It was an illusion born of your dreams."

My friend smiled slightly, his superior, pitying smile. "Perhaps you're right, Whang. But my idea is that I awoke because I felt there was some one in the room who didn't want us to know he was there. I've some little instinct myself. And let me point out that Watkins has had ample time to make a wax impression of this cross; also that he had every chance of pretending to find it where he did."

"You've no right to say that!" I re-

plied warmly. "You're unjust, Paul. If I hadn't told you Watkins was discharged from his last place without a character, you would never have thought of suspecting him. That silver cross seems to have made you beastly suspicious of everybody. Why, you even thought I had taken it! If I were you, I'd get rid of it if that's the sort of unholy influence it exerts over you."

He was turning the article over and over in his hand, his expression grave and preoccupied. "There's a lot of truth in all you say, Whang," he replied at length. "I may be wrong about Watkins, so we'll say nothing more. There's no doubt this silver cross has the power to change a person's character, and not for the better, I'm afraid. It's symbolic of a corroding influence. Here, take a look at it!" And he passed it into my hand.

It was about three inches long, in the form of a Maltese cross and of a rather elaborate, quaint design, the silver being almost black with age or neglect. It was also more or less worn, and from its general appearance—providing it was solid silver—I would have placed its value at a few dollars or so. In fact, it looked like a cheap enough trinket which a child might have worn, and close examination showed that at one time it had hung suspended from a chain; also that formerly a jewel of some sort had graced the center of the cross. The end of the shaft was crenated, carrying out the design of the arms. Most assuredly its value seemed grotesquely out of proportion to the row Dellacross had raised over its presumable loss, and he must have known I was thinking this, for he smiled and said:

"Doesn't look much, eh? How old would you say it was?"

"I haven't the least idea, for I don't know anything about antiques. It may be centuries old or made last year in Germany, for all I could say."

"McDowell," said my friend—and I knew of old he only used my surname when very serious—"would you like to hear the history of that thing? I didn't mean to tell you anything about it, and no doubt you've misunderstood my silence. It wasn't, you may be sure, that I didn't trust you, but that for your own sake I didn't want you mixed up in the matter. Remember what happened to me last night; if I tell you my story, you may become involved in the same dangers. I wish to warn you fairly, and I advise you it would be far wiser to——"

"You needn't say anything more, Paul. If you can show me anything in the way of mystery or adventure, I'll be glad of it, for I've been looking without success ever since I came to New York."

"It's not a light matter," said my friend earnestly.

"So much the better," I replied. "I've felt from the first, Paul, there was some big mystery back of last night's business, and I've been hoping you'd let me in on it. If it's only the fear of danger to myself that's been keeping you back, why, then, the road's clear. I insist on knowing."

I fancied a relieved expression appeared in Dellacross' eyes. "All right, Whang, I'll tell you my story, but remember, I don't ask you to help me out in the thing. I'm not asking that, and I'll think you only sensible in refusing to become actively involved in it."

He got up and locked the door, and then, our pipes going, he sat down close to me and told all about the silver cross.

CHAPTER V.

THE SILVER CROSS.

I'll make no attempt to set down circumstantially or in detail the strange story as Paul Dellacross told it to me, for I have not his ability of using the right word in the right place, and I

could do but little justice to the method of the telling. I cannot convey his eloquence, his fire, his sense of dramatic values, and the profound impression his manner, no less than the story itself, made on me. For Dellacross did not merely tell the story; he acted it, and so well that I found myself thinking his true vocation was the stage or writing for it. Indeed, at times I wondered if I were not listening to the consummately rendered work of such a master romanticist as Robert Louis Stevenson; for the narrative was strange indeed, and had to do with that rainbow pot of gold handed down through the ages—Buried Treasure.

To begin with, my friend told me that his family was an old Norman one, the name being spelled originally De la Croix from an ancestor who had been a Knight of Malta. Thus the Maltese cross was the family crest.

Coming down to the eighteenth century, a certain Pierre De la Croix fled to this country just prior to the French Revolution, and from this gentleman the Americanized house of Dellacross was founded. An aristocrat of the aristocrats, he had brought with him an immense fortune, the family plate and jewels together with the proceeds of such property as he could turn into ready cash. He had become an American citizen, settling on the northern end of Long Island, the modern little town of Crosshampton taking its name from the original estate.

For all his high birth, it would seem this Pierre De la Croix was a poor enough sort of character, caring overmuch for the material things of life and his own carcass and being incapable of high ideals or sacrifices. Witness his hasty and undignified scramble from France before the storm broke, his sordid foresight in converting his possessions into cash before the republic had come into being and confiscated such holdings. He had thought solely

of self, and had made no attempt to live up to the traditions of his house and race, leaving relatives and friends in the lurch and refusing all help to those in need. Paul Dellacross spoke of him with tolerant contempt, it being plain he felt no honor for this gentleman, his great-great-grandfather, who was born at Paris in the year 1764, and therefore in his middle twenties when he settled on Long Island. Five years later, in 1794, he married into a good Connecticut family, and my friend, Paul Dellacross, was the direct descendant of that union.

Now this Pierre De la Croix—or Dellacross, as he began to spell the name—developed into a great miser, until his name became a byword in the neighborhood. His wealth increased, but of the hoard brought with him from France no one so much as saw a jewel or gold piece. Nor did succeeding generations find trace of it.

The original De la Croix holdings were cut up and sold off during the ensuing years, and the family got poorer and poorer until the crisis came in my friend's boyhood, his father during the panic of '93 making a total failure, and having to part with the last acre and the family homestead, still known in the neighborhood as the Cross Mansion and built originally by "Miser Pierre." Paul's father had then gone West in search of a better fortune, the family settling in Nebraska, at whose university I've mentioned about first meeting with my friend. The family fortunes had not improved, and Paul was alone in the world, having no relatives but a distant cousin calling himself Arnold Dellacross, of whom I will have something to say later.

This, then, is the merest summary of the first part of my friend's story; the second part I will now attempt to give in his own words.

"Even in my grandfather's time," said he, "the story of the Dellacross

treasure, brought over sixty years before, was scouted, and in my father's day it had degenerated into nothing more than a legend. He laughed at it, saying the whole thing had been grossly exaggerated or never existed, else it would have been unearthed long ago. At the same time he admitted that, as a boy, he had made secret and prolonged attempts to find the treasure. This, you might say, has been the modern history of the family, the fathers in their youth hunting for the rainbow pot of gold and then in mature years laughing at and forbidding the efforts of their children.

"As you may imagine, the legend, when I first heard it as a child, set my imagination on fire; but, of course, all my efforts at discovering the secret were fruitless. Aside from all else, you can understand the difficulties to be contended with when you remember there was absolutely no clew to where the treasure had been buried, and that original vast estate had been cut to pieces, each piece owned by a different tenant on whose property I had no right to make search.

"The selling of our old home, the Cross Mansion, removed my last chance, and I went to our new home in Nebraska in a very depressed and hopeless state. Yet I still clung to my youthful faith in the authenticity of 'Miser Pierre's Hoard,' and the belief that some day it would be found. Then this faded when I began the battle of life on my own account until, on graduating from college, I had almost forgotten the whole story. Then, as you know, I entered the diplomatic service, and the story became nothing but a memory of my boyhood.

"About two years ago my father died, and among his few possessions was this silver cross which you now see. As a boy I had handled it more than once, knowing it to be an heirloom valued solely for sentimental reasons, though

its true history neither my father nor grandfather knew. In fact, I think my father thought it was owned originally by our crusading ancestor, the Knight of Malta; at least so he told me, and I believed it in all veneration and humility. But I now know its workmanship to be of a much later date, and that, in short, it was fashioned by a French master workman in no less a place than New York and under the direction of my great-great-grandfather, Miser Pierre. As you have no doubt guessed," added my friend, picking up the cross and pointing to the nicks on the end of the shaft, "this seemingly useless trinket is a key—the key to Miser Pierre's Hoard. A key which was formerly attached to a stout chain and worn about his neck night and day. You will notice," finished my friend, "that in the center of the cross there is a lion's head."

"Yes," said I, "and I suppose at one time the jaws held a jewel of some sort?"

"Possibly," replied Dellacross. "At any rate, this trinket seemed to me of no more value or significance than I've told you; it was merely an heirloom, and I placed it among my effects and promptly forgot all about it. Then came that accident while I was riding horseback, and my long stay in the hospital.

"I suppose because my hands and brain were idle for the first time since boyhood, you might say, the story about Miser Pierre's Hoard recurred to me, and I thought of it constantly. It filled my mind to the exclusion of all else, day after day, night after night. My thoughts kept harping on the subject, and I tried to put myself in Miser Pierre's place and imagine where a man of his avarice and cunning would be likely to hide the treasure.

"You've noticed, perhaps, that sometimes, when the body is ailing or incapacitated, the mind assumes an ab-

normal activity and keenness; maybe this was the case with me, but, at all events, I became convinced that the treasure had been buried in no less a place than the Cross Mansion. I argued that a miser like my ancestor would keep it as near him as possible so that he might feast his eyes on it and assure himself of its safety; yet it must be in a place so inaccessible that no outsider would stumble on it. Clearly, thought I, there must be some secret chamber in the Cross Mansion—a hiding place designed by Miser Pierre when building the house—which has escaped the notice of all the searchers who, I imagined, had brought no great intelligence or ingenuity to the matter.

"Then one night, as I lay thinking, the little Maltese cross suddenly flashed into my mind; rather, it was not the cross itself, but the lion's head which it bore, that so suddenly assumed a wonderful significance to me. For, while imagining possible hiding places in the Cross Mansion, I remembered the old Colonial fireplace in the library which, in the center of the mantel, bore the carved head of a lion. And the idea came to me—just why or how I can't explain—that the Maltese cross had a vital connection with that lion's head on the mantelpiece; in short, that one was the key, the other the lock to Miser Pierre's Hoard. Call it inspiration, madness, or what you like, but the suspicion became certainty, and I was on fire to leave the hospital and put my theory to the proof.

"The excitement, however, only retarded my convalescence, but when at length I was able to be up and about, my first step was to take the little silver cross to a well-known dealer in antiques who assured me it was of French workmanship and had probably been made toward the end of the eighteenth century. My next step was to gain access to my old home and put fortune to the touch."

Dellacross paused to light his brier.

"Now," continued he, "I must tell you something about my cousin, Arnold Dellacross, for it was his father who bought the Cross Mansion. This branch of the family is a sinister one, and they have really no right to the name, Arnold's grandfather being illegitimate. They have always been a turbulent sort, unscrupulous, scheming, and dangerous. Arnold's father—Stewart Dellacross—was a beach comber, gun runner, and dynamiter, an adventurer who turned his hand to the most shady, if profitable, enterprises, and Arnold himself is no better. They have always hated me and mine, not forgiving us for being the legitimate branch of the family or forgetting their own illegitimacy. The families never had anything in common, there was always bad blood between us, and when the Cross Mansion had to be sold at auction the worst blow and humiliation to my father and us was that Stewart Dellacross should be the one to buy it in. He made it very hard for us with his covert sneers, gibes, and pretended sympathy, and at the time we thought he had purchased the property in order to gloat over us, the place itself having no great value. But I now know that the legend of Miser Pierre's Hoard was known to Stewart Dellacross, and that he meant to have a try at solving the riddle, and, if successful, keep what he had no right to. At least I'm sure he knew the story, and that some such idea, besides the desire to gloat over us, prompted him to buy the property. To support this belief, we learned that Stewart Dellacross, some time after his occupancy of the house, was killed by a cave-in while making extensive excavations about the place. This left Arnold, who I knew must also possess knowledge of the legend. And Arnold, I may say, is a far worse sort than was his father.

"You now understand the position I was in. Here was a thoroughly un-

scrupulous man, who bitterly hated me, owning and occupying the house where the treasure was buried; suspecting it was somewhere on the premises, but absolutely unable, after many attempts, to find a clew to its whereabouts. Here was I with that clew, but stumped how to make use of it. I had no illusions about Arnold Dellacross, and I knew, for the sake of that treasure, he wouldn't think twice about putting me safely out of the way. Nor was there any use thinking about appealing to the law; possession is nine-tenths of the law, and Arnold was in possession of the place if not the treasure itself. I had no money, anyway, and without it one can do nothing.

"Meantime I had taken lodgings in Crosshampton—my old home being just outside the borough—where I kept an eye on Arnold's movements, and being careful not to let him know I was in the neighborhood. Fortune favored me at last, and I learned he was going away for a time. He did so, leaving the place in charge of a single female servant, an old crone, half deaf and blind.

"I thought I was in high good luck, but I now know that Arnold learned somehow I was in Crosshampton, suspected my mission, and deliberately laid a trap, hoping to catch me red-handed—just as I was disclosing to him the secret of Miser Pierre's Hoard. For he is far more cunning, able, and ruthless than I had even imagined. You understand, of course, that he left that old crone in charge purposely so that her infirmities would put me entirely at ease; in short, he calculated on my doing just what I did, and his plan very nearly succeeded."

"And what did you do?" I asked, as Dellacross paused. "Did you break into the house?"

"Hardly," he shrugged. "The thing required more finesse than that. I visited the Cross Mansion boldly, in daylight, explained my identity, and asked

to see my cousin, of course being very properly surprised and disappointed on learning he was away and would not return for some days. Then I set myself out to become very friendly with the servant, saying that this had been the home of my boyhood, and asking permission to look over the house. This was granted readily—too readily, I now know.

"At all events, I managed to be alone in the library for some considerable time—no doubt the old crone was acquainting her master of my arrival—and it proved enough for my purpose. I examined carefully the carved head of the lion on the mantelpiece, and, after some little experiment, found at length that the crenated end of the Maltese cross fitted a cunningly concealed opening within the lion's jaws. The lock was in the roof of the mouth, securely hidden from all but the most prying eyes.

"I had provided myself with some fine machine oil, knowing that the lock, not having been used for over a century, would require some persuasion; and so, after lubricating the parts thoroughly, I inserted my strange key. I will not attempt to describe my excitement when, almost at the first pressure, the whole back of the great fireplace suddenly disappeared like a sliding panel; and so cunningly had the master workman wrought that even after the disuse of a century the wonderful mechanism worked with truly remarkable silence and rapidity.

"The opening displayed was perhaps, roughly speaking, four feet square; and, though greatly excited and impatient, I had the forethought, before investigating further, to learn in what manner the great sliding back of stone and metal was replaced. I soon found that a simple reverse turn of the key accomplished this, and so, after assuring myself the old servant was nowhere about, I got down on all fours and entered the se-

cret chamber before which countless log fires had been burned for three generations. Just think of it for a moment, McDowell! Three generations had sat staring at that lion's head and never suspecting the secret held within its open jaws! Take my Cousin Arnold, for instance; night after night he had sat before that fire—it being late spring, there was none there now—never thinking that the treasure for which he was ready to do even murder was literally staring him in the face!"

"Get on with the story!" I said impatiently, being more interested and excited than I cared to admit. "You entered the secret chamber?"

"Yes," replied Dellacross, "and I found myself in a place so small that, short as I am, I couldn't stand upright; in fact, there was room for little more than a great, coffin-shaped, ironbound chest about four feet long, which, from the ample light coming through the fireplace, I saw was stamped with the family crest—the Maltese cross. This had been burned in the wood, now black with age. I suppose the secret chamber was almost air-tight, for that wood was as stout and sound as the day it was hewn, and the chest itself so heavy that it resisted all my efforts at lifting it. It was fastened with a single great heavy lock, and the whole thing had been so strongly and admirably made that I understood at a glance it would require considerable time, strength, and the necessary tools to force it. I had seen, however, that the great lock was in the form of a lion's head—the replica of that on the mantelpiece and the silver cross; so, possessing the talisman and its secret, I inserted the key for the second time in the lion's mouth, and opened the chest."

My friend paused, breathing audibly, the sweat pearling his brow, his mouth working, and his eyes large and bright with excitement.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH, MUCH TO MY DELIGHT, I AM PERMITTED TO SHARE IN THE GREAT ADVENTURE.

"I had found Miser Pierre's Hoard," continued Dellacross at length, in a low voice, speaking with an effort at composure. "There it was, after all the years, just as he had left it, no doubt. I cannot give you a detailed description, for I'd no time for that; I only know my eyes were literally dazzled, my senses numbed by the sparkle and glitter which came from that otherwise dark interior. I tell you that old box, four feet by two, was simply crammed with preciousness! Old brocades, now priceless; jewels of every sort, cut and uncut—there was one great ruby the size of my thumb which, with a handful of gold coins, I stuffed mechanically in my pocket. There were ingots of gold and silver, rouleaux of gold pieces, both English and French. Added to this was the insignia, decorations, and orders which had been in the De la Croix family for hundreds of years before, and whose value cannot be estimated in dollars and cents.

"Of all this, I repeat, I have the scantiest knowledge, if the most vivid memory, for before I had well begun the examination a lively fear overcame me—a warning by a sixth sense which I can't explain, though I've experienced it in my life more than once. I had heard absolutely nothing, you understand, and seen absolutely nothing to excite my alarm, but at the same time some overwhelming impulse urged me to lock that old box and beat as hasty a retreat as possible. I obeyed without hesitation, sliding the back of the fireplace into position and putting the silver cross in my pocket. Before I had time to rub the dust from my knees, I heard stealthy footsteps, and the next moment my Cousin Arnold Dellacross came tiptoeing into the room.

"Evidently after giving out he was going away, he had hidden himself somewhere in the immediate neighborhood—perhaps he had not left the house at all—but I'd accomplished my mission sooner than he had anticipated. Now his chagrin and disappointment were great, though he dissembled admirably, while I, on my part, followed suit. He said he had returned unexpectedly, and professed pleasure and astonishment at seeing me, adding he was unaware I had come East. I stuck to my original story of being in the neighborhood on business, and how I wished to look over the home of my boyhood. And so we lied and smiled and were very polite and proper; for you must know that though my cousin has always bitterly hated me and mine, he conceals it under polite words and a gracious smile. He is the kind that strokes an enemy with one hand while stabbing him with the other.

"You understand that my cousin didn't know whether he was too early or too late; whether I had found the secret hiding place or was prevented from doing so by his arrival. You may be sure, however, his keen eyes had seen the dust on my trousers, my general appearance of disarray, and, though he said nothing, I knew he was drawing his own conclusions—that I had made at least a search for the treasure, if I had not actually found it. Therefore—and this is an important point—the treasure must be concealed in that room, the library. Up to that moment he lacked the slightest clew to its location.

"Well, of course, we dissembled until the last, and he pretended to be very sorry when I said I must return to New York. From that moment, however, I was a marked man—shadowed, if not by Arnold himself, by those associated with him. They succeeded in holding me up, the way they did last night, and robbing me of the great ruby and the French coins, but luckily I had left the little silver cross at home. You can

understand, however, what this haul meant to Arnold, proving, as it did, that I had actually found Miser Pierre's Hoard. For it was most improbable that a man of my position, in the ordinary course of events, would be in possession of such a jewel, together with French coins of the eighteenth century.

"Arnold knew, then, I possessed the open sesame to the treasure, and he has made desperate efforts to secure it; my rooms have even been ransacked in my absence, and I've been hunted, you might say, from pillar to post. I've tried to shake off my shadowers, but all to no purpose, as witness last night's business."

"And where does the woman come in in all this?" I asked, as my friend paused. "I mean the woman who dropped the handkerchief."

"She is hand in glove with Arnold," replied Dellacross, "and for want of her right name I call her the 'Woman in Black.' My cousin isn't married, and I don't know what relation she bears to him. Arnold, I suspect, is head of a criminal gang of some sort, though I can't put my finger on any one thing that would bring him within the law. This woman is his associate, and she travels with two men whom I call 'Scar Face' and the 'Spaniard.' These are evidently Arnold's chief lieutenants; but how many more there are I can't say."

"And when did you first see this woman?"

"The night after my visit to the Cross Mansion. I was dining in a cheap restaurant on lower Seventh Avenue when she came in and took the table next mine. I caught her watching me in the mirror, and when I left she followed. Immediately afterward, in a dark side street, I was sandbagged by a couple of men and robbed of the ruby and French coins, as I've told you. Of course, I can prove nothing against her, but from that night I've noticed her here and there—always turning up

wherever I happen to be—and I haven't the slightest doubt but what she's the lookout, and, if possible, the decoy. Last night's business is just a case in point. The two men were undoubtedly Scar Face and the Spaniard; and I was trailed to the Hoffman House, where I went in to get a drink; then the woman waited outside and gave the signal when I appeared. That's the way they work."

"You haven't thought of appealing to the police?"

Dellacross made an impatient gesture. "The police! What charge can I make? I can't prove anything against anybody. I've been sandbagged twice, and I never knew who or what hit me, let alone swearing to the identity of my assailants. How can I prove that my cousin is behind the whole business? Who would believe my strange story? 'No,'" continued my friend, as he got up and walked the floor, "don't talk to me of the police or the law. I'll never get my rights through them. This is a thing that must be fought without the police or the law. You appreciate the legal difficulties, I hope; in the first place, though that treasure's mine by direct descent, I might have a hard enough time proving it in a court of law, for Arnold, you may be sure, would fight me tooth and nail. He would deny his illegitimacy, and I would have to prove *that*. Then he'd argue that as he owned the property he also owned everything on it or in it. A thousand and one legal quibbles would arise, and the lawyers, of course, would manufacture more and prolong the case for their own benefit. Meanwhile Arnold might stumble on the secret and walk off with the booty. No, the police and the law can have no part in this; it's a family matter, and I'm going to lift my own without their aid just as soon as I can think out a way of doing so."

"Then count me in on it," said I.

"This seems to be a job after my own heart."

My friend looked at me with shining eyes. "Do you mean that, Whang? Remember the risks——"

"Hang the risks! That's what I want—something with a fight in it. I think the ethics of this case are decidedly with you, though I don't propose to inquire into them too closely. Plainly the treasure is yours, if the house isn't, and this Arnold relative seems a good bit of a mucker who doesn't know how to play fair. You owe him something for those two underhand knock-outs. As you say, we'll see this through without the assistance of the police or lawyers."

Dellacross eyed me for a moment in silence.

"Whang, you're certainly the most trusting person I ever met," he said at length. "You believe implicitly all I've told you, though I can offer no proofs—nothing but this silver cross. You don't know my Cousin Arnold, yet you believe what I've said about him——"

"Because I know *you*," I returned, "and that's enough."

"Thanks," he said, with some emotion. "Everything I've told you is gospel truth, Whang, but you're about the only man who would believe me. It's agreed, then, that you help me out with this? You to receive an equal share of the treasure——"

"Not on your life!" I interrupted. "I only come in on the distinct understanding that I get nothing. Now there's no use talking," I added, as he began to expostulate, "for those are the only terms I'll consent to. I don't need money, and I'm not doing this thing for pay. I've been ordered away on a vacation, and a little diversion like this is just what I need."

And so, after some further expostulation and argument on Dellacross' part, the thing was settled.

"Now," said I. "let me understand the situation. Your Cousin Arnold

doesn't know you have this silver cross, or its significance?"

"No. He's hunting, you might say, blindfold. I'm quite sure he thinks I have a detailed plan, made by Miser Pierre, showing the location of the secret chamber. But if he ever set eyes on the silver cross he would have the intelligence to appreciate its meaning; he would be sure to see the significance between the lion's head it bears and the lion's head of the library mantelpiece. He would hit on the secret, just as I hit on it, for he's by no means a stupid man. Yes, he knows I have the talisman, but he doesn't know its identity."

"You said something about his being head of a criminal gang. What reason have you for thinking that?"

"Merely suspicion," replied my friend frankly. "Nothing but suspicion. But they will tell you, down at Crosshampton, that the Cross Mansion is a strange house which everybody avoids. My cousin doesn't mix with his neighbors, such as they are; and he has a name for surliness and eccentricity. He doesn't want any friends in the neighborhood, and has made them understand that. He doesn't do any work, yet always has plenty of money. Also his past, to my actual knowledge, has been shady, to say the least. He doesn't entertain, yet he has visitors—tough-looking specimens who come at night. The house is isolated and on the Sound, you know, and these visitors come in a motor boat. This I've observed for myself."

"Well," said I, rising, for it was drawing on toward eight o'clock, "I'll go down now to the settlement and make arrangements for a week's vacation. There are some things I must straighten out, but I'll be back about noon, and then we can discuss the line of campaign. For my part, I think the best thing to do is to demand your property from this fellow, and, if he puts up a kick, simply take it. But we can decide all that later."

"Meanwhile, Paul, you had better stay here; I don't think we were trailed last night, but it's just as well not to take chances, for from all you say of this Arnold Dellacross—— By the way, what is his right name?"

"Gage. He's known in Crossshampton as Arnold Gage. To me, of course, he calls himself Dellacross, though he has no right to the name."

"Well," said I, "he seems to be a person who will stop at nothing to gain his ends, so I wouldn't put it past him trying to spirit you off and then forcing the secret from you. For that reason I wouldn't leave these rooms until I return. You don't have to, do you?"

"Yes, I should. There are my diggings over on Third Avenue. I owe a week's rent, and, though I haven't many belongings——"

"I'll see about that," said I, taking down the address he gave me. "I'll bring your things here."

"You won't have much to carry," grinned my friend. "Just an old valise, a couple of shirts, some books and papers. To tell you the truth, Whang, if last night's business hadn't happened I'd have looked you up anyway and asked for temporary help, for I'd come about to the end of my tether. I suppose I'd better give you a note to the landlady, so she won't think you're trying to rob me of my valuable estate."

He did so, and then, taking the little silver cross from his wallet, handed it to me. "I want you to keep it," he said earnestly. "It will be far safer with you."

"I don't know about that," I demurred. "Why not leave it here? You won't be leaving these rooms——"

"It doesn't matter, Whang. I don't want it on the premises?"

"Why?"

He shrugged. "It's safer, that's all. Please keep it, for you're far better able to guard it than I. They'd think twice

about tackling a man your size, even if they knew you had it."

So I yielded, placing the silver cross in my wallet, though I considered it a purely unnecessary precaution. It seemed clear, however, that Dellacross still entertained some suspicion of my servant Watkins, and that this had prompted his request.

As I was about to leave, my friend suddenly called me to the parlor windows which gave on the Madison Avenue side of the house. "Don't come any nearer!" he warned. "But take a good look at that Johnnie down there."

The aforesaid "Johnnie" was on the opposite corner, negligently leaning against a lamp-post and reading the morning paper, as if waiting for a car. He was medium sized, neatly dressed, and wore a gray slouch hat. As I looked, he glanced up—his eyes seeming to rest on the window where we stood—and I saw he wore a black Vandyke beard and that his face was swarthy.

"That's my friend the Spaniard," said Dellacross composedly. "The beard and mustache are false. He is one of the men I've seen with the Woman in Black; one of the men who visits my cousin by motor boat. Without that beard and mustache you might also identify him as one of the two men who attacked me last night."

"No," said I, "it was too dark for me to see faces, and I didn't even recognize you until I struck a match. It would seem, then, we were followed here last night?"

Dellacross nodded. "I thought as much. They're a pretty slick bunch, all right. That fellow thinks I don't know him with the chin creepers, and he's waiting to get a line on you. I dare say he's pumped the desk clerk dry and has found out all about you and what you look like."

"Well," said I, "I'll give him a chance to find out for himself. I'll make no attempt to dodge him, so you just watch

and see if he follows me. I'll be back about noon."

"All right," said my friend; "but, remember, be careful, Whang. You can't be too careful. Give that fellow the slip if he tries to tail you."

So I left the Gresham, quite elated at finding myself in the middle of a real, sure-enough adventure, yet thinking regretfully that so far as mystery was concerned Dellacross' remarkable story had revealed all there was to know. Little did I suspect that the mystery surrounding the silver cross had, in fact, only begun.

CHAPTER VII.

WHICH RECORDS BRIEFLY SOME INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS.

My newly acquired friend, the Spaniard, did not follow me—or else followed so cleverly as to frustrate all my attempts at detection. En route to the subway I passed him closely by design, but he never so much as raised his eyes from the newspaper, and seemed indeed oblivious of my existence. The last I saw of him as I turned the corner he was still seemingly absorbed in his reading, and, until I returned and heard what Dellacross had to say, I wouldn't know if I had been followed. For certainly I saw neither hide nor hair of him during my trip downtown.

I got through my business at the settlement and then went up to Dellacross' "diggings" near Third Avenue and Fifteenth Street; they proved to be much better than I had expected, but he had not exaggerated about the extent of his "estate," it comprising little more than he had stated. There were many sheets of foolscap lying about, all scribbled over in his sprawling hand, and these, with the books and shirts, I dumped into the old valise without giving them more than a passing glance.

The landlady, a hard-worked creature who evidently had seen better days,

was relieved at receiving the back rent, and I suspected she thought my friend had left her in the lurch.

"Mr. Dellacross won't be back, sir?" she asked. And on my replying in the negative, she added: "There was a party here this mornin' askin' for him; she wouldn't leave no name."

"Oh, a lady, then? What did she look like?"

"She was a blonde, and dressed real quiet in black. She wanted to know when Mr. Dellacross would be back, an' of course I couldn't tell her. Then she asked my leave to go into his room."

"To go into his room?" I echoed, with assumed indifference.

"Yes, she says she was an old friend of Mr. Dellacross, an' that she'd loaned him a book she wanted to have back, an' so if I wouldn't mind she'd see if it was in his room, for it had to be returned that mornin'. A nice, respectable girl she looked, but I knows things ain't always what they seem in this world, an' so I told her the door was locked an' that no one could get in it unless they was to bring a written word from Mr. Dellacross himself. She seemed real put out, but there was no movin' me, an' so she went away without the book. So you'll tell Mr. Dellacross about the book, sir, an' that I'm real sorry if I disoblged the lady, but that rules is rules."

Here, then, thought I, was another bold move on the part of our adversaries; another proof of activity on the part of the mysterious Woman in Black. From one experience they had reason to believe that my friend might not carry the silver cross on his person, and so, while one of the party watched the Gresham, the woman had taken advantage of his known absence to attempt a search of his rooms. Only the landlady's city-bred sharpness had blocked the attempt.

When I returned to the Gresham, the Spaniard had disappeared, and I saw

no one whom I could imagine as keeping an eye on the premises. This, perhaps, was explained when I learned, to my astonishment, that, contrary to my advice and our understanding, Dellacross had left the apartment.

"He went out, sir," said Watkins, "about half an hour after you, sir."

"Did he say where he was going? When he would return?"

"No, sir. Just walked out and never said a word."

Now, owing to the law of compensation, I suppose, I have one very keen faculty, however deficient my others may be, and this is a highly sensitive olfactory nerve. I believe I can smell a smell farther and longer than any man living. I do not boast about this. It's not an enviable gift, and has caused me annoyance, for often I've been offended by odors of which other people seemed oblivious.

I was talking to Watkins in the little parlor, and since entering the room I had become aware of a very vague, indefinite odor entirely foreign to the place. I believe a philosopher has said that memory is greatly a matter of smell; so, at least, it now proved in my case. My mind suddenly leaped back to the previous night, when I sat in Madison Square and inhaled that Hungarian perfume wafted by the Woman in Black; the woman who had subsequently dropped her handkerchief.

Now it was a common enough perfume, so popular, in fact, that in the feminine world it had become something of a rage; yet I think, from all the surrounding circumstances, I was justified in believing that the mysterious Woman in Black, as Dellacross called her, had been actually in that room, and not long before my arrival. Here I made another discovery: the perfume came from the perfect serving man. There could be no mistake about it.

"Since when, Watkins, have you taken to using perfumes?" I asked.

"Perfumes, sir?" he echoed, looking particularly blank.

"Yes, perfume. Don't you smell it?"

"No, sir," he replied, sniffing energetically. "I'm sure I can't say that I do, sir."

"Then you should see a doctor about your nose," I remarked. "You really should, Watkins. That handkerchief which the lady dropped and which is now in your pocket, by the way, is very eloquent. Who was she? Did she want to see Mr. Dellacross?"

My deduction, simple as it was, appeared to disconcert the perfect servant for a moment. "No, sir," he replied at length. "She was a book agent, but she fooled me completely by asking for you, sir. I wouldn't have let her in, you may be sure, if I'd known her business. And you're quite right about the handkerchief, sir, though I'm blessed how you smelled it. I found it in the hall after she'd gone. Here it is, sir."

It proved to be the stereotyped scrap of cambric, wholly inadequate, one would think, bearing a daintily embroidered initial "C."

"When did this woman come?" I asked. "Before Mr. Dellacross left?"

"No, sir; about fifteen minutes ago."

"Was she alone in these rooms at any time?"

"No, sir."

"What did she look like?"

Watkins hesitated. "I'm afraid I can't rightly say, sir. She had dark hair and eyes, and wore light clothes—gray, I should say, sir."

I can't say, despite Dellacross' attitude, that I suspected Watkins of being mixed up in the mystery of the silver cross, yet I now felt that, purposely or otherwise, he had given me a totally erroneous description of the visitor's appearance. I was quite sure she was the Woman in Black, but I said nothing of what I thought.

I was puzzled and a bit worried by

Dellacross' unexplained absence, for which I advanced half a dozen theories that I needn't set down here. I expected him to return at any moment, and so set myself to wait as patiently as I could. The day, however, passed uneventfully, and my impatience increased in ratio. Where had he gone? What could be keeping him? My worry and restlessness seemed to have communicated themselves to Watkins, for he was in and out the room half a dozen times under one excuse or another. More than once, too, I caught him looking at me in a strange sort of way, but perhaps this was only imagination, for I was beginning to imagine many things.

Then, toward evening, I made a discovery which tended to increase rather than allay my perturbation. I had put on my smoking jacket, and, happening to place a hand in the side pocket, my fingers encountered a scrap of paper pinned to the lining. This, on investigation, proved to be a scribbled note from Dellacross, which ran:

I'm placing this here where I know you'll be sure to find it—you and none other. A startling and unexpected development has called me away which I can't and dare not explain here. Will return to-night unless forcibly detained. I warn you again about your man Watkins. He is not to be trusted for a moment. Arnold Gage had ample time to learn that I knew you, conjecture I would seek your help, and place a man here as a spy. Will convince you of Watkins' duplicity when I return to-night. Hastily,

PAUL DELLACROSS.

There was no mention of the Spaniard, so I was still in ignorance whether or not I'd been followed that morning. Evidently far weightier matters had wiped the other from Dellacross' mind, but what these could be it was useless to conjecture. I could do nothing but await his return.

After supper, which I delayed considerably against my friend's return, Watkins asked if he might go out for an hour or so. It was not his usual night

off, and, my suspicions awakened against my will—for I knew Dellacross to be no fool, and his last statement concerning Watkins was enough to shake the confidence of the most trusting—I asked him why he couldn't wait until his usual night. He replied that he was suffering from toothache and was going to have it pulled at one of the "dental emporiums" that do business until midnight. So I gave permission, deciding I would follow him and test his veracity, as I suspected he had no more toothache than myself.

He left by the employees' gate, I watching from the main entrance. I didn't fancy this spying business, but felt that circumstances demanded it, for I must know if, as Dellacross claimed, we had an enemy in the camp.

I flatter myself I carried out the shadowing program extremely well considering my bulk and inexperience. Watkins, I know, never knew he was being followed, and I tailed him up Fourth Avenue, where he met a woman, evidently by appointment. They were not lovers; Watkins' age precluded that, and, moreover, there was a subtle deference in his greeting for all that they seemed to know each other pretty well. I daren't come near enough to have a good look at his companion, but I saw, nevertheless, that, in the words of the landlady, she was a "blonde and dressed real quiet in black." I followed them over to Madison Square, where they took a seat in the park, and appeared to have a good deal to say to each other.

I would have given something to find out who the woman was and where she lived, but I knew it would be folly to hang about until they had finished their chat, thus inviting detection. Besides, I was satisfied that Dellacross must now have returned, and I was on fire with impatience to hear what he had to say. So I returned to the Gresham, satisfied at least that Watkins had lied to me. I meant to tax him with it on his return

and have the matter out, but little did I think what was to happen.

Not only did Dellacross fail to put in an appearance that night, but Watkins likewise. I sat up until, some time after four, I fell asleep from sheer exhaustion, and, on awaking the next morning, my feelings can be better imagined than described when the truth was forced home that not only had my friend disappeared mysteriously, but my servant, too. I now bitterly regretted returning home the previous evening instead of following Watkins and the woman. I had had the chance of learning something about her, and had permitted it to slip through my fingers. I felt somehow that she was at the bottom of the whole mystery.

The day dragged on without event, and I needn't attempt to describe my state of mind; one phrase in Dellacross' letter kept recurring to me: "Will return to-night, if not forcibly detained." There was something sinister about that. Who would attempt to forcibly detain him but his pseudo cousin, Arnold Gage? Why should he expect to be forcibly detained? Twenty-four hours had passed and he had not returned; therefore he must be forcibly detained. There seemed to me but the one answer: Dellacross had either gone voluntarily for some imperative reason to the Cross Mansion, or been decoyed there. Perhaps at that moment measures were being taken to force from him the secret of Miser Pierre's Hoard while I remained impotent, enmeshed in ignorance. One thing, however, I could do: I could find out, by inquiring at the hospitals, if my friend was the victim of an accident, and thus by the process of elimination narrow down the field of his probable whereabouts.

So I spent the greater part of that night inquiring for my friend Paul Dellacross, but neither police nor hospital authorities knew anything about him.

Early the following morning, forty-

eight hours after his disappearance, I packed my bag and painting kit and set out for the little village of Crosshampton. I don't know what others, placed in similar circumstances, would have done, but that's what I did.

CHAPTER VIII.

I ARRIVE IN CROSSHAMPTON, AND AM MORE MYSTIFIED THAN EVER.

Crosshampton, of which I'd never heard until Dellacross spoke of it, proved to be a typical little Long Island town whose existence depends mainly on summer visitors, it being a shore resort in a very modest way. There was a life-saving station, a humble post office and general store on the inevitable Main Street, a stereotyped little board walk, pavilion, and bathing houses, and that was about all, with the exception of unlimited sand dunes, beach, and water, together with an all-pervading smell from the fishing nets drying in the sun. The small permanent population got its living from the sea and from running boarding houses; and the season, such as it was, being yet a month off, the place was forlorn and God-forsaken. I think a summer resort out of season takes a lot of beating in the way of loneliness.

News travels fast in such a place, and I thought it just as well to say my name was Brown, an artist by profession, and that I was thinking of taking a cottage for the summer if I could find a suitable one. I've been a bit of a dauber all my life, and thus was able in a measure to sustain the rôle—at least before the eyes of such art critics as Crosshampton might contain.

I had heard nothing further of Watkins, and was satisfied that he had left my employment, though I was unable to quite make up my mind as to his part in the silver-cross business. Despite circumstantial evidence, I could not wholly overcome my original belief

in his worthiness of character. Yet at the same time I didn't want him following me, and so had left no address at the Gresham; I didn't want it known where I had gone, and by telephonic inquiry I could learn from the Gresham if Dellacross happened to show up, though I was reasonably certain he had been made prisoner in the Cross Mansion. Whether or not this was true it was my business to find out.

I had no definite plan of campaign, relying rather on chance and circumstance to point the way. Clearly enough going to the house and inquiring boldly for Dellacross would be nonsense, for that would merely expose my hand and gain nothing but a flat denial. I didn't know positively if Dellacross was there, and until I did, an appeal to brute force or the law would be useless. I thought the situation demanded guile and cunning, and for this reason I said my name was Brown, my profession that of an artist, for in such a rôle I could reconnoiter the Cross Mansion and possibly even meet Arnold Gage himself without arousing suspicion.

Crosshampton has no hotels, and, the more ambitious sort of boarding houses being closed, I found quarters with a Mrs. Ryan, the widow of a fisherman. She was having a hard enough time to make both ends meet, and I learned that the neighbors, wishing to help her along, always recommended out-of-season visitors to her place. I found her a prim, careworn little body, very anxious to please and more than willing to talk. I suppose she was lonely, poor soul, living, as she did, a solitary existence; and she rose readily, even voraciously, to my conversational bait. For I lost no time in inquiring casually about the various local "beauty spots," adding, quite untruthfully, that I had heard the Cross Mansion, on Sands' Point, was worth the painting.

"Yes?" said Mrs. Ryan skeptically. "Well, I should say the house itself

needs a good coat of paint, for it ain't been done over for years. It's terrible wild and lonely out there by Sands' Point, and they do say the house is haunted. I could never understand myself what some folks see in old tumble-down houses, but there's them that just dotes on 'em. There was a boarder I had—a young gentleman like yourself, sir—who was forever wandering off to Sands' Point and looking at that old house as if it was a statue of George Washington. I'm blessed if I know what he saw in it, for he wasn't a painter like you, sir."

"Perhaps its historical value interested him," I suggested. "The house is very old, isn't it?"

Mrs. Ryan shrugged. "I dare say; it looks old enough for anything. I ain't lived here but a few years, but I've heard tell something about a treasure one of the Cross folks buried there years back, and they do say the ghost of the man who buried it haunts the place—keeps looking for it, you know. I guess he'll be the only one to find it."

She laughed, then added, more seriously: "Anyway, Mr. Brown, you'll find many a prettier place than Sands' Point; places folks'll be glad to let you paint for the asking. That's more'n I can say about the party now living in the Cross Mansion." Then she told me his name was Arnold Gage, and that he was a surly, ill-tempered fellow who permitted no trespassing.

"We hardly ever see him except when he comes into town," she added, "and nobody knows much about him except that he lives there with a foreign-looking man—a Spaniard or Italian, I suppose—and another man with a scar on his face. None of 'em is neighborly, and so mean spirited that I don't think you'll get permission to paint the house. I know they didn't want Mr. Dellacross hanging round, and ordered him off, you might say."

The mention of my friend's name was

surprising, the coincidence in itself sufficiently astonishing; yet, thinking it over, it was but natural I should now find myself actually in the house where Dellacross had stayed; for, as I've explained, the town made it a point of recommending out-of-season visitors to Mrs. Ryan's.

"Mr. Dellacross was your boarder?"

"Yes," replied the landlady. "He came down here for his health—and very poorly he looked, I must say. I'm sure if he had stayed long enough the sea air and good, plain food would have made him all right. He looked worn out."

"Perhaps he'll return," I suggested. It was quite clear if he was in Crosshampton Mrs. Ryan had not seen him.

I inquired further concerning the tenants of the Cross Mansion, asking if Mr. Gage were married. For I wanted to hear something of the Woman in Black.

To my surprise, Mrs. Ryan informed me that so far as she knew there was no woman in the establishment. "Mr. Gage is a widower, I guess, and has a son. But nobody has seen a woman about the place—not even a servant."

She added another surprising statement—that the house had only been occupied about a month. "It was vacant for years, and folks thought it would be rebuilt and turned into a boarding house if anybody ever took it."

Here Mrs. Ryan, who was seated at the little front-parlor window commanding Main Street—her favorite post of vantage, as I learned later—suddenly interrupted herself to exclaim: "Well, talk about the devil! Here comes Mr. Gage himself and his scar-faced friend. They're going to the post office for their mail and groceries. Yes, they do all their own marketing, you know, and come in for their letters, so there's no excuse, you see, for anybody to visit them. Well, nobody wants to, I'm sure, and they may be as stand-

offish as they like. Much good may it do them."

I rose with assumed indifference and looked over Mrs. Ryan's shoulder, through the drawn curtains, in time to see a weather-beaten vehicle pass, drawn by a gloomy, venerable quadruped. The man nearest me had a shoe-string mustache and an inflamed scar on his right cheek; he was a big, ill-favored-looking brute, neither too clean nor well dressed. Arnold Gage was driving, and proved to be entirely different from the mental picture I had conceived of him. I must say that for a first-class villain he was a distinct disappointment, for I had expected an imposing sort of man in every way, with ample outward testimony of his subtlety and force of character. Instead I found myself looking at a shabby, undersized creature, sallow, chinless, and, to all appearance, spineless. He had a week's growth of stubbly beard, and sat hunched over the dashboard, the lines hanging listlessly in his hands.

Between these two men sat a boy, clacking at the horse, and, whip in hand, trying to stimulate its gait. He was a smutty-faced youngster, dressed in faded blue overalls and quite as dirty and ill-favored looking as his companions. In short, it was not an imposing outfit, but one such as is seen in any country town.

"Are you sure that's Mr. Gage?" I asked, as they drove out of sight.

"Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Ryan, "that's him, all right. Why?"

"Oh, I only thought a different sort of man than that lived at the Cross Mansion. That fellow doesn't look as if he had two pennies to rub together."

"I wouldn't be surprised if he hadn't," replied the landlady. "Wait till you see the Cross Mansion; the name's the best thing about it. Nobody would live there if they could afford anything better. No, Mr. Gage isn't

what you'd call rich; you can see that for yourself."

Needless to say, I didn't know what to make of all Mrs. Ryan had told me, for many facts did not fit in with Dellacross' story. True, Mrs. Ryan had not lived long in Crosshampton, but she was the kind to make herself familiar with local affairs and to know what she was talking about. If, as she stated, the Cross Mansion had only been occupied for about a month, what about Stewart Dellacross, or Gage, the beach comber, who had been killed by a cave-in while hunting for Miser Pierre's Hoard? Paul Dellacross stated emphatically that the Gage family had occupied the property when his own people went to Nebraska; he was a lad of twelve or thirteen at the time, and thus the Gages must have been in possession for about seventeen years. Of course, unknown to Paul, they might have leased the house, Arnold returning to it before my friend came East. Yet Mrs. Ryan spoke of it as a tumble-down, no-account place, vacant for years.

Delacross had also given me to understand that his pseudo cousin had "always plenty of money." Well, from what I had seen, he certainly didn't look it; that's all I could say. Neither had my friend mentioned anything about the dirty little boy I had seen. Where, also, was the old female servant who had shown him over the house? This certainly didn't agree with Mrs. Ryan's statement that there was no woman in the establishment—"not even a servant." If so, then where, in all this, did the Woman in Black fit in? It was certainly puzzling. Indeed, rather than experiencing regret, as I had done, that Dellacross' story explained away all the mystery connected with the silver cross, I began to think I was in as big a muddle as ever. Assuredly there were opposing facts whose truth or untruth I must find out for myself.

So that same day, after getting the

Gresham on the long-distance phone and learning that Dellacross had not shown up, I took my painting kit and set out for Sands' Point.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW I ENTERED THE CROSS MANSION, AND WHAT I FOUND THERE.

The Cross Mansion proved as great a disappointment as had Arnold Gage himself. I had expected to find age, but age with dignity and honor, as it were; while here there was nothing but a decayed and rickety dwelling; a neglected, ignoble, senile ruin. At some remote period the house had once been white, but now it was a filthy gray, scarred here and there with great brown patches where the original paint had blistered and peeled off under the constant attack of wind, sun, and rain. Several of the windows on the upper floor were broken, while amateur repair work was apparent in others. An unkempt garden, full of rubble and chickweed, encircled the place, and at the rear was an equally neglected stable where reposed, I suppose, the venerable horse and ramshackle vehicle I had seen in town that morning.

In fact, the whole ensemble bore out worthily the dirty and disreputable appearance of its inhabitants, and was a distinct shock to my sense of the romantic. The house should have been colonial with massive pillars and wide, noble spaces, but this showed no such thing; it bore instead the unmistakable stamp of the gingerbread, fretwork sort of architecture of the late seventies. If that house was over forty years old, then I knew nothing about houses. Certainly it was diametrically opposed to the idea Paul Dellacross had given me of it.

The house stood on a small eminence commanding the wide beach and Sands' Point, and it looked for all the world as if it had been dropped there by a ran-

dom hand anxious to get rid of it. The tide of progress and cultivation had receded or swept by, leaving it high and dry, for it was beyond the outskirts of Crosshampton, and over a mile, I'm sure, from its nearest neighbor. Truly a wild and lonely enough spot, as Mrs. Ryan had said, and I could not admire the taste of any ghost fool enough to haunt it.

I had found a sheltered nook commanding the house, and now, as I watched, the smutty-faced youngster suddenly appeared, hand in hand with the big, scar-faced man. They made their way down a flight of rickety wooden steps, running from the beach to the bank, and went over to a little cove near the Point, where a cruising power boat lay moored. It was dirty gray and shabby looking, like the house, but from its lines I imagined it capable of pretty good speed. The youngster and the man got aboard, the latter tinkering about the engine while the boy threw over a line and played at fishing.

Presently Arnold Gage, a couple of fishing rods over his shoulder, came out of the house and strolled down to the little jetty. He was followed by another man, sallow like himself, but taller and more rugged. Both got aboard the power boat, which presently put out, heading over in the direction of New London.

It was all very ordinary and commonplace, so commonplace that my sense of the romantic and adventurous received another shock. I had witnessed nothing more exciting than a prosaic family fishing party, and these supposed villains had not even bothered to lock the door behind them or leave one of their number on guard. For Mrs. Ryan had said there were but the three men in the establishment. Would they have acted thus if Paul Dellacross was kept prisoner in that house? Hardly. But I would soon find out, for I could not

ask a better opportunity for personal investigation.

So, waiting only until the power boat was well out on the Sound, I went boldly to the house, opened the front door, and walked in.

Inside it was all very shabby and dirty, the walls and floors being for the most part bare and the furniture consisting of the merest necessities. I hunted for the library, but there was none—no room I could imagine used as one; in fact, on the ground floor there was no sign of a stone fireplace, let alone the carved lion's head. The mantelpieces were of cherry and abominable in design, as I had expected. I went upstairs and found half the rooms barren of any furniture whatsoever. I opened every closet—none was locked—and sounded the walls and floors for a secret hiding place, but all to no purpose. Dellacross was certainly not there.

Finally I went down into the cellar and knocked about in the black bowels of the place until I was all dirt and sweat and strange oaths; I ransacked every nook and cranny, but neither hide nor hair of Paul Dellacross did I find. By this time I was thoroughly riled, as a man generally is when he discovers himself to be a first-class fool, for it certainly looked as if Dellacross had played a painfully elaborate joke on me. But in the name of common sense why? If his remarkable story of *Miser Pierre's Hoard* was nothing but fiction, why had he bothered to concoct it? And I couldn't believe it a lie when I thought of how circumstantially, with what fire and conviction he told it. Nor would its falseness explain his assault and all the other strange phases of the case. Yet there was no stone fireplace in this house, and no lion's head; that I had proved for myself. Could I be in the wrong house? Impossible! This was the Cross Mansion, the only house in the neighborhood

In the midst of these thoughts I was brought suddenly to a realization of my surroundings by a noise overhead—in the kitchen—which in the stillness of the place crashed out like a pistol shot. It seemed like a heavy chair being overturned, and was succeeded, after a moment's silence, by the muffled sound of cautious footsteps. Some one had entered the kitchen. Evidently the fishing party had returned in a hurry, while I imagined them to be over near the Connecticut shore. Thus I found myself well trapped, for there was no exit from the place but by the door opening into the kitchen. The cellar had but one small barred window, through which now came a gleam from the dying sun, and even if I succeeded in removing the bars there would be room for little more than my head.

It was hardly a gratifying situation to be in. What excuse could I offer for being on the premises, and in the cellar of all places? I remembered acutely that though Arnold Gage and his friends were in all likelihood innocent and law-abiding citizens, they had not shown any particular fondness for trespassers. There was a possible chance that if I waited long enough I might sneak out unobserved, but I thought the best and only thing to do was to brazen things out as best I could, relying on my painting kit—which I'd left in the kitchen—to support my rôle of harmless if inquisitive artist.

So, assuming a nonchalant air—which I was far from feeling—I walked up the stairs, threw open the door, and confronted, not Gage and his friends, but a woman.

She had hair like ripe wheat, and she wore a short and heavy walking skirt of some rough, dark material, stout boots, white sweater, and blue straw sailor hat—just the plain, sensible sort of rig for tramping about such country—and she was leaning against the table, her eyes on the cellar door, as if sud-

denly arrested by the sound of my approach.

Now I was wearing an old knock-about suit and flannel shirt which my grubbing in the cellar had by no means improved; I was not a pleasant-looking object—never what you'd call beautiful even in my most inspired moments—and certainly she hadn't expected me; yet she gave no sign of fear. For my part, I felt satisfied I had met at last with the mysterious Woman in Black, and that from the set of her firm little mouth and the whole alert, wide-awake impression conveyed by face and figure, she was a person not easily fooled or beaten. I fancied if she made her mind up about anything she'd come mighty near doing what she wanted or know the reason why.

So for a time we stared at each other in that gloomy kitchen, with its gathering shadows, while neither of us spoke. I took it for granted that Gage and her other friends weren't far off, if not actually in the house.

She was the first to speak, making a little deprecating gesture of apology. "I'm awfully sorry," she said, with a very winning smile and manner. "I didn't know anybody lived here. I thought the place was vacant. You'll excuse me, won't you?"

This unexpected greeting rather took my wind for a moment, and I stared the harder, looking, I am sure, even more stupid than I am. And I suppose my silence and concentrated stare got on her nerves, for she darted a quick glance at the open door leading into the front hall, as if calculating her chances of a sudden escape. She tried hard not to show fright, but I saw her eyes darken, her lips begin to tremble. Certainly if she had no connection with Gage and the others, but had entered the house in all innocence, as she claimed, the situation was enough to make any woman a bit nervous; the loneliness of

the place, my rough looks and forbidding silence, the coming night.

Evidently she thought I hadn't understood or didn't believe what she had said, for she added tremulously: "I really thought the place was vacant, otherwise I wouldn't have entered, of course. I hope you understand and forgive the mistake, sir."

"Why, with all the pleasure in the world," said I cheerfully, finding my tongue at last. "You see, I've no business here, either."

She paused halfway to the door, turning and staring at me. "You—you mean you don't live here?"

"No. Like yourself, I thought the place empty, and, being very inquisitive by nature, I simply marched in. I thought *you* were the owner, and I was wondering how best to apologize when you did it for me."

She gave me another long look, and then, as if in a measure satisfied and relieved, pointed to my painting kit which now lay on the floor. "Is that yours?" she asked, with a shy smile. "If so, then I do owe you an apology, after all, for I accidentally knocked it off the table. I hope I haven't broken anything."

"There's nothing in it worth breaking," I replied, lifting the heavy kit by its straps and slinging it over my shoulder. "Permit me to introduce myself; my name is Brown, and I'm an artist. I came out here to sketch, and stumbled on this old house."

"Then you are staying at Crosshampton, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Is it possible, Mr. Brown, that you are Mrs. Ryan's other boarder?"

"Quite possible, Miss——"

"Everton," she supplemented frankly. Whereupon we exchanged formal bows. Then a dimple appeared at the corner of her mouth.

"I arrived at Mrs. Ryan's this afternoon," she said. "It seems to be the

only place open at this time of the year. I heard of you, Mr. Brown, from our landlady, but I'd no idea we were to meet quite so soon or in such a way. I suppose you heard of this house from Mrs. Ryan?"

"Did *you*?" I parried.

She looked rather confused for a moment, and I added: "Yes, I heard about it from Mrs. Ryan, and so may as well confess that I knew people lived here. But I heard also the place was haunted, and, as I'm awfully keen on ghosts and all that sort of thing, I took the chance of butting in when I found the door open and no one at home. Of course, it was a scandalous bit of trespassing, and I've no decent excuse to offer——"

"Neither have I," she laughed. "I, too, found the door open, and walked in. And—to be as truthful as you, Mr. Brown—I knew people lived here, for Mrs. Ryan told me all about it. You see, I also happen to be very inquisitive by nature. It would have served me right if you had happened to be the owner."

"I can say the same. And now that we've apologized fully to each other, if not the tenants, I suppose we'd better clear out before they return."

She nodded briskly. "No doubt this will be a much needed lesson to us, Mr. Brown. You don't know how I felt when I heard you coming up those stairs."

"And you don't know how *I* felt when this painting box dropped over my head. I think we're quits, Miss Everton."

So we left the house together, and, as I glanced back before taking the turn that led to Crosshampton, I saw the dirty gray power boat making in toward the cove. We hadn't left any too soon.

Of course, I was puzzled by Miss Everton, for I didn't believe that idle curiosity had brought her to the Cross Mansion any more than it had myself, though her explanation seemed entirely

probable. On her part, I think she was a bit skeptical of the story I had told, for presently she said, with a little side-long, speculating glance: "But what were you doing in the cellar, of all places, Mr. Brown?"

"Oh, just looking round."

"Why, are you so fond of cellars?"

"No more than you are of kitchens."

She eyed me again, and then laughed. "Rather a coincidence, by the way, that both of us should be interested in haunted houses, isn't it? But then I suppose most every one is. Did Mrs. Ryan tell you about the buried treasure and the ghost, they say, that looks for it? Perhaps you were hunting for the treasure in the cellar, Mr. Brown?"

"Perhaps, Miss Everton. I confess it would come in mighty handy for a poor artist. You didn't happen to run across it in the kitchen?"

She looked at me reproachfully. "I really believe, Mr. Brown, you think I haven't been telling you the truth, and that I entered the house for some reason other than the one I've stated."

"Why, what other reason could there be? Or is that just a gentle way of saying you think I was down in the cellar cutting the lead pipe?"

"Well, I've always heard that a poor artist is capable of about anything," she remarked, with perfect gravity. "Really it puzzles me why you were in the cellar. You see, it happens that I'm also a very inquisitive sort of person, Mr. Brown; quite as inquisitive as yourself, I'm sure. I want a logical explanation for everything."

"Then, if you must know, I'll tell you. I happened to be in the cellar because it was the only part of the house I hadn't been in."

She eyed me with mock dismay. "I rather admire your thorough way of doing things—even trespassing," she said dryly. "I thought I had exceeded all limits by looking through the few rooms on the first floor, but my achieve-

ment is humiliatingly modest compared with your own. I wonder how you acquired such unparalleled impudence, Mr. Brown?"

"Why, it's a gift," I admitted. "I come of an impudent family. My father was a book agent—a successful one."

"I can quite believe it," said Miss Everton. "And so you actually went through the whole house? I suppose you poked into every nook and corner?"

"Certainly. Then, as a last resort, I went down into the cellar. That's the simple, logical explanation. Are you satisfied?"

Miss Everton shook her golden head. "I'm rather afraid you're laughing at me, Mr. Brown. Did you honestly and truly search the place from top to bottom?"

"Well, I don't know if I did it honestly——"

"And you found nothing?"

"Nothing. What did you expect me to find?"

"Why, the ghost's treasure, of course! And did you look in the barn, too?"

"Why, no. To tell you the truth, I never thought about the barn."

"Then," she laughed, "you must look there, by all means. If it's not in the house, it must be in the barn. I'm sure you'll find it there, Mr. Brown."

"Yes," I echoed, in the same spirit of raillery, yet thinking somehow of Paul Dellacross, "if it exists at all, it certainly must be in the barn, for it isn't in the house. I must look in the barn."

"Do," encouraged Miss Everton, "for otherwise your trespassing won't be complete."

We reached Crosshampton without incident, and I did not see my new acquaintance again that night.

Mrs. Ryan evidently thought it her duty to entertain me while I dined in solitary state, for she came in with her sewing and began asking questions—

her idea of entertainment. How had I happened to meet Miss Everton? Had I known her in New York? Had I any idea what brought her to Crosshampton? Didn't she seem a person without much means? Did I know if she was going to open a boarding house?

When I gave Mrs. Ryan to understand, as politely as I could, that it was none of my business what Miss Everton intended doing, she sighed resignedly and turned the attack on myself. Had I gone to Sands' Point? Had I found anything suitable to paint? Had I met Mr. Gage, and, if so, were those other two men his brothers?

Then in the midst of her garrulity, Mrs. Ryan suddenly startled me by saying: "You know that other boarder—Mr. Dellacross—I was telling you about this morning? You said maybe he'd come back again, and I says no, for I hadn't seen him. Well, it's a funny thing, Mr. Brown, but you was right, after all, for I've just heard tell over to the post office that he was seen in town the night before last."

"Then he's stopping in town?"

"No, he ain't," replied Mrs. Ryan. "Leastways nobody seems to know what become of him. They thought he was stopping over to my house. He must have gone back to New York."

So I phoned the Gresham again, and the now monotonous answer came back that neither Dellacross nor my servant had been heard from. By guarded inquiries at the post office I also found corroboration of Mrs. Ryan's gossip. Dellacross had been seen two nights ago, but not since.

I fell asleep that night while trying to puzzle things out—my first normal, unbroken sleep in weeks. At least that was one thing I had gained by coming to Crosshampton. I fell asleep with the resolve that I would make a search of the barn at the Cross Mansion, and, that finished, return to New York convinced against my will that I had been

the victim of an elaborate hoax. I would search the barn, not because I really expected to find anything, but because somehow Miss Everton's ironical words rankled.

Thus passed my first day in Crosshampton. I had accomplished nothing, you might say; but it must be remembered that I'm not a clever man. I hadn't the faintest suspicion of the truth.

CHAPTER X.

A FRIVOLOUS CHAPTER WHICH ENDS SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.

I had completed what I considered a very fair charcoal sketch of the Cross Mansion, and was beginning to slap on color when the bushes at my back parted and Miss Everton stepped daintily into the little sun-flecked clearing.

"Why, Mr. Brown!" she exclaimed, in affected surprise. "So this is where you've been all day?"

"Yes. Were you looking for me?"

Miss Everton sighed. "How impertinent you are! But then I must remember you belong to an impudent family. Do I intrude?"

"Not in the least."

So, book in hand, she came over to the easel and squinted critically at my masterpiece. "Is that a house?" she asked naïvely at length.

"It is. If you stoop and look through that opening on your right, you'll see below you the Cross Mansion. That's the house I'm painting."

"Why, so it is!" she exclaimed, following my directions. "What a delightfully secluded spot this is, Mr. Brown! You can see without being seen, can't you? How did you happen to find such a place?"

"Necessity, Miss Everton. Aside from my native modesty about painting in public, the people who own this land would kick me off if they knew I was here—so Mrs. Ryan assured me."

"You mean Mr. Gage and his friends?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm sure I don't blame you for wishing to paint in private, anyway," said Miss Everton sympathetically, taking another squint at my masterpiece. "Oh, if I could only paint like that, Mr. Brown, I'd be quite willing to die—even anxious!"

"I don't think it very nice of you to come all the way out here just to make fun of me," I complained. "It's really a very fine picture, whether you know it or not."

"I didn't mean to make fun," she said contritely. "Really I didn't. You mustn't mind what I say, for I never could make head or tail of cubist or futurist pictures. Oh, I'm so sorry! Have I offended again?"

"Not at all. Only it happens, you see, I'm neither a cubist nor futurist. This is a perfectly normal, healthy, everyday house; it's not a symbol, but the thing itself. I'm astonished that you can't see that it's a house."

"Well," said Miss Everton meekly, "I'll take your word for it. But tell me, Mr. Brown, does any one ever really *buy* your pictures—pay real money for them?"

"God forbid! I give them away. A sort of harmless, eccentric hobby."

"I thought so," she exclaimed, nodding wisely. "No wonder, then, you were after the lead pipe in the cellar. One must live. And so I think it my duty as an honest, law-abiding citizen, to mount guard and see that you don't go after the rest of the lead pipe. I wouldn't like to see you in prison, Mr. Brown; it's hard on fat men."

I let the calumny on my displacement pass unchallenged, and Miss Everton, without more ado, calmly sat down, leaned against a tree, and stared through the foliage at the Cross Mansion. She made a charming picture, by the way.

"So you suspect me of being a male-

factor?" I said. "Instinct or just personal appearance?"

"A little of both, Mr. Brown—though I must say you look cleaner than when you came out of the cellar."

"I am cleaner," I assured her. "And this is a better coat I've got on, too; one of my best, in fact. I knew you'd follow me out here, and I wanted to look nice."

She laughed, but a splash of red showed in her cheek. "It's such a handicap to talk with a person who comes of an impudent family," she sighed. "How dare you say I followed you here? How ridiculous! How absurd——"

"And how truthful, Miss Everton! I heard you following half a mile back. Not that my personal beauty lured you. I'm a modest man, Miss Everton——"

"You are the most impudent I ever met, Mr. Brown."

So for a while there was silence while I slapped on more color, and Miss Everton professed great interest in her book.

"Anyhow," she said, quite suddenly and irrelevantly at length, "you must admit you're not a professional artist at all, and that you paint very badly. Also that you've made your execrable painting an excuse for hiding here and watching the Cross Mansion."

"Therefore, suspecting this, you decided to follow me?"

"I didn't follow you," she said, almost violently. "Not purposely. It was a pure accident." But she would not meet my benign gaze.

"Well," said I, "anyhow, it turns out that your suspicions are quite correct, for I am watching that house. And here's what's happened so far: Mr. Gage and his little son—if the boy is his son—have gone out fishing in the power boat—that small speck over toward New London is the boat. The other two men are still in the house, and I'm waiting patiently for them to leave; they will leave soon, for I've seen

them over in the barn hitching up the venerable steed and antiquated vehicle. When they do go, I intend searching the barn according to your suggestion."

"I never suggested anything of the kind!" protested Miss Everton. "It was nothing but sarcasm, which evidently was entirely lost on you. I never thought you would have the impudence to do it. And what do you expect to find in the barn?"

"Why, the ghost's treasure. As you pointed out, one must live."

Her eyes danced. "I wonder you haven't tried selling books like your father; I'm sure you would have made an enormous success, Mr. Brown. Your impudence is most amusing, and I propose to stay here and see if you really are going to do as you say. Then I suppose it will be my painful duty to inform the police force—if there is such a thing in Crosshampton."

"There is. He's the brother of the postmaster—so Mrs. Ryan says. But I ask you to remember that you're something of a housebreaker yourself, and that fat men aren't the only people who suffer in jail."

She made a little gesture of resignation. "I am properly intimidated, sir, and so, against my scruples, remember, consider me your partner in the coming enterprise. I stipulate, however, that one-half the ghost's treasure shall be mine, for I, too, must live. Is it agreed?"

"It is agreed."

"Good!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands. "I'm beginning to feel quite excited. I hope those men will hurry up and go. You've quite infected me with the trespassing spirit, Mr. Brown."

Now at this precise moment a pesky little bug of some sort flew into my eye—from such small things do great events spring—and, as I took out my handkerchief to wipe the inflamed optic, another but smaller piece of cambric dropped to the ground at Miss Ever-

ton's feet. I had on the suit I'd worn last in New York, and this second handkerchief was the one given to me by Watkins and which I'd placed in the pocket of the coat and forgotten until that moment.

Miss Everton picked it up casually, started perceptibly, shot me a strange, quick glance, bit her lip, lost color, and then laughed nervously.

"Fie, Mr. Brown! A lady's handkerchief! Or—your humble pardon—perhaps it's your wife's?"

"No, I'm not married. But perhaps it belongs to another man's wife."

"You mean you don't know the owner? You found it?"

"No, it was given to me."

She shot me another glance. "It's rather a coincidence," she said slowly, examining the handkerchief, "but this initial stands for my name—Constance."

"Constance is a very nice name. I've always liked it."

"I haven't asked your opinion, Mr. Brown."

"It's also rather a coincidence," I continued, "that its owner should use the same perfume as yourself—that Hungarian one."

"Oh, there's nothing very singular in that," said she, "for nine women out of ten use it. It's very popular for the moment. Still I am almost sure that this is my handkerchief, so would you mind telling me how it came into your possession?"

"Not at all. One must live, and handkerchiefs are quite as marketable as lead pipe. You said a poor artist was capable of anything, so I picked your pocket while you were making fun of my drawing."

She made a hasty and successful canvass of her person, bringing to light a handkerchief the counterpart of the other. "Come, Mr. Brown, please tell me the truth," she pleaded. "Where did you get it?"

"Why, from my servant Watkins," said I. "You dropped it the other day when you were in my apartments at the Gresham."

Constance Everton drew in her breath sharply. "Ah, I thought so! Then your name is Mr. McDowell, and—and you are the friend of Mr. Dellacross?"

"Exactly. You see, I've decided to be quite frank with you, Miss Everton. And now perhaps you will tell what your interest is in this mixed-up business of the silver cross. I thought at first you were identified with Arnold Gage and the rest——"

"Aren't *you*?" she asked swiftly.

"I? Certainly not!"

"But you are Mr. Dellacross' friend!"

"Look here, Miss Everton, I'm not a clever sort, you know, and I'm in an awful muddle about this thing. I ask you to help me out, for my instinct—I have to use that instead of brains—tells me you're far from being the sort of person I thought you. I feel we've been playing at cross-purposes, and that it's time we came to an understanding. I'll be perfectly frank with you. Will you be so with me?"

She eyed me steadily for a long moment, and then nodded.

"Well, then," said I, "in the first place are you the person who waited for Mr. Dellacross the other night outside the Hoffman House and dropped your handkerchief as a signal to a couple of men who followed my friend, sand-bagged him, and attempted to rob him?"

"Most certainly not!" she exclaimed, fire in her eyes. "So *that's* the sort of person you think I am!"

"Please don't be angry, Miss Everton, for I'm only groping, you know, and I'll explain all about it later. I won't mind a bit, no matter what you thought I was——"

"But it's so extraordinary!" she protested. "Why should you accuse me of that?"

"Now wait a minute, please! In the second place, are you the person who went to Mr. Dellacross' boarding house and wanted to go into his room—ostensibly to look for a book?"

"I am," she replied, eying me defiantly.

"Good! Now, was the story about the book only an excuse?"

"It was."

"Didn't you hope to find the silver cross?"

"Certainly not! I simply went to Mr. Dellacross' boarding house and pretended to be an intimate friend in order to find out, if possible, if he had left the city and where he had gone. What good would the silver cross have done me?"

I stared. "Why, everything in the world, of course, seeing it's the key to Miser Pierre's Hoard."

It was her turn to stare. "What on earth do you mean, Mr. McDowell? Then you don't know the true meaning of that cross? Who it originally belonged to?"

"I know only what its owner, Mr. Dellacross, told me—that it is the key to treasure buried by his ancestor. What are you laughing at? I don't see anything funny in the situation, Miss Everton?"

"Forgive me," she gurgled. "You're quite right, Mr. McDowell; it's not a laughing matter," and her face became very grave. "The story told by your friend, Mr. Dellacross, is absolutely false, for the original owner of that silver cross was little Phyllis Somers who was kidnaped last month. That is the truth."

CHAPTER XI.

I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, IF NOT EVERYTHING.

I'm sure I stared in silence for full half a minute at Constance Everton while this astounding statement and all it must mean slowly soaked into my

intelligence department. I had almost forgotten the great kidnaping case quite aside from suspecting for a moment that I was actually involved in it. Finally I took out my wallet and produced the silver cross.

"You're quite sure about that?" I asked slowly. "There's no possibility of a mistake?"

She had taken the trinket eagerly, and was examining it minutely with shining eyes and labored breath. "There can be no mistake, Mr. McDowell!" she exclaimed. "Phyllis was wearing this the day she was kidnaped. This was a birthday present last year from her father; it was bought in Switzerland, and that lion's head is meant to represent the Lion of Lucerne. It was not a valuable gift, for she's only five years old, and, like most children, she's treated it very badly. Originally there was an imitation ruby held in the lion's jaws, but Phyllis soon knocked that out. I can identify every scratch, every dent, and tell you how they came there. You see," she finished, with compressed lips and a spot of crimson in her cheek, "I was her nurse-governess at that time, and I was discharged by Senator Somers, though I was in no way to blame. Your man Watkins was the butler, and he also was discharged without a character."

Like Saul of Tarsus, I saw a great light.

"I suppose Senator Somers was so frantic that he lost his head; at all events he acted most unjustly and cruelly," continued Miss Everton, her lip beginning to tremble. "He virtually accused Watkins and me of complicity in the kidnaping—I who loved Phyllis as my own! Watkins, who had been in his service for years! He even had us shadowed by private detectives, and only stopped when I threatened to complain to the police. Under such conditions you can imagine it was very hard to get another position—I haven't found

one yet. It was especially hard for Watkins, who had given the best years of his life in Senator Somers' service. It was unjust! It was cruel! And but for you, Mr. McDowell, Watkins could have starved to death and no one would have cared, Senator Somers least of all.

"I think," said I, "that before we go further I'd better give you my version of the silver cross—facts I'd every reason to believe were true." And so I told briefly about the assault upon Paul Dellacross and the strange story he had related to me while Miss Everton listened with wide-eyed, absorbed attention.

"You understand," I finished, "that I've known Paul Dellacross since we were at college, and that I'm willing to stake my life he's neither rogue nor fool. Besides, I've corroborated much of his story; that house there is the Cross Mansion, and Arnold Gage lives there with the scar-faced man and the Spaniard. All this is true, though I've searched the house from top to bottom and found neither stone mantelpiece nor lion's head. Also the legend of buried treasure is current in the neighborhood. If I've been the victim of an elaborate practical joke, how could Dellacross make up a story that's partly true in fact? Would that explain his interest in the Cross Mansion, when he was boarding at Mrs. Ryan's? And how did he come into possession of the silver cross?"

"Quite logically, if he had a hand in the kidnaping of Phyllis Somers—which seems to have been the case," replied Miss Everton.

"Impossible!" I exclaimed. "The idea is absurd. You don't know Paul Dellacross, but I do. He's the last man on earth to be involved in such a blackguardly business."

Constance Everton made a little gesture of conciliation. "Please don't be angry, Mr. McDowell. As you say, I

don't know your friend, and so I can only argue from the facts. And the facts are that your friend had the silver cross and that this cross was worn by Phyllis Somers the day she was kidnaped. Do you believe that, Mr. McDowell? Will you take my solemn word for it?"

"I cannot help doing so, Miss Everton. At the same time, I can't believe my friend involved in the kidnaping. When did you first learn he had the silver cross?"

"A few nights ago, in a cheap restaurant in Seventh Avenue—so that part of Mr. Dellacross' story is right, though if he was assaulted afterward by two men I know nothing about it. I don't see how he could have been assaulted after leaving the restaurant, for I followed him to his boarding house on Third Avenue."

She then explained that, having a seat near Dellacross in the restaurant and happening to glance in the mirror, she saw him take the silver cross from his wallet.

"You understand," she added earnestly, "that the whole thing was pure accident; I didn't follow him into the restaurant nor take a seat near him purposely, nor had I ever seen him before until that moment. I simply happened to see a total stranger surreptitiously examining a trinket which I believed to be the one worn by Phyllis Somers, and I naturally inferred he was one of the kidnapers. You can readily understand that ever since the disappearance of Phyllis I'd been making vain efforts to find some clew to her whereabouts or the identity of her captors, both for her own sake and with the hope of vindicating myself and Watkins. Now I believed that at last I'd stumbled on a clew, and so I followed Mr. Dellacross to his lodgings."

"But you weren't sure that the trinket you'd seen was the one owned by Phyllis Somers?"

"No. I'd only caught a glimpse of it in the mirror. Yet it was not an everyday sort of trinket, nor one such as a grown man would possess; but until I was positive about the identification I couldn't very well take steps to have the owner arrested. I must first make sure it belonged to Phyllis Somers. I really didn't know how best to act, and so, after finding out where the man lived, I decided to tell Watkins of my discovery and see what he thought. So the next day I called on him at the Gresham. That explains my visit which you discovered through my dropping this handkerchief——"

"Wait a moment, please, for there is a serious discrepancy here, Miss Everton. Dellacross gave me to understand that the restaurant incident happened weeks ago, and that since then he'd been shadowed by you and two men—at least I believed the woman to be you. Now you say the incident occurred only the other night—in fact, the night I brought Dellacross to the Gresham."

"It happened, Mr. McDowell, just as I've told you—four nights ago. That was the first time I'd set eyes on Mr. Dellacross. With the exception of that night, I haven't shadowed him, and I know nothing about two men. The restaurant incident happened Monday night, and on Tuesday I visited the Gresham."

"Well," said I, "either my friend Dellacross is a most confounded liar, or there's another woman and a couple of men mixed up in this business. But how did you know Watkins was employed by me? Had you kept in touch with him after leaving Senator Somers?"

"No, but I met him quite by chance one day last week, and he told me that after having a desperate time of it you had picked him out of the bread line and given him a position. He was most grateful, and spoke very highly of you, but said he was afraid to confess he

had been Senator Somers' butler, though admitting to you he had been discharged without a character. So that's how I came to know his present address.

"You can imagine my astonishment, however, when, after telling him of my important discovery, he informed me that the actual owner of the silver cross was your guest. And that he, Watkins, had handled the trinket and recognized it beyond all possible doubt as the one worn by Phyllis Somers. He told me that he knew Mr. Dellacross suspected him of taking the trinket from his wallet, but, as a matter of fact, Watkins never saw it, never knew the other had it, until he found it under the bed."

"I believe that," said I. "I believed it at the time; the cross fell out while I was removing the wallet, and I must have kicked it under the bed. I never doubted Watkins' honesty until Dellacross virtually forced me into it. Aside from that note which he left in my smoking jacket, Dellacross himself acted very queerly——"

"Yes, he did," said Miss Everton quickly. "I hope you won't be angry when I say Watkins believed Mr. Dellacross to be a scoundrel actually concerned in the kidnaping. Nor could he understand your position, Mr. McDowell, for, though you'd been very kind to him, he really knew nothing about you. If you were inclined to suspect him, he was inclined to suspect you even against his better judgment. Obviously you were an old friend of Mr. Dellacross and seemed to know all about the silver cross. Yet Watkins couldn't bring himself to believe in your complicity, and so, after talking matters over, we decided to watch and wait, hoping Mr. Dellacross would lead us to the place where Phyllis Somers was hidden, when we could call in the police. For that reason, when you discovered my visit, Watkins told you I was a book agent. Mr. Dellacross had gone out,

you remember, and so it was decided that I should go over to his boarding house and find out if he'd returned there or contemplated leaving the city. We agreed to meet that night and talk things over in Madison Square, Watkins saying he'd pretend to have a toothache so that you'd let him off."

"Did you know I followed him and trailed you both over to the park?"

"No, that's news, Mr. McDowell. So you didn't believe the toothache story? How long did you stay in the park?"

"Merely long enough to see Watkins and you—though, of course, I didn't know it was you—sit down on a bench and start talking. I was afraid of being seen, and moreover I was anxious to get back to the Gresham and find out what Dellacross meant by his note. But neither he nor Watkins showed up that night, and I haven't seen them since. Perhaps you can explain the mystery?"

"No," replied Miss Everton, "I can't."

"What? Do you mean to say you don't even know what's become of Watkins?"

"I do not. But let me finish my story. Watkins and I, as you know, met in Madison Square that night, and I told him the result of my visit to Mr. Dellacross' boarding house—which you also know. It looked as if Mr. Dellacross had slipped through our fingers, but we decided the only thing to do was to wait and see if he returned either to his boarding house or the Gresham. I was to watch the former, and Watkins the latter, and we agreed to meet the following morning so as to hear each other's report. If by the morning Mr. Dellacross had not put in an appearance at either place, then Watkins was to go down to Crosshampton——"

"But how did he know anything about this place?"

"By eavesdropping, Mr. McDowell. He heard Mr. Dellacross mention it to you. He listened at the keyhole after the door was locked, hoping to learn

something about Phyllis Somers. He knew you were discussing the silver cross, though he caught nothing but a few fragmentary sentences when Mr. Dellacross happened to raise his voice. But he heard plainly such words as the Cross Mansion, Arnold Gage, Crosshampton, Long Island. Also something about a Spaniard and a scar-faced man. Watkins considered himself justified in believing—and I agreed with him—that Crosshampton was evidently the headquarters of the gang—perhaps even the place where Phyllis Somers was hidden."

"No wonder he thought I was mixed up in it, too," I exclaimed.

"Yes," nodded Constance Everton; "and your apparent wealth and social standing wouldn't go to prove the contrary, for you know all the talk that was raised by the Somers kidnaping case, some papers making the wildest statements. They said it was a great international criminal society which numbered among its members men and women in the best society. They said the head of it was a person of surpassing intelligence—in fact, just such a man as you claim Mr. Dellacross to be."

"Mr. Dellacross has brains, certainly, but not criminal brains, Miss Everton—I—"

"But you really know nothing about him!" she protested. "You say you hadn't seen him since you were at college, and that even then you knew nothing about his people or who he was. He might be anything for all you know. He told you an absolutely improbable, ridiculous story about the silver cross, a story which you now know to be absolutely false. With childlike faith and innocence, you believed implicitly all he chose to tell you—"

"True," I sighed. "But you must remember I was particularly fertile soil; I was in a condition to believe and welcome the most fantastic adventure. All the same, I still believe in Paul Della-

cross' innocence, though I don't pretend to understand or explain his actions. But, in the name of common sense, if he was involved in the kidnaping, why should he bother to tell me anything about the silver cross?"

Miss Everton shrugged. "It was lost, and he had to give you an idea of its value commensurate with the concern he showed, hadn't he? However, there's no use arguing about his innocence or guilt, for there's a whole lot I don't pretend to understand, either. But let me finish my story.

"It was agreed, then, I should meet Watkins the following morning in Madison Square. Well, I kept the appointment, but he didn't. Then I finally inquired at the Gresham, and they said he wasn't there. You were out at the time too—"

"Yes, I was scouting round the hospitals looking for Dellacross. I thought he might have met with an accident."

"Well," continued Miss Everton, "Watkins knew my address, and so I waited, hoping to hear from him. But the next day—yesterday—I decided to pay a little visit to Crosshampton. I thought Watkins must have come here, and perhaps something had happened which prevented him telling me. Perhaps on his way home after our talk that night he had happened to meet Mr. Dellacross and followed him down here. I didn't know. I only knew that anything was better than suspense and inaction, and that Crosshampton seemed the logical place. For you remember we believed it to be the headquarters of the kidnaping gang, or the place where Phyllis Somers was hidden, and Watkins said he would come here if Mr. Dellacross didn't show up.

"So I arrived here yesterday, some time after you, and gave out that I was looking for a cottage for the summer. I inquired around casually, but no one appeared to have seen Watkins—or perhaps they didn't recognize him from the

description I'd given of him. You understand, of course, I didn't know you were here, Mr. McDowell, and that I'd never seen you.

"Well, it was easy enough to learn from Mrs. Ryan where the Cross Mansion was situated and what she knew of Arnold Gage and the other two men, though I learned nothing about Mr. Dellacross——"

"She didn't happen to tell you he'd been her boarder for a time?"

"No. But when she mentioned you—Mr. Brown, an artist who had just arrived, seemed interested in the Cross Mansion and had gone out to sketch it—why, I jumped to the conclusion that you were either Watkins or Mr. Dellacross under an assumed name. So I went out to Sands' Point, and the rest you know."

"And when you found out I was neither Watkins nor Dellacross and that I didn't belong to the Cross Mansion, you still suspected I'd something to do with the kidnapers?"

"Yes, I couldn't understand why you were in that house. Your story seemed very lame—as lame as my own—and I didn't believe you were a professional artist. Until you dropped the handkerchief, which I recognized as my own, I'd no idea you were the Mr. McDowell Watkins had spoken about. Now have I explained everything to your satisfaction?"

"Well," said I, "there's one thing I don't quite understand, and that is what you hoped to find in the Cross Mansion."

"What I still hope to find," she replied, "and that is either Phyllis Somers herself or something—a hair ribbon, some article of dress—which would prove her presence. That's why, yesterday, seeing the door open and believing no one to be there, I entered the place. Your unexpected presence prevented me from searching more than the ground-floor rooms. That explains

my interest—not any thought of the absurd ghost's treasure—when I suggested you looking in the barn. For you say you thoroughly searched the house from top to bottom?"

"I did."

"And you didn't find any trace of a girl's presence—any article such as I've suggested?"

"I did not. No girl lives there, Miss Everton. Mrs. Ryan, everybody in Crosshampton, would be sure to know if there was——"

"But the boy!" exclaimed Constance Everton, with flushed cheeks and shining eyes. "Don't you understand? The boy who's supposed to be Arnold Gage's son!"

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE BARN.

"Why, great Scott!" I exclaimed, staring at Miss Everton. "The idea of that boy being a girl never entered my head! But what reason have you for thinking it?"

"Merely suspicion. That's why I've been watching the house, hoping to catch a glimpse of the boy——"

"But I saw him only yesterday; every one in Crosshampton has seen him, for that matter. He's nothing but a dirty-faced, crop-haired, ordinary-looking youngster in a pair of filthy jumpers."

"And who could tell a five-year-old girl from a boy if you cut her hair, dressed her in jumpers, and kept her dirty and unkempt? Who has ever seen this supposed boy at close quarters? No one has exchanged a word with him, seen him anywhere but sitting between those two men in the buggy. The more I think of it," continued Miss Everton excitedly, "the more probable it seems; in fact, I'm almost certain that this supposed boy is little Phyllis Somers. Don't you see the cleverness of it all? Apparently they've made no attempt to hide her, knowing that even in

Crosshampton they'd be sure to find out that a little girl lived in the Cross Mansion; that in itself—after the stir caused by the kidnaping—might be enough to arouse talk, and if they tried to keep her shut up it would only start more. To disarm suspicion they've taken the boldest course, knowing there wasn't one chance in a thousand of her being recognized. Apparently the 'boy' has all the liberty in the world, but you may be sure she's been terrorized within an inch of her life and would be afraid to utter a word in public. Remember, too, she's only five years old."

"It seems quite logical," I admitted. "It would explain why they took such an isolated place as the Cross Mansion. And that power boat—though it looks like an old mud scow—is very fast. It enables them to keep in touch with any point on the Sound, and, if the worst should happen, provides a sure way of escape. At the same time we're supposing all this, for we haven't the least proof. Those men may be all they seem and the boy actually a boy——"

"I'm not forgetting that, Mr. McDowell, but I'm here to put my suspicions to the test; all I ask is a good look at this supposed boy, for if it's Phyllis Somers I'll recognize her no matter how she is disguised. And she'll recognize me——"

"And then those three gentlemen will very promptly and obligingly cut your throat," I supplemented. "Have you thought of that? If those men are what you think them, we'll have to use some finesse. You must have a look at the girl—we'll say she's Phyllis Somers, for the sake of argument—without her seeing you; otherwise she'll be sure to show that she knows you, and then the game——"

"I understand. Those men wouldn't hesitate a moment about putting her out of the way—or any one else, either—if they thought themselves suspected. What do you suggest? We must be

positive about the identification, yet I wouldn't recognize her, disguised like that, from here, and, as you say, I daren't let her see me. I also think we should act now, at once, before it may be too late. I'm sure this is only part of the gang—those deputized to guard the child—and they must keep in communication with the others, wherever those others may be. At any moment they may receive orders to remove Phyllis to another hiding place, and then we'd have all our work to do over again."

I was silent—it takes me some time to think—and evidently Miss Everton misunderstood it, for she colored up hotly. "Of course, Mr. McDowell," she said, with a sudden change of manner, "I've no right to expect you to risk anything; to help me in what is obviously none of your affair——"

"It's not very nice of you to think me a rank coward as well as a rank artist," I protested. "This happens to be as much my business as your own, for, aside from any question of Phyllis Somers, I've the right to help Watkins square himself. I agree with you that the time to act is now, while the power boat is out on the Sound. If I were able to identify the child, I'd ask you to keep out of this, but as it is we must find a place near the house, where you can identify her without being seen."

"There's no such place," said Miss Everton, looking about her hopelessly. For the line of trees and underbrush which concealed us was a good distance from the Cross Mansion.

"There's the barn," I said, struck with one of my very infrequent inspirations. "They must pass it from the cove to the house, and we can see them from that window in the loft. You see the one I mean? They'll pass close under it, for I watched them on their way to those wooden steps leading to the beach. Now when the other two men leave for town—and they should be going soon—we

can get into the loft. They are evidently going into Crosshampton for the usual groceries and their mail, and this should take them almost a couple of hours, for I know the pace of that old nag.

"On the other hand, the safe-and-sane course is for us to return to Crosshampton, wire New York, and have a flock of the best detectives sent down to watch these fellows. For, remember, it's no longer a question of money; I can hire a regular army—and will, if you say the word."

"It's very nice of you to say that, Mr. McDowell; to—to make such an offer. But I still think we should act now ourselves and find out if it is Phyllis Somers while we have the chance. Once that's done, we'll know better how to act. We can find out *now* what it will take the detectives some time to discover——"

"Hush! Here they come!" said I.

Scar Face and the Spaniard had emerged from the house, smoking and picking their teeth, as if they had just finished eating. They went over to the barn, not troubling, as on the previous occasion, to lock the door of the house after them. Why should they? No safer place for their prisoner could be found than on board the power boat under the watchful eye of the man called Gage. That unlocked door was clear and eloquent testimony to the fact that they'd nothing to hide, nothing in the house worth investigating or even stealing.

We saw them in the barn finishing hitching up the sorry old nag to the ramshackle buggy, and then they drove out on the narrow, neglected road that connected with the main highway running into Crosshampton. This road circled our rear, and we were hidden from it by the high belt of trees and underbrush I've mentioned. We could hear the creaking of the wheels, the windy sighs of the sorry nag, the mumbling

voices of the men as they approached. Our screen was well-nigh impenetrable from the road, and they'd no reason to suspect our presence; this I knew, yet got something of a shock when, as they drew abreast, we heard one of the men shout "Whoa!"

"Go on with your reading," I whispered to Miss Everton, while I resumed my masterpiece. "If they should happen to spot us, leave the talking to me."

"One of them has jumped down," she whispered back, pretending to read with great composure. "I heard him moving about."

So did I, and at any moment I also expected to hear the underbrush at our backs suddenly crash and the rough demand of what the *et cetera* I meant by squatting myself down on private property and to get the *et cetera* out of there in a hurry. However, nothing of the sort happened; we heard the man re-enter the buggy, and soon the creaking of the wheels began again, growing fainter as they passed down the road toward Crosshampton.

"What did they stop for? Do you think they saw us?" whispered Miss Everton.

"Wait here!" I cautioned, and, giving a fairly realistic imitation of a fat Indian on the warpath, I wriggled on all fours through the underbrush until I came to the road, and saw the buggy and its two occupants rounding the turn leading to Crosshampton. I dare say my snakelike exhibition, as viewed from the rear, was not impressive, for, on my return, I saw Miss Everton's lips twitching. Why is it that a fat man never gets any sympathy or applause? Not that I'm fat, of course, but that she thought so—which amounts to the same thing.

So I made my report, adding that it was evident the men hadn't seen us. Then I packed my easel and painting kit, stowing them away under some bushes, for I couldn't afford to be cum-

bered with excess baggage. After which Miss Everton picked up her skirts and we raced down to the barn, keeping it between us and the water in case Arnold Gage happened to have such an awkward thing as a pair of field glasses turned on the house.

The door stood wide open, and we climbed the rickety stairs leading to the loft. Here, at the back of the barn, there were no windows commanding the beach, but the place was even in a worse state of disrepair than the Cross Mansion, and, with the help of my jack-knife I soon enlarged an opening in one of the rotted clapboards; this permitted us an all-important view of the cove and the wooden stairway up which Gage and the child must come.

"This is even better than I expected," I said, squinting through the aperture. "We can get them coming and going. You should be able to see the child plainly from here without using that window," pointing to the solitary one in front which overlooked the Cross Mansion.

"Phew!" exclaimed Miss Everton. "Can we open that window? The smell up here is scandalous!"

It was; a horrible mixture of decaying vegetation, musty dry rot, and something else which I couldn't identify. So I went over to the little square of dirty glass, but found the window nailed fast.

"Never mind," said Miss Everton. "We may not have to wait here long, and there's quite a lot of good, clean air coming in through this hole."

The view from the latter was restricted practically to the cove, so we didn't know where the power boat was. We wouldn't be able to see it until it rounded the point. Thus we couldn't tell how long we might have to wait, and Miss Everton echoed my thoughts by saying: "I only hope they'll return before dark. Evidently the child spends

most of its time in that boat guarded by one of the men. It's quite an idea."

I asked her if she happened to know anything about gas marine engines, and she stared a moment and then laughed. "Well, it isn't part of the curriculum at Normal, you know, but I've had some little practical experience with motor launches, if that's what you mean."

"I mean could you make shift to start the motor of a power boat without my help?"

"Oh, yes, I'm sure I could. Senator Somers had a motor launch up at his summer home in the Thousand Islands, and I used to run it occasionally for fun—under expert supervision, of course."

So I proceeded to outline my simple scheme. If Miss Everton recognized the child as Phyllis Somers when Gage and it topped the wooden steps, we would then run down and wait behind the barn door which they must pass on their way to the house. While I engaged the man, she would make off with the child to the boat.

"And leave you?" she protested.

"There won't be anything to it," I replied. "All a fat man like me has to do is simply fall on that Gage person and he can't possibly survive——"

"It's not a laughing matter, Mr. McDowell; you've no weapon, and you may be sure that man has. Also the other two might happen to return——"

"All the more reason for you to make sure of the child," I urged. "She must be the first consideration; we came here to get her, and we're going to do it. Once aboard, and the engine going, they can't possibly interfere with you, for there's only the one boat. That's your important part in the business, and it will make mine all the easier if I know I can depend on you doing it. I want your promise to pay absolutely no attention of what may be happening here, but to put yourself and the child beyond

possible pursuit just as quickly as you can."

After further demur and argument, this point was settled to my satisfaction, if not to Miss Everton's.

Now while she kept watch on the cove and breathed the clean, sweet sea air that came through the spy hole, I began a tour of inspection, ostensibly with the intention of looking for some article of clothing that would prove the presence of Phyllis Somers. For her girl's clothing, if not burned, must be concealed somewhere, and I had found no trace of it in the house proper.

My investigations led me to the other end of the long loft, and here I found a door; I also found promptly that in the neighborhood of this door the indescribable smell which I've mentioned grew considerably stronger. To trace down and define this odor was the real motive of my investigation, though to Miss Everton I'd made the excuse about finding some article of clothing worn by her former charge. For the inexplicable odor had begun to work on me strangely, arousing certain ghastly suspicions that would not down. The smell of decaying vegetation and musty dry rot I could understand, but this other, I thought, could only be explained by—what?

I opened the door, and was instantly almost overwhelmed by the sickening stench. I found myself in a small store-room full of rusty farming implements, and in one corner was a heap of rubbish covered with old potato sacks. And from under this mass of assorted filth there protruded the toe of a shoe.

Buried treasure! Ghastly, horrific irony! Stupendous, pitiful tragedy! Had such a monstrous thing ever crossed Miss Everton's mind when she rallied me about not looking in the barn? Could she have remotely suspected that *this* was what I should find?

Nauseated, shaken to the very roots of my being, and with a great rage fill-

ing my heart, I backed out of that charnel chamber and slammed the door as Miss Everton began calling to me excitedly from the other end of the loft.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH I FAIL TO ACT SENSIBLY.

I was no longer under the delusion that the man called Gage and his friends were possibly innocent and law-abiding citizens, for my gruesome discovery had completely shattered that. I knew them now beyond all possible doubt to be dangerous to a degree; knew they had not hesitated—and would not hesitate—to take human life if need be. They were ruthless, and their own lives already hostage to the law; the sort to be handled without gloves if Miss Everton and I were not to share the fate of their first victim. Of that discovery I must, however, keep for the moment my companion in ignorance, for she would have need of steady nerves and a cool head. So I joined her at the spy hole, looking as unconcerned as I could.

"The boat!" she was saying excitedly. "Look! It's rounding the point!"

We could see quite plainly the man and the child as the former steered into the little cove. For all her excitement at the approaching crisis, Miss Everton had time to eye me sharply and exclaim: "What's the matter, Mr. McDowell? You're as white as a ghost."

"Nervousness," I replied.

"Nonsense! What were you doing in that room?"

"Oh, just looking round."

She shook her head, but there was no time for further questioning, for Arnold Gage had tied up the boat at the little jetty. Then he took the child roughly by the arm and yanked her out, adding a gratuitous cuff on the ear that sent her sprawling.

"The brute!" exclaimed Miss Everton, gnawing at her lip. But as for me, I said nothing, for my anger—that's a

polite term—had long since reached the point where it couldn't be improved upon. For the sake of that dead man lying under that heap of assorted filth in the little room at the other end of the loft—if for no other reason—I meant to do some settling with Mr. Gage and his friends.

Of course, by this time I was absolutely certain that the child was none other than little Phyllis Somers, so when the couple topped the wooden steps I showed no surprise when Miss Everton suddenly gripped my arm convulsively and exclaimed: "It's she! It's Phyllis! I'm sure of it!"

As we reached the lower floor, the unmistakable sound of creaking wheels came to us, and Miss Everton's face blanched. "The other two! They've returned!"

"So much the better," said I. "Remember, your first and only thought is to get to the boat with the child."

She nodded, with compressed lips and clenched hands, and there followed a moment's tense waiting as we heard Gage rounding the corner of the barn, evidently dragging his charge by the hand while he cursed her volubly. The creaking wheels had drawn nearer, and then came a distant hail which Gage answered.

"Now, then!" said I, stepping from the barn.

I have still a mental picture of the scene: the old buggy coming down the disused road and bumping over the ruts, the scar-faced man and his swarthy companion lounging negligently over the dashboard while Gage and the child stood with their backs to us about a yard or so away. He hadn't heard us, but, of course, the other two saw us the moment we appeared, and they shouted a warning. I remember the child—looking so piteously grotesque with its filthy, worn rompers, smutty face, and shaven head—uttering a shrill cry and running toward Miss Everton. Of Gage whip-

ping out a knife and my smashing him head over heels like a shot rabbit. I remember how he thudded on head and shoulders and slid along in the dirt, and the jar that ran up my arm from wrist to shoulder from the force of the blow. Of the other two leaping from the buggy and coming for me while I yelled at Miss Everton to run for it.

What next happened I can't attempt to explain in detail, for I know very little about it. What I did I did instinctively and without conscious effort. I'd no thought of playing the hero or anything of that sort; I knew simply that I was fighting as an animal fights, and that I was taking an uncommon, even brutal, pleasure in so doing. It seemed as if the last ten years had never been and I was back once more in those good old smashing, crashing days of the grid-iron when my nickname "Whang" meant something. I was all wound up, and I sort of cut loose regardless. I'd never known my own strength, never had it tried out to the limit, perhaps, until that moment; I'd no weapon but my two hands, and it was lucky for me my opponents—with the exception of Gage and his knife—possessed none either, or, if they did, found themselves too busy to use it.

The first really coherent thing I remember was a sudden lull in the cyclone and of hearing Miss Everton's voice calling me frantically from the cove, this rising above the splutter of the gas engine. Then, as my eyes cleared, I saw the big, scar-faced man and the Spaniard lying on the ground, which looked as if a stampede of cattle had passed over it. At the same moment Arnold Gage came hopping out of the Cross Mansion and began to let fly at me with a pump gun. It was long shooting for small shot, nevertheless some of the pellets reached me and proved a necessary stimulant. There was no use arguing with a shotgun, so I promptly turned tail and bolted for

the cove with the Gage person after me. I've mentioned about my being able to do the hundred in ten flat, but with all modesty, I think I now beat the Duffy record. You never know what you can do until you're on the sore end of a pump gun. This suggestion I offer freely to trainers of track teams. Lucky for me, it didn't happen to be a full choke weapon, or firing buckshot, and that Gage had evidently been lamed in the mix-up.

Down the wooden steps I went, and lickety-split along the beach, the deep boom! boom! of the pump gun ringing out at every few yards and throwing up the sand about me in little wicked spurts. Miss Everton, handling the boat like a veteran, stood in to meet me as I floundered through the water and scrambled aboard. We lay down in the bottom, and headed out the cove as Arnold Gage, wading in up to his waist, pumped shell after shell at us, the shot harmlessly pockmarking the water.

I was thoroughly fagged, and for a time could do nothing but lie there supinely and blow like a beached whale; when at length I was able to sit up, Arnold Gage had disappeared. Then I took over the wheel from Miss Everton and headed down the line for Crosshampton, a two-mile run by water.

It was growing dark by this time, and little Phyllis Somers, terrified by what she'd come through, could do nothing but cower against Miss Everton and stare at me as if she expected I was going to eat her alive. I dare say I looked the worst sort of ogre imaginable, for my clothes were in rags and I was blood and dirt from head to foot. I'd got a bit of a knife wound in the shoulder, and was studded here and there with shot which I could pick out at leisure. Add to this that my mouth was puffed up, one eye was figuring on closing, and two of my favorite teeth missing, and you can imagine my personal beauty was sort of under a cloud.

All the same I never felt fitter in my life, for that little mix-up was a better tonic than all the doctor's dope going.

"Well," said I to Miss Everton, "it was great while it lasted, and I'm glad you voted for direct action instead of the safe-and-sane course. You behaved like a brick. I told you there wouldn't be anything to it."

Evidently reaction had set in with her, for she was all white and trembling and in doubt about whether to laugh or cry. As a sort of compromise, I suppose, she suddenly decided to get angry and proceeded to pitch into me.

"You—you talk as if it were a—a strawberry festival!" she exclaimed. "I don't know what you call something if that wasn't anything! Look at you! You've—you've been half killed, and if that had happened to be a rifle instead of a shotgun——" She waved her arms. "Why did you stay and fight those men? Why did you do it? You'd all the time in the world to get to the boat before those men got out of the buggy. Instead of that you ran to meet them——"

"Did I?" I asked humbly and in all sincerity. "I really don't remember."

"Well, I do! I saw you. I waited at the top of the steps and kept calling to you; but I might as well have saved my breath! You had a long start, and could easily have got to the boat, but instead you acted like a wild Indian and rushed headfirst at those two men as if they were your mortal enemies. It's all very well to be brave, but there's such a thing as common sense——"

"I really hadn't thought about trying to be brave," I tried to explain. "I don't remember rushing those two fellows."

"It was criminal of you, that's what it was; and it's a wonder to me you weren't killed!" said Miss Everton warmly. "If I'd only known you were going to act that way I'd never have agreed to the plan. I thought you were

going to act sensibly. I suppose it never once occurred to you what *I* was going through, knowing I must get Phyllis to the boat and—and leave you alone against such odds——”

“It was very nice of you to think of me——”

“I wasn’t thinking of you personally,” said she, more warmly and with a splash of color in her cheek. “It was simply that if—if anything happened to you I’d feel myself to blame—even though it was brought about by your criminal rashness. If you’d only told me in the first place that you *liked* to fight like that——”

Here little Miss Somers, who had been watching us both with big, terrified eyes, evidently thought there was going to be more violence, for she set up a piercing wail and buried her shaven head in Miss Everton’s lap. Poor little girl, the long terrorizing she had received at the hands of those three brutes seemed to have put her in a state bordering on idiocy. She was like a frightened animal, and had almost forgotten how to articulate.

So Miss Everton forgot all about being angry with me, and together we managed at length to instill such confidence into our mutual charge that presently she fell asleep in the woman’s arms. Then Miss Everton said suddenly to me: “And what did you find in that room, Mr. McDowell? Now please don’t say it was nothing, for I know better; I saw by your face something had happened. What was it you found?”

“Watkins.”

Miss Everton gasped, turned white, and stared at me, horrified, through the gathering twilight.

“You might as well know now,” I added, “for it will be all over the place in a few hours. It was Watkins.”

“Oh, Mr. McDowell!” she cried piteously, dropping her head on the sleeping child.

“Yes,” I added, “poor old Watkins regained his lost caste. We may never know the circumstances, but I think it’s clear he succeeded in finding Phyllis Somers and paid for it with his life. He hadn’t been with me very long, of course, but I’d—I’d come to think a good deal of him, so if I rushed those fellows instead of acting sensibly—well, maybe you can understand that I didn’t feel like acting sensibly. They’re pretty well knocked around—judging from what they handed me. We’ll get help from Crosshampton and clean them up to-night.”

I was thankful Miss Everton forbore speaking of Paul Dellacross, for that was a subject I didn’t care to discuss.

CHAPTER XIV.

I LEARN THE TERRIBLE TRUTH.

Of course, when we got into Crosshampton and told our story, there was a great hullabaloo which I won’t attempt to describe in detail; in fact, I didn’t wait to examine into it, for, after seeing Miss Everton and her charge safely in Mrs. Ryan’s, where they purposed waiting the arrival of Senator Somers, who had been wired for, I managed to sneak off and join the hastily organized posse that went out to round up the kidnapers.

I had hoped for something further in the way of excitement, but the whole thing proved a very tame affair, the scar-faced man and the Spaniard—he turned out to be an Italian, by the way—being only fit for the hospital, while Gage, with a game leg, was little better off. Realizing the hopelessness of the situation, they had made no attempt to escape and surrendered without resistance. Gage was the only one of the three able to talk intelligently, and from him I tried to learn something about the criminal machine of which it was thought he and his companions were but insignificant cogs. I tried also to wring from him some account of poor Wat-

kins' fate, but for all my pains I received nothing but a most hearty cursing and the very natural threat that he would get even with me somehow and some day.

So, after making arrangements about poor old Watkins' remains, I set out for New York by a roundabout way, for I knew that Crosshampton by this time would be swarming with newspaper men and the morbidly curious.

I managed to reach the city without incident, and I made straight for a Turkish bath, where for a time they insisted upon treating me as if I had just emerged from a prolonged debauch. Then, looking rather more presentable, I went on home to the Gresham.

It was now round ten o'clock, and, believe it or not, the very first person I saw on entering the lobby was my friend Paul Dellacross. There he sat, as large as life, a box done up in wrapping paper on his knee, and looking about him unconcernedly as if I hadn't been hunting him high and low for the past three days.

He caught sight of me instantly, and started up with extended hand, exclaiming: "Well, if it isn't Whang McDowell!" Just like that; as if he hadn't seen me for half a dozen years.

"Where on earth have you been, Whang?" he added. "They said at the desk you were out of town, and I've been hanging round here——"

"Come upstairs!" I said; for I noticed some guests were eying us queerly, while the desk clerk had nudged his assistant and begun to whisper.

"Why," said Dellacross; "do you live here, Whang?"

It was right here that for the first time the suspicion crossed my mind that Paul Dellacross was not quite sane. The absurd question, the whispering of the desk clerk, the glances of the guests loafing in the lobby, my friend's vacant stare and rambling talk—for he

had begun a long-winded statement out of which I could make neither head nor tail—all produced this suspicion which had never occurred to me remotely until then. Yet it was only suspicion which I really didn't believe for a moment to be true.

I got a shock, however, when, as we entered the apartment, Dellacross looked about him with the same vacant stare, as if he'd never seen the place before. "Pretty nice rooms, these, Whang," he said. "Are you married? Fancy meeting you, of all people!" Then he began to talk as if we were back in the old days of university life, mentioning incidents and actors of ten years past as if they were contemporary.

"Paul!" I said gently, hardly yet believing the terrible truth. "Don't you remember being here three days ago? Don't you remember about the silver cross——"

"Ah, the silver cross!" he cried instantly, the vacant stare giving place to that febrile fire which now, alas! I recognized for what it was. An entire transformation had taken place, and I saw again those eyes which on two occasions had glared at me over the barrel of the automatic pistol. And I knew it now for the glare of a mind deranged.

He arose stealthily and approached me on tiptoe. "Whang," he whispered hoarsely, "I've got it! I've got it, I tell you! I've got Miser Pierre's Hoard," tapping the box in his hand. "Yes, I got it out of the old fireplace, just as I told you I would; got it from right under the nose of my precious cousin. But he's after me, and you'll help me guard it, Whang? But I want to show you the treasure. I want you to see it for yourself. I think you never quite believed my improbable story, Whang, and I want you to see it with your own eyes. Look, there it is! Look! Look! Did you ever see anything like that in

your life before? Look! See them sparkle! See them sparkle! Treasure, Whang, treasure!"

He had, with an infinitude of cunning and caution, unwrapped the package—it was nothing but an old shoe box—and poured its contents on the table. And such contents! Pieces of stone, bits of trumpery tinsel and broken glass, bright-hued buttons, scraps of shabby cloth—all the utterly worthless rubbish such as a child might hoard. And now over this heap of assorted trash my poor friend pored and gloated as if it were the fabled wealth of the Indies, holding up bits of red glass and calling them rubies, fondling scraps of worthless cloth and asking me to guess the value of such priceless brocade, raising aloft an old battered pewter spoon and hailing it as the insignia of the De la Croix. It would have been ludicrous if it had not been tragic.

I will not prolong the scene, for even now I cannot bear to dwell on it, and what poor words of mine can depict its supreme tragedy or convey my feelings as I gazed on the unmistakable wreck and ruin of a mind once so brilliant? I could have cried. How lightly and thanklessly we accept daily the boon of sanity, taking it as a matter of course, as something which must be ours while life lasts! How little we think of this supreme gift without which life itself would lack purpose and meaning! How little we estimate and understand the suffering of him who must stand by impotently and watch the cloud of madness close down utterly and forever on the life of a loved one!

All this I now understood to the uttermost as I looked at my poor friend, Paul Dellacross; saw the slack jaw and vacant stare; heard ringing in my ears the now dead and monotonous voice saying, over and over again: "See them sparkle! See them sparkle! Treasure, Whang, treasure!"

Terrible, monstrous fate that he

whose intellect had surpassed us all, whose fame we had expected to circle the globe, was destined to end his days in a madhouse!

Such is the strange story of the silver cross; and the important, though unwitting, part Paul Dellacross played in the recovery of little Phyllis Somers I will now attempt to explain, though much can only be inferred, for he was never able to talk intelligently on the subject.

In the first place, I found there had been insanity in the Dellacross family—his mother dying in an asylum—and that *this* was the hovering shadow which, back in our college days, had occasioned his periodic fits of abstraction and depression. We are told that the line separating genius from insanity is perilously narrow, but certainly none of us at the university thought of Dellacross' brilliant mentality as anything but normal. Coming from New York, as he did, none knew anything of his family history, and naturally he had never let us suspect his dreadful secret—the fear of madness. His ailment did not develop until maturity, was progressive and incurable; thus while at college and for some time afterward he seemed, and no doubt was, in every respect normal, the dread disease had already marked him down.

The whole remarkable story of Miser Pierre's Hoard was, of course, nothing but the figment of a deranged mind, and, as a matter of fact, I learned that his name never had been spelled De la Croix, and that there was no ancient French blood in his veins. So far as investigation led me, I learned that his father had kept a retail shoe store in New York, his people for years back being tradesmen in a small way. They had never lived on Long Island, and the little town of Crosshampton had absolutely no connection with them. It was named after the Cross family, of Revolutionary fame, whose descendants had

built the Cross Mansion; this family was now extinct, and had been for a quarter of a century, and, I repeat, it was related in no way to the Dellacrosses. Nor had my poor friend any cousin by the name of Arnold Gage, while the account he had given me of his accident while riding horseback was equally fictitious. The real truth of the matter was he had been compelled to give up his berth in the diplomatic service because of a complete breakdown due to overwork; and this, no doubt, was the inception of his mental affliction.

Indeed the true story, as I afterward learned it, of my poor friend's life is a pitifully tragic one. He had been always more or less affected with the "scribbling itch," and, on leaving college, he became fired with the ambition to become a great playwright; in other words, the diplomatic service was but a means of earning his bread and butter while he slaved at his loved ambition. I have no record that he achieved even the smallest measure of success to encourage him, yet he kept at it night after night, and it was this burning the candle at both ends which caused a breakdown and no doubt hastened his mental collapse.

Miser Pierre's Hoard was, in fact, a play written by Paul Dellacross, and if, at the time, I had happened to examine the litter of foolscap which I brought from his boarding house that day, the truth must have inevitably suggested itself to me. Here, as the synopsis of a play, was the whole story as he had related it to me; this, then, is why he was able to tell it so circumstantially and with such conviction. He believed every word of it, for, in one suffering from his mental derangement, it was but a step until the whole thing became real, and he *actually believed himself to be the hero of his imaginative creation!* This, I've been told, is a common enough phase of insanity.

I will now try to relate how Dellacross came to conceive the story of "Miser Pierre's Hoard," giving his own name to the hero, and at length arriving at the belief that the whole thing was real. I repeat that I can only work by inference and deduction, imagining such and such a thing to be true, for I have no actual proof.

It is clear, then, that the story first suggested itself to Dellacross during his stay at Mrs. Ryan's. She speaks of his interest in the Cross Mansion, and no doubt the loneliness of that old house, the gossip of buried treasure current in the neighborhood, together with the name "Cross," fired his imagination. Then one day, while near the house, he chanced to find the silver cross, evidently dropped by Phyllis Somers, unknown to her captors. I can vouch for the fact that she was roughly handled by them, so what more natural than, on the night she was brought to the house, the trinket she wore about her neck should be torn loose and fall unseen to the ground? Indeed this must have happened, for it is clear Dellacross found it near the Cross Mansion, thus associating the two and weaving a romantic story, embracing the local gossip of buried treasure, in which Arnold Gage was transformed into a villainous and scheming cousin, the scar-faced man and the "Spaniard" being his accomplices. It is clear also he never associated the silver cross with Phyllis Somers, and that he had no idea of its real significance or the true character of his imaginary "cousin."

Of course, the "Woman in Black" was also an imaginary creation, for Dellacross had seen Miss Everton on but the one occasion—the restaurant incident which I have mentioned—and her entirely natural interest in the silver cross was instantly taken up by his deranged mind and woven into the story, she becoming an accomplice of his "cousin." There is every reason to be-

lieve that he wasn't held up and assaulted after leaving the restaurant that night, while the story he told me of another assault in which he was robbed of the great "ruby" and various "gold coins" was purely imaginative. Moreover, the woman I had seen that night in Madison Square—and who happened to use the popular Hungarian perfume like Miss Everton—had, without doubt, no connection whatever with the roughs who afterward assaulted Dellacross; their object was simple robbery, but my friend promptly wove it into the imaginary romance which, to him, had become living and vital. The dropping of the handkerchief, of course, had been entirely misconstrued by me, and I had read a sinister meaning into what was nothing but an accident. As for the foreign-looking man who Dellacross averred was watching the Gresham, I know now he was the most innocent stranger who would have been properly startled if he had suspected the character and motives conferred upon him by my friend.

I haven't been able to trace fully Dellacross' wanderings that morning after leaving the Gresham. Undoubtedly his mind, hastening toward its final complete collapse, was even then given to periods of utter blankness; thus, on our meeting again, it will be remembered he had forgotten all about the silver cross until I mentioned it. After I'd left for the settlement that morning, there was no one to keep his interest sustained in the matter, and I believe he left the apartment without thought or purpose. Indeed, from his landlady I learned he was given to periodic absences, but that though she considered him eccentric and absent-minded, she had never questioned his sanity. I dare say there is many a man, as mentally irresponsible as was my poor friend at that time, who is mixing day in and day out with his

neighbors while they consider him nothing more than eccentric or absent-minded. Insanity has many strange phases, and Dellacross' wasn't the kind that develops into homicidal mania; this I've been told by doctors, but, at the same time, I can't forget those two occasions when he tried to shoot me.

It is clear that my friend's aimless wanderings that day concluded with a trip to Crosshampton, and that, once arrived there, he forgot apparently why he had come and returned promptly to New York. And evidently, as Miss Everton suggested, Watkins happened to meet Dellacross that night and followed him to the little Long Island town. Whether the former led him in the direction of the Cross Mansion or Watkins went there of his own accord, can only be conjectured, but it is evident the old butler discovered the real secret of the lonely house on Sands' Point and paid for the knowledge with his life. All the circumstances surrounding his tragic death may be cleared up when Gage and his accomplices come to trial.

It may be seen, then, that though the newspapers have tried to make me out something of a hero, my part in the silver-cross business and the rescuing of little Miss Somers was due entirely to the bull luck that has followed me most of my life. All the credit, in fact, is due to poor Paul Dellacross and Constance Everton, for it was he who stumbled all unconsciously on the all-important clew, while she had the courage and cleverness to make use of it. I, following a ludicrous false trial, only blundered in at the finish with my usual bull luck.

And, by the way, that bull luck is still holding, for I've become very good friends with Miss Everton. She actually believes I am something of a hero—anyway, she pretends I am—and that, moreover, I'm not a bit stupid at all.

COMING SOON: A GREAT NOVEL OF THE SOUTH SEAS.

The Shadow of Granite Ridge

BEING THE ACCOUNT OF A WOLF DOG, AND A VICTIM OF THE GREAT WHITE PERIL WHO WAS BANISHED TO THE WILDERNESS

By Vingie E. Roe

L—THE DESPERATE BLUFF

SHE was built like a super-woman. Deep-breasted, straight-backed, long-limbed, she lifted her brown head unconsciously among the clouds.

And she had always lived among the clouds, too—the clouds of clean thoughts, of infinite kindness, of romance-and-adventure dreams.

She had built herself a strong, reliant character, of which she was inordinately proud. And she loved her body, that tall, somewhat heavily boned body, with its firm, white flesh and its swinging carriage.

She had clothed it always in the best plain shirt waists and black skirts she could afford. She was a stenographer, and a "rattling" good one, to quote her "boss." She had given the seven years since she was twenty to the care and support of a mother dying of a slow disease, and she had her bare wages from month to month.

Then came the little mother's death, and she found herself miserably alone, poor in this world's goods, and with Romance so often turned firmly away that it had left her vicinity.

That was an awful winter. Many a time her soft lips trembled over her work, and her pretty eyes, big and gray and black-fringed, filled with annoying tears. But she knew she was stanch and true herself, and that she owed herself all the help possible to get through to the calmer waters, so she declined the "boss'" invitations to supper and the

attentions of several of her fellow clerks.

"They're much too little men—for me," she told herself honestly, unconscious of the egotism. "I'll wait for the big man."

But the big man was slow in coming, and the work dragged sadly that busy season. The holidays were a nightmare when she worked early and late to escape the silent flat with its fires that had to be lighted, and its lonely meals. And the winter seemed colder than usual.

But at last came spring, and brought her so great a lassitude that she went to a great physician in the big coast city. He thumped and tested and laid his head on her superb breast, and took a funny X-ray picture of her back and shoulders.

And then, after three days, he took her dreary world and turned it upside down for her.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you, Miss Lambert," he said gravely, "that there is a spot on your right lung. Any tuberculosis in your family?"

"Mother," she said briefly, "died last fall."

"H'm!" said the specialist. "Go to the mountains at once. Sacrifice everything, if you must, but *go*—and *stay*. You'll have to fight, but you can win." So she went back to the little flat, sat down before a big mirror with a whistling gas grate behind her, and looked herself and her prospects in the face.

Three weeks later she was lost to the world that she had known.

She stood on the threshold of a cabin forty miles from a railroad and six thousand feet above sea level, and watched the man who had brought her turn his jaded team down the lost trail.

"They's lots o' game up here, miss," he said, from the high seat, "an' more trout'n you could ever ketch. They'll mebbly be campers in here, too, a bit later. Well, so long!"

She could not speak, but she nodded and tried to smile. The jehu's homely face seemed the most desirable thing to see on earth. When he turned from her and clucked to the horses, she all but screamed. Her eyes dilated wildly, and she leaped off the step, running after the wagon, already half hidden by the crowding young fir trees.

But half across the ancient yard, cleared by some eager miner's hand, she stopped and clapped a hand to her mouth to still the cry that choked in her throat.

"Fight!" she gasped to herself hoarsely. "Fight! Do you want to die—like a rat—in your youth—and with all your beauty? *Go back!*"

And she went back, trembling in every limb, faint with terror, crushed by the mighty wilderness in every cringing fiber.

She stepped in at the door as softly as a cat, and looked fearfully around at this cabin to which the man had brought her for a robbing price.

It was tight and strong, made of fir logs set well together and securely chinked. Its door had a strong bar, and its windows were nailed down.

Rough, handmade furniture furnished it scantily—a bed, a table, a cupboard, two chairs, and a bench. A little iron stove, red with rust, stood in one corner. In the center of the floor stood her trunk and two huge boxes with six months' provisions.

And she had told the jehu to come after her six months from to-day!

Six months!

She started to scream again, and again shut her lips.

Why had she done this awful thing? Why hadn't she gone somewhere with other people?

There was her answer in the two boxes and the flat purse in the front of her shirt waist. The purse contained three dollars and sixty cents.

And the lassitude was growing so fast that she could not work—and her pride was as great as her soul.

Here was to be the mighty proof.

If she survived, she would survive so grandly, so sublimely, that nothing that life could offer would ever daunt her again. If she perished—well, she would have infected no one else, carried no other along her dismal way.

She shut her teeth with a tension that drew taut the muscles in her cheeks, and laid a large white hand on the nearest box. All that day she worked in the cabin as only a woman can work amid desolation and desertion and the decay of loneliness. She had known what she was coming to in part, and had laid out a scant portion of her precious money accordingly.

Among the provisions were lye and a broom, white oilcloth, and two rolls of scarlet crape paper. There was a lamp to hang from the rafters, and a package of cheap scrim.

By four of the little brass clock that she had brought, along with every pretty thing she could manage in her small trunk, from the flat, she had torn out every piece of furniture and scrubbed the whole place, top, bottom, and walls, with the lye and the abundant clear water from the spring beside the trail. She went over the furniture, put it back, built a fire in the stove, unrolled her bedding from its bundle and made her bed, cut, hemmed, and tacked

up to the two windows little curtains of the scrim. She put her provisions and her few dishes in the cupboard, upended the biggest box for a dresser, covered it with the flaming paper, hung up a pretty oval mirror with a gilt frame, and got out three pictures—a pretty reproduction of a Corot landscape in autumn, a copy of a Rembrandt, and one of the Mona Lisa.

When it was done, she stood in the center of the room and surveyed it with smiling eyes.

"Pretty fine, Lola!" she said aloud. "And to-morrow we'll add a hundred touches more. Just now we'll eat."

It was dusk by the time she had finished her first simple meal. It was a hard matter for her to eat lately, an uninteresting proceeding that she would have cut if she could, and for the first time that day she found herself at a leisure that she did not want, that she had dreaded with a hushed horror. She walked to the door and looked out. Vast silence lay over the dropping ridges like a blanket, and for the first time she sensed it, felt it press down upon her like a finger of fear.

A pale pink-and-lavender sky arched over the green wilderness, and a small new moon hung therein like a silver sickle. From the very slope at her feet the whole world went down and down and down, fold upon fold and ridge against ridge, to where the river lay like a shining thread below.

It was the wilderness in every giant line, every distant peak. She knew she was the only human being in a probable radius of twenty miles, a woman alone in a wild world that might have been newly created.

And panic fell upon her. She shut her hands hard in the folds of her skirt, and her eyes grew big and dark with an awful fear.

"Why didn't I bring a dog?" she whispered, with white lips. "A big, savage dog, from the city pound."

Then she whirled inside, slammed the door, and barred it, to fall back against it, trembling.

Who says there is not a method of communication that scorns time, distance, and the difference of species?

Five miles away, and another thousand feet above, White Ears sat out upon a sharp, bare shoulder of the mother mountains under the silver moon and fidgeted restlessly. There was something alien in his primeval world, a feeling in the air, a note of mystery in the diapason of the night.

It was not fear—White Ears knew that warning—and it was not game. Neither was it the lure of the she-wolf trotting down the wind, though this was the mating season. It was nothing that he knew, and he cocked his sharp, white-lined ears this way and that, questing the void with his delicate nostrils.

A very handsome fellow was White Ears, bigger than his mother, the gaunt, gray timber wolf who bore him three years back, more cunning than his father, the renegade collie, deserted from the summer sheep camp twenty miles below and caught in a trap the winter White Ears was a year old.

His chest was broad and deep to give sounding space to the voice that made all the hillfolk stop and listen; his back was straight from the rearing shoulders; his hind quarters were heavy, his lean flanks smooth. His head was a thing of beauty set upon his crested neck, his tail a silver plume that waved and waved when he trotted out in pride. His paws were velvet soft and silent as the night. A broad, white band encircled his neck, sign of his paternal legacy of longing for a god.

For an hour he sat and listened and sniffed, turning his pale eyes here and there, seeing everything in shadow and light.

Then he slid off the shoulder like a

gray shadow himself, and began to drop swiftly down the slopes.

In forty minutes he stood under a manzanita bush in the ancient yard of the cabin with its barred door, and breathed deep of the alien thing in his world.

At that same moment Lola Lambert, crouching against the door where she had crouched for three hours in a panic so great that she could not move, felt a new wave of fear sweep over her.

Something had come out of the distance and the mystery, something sinister and fearful, something that *knew* she was there behind the barred door.

For a long time White Ears stood still as a statue under the manzanita bush, waiting, watching, *feeling* what it was there in the old log house. Then he padded three times around the cabin, sniffed with long breaths at the crack under the door, and slipped away more puzzled than he had ever been in his life before.

At those whistling sniffs the woman on the other side flung out a cold hand, gasped as one drowning, and slid down upon the floor in a heap.

When she came to herself, an early sun was shining gloriously in at the east window, and a black-and-white camp robber was screaming hilariously in a pine at the cabin's eaves.

She gathered her body, stiff and weary with the cold night of the high hills, and, dragging herself to a window, looked out with fearful eyes.

There was nothing to see but the big-winged bird and that most glorious of all things, a spring morning in the mountains. A sense of reassurance came upon her with sight of the broad sunlight, and she made a fire and opened the door. To be sure, she looked slyly out along the lintel, held her breath, and listened. Then she lifted her head and filled her lungs, those lungs for whose sake she had come to the healing heights.

She was adrift on the primitive, playing for her life in deadly earnest, and she would make her fight consistently and doggedly.

She worked in the cabin all the morning, putting a bright wool rug on the floor, covering the table with a red-white-and-black Navaho blanket; and by noon it was a beauty spot.

But when she had done all she could, she felt her nerves tightening against the leisure that she did not want. She dug in her trunk and brought out a gun, a good blue-steel automatic, together with a new rifle and a lot of ammunition. The rifle she stood in a corner, but the other she took out in the yard. She had never pulled a trigger in her life, but she calmly intended to learn. She had foreseen many things that dreary night when she faced her youth, her beauty, and her danger in the glass before the gas grate. So now she set up a target, loaded the sinister thing in her hand according to the dealer's directions, took a long aim, and fired. The sound frightened her at first, but she was built of sturdy stuff, and she spent a swift hour wasting ammunition. But at its end she had hit her bull's-eye five times, and she was content. In the big box was more ammunition, and she laid out a certain amount to learn to shoot on. She spent the evening putting the beautiful rifle together.

And that night she slept, while White Ears padded and sniffed at her threshold.

As the days came and passed and nothing happened, she began to feel a trembling pride in herself.

And White Ears, ranging the ridges, killed three deer and continued to be restless. Wherever he went, whatever he did, the memory of that alien thing at the lonely cabin haunted him. At last it became so strong that he waited for a certain day, lying flat on his belly

along a rock under a low laurel bush that commanded the ragged yard.

So it was that he saw a woman for the first time in his life. Men he had seen twice, to his detriment. He still had nightmares sometimes when he felt again the fire in his vitals that had come with the poisoned meat one of the species had left for him in his cubhood. That he had survived spoke eloquently of his vast vitality, his grip on life.

She stood in the door and looked around, and the hair on White Ears' crest rose slowly, bristle by bristle, while his eyes dilated until the pale iris was covered by the black of the pupil. Strange sensations were racing through his heart. He did not know whether he wanted to kill this creature or to crawl and lick its feet. Something of both desires stirred in him. And then she did—for her—an odd thing. She lifted her arms along the door cheeks, raised her breast, and began to sing—for the first time since the little mother died. She had a sweet voice, deep and rich and throaty, like warm honey melting and dripping slowly, and she sang slowly in a luring, sensuous manner. That the song was "Face to Face" made no difference; it lost nothing by that. She looked off across the dropping hills and sang, and it was a free gift of melody, a whole garden of flowers flung out on the silence of the new day. And White Ears, crouching under the laurel bush, crawled dangerously near its edge. The skin on his sharp nose wrinkled back and quivered; the hackles along his crest sank slowly; the pupils drew in across the iris of his eyes.

This was a call like nothing he had ever heard, a luring, loving, friendly call, and it meant something alien to him. Had his father, the renegade collie, been alive, he could have told him that it was the voice of the good Master Heart, the tone of the Man Love which, once found by a dog, was the

one thing to be desired, surpassing all else.

His mother would have sheered from it and stalked this creature from behind.

But White Ears only lay and shivered on his rock.

And the strange lure drew him back to the ragged yard again and again, so that, in the end, he became more or less careless in his eagerness, and betrayed himself. Lola, opening her door one morning, screamed to high heaven and flung it shut. She had seen that long, gray head, with its white-lined ears pointing around the laurel bush. Her heart swelled in her throat, and she knew what it was that had sniffed at her door.

She had never seen a wolf in her life, but she knew that nothing else looked like that low-hung head, those pale eyes, and those sharp ears that lifted and fell so swiftly.

Creeping heavily, she got the rifle and slipped it out the window.

White Ears had not moved, and she took what aim she could for the trembling of her arms, and fired. The bullet whistled close enough to make him leap aside, which brought him in the open, and Lola dropped the gun, open-mouthed with astonishment. The pure white collie collar gleamed in the morning sun.

"Why—why," she whispered, "why, what is it—dog or wolf?"

"Dog—and—wolf," she finished, with a flash of inspiration. "As sure as death that's what it is!"

White Ears made one glorious bound that took him over the bush, and was gone. But Lola sat down in the doorway, all atremble, and stared at the place where he had been, filled with excitement and a good deal of her first fear.

"What a perfectly wonderful, glorious creature!" she said aloud. "Wild and savage and beautiful! What eyes!

And what a ridge of hair on his shoulders! And what a beautiful white collar!"

And while she sat there, something grew out of her fear and her loneliness, her new dependence on her own strength and her aching need of a thing alive to speak to, something that lent sparkle to her eyes and sent the breath sharply in across her lips.

She took to rising very early and watching the laurel bush from behind the curtains, but she saw no sinister sharp nose again, though it took her scent three times in the week that followed. That was another matter of puzzlement to White Ears, the ravishingly sweet scent of this alien thing. It came to him poignant as the smell of new blood under his paws, and it sent little shivers of ecstasy down his back.

It was woman flesh and carnation talc, and to the wolf dog it was a lure unspeakable. Sometimes it made the saliva drip from his jaws; again it made him whimper with a little ingratiating whine.

As the days went by, winelike and sweet and gaining in warmth, Lola came to venture a little way from the cabin. She had learned to handle the rifle amazing well; the automatic was not so easy to her; and she took it with her, hung in the bend of her arm in a familiar fashion that filled her with pride.

"Ho, ho!" she told herself aloud. She was coming to speak aloud a good deal, after the manner of those alone. "Ho, ho! I'm getting to be a woodsman!"

She rigged a line on a slender pole, hunted barnacles off the water rocks as the jehu had told her, and, the first day she tried, took fourteen trout from the little stream that sang and hustled, crystal clear and white with its hurry down the mountain a stone's throw from her door.

That was a great experience, and it filled her with joy to think she could "go get her meat," as she called it. They tasted better, too, than anything she had eaten in many a dreary month. But, though she went a little farther and a little farther, exploring the steep slants, she always listened fearfully every few steps, watched every stone and shadow, and was back at the cabin before the sun had touched the western shoulder of the mighty hill. Sometimes at night she waked in a cold sweat at memory of the daring of the days, and vowed never again to go out of the yard.

But the call of the whispering pines would prove too strong by light, and she would find herself brave once more. She was made of sturdy stuff.

So it was that she saw White Ears again.

She had been out along a slope, sweet with dry needles and silent as stellar space, and she had been lost in a dream of shadowy romance, her romance-and-adventure dreams were coming back to her these last few days, along with a strange, sweet tingle of life in her flesh. The weary lassitude did not press so heavily upon her, it seemed.

So she walked a little way, and halted idly, and walked again, and once she sat down upon a mossy rock. Her rifle never left her hand, for fear stalked always with her, a colossal giant of fear that shadowed the sun and shut out half the beauty that she could have seen. It spoke for the fiber of her courage that, though she entered the giant's company each time she ventured upon the slopes, she still went.

Sitting idly thus, she recalled an odd, big plume of moss that she had passed, and decided to go back and get it. Rising, she stepped softly back along the way she had come, skirted a hazel bush, turned round a giant pine, pushed aside an airy branch of vine maple, like a floating drift of downy green—and

stood face to face with him. His right forefoot was lifted, arrested in his step, his head was up where he had flung it suddenly from sniffing at her trail, and a shaft of sunlight coming through a pine struck full upon his breast, white as snow against the gray of his shoulders.

For an awful moment the girl swayed on her feet, and all the green world went black. Then she thought to herself her watchword, "Fight!" and straightened. With that moral gripping of her fibers, her sight cleared, and she looked straight into White Ears' eyes, strange, pupil-covered eyes that looked back at her with mingled instincts and desires playing swiftly in them. White Ears did not know whether to spring or not. His muscles tightened slowly, uncertainly. His lips drew back a very little.

And then Lola, smiling with an effort, opened her lips and spoke.

"Beauty boy!" she crooned, half unconsciously. "Big, gray beauty! Come, boy! Come, boy! Come!"

She was a vital woman, full of instincts herself, given to impulses, and her golden, low voice, though a bit unsteady, was full to the brim of that sympathy which bespeaks the universal lover, of both man and beast.

It went into White Ears as nothing has ever done before, set vibrating a harp of unused strings, heritage from that most faithful strain, the highly bred sheep dog. It was the tone of the Man Love again.

At every golden note some tightened muscle relaxed. His eyes drew in their spread pupils. And then, instinctively again, the girl put out her hand. The motion broke the spell, and White Ears whirled in his tracks and was gone.

But Lola dreamed of him that night, and shrieked in horror.

By morning her courage came back.

"I've got to have him!" she said aloud, as she put her feet on the gay

wool rug. "I've got to have him! If I don't get him through the dog strain, sooner or later he'll get me through the wolf strain. I saw both possibilities in his eyes yesterday."

So this was the task she set herself—to tame White Ears, White Ears, the unmolested monarch of all the Un-surveyed!

Trembling with fear, but persistent, she ranged the ridges after that, trying to meet him. She practiced faithfully with the rifle, for she knew that any hour she might have to kill or be killed. The quivering interest of the undertaking drove back the awful loneliness somewhat.

But, try as she would, she got no glimpse of the great wolf for another week, though four times he was so close that she might have touched him with her little fishing rod.

Then she saw him again watching covertly from the manzanita bush. She sat down softly in the doorway and began a little crooning call, throwing into it all the sweet and coaxing tones she knew, but he melted away like a shadow. Time after time she tried this as he continued to hang around, but always with no jot or tittle of success until she was in despair.

"If I could only get my hand on him!" she said wistfully. "If I could only touch him!"

And then one day, poking around an ancient rubbish heap under a pine, she came upon an old steel trap, a rusted, clumsy thing, but intact with its chain and ring. She knew what it was, for once she had had brothers and lived on a farm in Michigan. She sat back on her heels and looked at it, hanging in her hands, and with the swiftness of inspiration she conceived a scheme, a cunning, hard scheme.

She took the trap into the cabin and oiled it, looked to its hinges, and sprung it a time or two. Then she deliberately took the gun and tried to kill a big

gray squirrel. That was a hard proceeding, for she was of a tender heart, but she said to herself: "Self-preservation is the first law of nature. I need that squirrel." But it was three days before she brought him down from the big pine, shot cleanly through the head. She was glad he did not kick. That evening at dusk she set the trap in the faint trail White Ears had made around a boulder that hugged the manzanita bush.

She stepped carefully, touched nothing she did not have to, covered the trap with leaves, and when she left brushed the whole spot with the wet skin of the squirrel, dragging it over her steps as she backed away.

She felt mighty proud of that feat. She had read it somewhere in her girlhood, and it seemed to her the last word in woodcraft.

She lay awake half the night, listening, but White Ears did not come to the cabin. He was chasing a four-pointer buck through the late moonlight high on a shoulder of Granite Ridge.

A day passed, and a night and another day, and Lola stayed away from the trap. She had suddenly succumbed to a fit of the "blues"; she missed her gentle mother. That night she gave up and wept herself to sleep late in the lonely silence.

What awakened her she could not say in the first startled moment. Then a cold horror went flying over her. She had caught something in the trap! Outside in the darkness there was an appalling sound, or rather a mighty mingling of sounds, thrashing in the manzanita bush, the thump and grunt of a heavy body banging itself on the earth, a very fury of snarls, and the staccato stroke of snapping teeth. That last sound froze her in her bed. What teeth they must be! And what jaws behind them!

It was in the very dark hour just

before dawn and all through the time between then and light that awful thrashing continued. The girl cowered in her covers. What terrible monster of the woods had she caught? She thought of the strength of the old chain, of the huge green stake, knee-high, that she had driven in to hold it, and wished they were not so strong, that the Thing might be gone by day. But light crept over the eastern ridge and the conflict was still going on. She rose, trembling, and, dressing herself, took the rifle and looked fearfully out of the window.

In the gray dawn a huge gray body was flinging itself fantastically into the air, falling and jumping and tearing at the thing that gripped its right forefoot in jaws as savage as its own. The collie collar gleamed in a ruff of rage. White Ears had found himself for the first time in his life bound against his will.

The fury of that tumbling wolf cowed all the new-born courage of her, and she crouched down beneath the window, white and shaking. It was nine o'clock of the golden morning before White Ears, panting, red-eyed, dripping-tongued, ceased his continuous, frantic effort and lay still beneath the bush. For another hour Lola coaxed her courage. Then she softly opened the door and slipped out. Step by step, eyes upon those shining red ones, she went across the yard. White Ears never moved. He knew that he was fast. But a dozen yards away she stopped, a hand at her throat. And in that second the great wolf dog lifted himself and launched his body at her through the air. He fell, snatched back by the chain, and the bloody foam flew from his mouth, but Lola knew that he meant murder in every line of him. She sat down upon the slope, the rifle across her knees, and began to croon all the soothing sounds she knew. White Ears crawled back and lay down

beneath the bush again, put his nose against his left paw, and glared at her with awful eyes. The right forefoot, doubled back, sent a shiver of pain to Lola's heart. The jagged steel teeth of the trap had bitten deep, cruel as death and as unrelenting, and White Ears' struggles had done the rest. The skin, cut by the teeth, had peeled smoothly down, showing the silvery white tendons for two full inches.

It formed a little wrinkled bulge below. There were savage cross gashes where White Ears had gnawed at the leg himself in his agony.

There are some days that one would fain forget.

That was one to Lola when she sat all day and watched the suffering she had made. An awful day.

All throughout its soft hours White Ears rested and fought and leaped and tore at the anguished foot, and rested again to spring up again and again and go over the same weary way.

The afternoon came out warm, and his tongue hung far out with thirst.

Fever held him, too; she could see that from his eyes. The foot below the trap was swollen cruelly. At dusk she left him and shut herself in the cabin. All the evening she worked under the lamp, cutting up a wide, strong leather belt, setting the straps together with wire hairpins twisted tight with a pair of little pinchers she had found on a shelf. Small buckles off the belt went into the thing she made, and when it was finished she held up a simple but vastly effective muzzle for a giant dog or a wolf, mayhap. Then she went to bed. But she could not sleep—not while that thing of agony crouched under the manzanita bush and the steel trap ate in the swollen flesh.

At gray dawn she was out again. Again White Ears greeted her with a full-length leap of fury, to fall on the trampled earth.

He looked very gaunt this morning.

The white of his collar was soiled and disheveled. His eyes were bloodshot. His tongue was swollen more, and the leg above the trap was big as Lola's arm.

Tears filled her eyes at his pitiful plight.

"Beauty boy!" she said gently. "Poor lad! But how will I win you unless I rescue you from pain? And how will you know pain unless I inflict it, you proud king of the country?"

Gripping her courage tight, she walked close as she dared to him, set down a pan of sweet water, and pushed it within his reach with a stick.

"Three tablets," she said aloud. "If it's too much—well, good-by, my big gray beauty—but this is desperate work, and it needs desperate measures."

Then she went back in the cabin and examined the small bottle of opiate in her medicine box which the great doctor had given her.

"For emergency only, mind," he had cautioned her, "and according to direction. In the lonesome land it is sometimes necessary as your permanganate and your calomel."

She had put three tablets in that pan of water, and she deliberately went out on the slopes to escape what it might do.

She did not return for two hours.

When she crept back and peered fearfully round the bush the pan was empty and the splendid, wild creature that had ranged the ridges so long lay sprawled and flat in the sunlight, the world gone far from him, the agony forgotten. His lean side raised and dropped softly.

Fearfully she crept to him, touched him, pushed him. He neither moved nor opened his dull eyes.

"Now!" she breathed. "Now!" And, flying to the cabin, she brought the muzzle and buckled it securely upon the huge, helpless head. The feel of the rough gray fur under fingers thrilled

her; she touched the sharp ears ecstatically. Then she took the savage trap, and, with foot and hand, sprung it open. The tears came sharp under her lids again as the poor maimed foot came out. Next she brought her trunk rope, wound it about the inert body, and began to drag it toward the cabin.

That was a herculean task, for White Ears was all bone and hard muscle, and five times she stopped to rest on the short journey.

But at last it was over, and the wolf dog lay, a heap of wild gray fur, on the bright rug—and Lola, trembling and triumphant, closed the door.

It was a strange sight that they presented in the days that followed; a strange sight!

All that night White Ears slept in his stupor, and when he came out of it he was like one half dead, so that he could not sense his wrong.

But at last life came flooding back in him, and he saw the woman backed against the door with the rifle in her hands, felt the horrid thing that bound his jaws, knew that the door was shut upon his freedom.

Then, indeed, the king of the ridges rose in his fury.

He was weak from lack of food, dizzy from fatigue, stupid from the drug, but he turned the tiny interior into a place of horror.

Round and round upon the floor he went, tearing at the muzzle, foaming in vain delirium. And finding himself helpless he flung himself upon Lola, crouching by the door. She shrieked and screamed at the first attack, covering her head under the mouthing muzzle.

"Let it hold!" she screamed. "Oh, God! Let it hold!"

Then she raised along the wall and caught the beast by the forelegs.

She was tall, but he reared his savage face to hers, and Lola saw his eyes. They were agonized and wild and full

of two things at the same time—the fight lust of the wolf, the anguished appeal of the dog. She held him hard in her large white hands, straining all her big body to match his strength. She looked straight in those awful eyes, though her throat contracted. And as she struggled with him she began to talk, the gentle, soothing croon that meant pity and love and help.

And finally, after so long a time that she could never afterward compute it, White Ears tore from her grasp, staggered across the floor, and laid him down beside the cupboard.

What was in his heart she could not guess, whether surrender or strategy, but she was ready for her own move. She followed him with a steady step, set a fire going in the stove, opened a can of beef broth, and made a thin gruel that filled the cabin with its aroma. When it was done she cooled it in a pan and set it down close to the sullen gray nose.

But White Ears scorned to notice.

So the day passed, and the night came down, dusky and sweet with the smell of the woods in spring, and Lola sat by the closed door. She lighted the lamp, and took up her vigil for the night. Once after midnight she dozed, to wake in fright, but the huge gray shape had not moved.

So gray dawn found them, and Lola began to fear that White Ears would never eat. She made her fire, and sat down beside him with the gruel, warm in its pan.

She put a hand upon the flat head and raised the pointed nose. Then indeed White Ears lifted his eyes and looked at her, and Lola's heart gave a great leap.

"Poor, poor boy!" she cried. "Lola's gray lad! Come!"

And she slipped the nose strap two notches through the buckle. Wetting her fingers in the grateful liquid, she forced them in across the pale lips.

Brute nature could bear no more. The wolf dog was famished and dropped his weary head to the pan and lapped painfully until the last sweet drop was gone.

And Lola crept close to him and began her last great campaign, the application of personal appeal. She talked ceaselessly, crooning her love words, while her hands, those sweet woman hands with the scent upon them of woman flesh and carnation talc, played softly over the rough, gray head.

Up from the sharp nose they went, along the forehead, to linger on the white-lined ears, laid flat to the skull in some unguessable instinct, to travel gently down over the wide white collar. Again and again they performed this soothing journey, now patting the trembling, tense shoulder, now rubbing softly and with gentle insistence under the base of the ears. Sometimes they passed under the jaws and smoothed the silver throat.

Who shall say what held the great wolf still, what vague sense of the creature for the Oversoul?

In the last extremity does not man turn to his invisible Deity?

Perhaps White Ears quivered there under the actual hand of a god.

Who knows?

At any rate he lay supine while the hours passed, and Lola looked beyond the lonely walls with shining eyes.

So she fed him and crooned her love words to him and fed him again.

She slept on the floor beside him all that night, curled under a blanket with her hand in the fur of his throat. And White Ears stared into the lamplit shadows with steady eyes, and did not sleep.

So it went for a whole long week.

At its end the wolf dog was free of the cabin, and he had worn no muzzle for the last three days of it.

He was gaunt and lean from his lack of blood meat, but he was tamed at

last. He ate from the girl's hand and let her pull his huge head in her lap at will, while she bathed and tended the healing foot.

But there was that in Lola which would never be satisfied with an uncertainty. She knew he was tamed, but that was not enough. He must be won forever and a day. Then would she exult and say to herself "Behold my power!"

So, on a day when the woods were sweet with sun and wind, she sat on the floor and fondled White Ears with every loving blandishment she knew, pulled the sharp ears tenderly, breathed upon his nose, and looked into his pale eyes, and opened the door to the free green world.

At sight of freedom the wolf dog rose slowly to his feet, lowered his head, and gazed out upon it with contracted eyes. For a long time he stood so. Once he turned his head and looked at Lola, a questioning gaze.

Then he looked back to the door again, drew a great breath into his lungs, gathered his muscles for a spring, cleared the space between him and the sill at one bound, and was gone.

Gone like a flash of wild gray fur down along the sloping yard to the encroaching pines.

Long Lola sat by the empty pan, and the spring day seemed void of joy.

But that evening she sat in the door until the moon rose over the eastern peaks, waiting. When it grew too cold she went to bed, lying on her elbows with the rifle in her hands, and watched the open way through the still hours.

Sometimes she was cold with fear, and always she was tense, but still she watched.

She slept through the day, and the next night took up her vigil again.

For three interminable nights she kept it up until her eyes ached from the incessant watching of the tall square

of the door that turned from the silver of moonlight to the blue of starlight and then to the gray and pink of dawn, but no shadow ever crossed it.

On the fourth night she was fain to give it up.

"For once you can't run your eternal bluff, Lola," she said. "You've met your match—nay, your master at the art. The king was only waiting for his hour, possessing his soul in patience. He'll never come to sniff and listen at your door again."

But even as she spoke the breath died on her lips, her heart lost a beat, for there was a stealthy pad upon the soft earth outside. She grew rigid in her bed and brought the rifle up to her cheek, trained on the dim square. What might it not be, there at the step?

For a moment there was silence.

Then a soft pad struck the flat stone outside, and a head came slowly around the lintel, a long, slim head with a pointed nose and sharp ears lined with white.

There, in the moonlight, gleamed the broad white ruff of the collie collar.

"White Ears!" she cried tremulously. "Gray lad! Lola's beauty boy! You have come back!"

And she held out a hand from the bed's edge, calling low in her throat.

It was the tone of the Man Love, laden with the promise of caresses, sweet with tenderness, and it drew the wolf dog in across the floor. Step by step he came, slowly, hesitantly, until he stood and looked at her with great eyes, luminous in the shadows. Then

he dropped his nose in the waiting hand, and the struggle was done.

Lola had found her friend, her champion, her faithful servitor for all time, and White Ears had come to his god.

For a while the girl fondled the rough gray head. Then suddenly realizing that she was very weary, she dropped on her pillow with a sigh, and White Ears lay down beside the bed, his nose toward the open door, for the first time in his life on guard.

So had his father, the sheep dog, stood guard in the good days before he fell.

Just before she fell asleep Lola roused a little, smiled in the darkness, and muttered exultantly.

"Ho! Ho! Bluffer!" she said sleepily. "You've bluffed the Wilderness, the giant Fear—as witness the open door! You've bluffed the wolf out of your king of dogs. And, unless I'm much mistaken, you're beginning to bluff that impudent spot on your right lung!"

Then she drifted away.

But the sound that had roused her still echoed high in the ramparts of Granite Ridge—a long-drawn, blood-curdling, womanlike scream—and the hackles on the wolf dog's crest rose in a ridge.

He had heard that scream before in contemptuous indifference.

Now he thought of the yellow shape that gave it and sniffed uneasily at the hand hanging on his neck—that hand so ravishingly sweet with the scent of woman flesh and carnation talc. It was well he stood on guard.

The second story in this series—called "White Ears on Guard"—will appear in the next POPULAR, on sale two weeks hence, March 23rd.

A TREE THAT IS A LUMBER YARD

According to all the experts, the biggest tree in the United States to-day is the "Mother of the Forest," a redwood in the Calaveras big-tree grove in California. It is estimated that there are 140,619 board feet of lumber in this one tree.

A Badge of Honor

By Leavitt Ashley Knight

Author of "The Millennium Engine," Etc.

Charley the pawnbroker's clerk on the trail of the Mush-Man and twenty-five hundred dollars reward. A tale of the city of thrills

ELBERSTEIN, the pawnbroker, eyed his new clerk critically, then set a green velvet hat atop a lumpy, baldish head, and shot orders thus: "Now, remember! No loans above ten dollars while I'm out. If anybody drifts in after a bigger bunch, say that I'm out to dinner and will be back in an hour."

The new clerk bowed obsequiously at his employer's round back until it vanished in the thickening crowd of Broadway's early summer evening. The next instant he was rubbing his blue-veined hands together and contemplating his smile in a great gilt mirror across the sparkling shop. Having wearied of this, he scanned the goods in the show cases and deciphered their tags.

"This sure is a fine business!" he mumbled to himself. "You sit on your haunches and let the dead brokes lug in their watches and sparklers. It's a cinch and a steady one as long as there are poor devils with board bills to pay. Gee! But I wish I could open a pawnshop of my own! Now how much dough would it take?" His finger tips did some quick arithmetic, then he groaned: "'Tain't for me. Once a clerk, always a clerk."

Speculating thus, the young fellow was alone with Elberstein's hundred-thousand-dollar hoard of other people's diamonds and trinkets for the span of time in which, let us say, nine hundred

sight-seers, actors out of work, and gentlemen burglars had strolled past the door. Then a man darted in swiftly, though without running, and so softly that the new clerk stiffened and felt about beneath the counter for the revolver which every New York pawnbroker keeps within short reach in these thief-ridden days.

The man perceived this move. His jaw fell, and he sucked in air with a hoarse, whistling sound deep in his panic-stricken throat.

Ten lingering seconds through, the two held their postures, like puppets. Then the clerk twanged sharply: "Well, what can I do for you?"

With that, the visitor went limp, mopped his brow weakly, and essayed a smile. "Just a little loan," he said, "on these things."

From an inside vest pocket he fished up a wad of tissue paper and laid it tenderly on the counter.

A sigh of relief blew through the clerk's professional smirk. He unwrapped the little package with the deftness of a surgeon. First issued forth a necklace of octagonal turquoises, crudely cut and ill strung. The clerk sniffed his contempt. Next a miniature on old ivory. It bore a picture of a small boy topped with a wild shock of carrot hair. All the rascality of grammar-school days lurked in the gray squint eyes, and the lopsided grin laid

open to honest daylight a mouth that was a cavern of trickery.

The clerk held it at arm's length and chuckled.

"Say," he observed, "there's a kid who's dropped many a tree toad into grandma's iced bouillon, eh?"

The owner nodded morosely, then leaned half across the counter and asked: "Won't you advance me twenty-five dollars on it?"

"Are you crazy?" the clerk hooted, and instantaneously resumed the icy judgment of those who live upon the helplessness of the destitute. "It's got lots of sentimental value. But we don't lend on that. I couldn't allow you more than two dollars on it."

"How much on the necklace?" the man asked dully.

"Maybe seven or eight dollars," the clerk hazarded, cocking his head sagely at the trinket. "And that's kindness, let me tell you."

The petitioner winced and caught his lip in his teeth. "I've got to raise fifty dollars," he blurted piteously. "This will bring it, and don't try to tell me that it won't. It's virgin gold, straight from the mines of the man who gave it to me——" And he rolled across the dull oaken board a thick yellow disk.

It was a huge badge, backed with a clever safety pin, flecked with gaudy enamel which represented a coat of arms, and covered to the raw rim with engraved curlicues of almost microscopical fineness. Around the coat of arms ran a wide ribbonlike decoration that was no longer decorative, for it was deeply scraped and scratched.

The clerk weighed the offering, and his eyebrows lifted. "Pure stuff, all right, Mr.—er——" Suddenly he stopped. "Say, I'm sorry, but I can't lend you half what this is worth. My boss doesn't allow me to lend sums greater than ten dollars while he's out. But I'll tell you what. Let me melt

the thing right now, and I'll buy the metal. I can do that——"

"My God, no!" The man choked. "No!"

"Oh, well," the clerk shrugged his dapper shoulders, and shoved the badge back to its owner, "we can't do business then. You'll have to wait till Mr. Elberstein comes back."

Mechanically the man dropped upon a stool and looked steadfastly toward the rear of the shop as if shunning curious eyes. Evasively the clerk, while bustling about to no purpose, managed to take note of his visitor's nobly limned brow, his frayed trousers, his celluloid collar, the rough, black button between the two proper brown buttons of his wrinkled and threadbare coat, and that peculiar laxity of cheek and lip which is the sign of utmost physical weariness. In all these marks, taken one by one, there was nothing which a Broadway pawnbroker might wonder at. An all too familiar figure it was, this benumbing despondency, this shabby genteel, this one-time gentleman brought at last to the final surrender, the pawning of keepsakes. But what piqued the clerk's curiosity was the combination of marks. Here was a fallen angel from some haughty drawing-room. And here, too, was a complete surrender of reminiscent pretense in his dress. Most of Those Who Have Seen Better Days sedulously cherish and display sartorial relics of extinct splendor. They swagger into the pawnshop, flaming at the throat with silken cravats skillfully knotted so as to hide the holes in them; or swinging gold-knobbed ebony canes, thirty years seasoned, with well-feigned nonchalance—as if, poor things! they really believed that the eagle-visaged men behind the counters believed their stories about remittances delayed in the mails, or unexpected wedding presents to buy, or reckless wagers lost! But this poor devil with

the badge was different. Unmistakably he was a man of breeding. Yet his pride was all gone, and his habits of pride had left him. Every stitch on him was cast-off clothing out of some dingy Bowery hand-me-down establishment. And in his eyes the clerk thought he discerned something like humility, tainted with degradation and blighted with fear. And, being a new man at the business, the clerk wondered what all that meant. He wondered if——

Then in waddled Elberstein, hard and shifty of gaze and soft of paunch.

"Let him have fifty dollars," he grunted, after a swift appraisal of the three articles.

The clerk paid over the sum. The man nervously thrust it into a dilapidated pocketbook, mumbled thanks, then turned pleadingly to the proprietor.

"One little favor, sir," he begged. "Will you please put those things in the window?"

"Eh?" Elberstein stared. "We only exhibit unredeemed goods after their time's up. Aren't you going to pick your stuff up in a few weeks?"

"Yes, yes," the man rushed the words. "I shall—but—I'd like to have them where I can see them. The sight of them cheers me up when I'm feeling blue—you don't understand—they help me to keep going——"

"Oh, I understand all right. Put 'em in the north window, Charley," Elberstein gruffly ordered the clerk, who laid the three articles on a battered pewter tray and set them down in the midst of a dismal collection of early-Victorian chip-garnet pins.

"It's very kind of you." The owner bowed courteously to Elberstein, and straightway slipped into the street.

"There's a mush man!" grunted Elberstein as he wriggled out of his coat and began fumbling over the lock of his squat safe. "Mush man! I'm sick

of 'em. Soft hearts and soft heads. Always wanting me to weep on their shoulders, because they've been fools and lost their money and have to put their wedding rings and baby pictures in soak. Look out for 'em, Charley. They're the rottenest lot we got to deal with. Worse than the second-story men."

"That badge," commented Charley, "looks like a hero medal. And if it is, that guy certainly lifted it off'n somebody. He never won none——"

"Let's look at it. You never can tell——" Elberstein waved commandingly toward the pewter tray.

"Hm!" mused the pawnbroker as Charley handed him the badge. "Those scratches look bad. Now wly did he make 'em?" And with that query on his pudgy lips, Elberstein clapped a magnifying glass to his eye. "Say, my boy, what d'ye make of this? There's a B and an S and ONIA. And I guess there's a number, 1630. Here, you try it."

Charley took the badge, and laboriously spelled off: "Bostonia Condita 1630."

"Sounds like guinea talk about Boston," conjectured Elberstein.

"It's Latin," explained Charley, "and means 'Boston founded in 1630.' And it's my guess that the picture in the middle is the seal of the town."

"Good eye, 'son," Elberstein nodded.

"Now I'm wise. That's an official police and fire badge. The fancy kind that mayors and aldermen and department chiefs sport. It lets 'em in at safe crackings and murders, and it passes 'em through the fire lines when there's a big blaze, y'know——"

"I knew that fellow had stolen it," was all Charley said. "He's not the kind that gets high up in politics——"

Charley would have said more. But he checked himself at the sight of a transformation sweeping over Elberstein's face and Elberstein's fat, wicked

hands. Elberstein was not pretty at his best, and at his worst those yellowish, puffy eyes of his and that wrinkled neck darting to right and to left like a sluggish serpent would halt the speech of any man who looked upon them. Now, as Charley speculated about the owner of the badge, an ugly change appeared in his listener. The pawnbroker was working his lips tensely. He was picking up the badge and laying it down softly; picking it up and laying it down again. His wrinkled neck was working snakily. He was looking in that strange fashion which men fall into when they fix their gaze, not upon things around them, but upon Things of the Past. Elberstein was looking, not across the spaces of Broadway; he was looking across the vanished years. Suddenly a sharp grunt escaped him. The joy of hell gleamed from his countenance. He replaced the badge on its tray, set the tray in the window, waddled hastily to his desk at the rear of the shop, and fell to writing letters.

On the fifth day after the badge had arrived in Elberstein's window, Elberstein casually asked Charley if that crazy mush man had been coming around to moon over his trinkets.

"How do I know?" Charley asked in mild bewilderment. "I ain't paid to look out of the window, am I?"

"You're paid to do what I ask," growled Elberstein. "And I'm now requesting you to keep a sharp lookout for him. I want to see him. I want to buy that coin he brought in. You know, that thing you thought was a badge. 'Tisn't a badge at all. It's a rare coin, and I got a fine offer for it, see? But don't let on to him. Just find out where he's living, so I can call on him. I'll give you an extra ten-spot for your trouble."

"All right." Charley bowed to hide a grin. For Charley knew. He knew,

by that clumsy lie of Elberstein's, that the badge had been stolen, that there was a reward for the capture of the thief, and that Elberstein was going to gather in both thief and reward—if he could.

"If he can," Charley winked to himself. "But maybe I need that reward more than Elberstein does. I'd like to open a little pawnshop of my own. I'm going to be independent."

As usual, Elberstein went out to dine at seven. As usual, Charley stayed on solitary duty. But he did something unusual, quite unusual. He twisted a bright little wire into a queer shape, thrust it deep into the thin crack where the edge of Elberstein's desk top met the desk frame. Then likewise with another wire on the ridge edge; a gentle tap or two, and Charley was inside, running through papers and letters with finger tips like feathers, replacing every sheet and envelope precisely as he had come upon them. Before the whistle of the traffic-squad patrolman on a near-by corner had sounded thrice its command to the vehicular torrents of the night, the clerk had found what he had sought.

It was a letter from the chief of the Boston police. Charley read:

DEAR SIR: Replying to your inquiry of the 17th inst., would say that your recollection of the Carrington case is, on the whole, correct. Henry Carrington, only son of his father, William Carrington, deceased, and member of Boston's exclusive circles, was appointed commissioner of paving and public embankments. The position was offered to him out of pure charity, because he was hard up, his family estate having shrunken to almost nothing as a result of the big Chelsea fire a few years before.

On April 19th, in the year he was appointed, he accepted a five-thousand-dollar bribe from Matthias Kell, who was hot after a million-dollar contract for furnishing Boston with limestone blocks for the big new extension of the West Side Embankment. Carrington was caught in his office with the greenbacks not ten minutes after Kell had delivered the stuff. By a clever trick he got

away from our detectives before he was out of the building. But he left the money behind.

The municipality offers a reward of one thousand dollars for his capture. Two of the fashionable clubs to which he once belonged offer another one thousand dollars. And the Pioneers of Civic Virtue, a local club, offer five hundred dollars. Although it is now nearly two years since Carrington fled, all these rewards are still offered.

You are also correct in supposing that Carrington has a son, a boy of thirteen now. He and his mother are living in Ballington Center, near Lynn. He is attending school, and his mother works in one of the Lynn mills. We know that she is earning only seven dollars a week, but is paying twelve a month rent, and spends twenty-two a month at the grocer's and butcher's in Ballington Center. So she is receiving funds from somebody. We have been unable to discover that this somebody is Carrington. The only connection Mrs. Carrington keeps up is with an Italian mission school here in Boston. She used to be a teacher of French and Italian; and Carrington met her in Florence while he was living there with some rich American friends.

As Carrington speaks Italian perfectly, and knows Italy like a book, his former friends generally believe that he had fled to that country, and is probably a guide or waiter in some remote district unfrequented by American tourists.

From that moment, Charley's sharp, gray eyes lived in the north window. Past its plate glass the drift of the world moved, now thick, now sparse, now fast, now slow. Sometimes a whole hour would pass without anybody peering in upon the bright, sad forfeits of the poor. Then a group of three or four would stop to contemplate Elberstein's glittering offerings, and the presence of these three or four would draw, in great flocks, that queer, harmless beast of the metropolitan jungle, the thrill eater, a biped which lives upon novelties, and waxes fat when fed with the petty excitements of the avenue. With such a throng before him, Charley would grow weary with much searching. But twenty-five hundred dollars reward! That was worth a headache or two, eh? So he stuck

heroically to his task. And behind him Elberstein chafed one palm against the other in nervous expectation.

At last the man of the badge appeared, and Charley's luck came with him. Elberstein had just returned from lunch, and it was Charley's turn to go out and wrestle with quick-lunch sandwiches. The pawnbroker was busy stowing away a big tray of jewels in his safe at the very instant the man's pallid face shone with a wistful, reminiscent light upon the turquoise necklace, the miniature of the carroty-haired boy, and the badge. Breathlessly, like a fisherman who feels a big black bass nibbling bait, Charley watched that face with one eye and Elberstein's fat back with the other. Breathlessly he watched the man's lips move, as if reciting something, and Elberstein's gay outing flannel coat disappear behind the farthest counter as the pawnbroker poked about on the bottom shelf of his safe. Breathlessly Charley watched the man gather himself together with visible pain and move off down Broadway, unseen by Elberstein.

"Well, I'm off!" the clerk sang out. And, as Elberstein grunted, Charley flashed into the street, on the trail of mush man and twenty-five hundred dollars reward.

It was an easy trail. Mush man trudged steadily into the southwest until he reached one of those strange islands that dot the sea of humanity below Washington Square. It was an Italian colony which he entered, a colony set down in the midst of Greek colonies, shirt-waist factory colonies, and wholesale fruit and vegetable colonies. Into a reeking, squalling, chattering, moaning, steaming tenement he turned. To some boys shooting craps at the curb he nodded with a smile which was returned fivefold—then vanished up dark stairs.

"This is too easy," Charley chuckled

as he jotted down the address and walked up to the boys.

Pawnbrokers' clerks are not innocent and guileless Sunday-school children. They are crafty in all the ways of the city. Every day they haggle over the counter with thieves, some of whom they are under iron orders to protect and some of whom they trap under spur of a reward or of a ward boss' revenge. Every day they spar with cunning servant girls and valets who fight hard to pawn as solid silver the plated ware of mistress and the nickel chafing dish of master. Every day they quiz janitors, policemen, central-office detectives, newsboys, corner loafers, confidence men, asking them about new faces in the neighborhood, about goods stolen, about rewards offered, about thieves trapped with bunches of pawn tickets sewed in the linings of their vests. And those quizzed answer—promptly, if not always truthfully. For they wish to have friends at the Sign of the Three Gilt Balls, because—well, hard luck may overtake the best of us some day, you know.

Charley, though new with Elberstein, was old in all these devices of discovery. Within a week he had learned from twenty sources that the man of the badge called himself Amateo Viretto; that he was an Italian-American who knew English so well that he was earning enormous money—over twenty dollars a week, signor!—tutoring the immigrant boys and youths and maidens in the speech of the New World. He lived with the Widow Fresci, fourth floor, rear, to the left, next to the insane cobbler, whose wife and three daughters had perished in the Triangle shirt-waist factory fire that burned up the cobbler's wits, Virgin Mary preserve him in paradise! A nice man was Amateo Viretto, a verra nice man! He paid the cobbler's rent, and pretended to the cobbler that it twas the government which was doing it. To

the patrolman who occasionally looked into the street he gave a quarter every Saturday night, to seal his lips and shut his eyes while the boys of the block played one-o'-cat. And for every window the boys smashed, out popped a quarter from Signor Viretto's purse, up bobbed the glazier, Sorrentino, from his cellar shop, and presto! some screeching housewife had a nice, fresh pane of glass.

Yes, the whole block worshiped Amateo, the boys swore by him, and Camman, the big Tammany man, was verra, verra afraid of him; for all the young voters followed him, but he would not fall in with Camman nor any other politician. Some said he was building up a political gang of his own, but others insisted that he was just naturally good. And by way of proof they pointed to his way of life. Did he spend his twenty a week going to dances and Far Rockaway excursions? Did he offer prizes at bowling contests and pool matches? Never a penny! He lived in a stuffy hole in the wall, ate the Widow Fresci's wormy risotto and antique Gorgonzola that smelled as if ammonia had been spilled on it, with intent to kill something therein. He did not even subscribe for the fireworks and the street festoons on the day of St. Antonio, nor on the Day of the Three Saviors of Padua, nor on any other of the thirty-two Days. No, plainly the signor was not scheming to become alderman. He was hoarding to open a school of languages or to buy an asparagus farm on Long Island—or maybe an automobile.

Charley's luck stayed with him. His upper lip helped him next. It grew long, stiff black hairs very fast. Charley put away his safety razor, and in a fortnight a bristly young mustache was effectually disguising him. Forthwith he took lodgings on the floor below the so-called Amateo Viretto. Another week, and the two were exchange-

ing good mornings and good evenings in the hallway. Charley let it be known that he had moved into the quarter to learn Italian and thereby better himself, for had he not been promised a fine position in the office of an Italian importer?

In a little while he begged the so-called Amateo to give him lessons. At first Amateo hesitated, but when Charley offered him a dollar an hour he yielded almost greedily.

One night Charley was reciting: "*Buon giorno, signor. Fa fresco—*" when somebody rapped on his teacher's door. The so-called Viretto went; it was one of his young friends. He said that some of them wanted to speak with him a minute downstairs; one of the crowd had been arrested for gambling.

Viretto excused himself, descended, and in twenty seconds Charley's bent wire had worked open a little trunk in the corner of the dingy room, and from beneath a shabby overcoat, drawn forth a man's wedding ring, the ring of Henry Carrington, bribe taker and fugitive from justice.

After the lesson Charley dropped in on a pawnbroker in upper Third Avenue, a very old man who wished to sell out. The pair haggled a while, and at last the proprietor disagreeably condescended to give up his ground lease, office equipment, firm name, and good will for twenty-five hundred dollars cash—seller to retain all unredeemed goods and to remove same from premises within forty-eight hours after sale. Charley shook his head; but finally he said: "I'll have to think that over. Here's fifty dollars to show I mean business. Gimme a sixty-day option."

Five minutes later Charley telephoned Elberstein dolefully that he was sick and might not be down to the office until noon on the morrow. Then he fled to the Boston night express.

On the following noon he was back,

hanging up his hat behind Elberstein's ground-glass partition and telling Elberstein dismally what awful cramps a spoiled cucumber had caused him. Elberstein did not listen. Elberstein did not grumble. He stood in the doorway, glancing anxiously from his ruby-studded gold watch to the dusty shimmer of the street.

In a minute a thickset man strode into the shop; a brute of a man with a slit of a mouth, a threat in his greenish eyes, and the ghost of a sneer here, there, and nowhere on his square-built face. "How d'y' do, O'Tale!" Elberstein grunted and tossed his head as a signal to the newcomer to follow him to the sheltered rear room behind the glass partition. Halfway down the aisle the newcomer noticed Charley, halted, and thrust out an apelike hand. "Why, hello, Red!" he croaked. "When did you get out of th' pen? I thought you——"

Elberstein wheeled like a well-spun top, but not quickly enough to forestall a terrible glance that traveled from Charley to O'Tale.

"Well, ain't that funny?" O'Tale laughed uproariously and slapped his thigh. "I seen yer back, and the build of it is just like an ol' pal o' mine. But when ye turn face to me, the joke's on me all right. Excuse me for laughin', son."

Whereupon Charley laughed feebly, and Elberstein moved on, followed by O'Tale, who, as he closed the glass door behind him, shot a great wink at the clerk.

It was a long minute before Charley ceased trembling on the stool from which his panic-weakened limbs refused to lift him. But as he was coming out of his cold sweat, Elberstein's voice filtered through the partition, carrying a word that drew the clerk upright and quickly on tiptoe to the closed door.

"He was up here yesterday noon,

looking at the badge," Elberstein was saying. "I'd 'a' followed him myself, but Charley—that's my clerk—was out to lunch, and I couldn't leave the shop. Pat the Cracker was loafing across the street, and I sent him on the guy's trail. Pat spotted him all the way, all right. I was down there this mornin' and saw him myself, living in a ramshackle tenement."

"An' wot d'ye want o' me?" rumbled O'Tale.

"I want you to go down there with me right now." Elberstein dropped his voice. "You gotto nab him—any way you like—only nab him tight, d'ye hear? Then we'll turn him over to a private detective I've hired to railroad the party back to Boston. I ain't goin' to bother about extradition papers—that only means splittin' the reward with the police."

"How much is the reward?" came sharply from O'Tale.

"Five hundred," Elberstein lied suavely, "and I'll give you an even hundred, which is easy money, I'm telling you. The guy is slim and wabby. He won't put up any fight. Come along now——"

Back to his stool Charley flashed. Then the door opened.

"Well, my boy," Elberstein turned to his clerk, "I'm off to lunch now. Write some fresh price tags for that tray of ladies' watches——"

Dumb with bewilderment, Charley watched the pair step into a taxicab and flit into the southwest. As they vanished in a whirl of trucks, limousines, dust, and wayfarers, Charley saw his twenty-five-hundred-dollar pawnshop disappear like a bubble in a breeze.

"No, sir, Mr. Elberstein! No, sir!" he cried savagely. "You'll not beat me out that easy! I'm going to have a little pawnshop of my own! I'm going to get a start in life!"

He opened the till and stripped it

of its eighty-five dollars. Then he ran to the door and yelled to a lolling chauffeur. The car rolled up to the curb, and Charley's hand was upon the door, when he suddenly turned, dashed into the shop, and took from the north window the turquoise necklace, the miniature, and the badge.

"Poor devil!" he muttered. "He'll want these with him in jail, I guess. And now, son," he turned to the chauffeur, "break the record to Spring Street. See this ten-spot?"

They shot off with a roar, leaving behind them the well-known pawnshop of Elberstein wide open, empty, and its hundred thousand dollars of jewels unguarded.

The car thundered into the Italian quarter. Up the stairs to the Widow Fresci's Charley leaped and tapped on the hall-bedroom door. Amateo Viretto, alias Henry Carrington, opened it.

"Why, hello!" he began, extending a delicate hand. "Come in——"

"Come along, quick!" Charley clutched the teacher's sleeve desperately. "There's a bad row on over in the next street. Some friends of yours in it. They want you. They think you can stop it——"

For one immeasurably brief instant, Henry Carrington searched his pupil's face in a still agony of doubt. Then he went along.

Charley shoved Carrington into the car, and whispered to the chauffeur: "To police headquarters!" He took his place beside the teacher; the car started.

"Well, Mr. Henry Carrington, how'd you like a trip to Boston?" said Charley, with a wicked little burst of mirth.

There reigned a tense, brief silence, while Carrington, pale and trembling, surveyed his captor.

"I've been expecting this." The fugitive's words quivered under the stress of a tremendous self-control. "Every night. I've wondered if it would come

before morning. It's been hell, straight hell, these three years. Now that I'm caught, I'm glad——" And with that the wretched man lost the leash upon himself and collapsed into a mere bag of quaking, sobbing human flesh on the floor of the car.

For the first time in his cunning career, Charley was at a loss what to say and what to do. Several blocks they rode thus; then the chauffeur swerved into a thoroughfare ill-paved, and the rude jolting over dislocated granite blocks shook the clerk's wits together and set them to working, very much as one may start a sick alarm clock by dropping it on the floor. He dragged Carrington up beside him and shook him. "Say, now," he protested, "don't cut up like that. It's not pretty. Be a man."

"Be a man? Be a man?" Carrington shrilled hysterically and flung up his long, soft hands with a sharp, tragic laugh. "What a joke! I've worked like a slave. I've saved money. I've sent my wife eight dollars every week. I've put three dollars in the savings bank every Saturday morning for my little boy's education——"

"That ain't much," was Charley's foolish comment.

"Not for you. Not for most men," Carrington retorted bitterly. "But it's a lot for me to make and save. I've been brought up to spend, not to make and save. On the first of every month my father gave the receiving teller of his bank a slip of paper or two, the teller wrote eight hundred dollars in my pass book. That's the only business training I received." He shrugged his shoulders and looked out of the window. "But why bore you with the history of my life? It——"

"Excuse me, but I didn't mean to rub it in," Charley hurried to say, with a grave earnestness. "I was sort of rattled when I said what I did. But, now that you've opened up, you won't

mind my saying that I guess you didn't know the difference between a yellow-back and a plugged nickel when you—— when you had that little affair with one Matthias Kell——"

Henry Carrington nodded, and there came a grim tightening of his cheek muscles that condemned, as loudly as the shouting of a multitude, the men and the silly conventions of society which make fashionable the upbringing Henry Carrington had received. "No, I didn't know the difference," he declared vehemently. "But why won't they let me learn it? Why won't they give me a chance to understand what makes a dollar more important than a dime? Why won't they let me do for myself what my father and mother should have done for me but did not do——"

"What d'ye mean?" Charley's brows lifted.

"I want to be decent," Carrington snapped, with a show of sullenness. "And no man can be decent unless he works, rubs up against real life, sweats, lies awake nights wondering how he is going to pay his landlady. How did I come to take Matthias Kell's dirty money? Because I didn't know enough about men and money to see through his schemes. He pretended to be a friend. He was interested in my boy too——"

"The carrot-haired kid on the miniature?" Charley asked casually.

Carrington winced as he muttered: "Yes, Jackie. Kell knew I was hard up after the Chelsea fire wiped out a lot of underinsured houses that father's estate owned. He knew I'd have a tight squeeze sending Jackie to Harvard. So he came around with the five thousand one day——said it was for the boy——then he just mentioned that matter of the stone contract. He never said the money was a bribe. I didn't have the sense to think of it as a bribe, poor baby-brained fool that I was! But

I saw it the minute the detectives rushed into my office——” He flung himself back in his seat with another bitter laugh. “Oh, well! What’s the use of saying all this? I’m glad the suspense is over. I guess I’ll be better off in prison, anyhow. They may teach me a trade there. That’s worth being locked up five years for——”

It was Charley’s turn to laugh now. “Yes, they’ll teach you a trade, all right,” he said slowly. “And they’ll teach you more——”

“More? You mean a profession? Law? Medicine?” Carrington’s eyes opened wide. “If I’d known that, I’d have given myself up long ago——”

“No, no!” Charley darkened. “Not that! They’ll teach you how to sandbag a fellow—it’s dead easy, let me tell you. They’ll put you wise to little stunts like this——” Charley held up before his prisoner’s astounded gaze the latter’s memorandum book and handkerchief, which he had stolen while talking. “They’ll teach you how to open a roll-top desk with a hairpin, how to open a safe by paring your finger nail to the quick. And, what’s more, they’ll treat you white——”

“They?”

“The poor devils in stripes, I mean,” Charley explained, as the automobile slowed down. “They’ll treat you white. They’ll help you when you’re sick, and you’ll be good and sick of the stinking air and the filthy beds and the slaving at the contractor’s benches. They’ll lie to the guards and to the shop bosses, to make things easy for you, if you can’t stand the drive. And when your time’s up, if you ain’t got no friends to put you on your feet, they’ll send you to some of theirs.”

“How do you know all this?” Carrington asked sharply.

“Oh,” Charley grinned, “I sat five years in Sing Sing. For hitting a fellow over the head who had cheated me out of two months’ wages. A healthy

man wouldn’t have felt the crack, but this crook of a storekeeper had a paper skull—and I had to pay for it. I was only nineteen years old then. But that’s neither here nor there, Mr. Carrington. What I was saying was that you’ll learn a lot more than a trade where the likes of you and me go. And the fellows will make you one of them, if you’re there long enough. And when you come out, you may not be a first-class carpenter or mason, but you will be a first-class member of the Big Gang—what some writer folks call the Underworld. And in the gang you’ll stay until the undertaker comes around and——”

“I don’t understand,” Carrington muttered.

“And you won’t understand until you’ve come out of the pen, as I have, with the Sing Sing bleach in my skin and the black rage of the ex-convict in my heart—rage at the good people who build Sing Sings and lock up boys who lose their temper once. You won’t understand until you’ve tried to get a job. Then the boss asks for your references. If you tell the truth, he sneers in your face and kicks you out. If you lie, you may get work for a week or two, but pretty soon somebody gets wise, and you find yourself on the street again.”

“Are you trying to torture me?” Henry Carrington cried hoarsely, and pressed his hands against his cheeks. “Is this to be the end of me, after three years of honest struggling to be decent? Oh, my God——”

“No torture! Just plain facts,” Charley went on, with merciless monotony. “I’m luckier than most of the pals that got out when I did. Nineteen months I’ve been out, and eighteen of ’em I’ve spent licking up free lunches that old Sing Sing graduates passed out to me, sleeping with gunmen over in Second Avenue cellars, earning a quarter from patrolmen on cold nights, to tip ’em off when the roundsman showed up, so that they could sneak out of the saloon

and back onto their beat. Oh, that was a jolly year and a half, that was! And I'd be the same dirty chunk of human garbage if my old prison pal, Harry O'Tale, the strong-arm man, hadn't got his son a job at police headquarters. The kid knew me, had a hook in Elberstein—it was some old piece of loot that Elberstein couldn't explain getting into his shop—and he made Elberstein take me in. Elberstein thinks I'm just a plain ward heeler. But I don't care if he does now. I'm going to be my own boss. I'm going to have a little pawnshop of my own—if he knew, wow!"

He laughed wickedly. Whereupon Carrington sank his fingers into the clerk's forearm and moaned: "Listen to me, in God's name! After I've gone into that hell you're telling about, do me one little favor." He drew forth a shabby wallet, and from it some bills. "Here is fifty dollars—it was going to pay my wife's doctor bill. Take it to Elberstein, get my old badge and the necklace and Jackie's picture. Go to Annie—that's my wife—in Ballington Center. Give them to her, and tell her—tell her that I did my best to make a man of myself, but they wouldn't let me——" His tongue struggled pitifully to say more, but failed him.

Charley contemplated the sunken head a long time, coughed once or twice, then said distinctly: "No, sir! I don't go on that kind of errand. I'll tip off cops for a quarter, but no mush man's job for me! Maybe——"

"Police headquarters!" the chauffeur sang out. The car squeaked in its brakes and drew up at the curb before a somber pile.

"Now sit right still there!" Charley commanded. "I've got to bring a cop. Don't try to sneak off while I'm gone, for there's two hundred officers within whistling reach."

With that Charley mounted the great stone steps beyond which sit those still, cunning, mighty men in gold braid

who, according to law and popular opinion, make perpetual war upon the enemies of society.

Up the corridors he sauntered, nodding to official acquaintances, until he reached a sleepy old veteran of the force, lolling before a desk telephone.

"Hello, Jerry!" The clerk thrust out a glad hand. "Say, phone quick to the West Thirty-seventh Street station and have Curran hustle a cop over to Elberstein's pawnshop. The front door's wide open, and nobody's on the job inside. I was, but a cheap crook got away with the cash drawer while I was tending to a customer. I chased him, and got the dough but not the man. And if Elberstein comes in before I get back, say I'll be there soon with his eighty-five dollars. And now where's Harry O'Tale, the son of my old pal?"

"He's over at the complaint desk," said Jerry.

"Harry!" commanded the pawnbroker's clerk, when he had found his party. "Give me a big envelope!"

Harry obeyed. Charley stuffed into the receptacle a scarred gold badge, a turquoise necklace, and a miniature of a carrot-haired boy, who grinned gleefully as the clerk next thrust in a roll of bills and scribbled the following note:

MR. CARRINGTON: Beat it. You're doing your best to be decent, and so am I. Go to Ackermann's Palace Café, in West Yates Road, Bronx, and stay in the back room until my old pal, Harry O'Tale, comes after you. He is off on a job for Elberstein, but as soon as he gets back I'll send him up. He'll look after you. You'd better melt up your badge. Pretty soon we'll get wife and kid away from around Boston on the q. t.

"Here!" Charley handed the envelope to Harry O'Tale, junior. "Give this to a guy in the yellow taxi out in front that looks like a dishrag. And tell him he'd better do as I say."

In a minute the youthful police of-

ficial returned. And to him Charley whispered: "As soon as you can, get hold of your old man and tell him to hike up to Ackermann's Palace Café and cover a get-away for me. And now lend me a hundred for a week or two. That's a good boy."

"Funny thing!" Charley said to Elberstein, a few hours later. "While you were out to lunch, Mush man dropped in and redeemed his badge and

stuff. I'd have followed him, but I was all alone here, and you wouldn't want me to take any chances on leaving the shop, would you, Mr. Elberstein?"

After Elberstein had stopped raving, Charley said, in the soothing tones of a trained nurse: "It's a trying job, running a pawnshop, ain't it, Mr. Elberstein? I used to think I'd like to have one of my own. But I've gotten over that idea. I ain't smart enough."



WHAT A REAL CROWD IS

ONE of the favorite diversions of William H. Taft nowadays is to sit back and watch how some of the men in public life, who used to call themselves "progressives," are rushing back to the standard of the Republican party.

According to the former president, this scramble back to the old reservation is picturesque and amusing, being accompanied by the sight of several men partaking of a large diet of crow and humble pie. One man, he says, did not stop to pick the crow. He ate it—feathers, claws, bones, and all.

This crowding back, Mr. Taft said, reminded him of the fellow who, being a little intoxicated, rushed up to a theater box office and, slamming down a lot of money, demanded a ticket. Being told that all the seats were sold, he finally took a "standing-room" coupon.

In a few minutes, he emerged from the theater and again attacked the box office.

"Gee!" he shouted. "That's an awful crowd in there! Never saw such a jam! Must have more room. Gimme another 'standing room'!"



MR. WALTER'S LACK OF DIPLOMACY

EUGENE WALTER was attending the rehearsals of his latest play, in which one of the most prominent rôles was taken by a well-known actor who wears a wig. This actor is a "highbrow." It hurts his feelings to think that he ever could be connected with any dramatic production that is not full of "atmosphere," temperament, genius, and a general tra-la-la air.

A few days before the opening performance, the man with the wig stopped Walter at the stage entrance of the theater, and said pompously:

"Walter, I hope there will be nothing inartistic connected with this production. I hate this atrocious commercial atmosphere which is invading the theater. And I do hope you won't have a program setting forth where we all get our clothes."

"What do you mean?" asked Walter.

"Well, for instance, I hope you won't have anything on the program like that old line, 'Shoes by Kammerer,' and all that stuff."

"Oh, yes," replied Walter. "There'll be 'Shoes by Kammerer,' and there'll be 'Wigs by Heppner.'"

The Man's Boy

By Henry Milner Rideout

Author of "The Far Cry," Etc.

It is two years since we have had a story from the pen of Rideout, and we have been patiently awaiting the impulse of his vagrant muse. Those who read his "Far Cry" need no further recommendation. That was a sea tale told with the dash of Marryat and the color of Conrad. The present story is in different vein—a search through the great woods for a missing man. As you read you live and breathe the life of the wilds, and you become acquainted with real people—people you will hate to leave eventually. Among them is an Indian done with the fidelity and skill of Cooper: higher praise we could not yield.

(A Novelette)

CHAPTER I.

SHERIFF HARDY'S MAP.

MAPS!" cried a bass voice at the front door. "Maps for Judge Boswell!"

The voice rang through the fore part of the house like a cheerful song.

Mark Boswell was lying in an arm-chair. For the past fortnight he had been a rather sick boy, and this was his third day downstairs. He raised himself to listen. A voice like that could proceed from only one man. Mark's face had lost a good deal of sunburn, but now it went from pale to red as he sat up, excited and hopeful, running his fingers through his yellow stubble of hair.

"What kind o' maps?" retorted the sharp, inquisitive voice of Hazel, the "hired girl."

"Don't you fret!" laughed the other. "Maps. That's all you need to know, my dear. In a gen'al way, maps.

They ain't handsome to look at, not pretty like you, young woman; but I guess they'll serve the judge fast enough. He ast me for 'em. How is he, anyway? And how's his boy?"

Mark smiled to himself. Only one man would have called Hazel pretty or young in such a loud, generous, warming fashion.

"Mr. Boswell ain't to home." Her voice was not half so fretful as before. "Mr. Boswell's be'n away over three weeks. I've worried 'most to flinders. That boy Mark, he's laid abed sick, and 'tain't like his father to do so; we ain't had word or scrap from the judge since he went a-fishin'—"

"Dear land!" cried the visitor. "I'm sorry to hear that!"

Mark rose to his feet, though he found them still rather tottering objects to stand on.

"It must be Sheriff Hardy," he said. "Oh, Hazel, ask the sheriff to come in. I want to see him more than anybody."

A clatter of hobnailed boots resounded through the hallway, and Josephus Hardy stood in the library door. A big, brown, shaggy man, more than six feet tall, who carried lightly under rough clothing some two hundred pounds of bone and muscle, he pulled off his dusty straw "cow-breakfast" hat and made a bow into the judge's library.

"Well, I'm tol'able easy to see, they tell me, when there ain't no trees round," he declared, grinning. "How are you, boy? Be'n fallin' off any more o' them ridgepoles lately? What's happened to your father?"

Mark's face grew pale again and tired and disappointed.

"I was hoping you'd tell me that," he replied. "Father went fishing three weeks ago Wednesday. I came down sick the next Friday, and was out of my head for a while. Father sent word by Tommy Cody, just about then, that he was going in deeper to try a new place. We haven't heard anything more. I was hoping you'd run across him."

The boy sat down, looking miserable. Sheriff Hardy came forward cautiously until he stood on the library rug.

"Gosh, they *are* treach'rous!" he muttered. "Hope I hain't defaced 'em with my boot nails. Jest like a hen on ice. Awful treach'rous, them hardwood floors."

He shied his hat under the table, and sat down timidly on the edge of a chair, facing Mark. His brown face, heavy as a buffalo's, wore a grimy coating of dust and unshaven beard; but his eyes twinkled bright and clean. The sheriff was a good man; and as he perched there, looking so awkward and so much too large for any indoor space, he seemed a great comforter.

"But father," said Mark, "never went into the woods to stay so long, without——"

"Shoo-fly!" cried the sheriff. "Never you bother *your* head, son. I guess

Judge Boswell he knows the four carnal points o' heaven. Shoo-fly! He'll come homin' back like a old belfry pigeon to-morrer, trust him, or next day, maybe. Never you lose no sleep about *him* in the woods."

This had a reassuring sound, but Mark observed that Mr. Hardy's eyes failed to enforce it, and went wandering instead round the bookshelves, along the treacherous floor, then out at a window into the bright August sunshine.

"You didn't see father anywhere?"

"No," replied the sheriff, staring now at a bowlful of chokecherry branches in the fireplace—green leaves jeweled with dark-red pendants. "No. That's a fact. I didn't."

"Things can happen," said Mark, "in the woods to a man all alone."

Josephus Hardy's wandering eyes came back with a snap. He nodded his big, dusty head.

"And *that's* a fact, too," he admitted. He faced the boy squarely and honestly. "I know that. Things do happen in the woods. Not always, though. Not often."

Mark waited for him to continue, but the sheriff began staring again at the chokecherries in the fireplace, and nursed his right forearm. The clock ticked, then struck eleven, then went on ticking louder than before.

"Must be a change comin' in the weather," quoth Mr. Hardy. "My old arm smarts, kind of, this mornin', where they cut that bullet out of her. A man mistook me for a deer. Least, a man *said* he did. Terrible ee-roneous feller. His eyesight might 'a' been better if I hadn't put him in jail onct afore."

"Look here!" demanded Mark. "What do *you* think has happened to father?"

The sheriff puckered his lips under the heavy, brown, piratical mustache.

"Nothin'," said he. "Your father's all right. Nothin'."

The boy moved impatiently in his chair.

"But he's been three weeks away."

Hardy appeared to be chewing upon this fact. "Yeah," he grumbled. At last he spoke:

"Where did Tommy Cody allow he seen him?"

"Up the river, on the middle fork; two miles this side of Tinderbox Hill."

"Humph!" growled the sheriff. "Thought so, maybe."

He turned on the edge of his chair, and, raising his voice, sent a jovial roar echoing through the house:

"Young woman! Oh, young woman! Bring us back them maps, will ye?"

Hazel must have been listening in the hall, she appeared so promptly. Her crabbed old face was wreathed in smiles, and as she handed the sheriff a roll of untidy papers, no girl could have acted more bashful and simpering.

"Bless your pretty heart!" cried Hardy. "That's them. Many's the thanks to *you*, my dear! Now I won't trouble you no more."

Hazel, in great embarrassment, withdrew. Her flatterer sat waiting, papers in hand, till the sound of her footsteps retreated, and a distant door closed after her. Then he winked at Mark solemnly.

"I found a wild bees' nest onct," he declared, "on top that old granite quarry to Beaver Lake. Honey was all an-oozin' down over a busted slab o' rock. I guess your girl Hazel ain't ust to smilin' much. That's what she made me think of right away—honey a-tricklin' over granite. Don't she?"

Mark laughed as he had not laughed for many days. Hazel, the kindly tyrant of his childhood, had done her best for a motherless boy, but there was a funny side to Hazel, and the sheriff, with his big, staring gray eyes, had seen it.

"Now, that's right!" declared Hardy. "That's right, boy! A good laugh is

a good starter." He pulled his chair up to the corner of the table, on which he unfolded his papers. "A long face don't buy the baby no boots, I always found. Let's come right squat down to figgers."

He spread out a crumpled fragment of brown paper bag, darkened with oily spots and scrawled upon with rough pencil tracks.

"Map," said he. "Map o' the brooks and branches beyond Tinderbox Hill, up as fur as the Red Logan. There she is. Ain't many city folks could have drawn her, boy. She might look neater, but I had to wrop up a lump o' putty I was carryin' to Widow Johnquest. Broke a pane o' glass in her shop. Maybe that's why I never seen your father; because the widow she's kind o' feeble nowadays, and couldn't git her hay in single-handit no more, so's I stopped and mowed it for her; else I'd 'a' prob'ly gone funder. You know her. She farms it all alon' and keeps a store, right under the aidge o' the big hemlocks. She's a fine woman, too, Mis' Johnquest. A lot o' trouble in her life. That's why, maybe."

Discoursing thus, Hardy flattened the scrap of greasy paper, and began to follow pencil lines with his thumb nail. The map—so far as it resembled anything—resembled a child's drawing of some thin, leafless tree, among the branches of which hung circles, half-formed letters, crisscrosses, blots, and smutches, like strange fruit or the nests of untidy fowls. Mark found it altogether mysterious. But the sheriff explained it as if reading aloud from a book.

"Here's where your father went. Tinderbox Hill, see? Place where the putty oiled her a little, shape of a dog's nose. That's the neighborhood Tommy Cody seen your father in, fortnight ago." The sheriff beamed. "Now then. Here comes Deadwater Brook a-wrigglin' in, so black and still every-

body takes her for a swamp hole and gives her the go-by. Finest fishin' stream in this world, though, if you pus-savere up to the quick, past Hardhack Pond, where all is rocks and rips and wild country. There's your father, this livin' minute, right under my thumb. A grand, lonesome spot. Why, gorry, I can see him now with his old gray hat on, a-snakin' out fish beneath them falls, though it's no season o' the year to bite!"

And Mr. Hardy beamed again, like a sunburned buccaneer who had sighted a prize. Mark Boswell caught something of the man's enthusiasm, it was so welcome.

"Do you think that?" he exclaimed. "Honest now, do you, Mr. Hardy?"

The sheriff nodded.

"Bet I do. Judge and me was lately talkin' about that very same brook. Judge says he'd fish there his next time. So I drew the map, you see."

Mark hoisted himself out of his chair. He felt steady on his feet now, for his mind was resolved.

"Then I'm going to Deadwater Brook," he announced.

Josephus looked up at him thoughtfully.

"Why so, my boy?"

"Because," replied Mark, "something must have happened."

"Poh!" said Hardy. "What could?"

"Suppose father took sick or broke his leg, alone in the woods——"

The sheriff bent down, reached under the table, recovered his old straw hat, and twirled it on his knees, meditating.

"Might; might not," he responded.

"I guess you wouldn't do no harm."

"I'm going," said Mark.

Hardy wagged his head.

"You been a pretty sick boy," he objected.

"I can't wait any more. I want to find my father."

"Yes, yes. There, there," mumbled the sheriff. "Course ye do."

Mark took up the map from the table.

"I mean to go," he affirmed, and, folding the bit of oily paper, thrust it into his pocket. "You know, Mr. Hardy, as well as I do, that somebody ought to go hunt for father. I'm going."

His burly adviser rose and looked him straight in the eyes. There was no more loose talk or evasion between the man and the youngster.

"All right, Mark," said Josephus frankly. "If you feel that way, I guess you better. I wa'n't none too easy about your father myself."

Mark went to the library door and called:

"Hazel! Oh, Hazel!"

The housekeeper came presently and stood before them, her shrewd old face wearing yet some trace of Mr. Hardy's influence; but no sooner had Mark declared what he meant to do than the honey was gone from her look, and nothing remained but good New England granite.

"You ain't a-going!" she snapped.

"Not out o' *this* house!"

"I am!" said Mark.

"You ain't!" said Hazel. "You can't hardly stand up this minute. Let 'em ring fire bells and roust out the whol' town, way they did when the Pettengill boys got lost and Chub froze to death. Let 'em do that again. I don't care. You're not a-goin' one step."

The sheriff put in a mollifying word.

"Guess you better allow him to, my dear," he ventured.

"Who *is* your dear?" Hazel turned upon him savagely. "I ain't, anyhow. And while the judge is gone I keep the say of it. You can talk jest as smooth as you want to. Mark don't go one single step!"

Whenever Hazel grew indignant she pulled her chin down tight against her throat, interlocked her fingers at the

top of her apron, shook her head primly, then stood quivering all over. She did so now. It meant that she knew herself to be in the right, and would stay there, inflexible. "Mrs. Rhadamanthus," the judge used to call her, when describing this attitude. Mark, who recognized it only too well, was on the point of losing his temper.

"I'm not a baby!" he began.

"That's so!" retorted the housekeeper. "Babies have some gumption. Babies know when they're sick."

How this unseemly argument might have ended it would be hard to say. But just then the front-door bell rang, and the ringer, waiting in the vestibule without, gave a fine, deep, sonorous cough. It was the doctor, of course. Doctor Hale, the beloved physician of all that town and country, was known, before he appeared in sight, by the welcome noise of his great outdoor cough. He had cured many troubles of body and soul, but never that personal annoyance. Perhaps he had never the time to cure it or the thought to spare on himself. Two generations of anxious men and women had heard and blessed it, when, in snow or rain, glaring dog days or blind zero weather, at noon or midnight, it proclaimed that the doctor was arriving, cheerful, wise, kind, ready to shoulder another household burden or fight another mortal enemy for his friends.

Hazel and Mark were so angry that they gave no heed to the interruption.

"Oh," mumbled the sheriff, "jest so. Yes."

With a sudden turn, silent, instantaneous, catlike—extraordinary in a man of his bulk—he slipped from the room and was gone.

Hazel woke to a lost opportunity.

"Here!" she exclaimed. "You wait! I want to see the doctor first."

She ran pell-mell into the hall. Mark, following, saw her catch at the doorknob just half a second too late.

The sheriff was outside, already talking in the vestibule. Through the old-fashioned frosted glass of the door, two big dark shadows glimmered, two voices rumbled in consultation. Hazel yanked and twisted at the knob. It would not budge, for the sheriff's hand, outside, lay heavy on its mate.

"Oh, these men!" wailed the housekeeper, struggling in vain. "They walk right over you!"

Then the door suddenly opened, and let her go staggering back.

"Well, well!" laughed the doctor, entering. He loomed even larger than Mr. Josephus Hardy. The sunlight seemed to follow him indoors and cling round his massive white head like a sign of all the human benedictions wished upon it throughout many years. "Good morning! Good morning! What's this I'm told?"

Hazel, the tyrant, stood conquered and smiling.

"Here's an awful bad boy, doctor," she replied.

"Well, well!" said Doctor Hale, putting down his hat. "Of course he is. Of course he is. His father was. Come in here, boy, till I take your pulse and look down your throat again. You want to run wild in the woods, do you? Hazel, go get me a tablespoon, like a good girl. Come here to the window, Mark. My eyes are growing a little old. A little old, like everything else."

Whatever their age, the doctor's eyes were very blue and full of sagacious twinklings as he pressed the silver spoon upon Mark's tongue and peered in after it by the light from the library window.

"Ho!" he murmured. "Ha! Thrown off. Pretty well. The constitution fairly tough, Mark. Yes, yes. All your mother's people were given the same way, but they lived long and well, God bless them! There, there!" The doctor turned slowly toward Josephus, who sat on the corner of the table lost

in admiration. "I think you're right, sheriff. If this boy wears good light woolen next the skin, and avoids the night air off the rivers— You'll take care of him, Josephus?"

Hazel started forward to make a protest, which nobody heeded.

"I'll take care," boomed the sheriff, "so fur as I can. If I can't, I'll give him in charge to Lola."

"You mean Lewie's grandson?" The doctor puckered the lids of his wise blue eyes, and seemed to be calling back the appearance of some far-off person. "You mean Lola, the Injun?"

Hardy nodded.

"Sure," he answered. "Lola's the best man up there case o' trouble."

Doctor Hale patted Mark on the head as if he had been much younger.

"Couldn't choose a better man myself than Lola," said he. "I vaccinated his grandfather and all the camp one day knee-deep in snow. All right, Mark; don't you forget the woolen underwear."

And Mark, filled with delight, gratitude, and expectation, knew that he was going to look for his father in the woods.

CHAPTER II.

BAD SILVER.

"I will say," observed Hardy, "that for a fellow your size you ain't altogether a slouch."

The sheriff's plump little bay mare, a brisk and cheerful roadster, had gone tugging forward with great energy, rattling down one hill, scrambling up the next. Now, at the sound of his voice, she cocked her ears and started on afresh, as though rebuked. Her master had broken the drowsy afternoon silence on this country road.

"No, you ain't no slouch at all."

Mark knew this for a high compliment. The sheriff, half turned on their seat, was looking down into the tail of

the wagon, where lay the two bundles which Mark had made ready for his expedition.

"You done them inside half an hour," said Josephus approvingly, "for I timed you. You done 'em up neat, with nothing but what the's a necessary need for. Blankit, stockin's, change o' wool, hatchet, fry pan—" He completed the catalogue in a whisper, nodding as he counted and bending down the fingers of one big, sunburned hand. "Lot o' grown men don't know how to go into the woods. You're all there in a two-fist grab, and all right, Mark." He returned to his reins, laughing. "Ho, quiet, Milly; ye can't uproot the whiffle-tree, ye fool girl!"

Milly, the red mare, did her best to contradict him, and stepped out faster than ever.

"Her walking gait," ventured Mark, "is better than some trots."

The sheriff nodded solemnly, as if his companion had sounded the depths of human wisdom.

"I love willin' folks, that pull snug up into the collar, and go for'ard handy. Horses is folks," he added. "Milly don't gorm along, nor soldier. Patchen blood."

And so, pleased with each other, with the horse, and with the whole sunshiny aspect of the world, they drove onward in friendly silence. The road wound and loitered, sunken between banks like a stream, not of water, but of yellow earth, flowing through quiet, endless variety. Alders bordered it closely for a time; then ledges of gray, scarred granite, tumbling rail fences, also gray, and the furred stalks of mullein; then raspberry patches, thick and sultry, where a locust filled the air with his music, dry, brittle, yet in good keeping with the scent of berries and warm vines; then fir woods, in which green darkness and bronze light, mingling, comforted not only the eyesight but the mind. Mark sat watching it all, lis-

tening to the energetic beat of Milly's hoofs, and thinking how good it was to be outdoors again, to feel the woods increasingly surround him, to wear old clothes and breathe balsam.

The sheriff must have read his thought.

"Bein' pulled through a knot hole ain't so bad, hey, Mark, when you find all this on t'other side?"

"No," said Mark. "Yes. I mean— Well, Mr. Hardy, you can't guess!"

Hardy chuckled.

"I kin too guess!" he declared. "The woods. Gorry!"

They fell silent again. The sun went down behind trees. When they had climbed a long hill, the road suddenly plunged downward to its end, the firs gave way once more to alders, and Milly was tugging the wagon through a narrow, swampy lane where the wheels bumped over many a rock, stuck in mudholes, or trundled softly on trackless meadow grass. Twilight gathered.

"Nigh the river we are now," said the sheriff. "Widow Johnquest lives beyond the next bend. We'll sleep in her haymow to-night."

They splashed through a shallow brook, and rattled round a sharp turn of the alder lane. There, all at once, a wide field opened, slanting hollow toward the glow in the sky, against which ran black, billowy hemlock tops, with a curl of chimney smoke wandering above. The house became visible last of all, banked under the hemlock darkness, and so gray that it, too, might have been smoke, melting and mounting spirally at its gable.

A dog barked. Echoes of his barking rang from the woods behind, as though an unseen pack answered the cry.

"Hello, Jowler!" hailed the sheriff.

The dog ran forward, a black-and-white thing frisking downhill.

"Well, well! Good hound!" said

Hardy. The dog, hearing his voice, barked again with a difference, to say that a friend had come.

Two patches of lamplight appeared through the front of the house; a window, and a door in which stood the lean silhouette of a woman.

"Who is it?" called a gentle old voice.

"Me! Only me!" bellowed the sheriff. "Goin' to put up in your barn, ma'am. Me and Judge Boswell's boy!"

The dog, still capering obscurely, followed them round the house and into the cavern mouth of a barn that was pitch black, and sweet with late-mown hay. They unharnessed Milly in the dark, led her into a stall hidden like a grotto under the hay, shook down half a bagful of feed into her crib, and returned by starlight to the widow's door.

"Come in," said Mrs. Johnquest. "Your supper's 'most ready."

She stood by a stove, at the far end of the room, bending over some cookery which gave out a warm and hospitable smell. Mark found that he was hungry, and had been so for weeks, without knowing what ailed him.

"Judge Boswell's boy, did you say?" The widow, busily stirring a long iron fork under the lid of a pan, spoke over her shoulder. A thin, small, muscular woman, dressed in brown calico, she seemed to fade among shadows, for the room was dark, and hung with many mysterious things which made it darker still—clothing, boots, knitted woolen, tin pots, homely merchandise of every kind—more than the one oil lamp on the supper table could begin to show.

"Yes," replied Mark, "we're going up to find father. You haven't seen him, have you?"

"No," said the widow, "not lately. I don't see many folks here. You've got your mother's way of speaking. You can't remember her, can you? She died when you was the baby, and there

ain't any more women like her now. Least, not on earth. Why in all tunket don't my fire burn? This mess o' pot-tage don't look right yet; not by a long ways to tempt Esau."

She spoke like one who had lived so much alone that thought and speech were grown identical, demanding no replies. Hard work had bent her back like a piece of barrel hoop. Never once did she turn to greet her visitors. But Mark, as he sat down with the sheriff by the lamp, felt somehow that a keen pair of black eyes had flashed at him and taken his measure. When supper was ready, she brought it silently to the table, and, retreating, sat in the far corner, her arms tightly folded. The old black-and-white dog made a hassock for her feet—a hassock that snored or now and then comfortably stretched.

"So you ain't had no cloud o' customers here?" Hardy broke off a lump of steaming blueberry cake, buttered it, looked upon it with loving eyes, then took an ogre's bite. "You would, ma'am, if they knowed the taste of your cookin'. Wouldn't she, boy?"

Mark agreed. The sheriff halved a platterful of fragrant omelet, and, though each half buried a plate, it did not seem enough.

"We're goin' to buy our provisions from you, ma'am," continued the sheriff, talking as heartily as he ate. "We'll buy 'em to-night, so's to make a start afore bird song in the mornin'. We can sleep in the hay, s'pose, no objection?"

Mrs. Johnquest's eyes twinkled out of the darkness.

"I do object to gre't tramps a-hulking in my haymow," she replied. "But, seeing you don't smok', Josephus, and there wouldn't 'a' *been* hay at all if you hadn't cut it——"

"Shoo-fly!" cried her benefactor, and blushed rosy pink through his tan. "Shoo-fly! I guess my mother and you was friends, wa'n't you? Onct?"

"We was always," replied the widow quietly; and she paid no further embarrassing compliments to her guest.

When they had cleared the supper table and put the dishes away, it seemed very late at night, though somewhere, from a pond far off among the woods, a loon still laughed and hooted over his evening joke. Carrying the lamp with them, they moved, all three together and the dog at heel, round the orderly confusion of the widow's room. A small glass case held fishhooks, thread, needles, bright-colored candies, Woodstock pipes of heavy clay, linen fish lines reeled flat on cardboard. Alongside, four barrels—pork, sugar, "Injun meal," and flour—stood ranged to form a counter, over which dangled a row of home-knit stockings. Two shelves behind exhibited the gaudy labels of tinned fruit and vegetables. These, with plug tobacco, cards of matches, a bin full of hard-tack, a jug of sharp-scented vinegar, and a few odds and ends, composed the "store"—a last humble effort of commerce at the edge of the wilderness.

"I call that a rale rig-out," declared Josephus, when their supplies were bought. "Good goods, all complete. Now, about change. Here we are. *And* one dollar more squares us." He laid Mark's money and his own on the glass case, then caught up one bit of paper again in disgust. "Foh! No! Gorry, 'tis another o' them Canada four-dollar bills. Consarn! When will the Bluenoses outgrow the 'lucination o' printin' four-dollar scrip? Can you break four dollars, ma'am?"

Mrs. Johnquest nodded complacently.

"I've got abundance o' change," she answered, with a funny little air of pride. "Great abundance. My last customer, him that came Wednesday, broke a bill for me. Little though I liked his looks——"

She pulled a drawer from under the shelves. In coming out, it rang a quiet

and rather musical bell, at the sound of which the dog barked and continued barking until his mistress bade him stop.

"I learned him to do that," said the widow. And the dog, hearing himself praised, beat a tattoo upon the flour barrel with his tail. "You always give your grandmother warning, don't ye?"

Mark laughed.

"Nobody could rob your till, Mrs. Johnquest, with him round."

The old woman smiled.

"Tain't that so much," she replied as she gave the sheriff a handful of silver. "It's more to amuse me. Old folks, childern, fools, and dogs, a little goes a long ways to entertain. That right, Josephus? Oh, no. Everybody round here is honest."

"Or tries to 'pear so." The sheriff corrected her while counting the change, poking among the coins with a stubby forefinger. His big face glowed in the lamplight. Then, all at once, Mark saw his expression change, his gray eyes harden and grow thoughtful, as if he had found something wrong or met a disagreeable surprise. But, glancing up again, he spoke as before, quite free and easy: "Don't happen to have any more half dollars, do ye? I'd like to keep some on hand if you could spare 'em."

The widow peered into her open till.

"No. Not there, least. I'll go look inside my bedroom."

"Thank ye," said the sheriff.

He waited until she had gone into the other room of the house, where they heard her strike a match before shutting the door. Then a strange thing happened. The sheriff made a sudden gesture, commanding silence and secrecy.

"Look here, Mark," he whispered, "don't you talk. Don't you say a word. Listen!"

From the silver pieces in his hand he chose two half dollars. These—after pocketing the rest—he held close to the lamp.

"See anything?" he inquired, still un-

der his breath. "Quiet. I don't want *her* to know. She'd be for takin' them right back, and she can't afford it."

Mark stared, but saw nothing, except the fact that Hardy was much excited by two ordinary coins.

"May not be. But—— You listen."

Balancing one half dollar on his finger tips, Josephus lightly struck it with the other. There was a faint, dead clink of metal.

"Dunno!" he whispered, staring doubtfully. Then, with his quick, silent habit of motion, he was across the room and bending over the stove, from which next moment he had removed the lid and scooped out a shovelful of red-hot embers. Their glow revealed his face, dark, angry, and perplexed. Mark and the dog stood watching him.

"Soon tell!" he muttered, and, like a conjurer doing a trick, he placed one of the half dollars among the brightest coals. Nothing happened at first. The coin lay still. But, after a time, by degrees, imperceptibly, then all at once in a whiff of magic, it bent through the middle, crumpled round the rim, melted into a dirty gray liquid, and was gone.

"Thought so!" said Hardy.

He poured back the contents of the shovel into the fire, replaced the lid, and was sitting carelessly over at the table when Mrs. Johnquest opened her door.

"I can't find another *one!*" she complained, with disappointment. "Not one! I *am* awful sorry, Josephus."

The sheriff yawned and stretched, as though more than half asleep. Mark, seeing those yawns, felt almost that he himself lately had been dreaming.

"It don't make no odds, ma'am." Hardy appeared to have forgotten the errand he had sent her on. "Not the least odds." He roused himself with an effort. "So you ain't had company but us two since last week, I understand?"

The widow sat down in her corner,

and folded her arms again, to enjoy this rare treat of conversation.

"Company?" Her eyes snapped. "I call you company, but I don't him! A customer, he was. And a tough customer, too."

"That a fact?" inquired Mr. Hardy. "Didn't like him, then, I guess?"

"Like him? Say not!" their hostess retorted. "He'd been drinking, to begin with. A mean-looking fellow, fit to sell rum to an Injun. Stranger, he was. Least, I never saw him before. A red-headed fellow with one eye, and that eye terrible mean."

"A river driver, p'raps," mumbled the sheriff, nodding drowsily.

"River driver this time o' year?" Mrs. Johnquest laughed aloud. "Josephus, you better go to bed. You don't know high water from drowth, nor river driving from snow sledding this very minute. I counsel you to go make up your sleep before your head falls on the floor."

Hardy yawned again, and rose reluctantly.

"You're right," he drawled. "Come on, Mark. Let's tumble in for an early start."

They gathered their bundles of provisions, and, bidding Mrs. Johnquest a good night, went out under the stars. Crickets were singing everywhere down the field, a hillside chorus bounded only by the blackness of the woods. Into the barn this music came, and when Mark and the sheriff lay rolled in their blankets on a slope of hay, the trilling continued for a long time, mingled with an odd snore now and then from Milly, the mare, standing fast asleep at her manger.

"Do you suppose we'll find father up there?" said Mark. "We can't pass him on the way without knowing, do you think?"

Mr. Hardy was awake, after all.

"Of course we'll find your father," he grunted. "That don't pester me one

bit." He rolled over, with a restless, rustling noise, then spoke like one who has been thinking hard. "No, boy, we'll overhaul the judge all right. Lucky, though, that I never carry fire-arms in clos' time. Hot-tempered fellers ought to make it rule never to. Because, if I meet that skunk, that red-headed man with one eye——"

The sheriff groaned.

"Think of cheatin' a poor old woman with bad silver!"

Mark suddenly understood, and, with a bunch of dry clover blossom for a pillow, lay thinking, as he was bidden to do. It was a nasty, perfidious bit of low cunning; he shared his companion's anger and disgust. So he thought, and dozed, and thought again, until the snores of the mare, the trill of crickets, and the perfume of hay become lost altogether among stars that faded beyond the barn door, glimmering.

CHAPTER III.

LOLA.

"Bird song in the morning" was not just one of Hardy's phrases. Mark dreamed of music, woke with music in his ears, and, sitting up, wondered where he had come to life. The dry, sweet smell of the haymow presently told him. By the darkness, it should have been midnight, or so he thought until, looking roundabout in bewilderment, he found that the music came pouring through the barn door along with a cloud of morning mist. He had never known that birds could utter a sound so magically various, of such volume; it was not harmony, but something better—a confusion of mounting notes, calling, answering, and interweaving. It was only birds in the widow's orchard. It seemed a heavenly orchestra tuning before the mysterious curtain should rise upon a wonder.

Mark listened to them, lying in his own warm nest. After a time, how-

ever, he heard footsteps go back and forth outdoors. The sheriff was up and waiting.

The boy rose. It came hard to leave such a bed, for the mist felt cold as winter. Wearing his blanket, he stumbled out of the barn.

"Mornin', boss!" Hardy, a big, steamy shadow, came toward him in the twilight. "Ready for breakfast? Time we was off, but I hated to spoil your sleep, you looked such a puddle o' comfort."

He gave Mark a tin cup, filled it with cold tea from a bottle, then handed over a lump of dry bread and a morsel of chocolate.

"Twill put heart into you," said he.

Cold fare at a cold hour, thought Mark; but as he ate and drank he found himself enjoying it, his courage rising and his blood flowing more awake. The mist grew pink and woolly under the apple boughs, thinned, and began to brighten. The birds broke off their chorus with a few scattering bursts of melody from tree to tree. Then all became still, as if waiting for the sun.

"You lug them!" commanded the sheriff. "I'll take the rest. Milly, the mare, we don't fret about. Mis' Johnquest has the use and care of her till we come back. Shoulder arms! We must git first on the river, so's nobody can pass down by us unbeknown. Forward, march!"

Lifting a double armful of bundles, Hardy led the way downhill. Mark followed, with two smaller bags and a pair of varnished paddles. It was now daylight, but a cold, shimmering daylight, and the wet stubble underfoot shone silvery, as though coated with frost.

"Here," called the sheriff, plunging among alders, "here's my *Old Girl*, if the porcapines haven't et her!"

His *Old Girl* was a battered green canvas canoe, lying bottom up on a pair of cedar trestles. He dropped his bun-

dles, ran round her, thumping and inspecting, then in his great arms lifted her bodily and carried her through a gap among the leaves, where a bank of denser mist swallowed them both, man and canoe.

"Fetch on your cargo, boy!" his voice called.

Mark, obeying, almost fell down a rocky shore. Hardy caught and saved him, with a laugh. They stood beside the canoe, which lay half grounded, half floating, on a dark-brown water covered with round cakes and curds of white morning foam. Beyond her, a blankness of gray-green fog moved in the same direction with the clotted foam, but somewhat more quickly. This was the river.

"Get aboard careful," said the sheriff. "Don't hop round."

Mark climbed into the canoe properly, and knelt, ready to use the bow paddle.

The sheriff chuckled.

"I take it all back. You've been there before like a Mohawk."

He stowed the last bundles neatly, shoved off, and, before sitting down, sent the *Old Girl*, with one powerful, curved stroke, gliding up against the current.

"Paddle jest enough to warm you," he advised, "but don't try puttin' forth your he-curlean stren'th. Mind you been sick. Go easy. Now I'm a-goin' to talk all the time, and holla, and carry on loud, so's anybody passin' downriver can hear us and sing out."

With that, paddling steadily, he began to sing "The Year of Jubilo"; then let forth several whoops and catamount calls, which were echoed along the unseen boundaries of the fog close by; then fell to narrating a long nonsense legend of the border logging roads—how Tommy Cody, a famous thin man, fell through a sled-stake hole and was lost in the snow. Mark listened or not as he chose. His work as bow paddler

seemed light and pleasant. There was no danger that his father would pass them unawares while the sheriff maintained such a marvelous hullabaloo. And presently he could see ahead where they were going. The mist, like smoke in a draft, blew faster and faster in their faces, went aloft, and vanished, leaving the brown water and the cakes of froth to meet the bow of their canoe in a longer and longer vista. Shadows of pointed trees on either hand appeared as though drifting. Then the sun rose, warm and red, astern; and Mark saw the whole river flowing toward him down a ragged lane of granite boulders and dark firs.

He peeled off his coat, and rested.

"I hear a noise like water boiling," he said.

"Course you do," quoth Hardy. "That's Teakettle Rips we're comin' to. Hence the name."

The noise increased, hissing louder and louder till the canoe swung laboriously round a bend and hung arrested in "quick water" at the foot of tumbling rapids, all yellowish-white cascade and rainbow spray opposite the morning sun.

"Here's our first carry," said Hardy. "Better eat here and warm our hides afore goin' further up."

So, on a rocky bank, with the full roar of the Teakettle about them and the yellow-stained waves leaping down alongside, they built a fire, ate a hot meal, and lay basking in great content. When they had "carried" round the Rips, and relaunched their canoe above, the sun rode high, the brown river lay still and gleaming before them, and they stole upward, stroke after stroke, into a milder and more silent country. Fir woods here and there showed the lighter green of birch or poplar among them; granite ledges gave way to more and more open stretches of marsh, with cow lilies and pickerel weed encumbering the water.

"Good fishin' ground," the sheriff pronounced it. "We won't stop to ketch any, though. I want to see if Lola's to home. If he is, you and me part company, boy. I must go up the main branch and—and inquire about your father there. Lola, he'll take you up the east branch; so doin', we waste no time nor lose our pains, ye see; and the likelihood of mucklin' on to the judge is jest about doubled. Thribbled, I should say, for Lola makes three of us, if not more."

Mark saw that the plan was good, but still he did not welcome it. To leave the sheriff was to leave an old friend. Somehow the notion of traveling through these woods with a stranger made the expedition seem far more uncertain than before, the chance of success more doubtful and remote. He said nothing, however, and when his friend commanded him to cease paddling "for fear of bein' overdone," he obeyed, and sat quiet, rather downcast.

They had traveled a long way up and up the slow current when he was surprised to hear the sheriff answer the very thoughts he had kept secret.

"No, sir. Nor *I* don't want to leave *you*, neither. But there it is. The river'll come to a fork soon. We must divide and cover the country all to onct. I'll be back with you inside o' three days. And you'll find Lola good company."

"How did you know," cried Mark, astounded, "when I wasn't talking?"

Josephus laughed. His paddle dipped and dripped a few times before he spoke again.

"Talk ain't the only thing," he answered. "Sometimes when a man keeps still you can foller him all the better."

Mark pondered on that saying. It was a truth he had never known, a new lesson to be learned, and in the noonday calm of woods and river, where nothing sounded but the plash

and trickle of the paddle, he sat learning it deeply over and over.

Early in the afternoon they slid forth on a little bay or widening bend, where the current divided to follow on either hand a bank of tawny meadow grass, while in midstream rose abruptly a dark, bold, narrow hill covered with pine woods. Like the bow of a high ship, this evergreen hill clove the river in two.

"Here we are," Hardy declared. "Partin' of the waters. Main branch goes up to the left; east branch to the right."

He steered into the east branch, where shadow and sunlight by turns poured over them. Soon afterward he called, in a tone of satisfaction:

"There! The luck's with us. Do you see her?"

He pointed with his glittering paddle blade.

Underneath a slant pine bough, and drawn half out of water on a pebble beach, there rested the long, gray body of a birch canoe. Dinky and worn, but graceful, she bore along her gunwale a rough ornamental drawing, scratched into the brown of the bark; at the bow a sign somewhat like the figure four upside down; amidship, men shooting deer, women running from a dog or bear; and at the stern a long name in sprawling letters.

"*'Nattawekoeg,'*" read the sheriff. "The *'Sea Rider'* is her name. Well, she earned it, too. That birch has tasted salt water all the ways from Point Lepreaux down beyond Cape Cod. Which some folks would be skeered to do in a three-masted schooner. Lola's bo't she is, the *Nattawekoeg.*"

So saying, he brought the canvas flank of his *Old Girl* alongside the birch canoe, and stuck his paddle into the river bottom.

"Ah, wa, wa, wa!" he shouted. "Oh, Lola, Lola!"

The pine woods above echoed like an empty house.

Hardy shouted again.

The shout went echoing upward as before among the pine trees. Then came silence. Mark could have sworn they were alone; the loneliness troubled him, for he thought that somehow in this place where nobody lived his father might have met almost any kind of misadventure. Then a sound as of a light wind stirred some leaves; the bushes parted, and by the roots of the overhanging pine trees a strange man stood and looked down upon them gravely, as if he had been standing there all the time.

"Hello, Lola!" said the sheriff.

"Joseepha," replied the strange man.

He was very strange, indeed, yet also very commonplace—a drooping figure, from head to foot as brown as a tree trunk. His broad face, calm almost to the point of stupidity, was brown and wrinkled; so were his old shirt, his faded, rusty trousers, his oil-tanned moccasins. There appeared no other color about the man, except in his eyes, which were glistening black, and in the handkerchief—a stringy piece of blue cotton—which hung knotted below his throat.

"Lola," inquired the sheriff, "can you take this boy up the east way a piece for me? He wants to find his father, Judge Boswell. Have you run across the judge, maybe?"

"No," said Lola, in a quiet murmur devoid of interest, "I hain't. Um! Yea-ah! Tha's so."

He spoke as to himself, and began looking slowly up and down the stream with mild, unexpectant eyes.

"Well," began Hardy once more, after long waiting, "will you take the boy up as fur, say, as Red Logan? We're kind o' jealous the judge may ha' got lost."

He explained carefully the nature and reason of their search. The brown man stood motionless, like a sleepy animal, in brown-checked sunlight under

the pines. He could not have listened. His face expressed a far-off meditation upon some general subject, perhaps the weather.

"Um. Jesso," he droned at last. "What's the boy's name?"

"Name's Mark," replied the sheriff. "And I tell ye——"

Lola began staring thoughtfully at the evergreen branches overhead.

"They's a crow's nest up there," he reflected aloud. "All gone now, they be. Some folks is foolish. Yea-ah. Some folks says young crows hain't good eatin'. White woman donno how to cook, mebbe. Um. Guesso." With eyes turned still aloft, he added: "You got a loomerum teakettle?"

Mark thought this question might be addressed to the pine needles or the departed crows until he heard Sheriff Hardy answering for him.

"No, he don't carry any such article."

"You," continued Lola, turning to examine the top of another tree, "you got a loomerum teacups?"

"No," replied Mark, wondering.

"Or mebbe," said the Indian over his shoulder, "five-hund'ed-dollar gun, she pump the shot so fast a bird hain't got no chanst? And readin' book, mebbe, for tell me what to do?"

"No," Mark repeated.

Lola sighed, and turned to face them once more.

"Last feller hed," he stated mournfully. "Um. Yea-ah. Last feller he come f'm city. Yeller mus-tash. Rich man. Sunburn keepled him awake all night. Ast questions. Hardware store fer to carry; hund'ed-pound bags; fancy hatchet, no cuttin' aidge. Tha's so. He ast me questions, then knowed better'n what I tolt him. Yea-ah. Gimme headache, that feller. Guess I don' take nobody ag'in. No."

The sheriff burst out laughing.

"Mark ain't that kind," he cried. "You try him. You see." And he

added many strange words in an unknown tongue.

The Indian turned his steady, bright eyes upon Mark. A slow grin flickered across his wrinkled cheeks and faded. Mark saw that he was being joked about, and laughed.

"Well, mebbe," grunted Lola. "Um. Yea-ah. I guesso."

This remark, though vague, satisfied Hardy at once. He began lifting out Mark's bundles and stowing them over-side in the birch canoe. Mark climbed after them.

"Wait till I go git my pole," murmured Lola, and disappeared as quietly as he had come.

The sheriff plucked out his paddle from the mud, so that the *Old Girl*, released, went swinging slowly into the current, but not before he had shaken Mark's hand and said good-by.

"Mind you, boy, we'll meet inside o' three days. Don't you fret about nothing. You're in better hands than mine now."

Lola, returning with a long, iron-shod pole, stepped into the *Nattaweckoeg* without a word, and shoved off. The two canoes hovered close for a moment in mid-river.

"Keep a good lookout," cried Hardy as they parted company. "Remember the boy's been sick, Lola. Take care of him. Good luck to ye. So long!"

He waved his paddle, and was lost behind a jutting pine bough.

Lola, without effort, sent his long birch flying up the eastern river.

"Um. Yea-ah," he grumbled. "Guess you'd like to see the juds. Mebbe."

Something in his tone gave Mark a new hope, an access of confidence which was needed sorely now that the sheriff had gone.

"You think you can find him?" asked the boy.

"Kin if he's alive," came Lola's answer, and the words, though grim,

sounded honest and encouraging, like the speech of a man who would rather do than promise.

The *Sea Rider* went sliding without a ripple through reach after reach of woodland, all empty, where nothing else moved but the crinkling flow of the water, and high summer clouds that towered like snowy Alps afloat in the sunshine, with deep reflections whitening the river.

"You hain't got any them a loomerum teacups?" inquired the Indian. "Glad you hain't. They scalt my lips nigh off my teeth. Um. Yea-ah. Tha's right. Your father says only t'other day——"

He broke off with a grunt. A half mile or so later, he mumbled, as if in displeasure:

"I hain't got learnin'. But I got good head for remember, me. Your father, the juds, he don't carry no high-tone rubbage int' the woods. Tha's what I started fer to say. No, sir. Your father, he's the mos' best man ever live!"

Not only the confusion in these words, but some trick of Lola's voice—a crafty note which was intended to deceive and reassure—caused Mark to give a look backward. It was a glance, no more; but in that glance he caught Lola's brown face as though unmasked. Doubt and anxiety worked in every wrinkle. No wonder the canoe shot up-stream so fast, for the man was paddling at top speed furiously, throwing himself forward shoulder first.

Mark sat mystified. He knew better than to ask questions. He also knew, without asking, without even looking back again, that something had gone very wrong. This Indian had made a slip of the tongue. "Your father says only t'other day"—what else could it mean? This Indian had lied to the sheriff; he knew more about the object of their search than he pretended.

"He *has* seen father lately," thought Mark.

Sunset turned the river to blazing gold, until the blackness of the firs on the left bank stole out across and covered all in twilight. Evening began to fall, but still the long birch went flying onward, her bow shattering the pale reflection of an early star.

"Look here," said Mark, on a sudden. "You didn't tell Mr. Hardy the truth about my father. Did you?"

The Indian in the stern gave a dog-like growl.

"Hesh up!" he threatened, and the very harshness of his threat had a guilty sound. "Don't you never talk that way to *me!* No, sir!"

The paddle went even faster than before. Into the mournful Northern darkness Mark felt himself hurried silently, alone with a queer, taciturn, hostile man, toward some piece of evil-doing; he could almost have been certain of that much; something wrong lay hidden among these fir woods under a starry night. Helpless and rather scared, he was in Lola's hands. And Lola was lying.

CHAPTER IV.

HARDHACK POND.

"I don' wan' nobody to run pas' us in the dark," said Lola. "Tha's why we're a-goin' quick. Yea-ah. Listen them fallses."

A noise like that of rushing wind had risen beyond the trees, and now, drawing nearer, became gradually the full roar and hiss of tumbling water.

"We're a-gona camp there, right on top the carry."

Lola had regained his composure, and spoke in a voice friendly enough, though pitched high above the rumble of the falls, and when at last the *Sea Rider* came within view of a tossing white wall, and slid into a shower of

line spray, he turned her bow toward the right bank and brought her to land.

"Wrop up in your blanket," said he, carefully helping Mark to find a stepping-stone in the welter of foam and darkness. "Wrop yourself warm now, untell I lit the fire."

He vanished. Mark, waiting, stretched his legs upon a granite knoll, with nothing for company but stars overhead and rushing whiteness alongside. Then a little red flame sprang up near by and grew into a blaze, and there squatted Lola, encouraging a great camp fire laid up endwise, wigwam fashion. Beyond his silhouette, past the flames, yawned the open front of a hovel rudely built in green spruce boughs under the tall background of the forest, where slim white birch pillars played a flickering ghost dance among the innermost shadows.

"You go lay down," grunted the Indian. "I'll git the supper."

Mark stretched himself in the hovel, and upon a dry, springy cushion of new evergreen lay watching Lola and his fire. The Indian's broad leathern face shone out, not unkindly, while he crouched above his cooking. Behind him his shadow wavered, enormous on the red obscurity where firelight blended with river darkness. Sparks, high overhead, went darting like fiery tadpoles through the network of green spruce needles. The falls thundered, the fire snapped, and a lazy warmth called forth many balsam odors to fill Mark's comfortable house.

"Here she come," declared Lola. "Here's your supper. Yea-ah."

He brought a savory dish all steaming, squatted, placed it between them, and handed Mark a spoon.

"You kin eat out o' same dish, mebbe, with a Injun? Or can't ye?"

"Of course I can," replied Mark, and did so with much appetite.

"Well!" Lola watched him, though with what expression of countenance

it was impossible to guess, for the man sat with his back to the fire. "I guess you was got the makin's of a feller."

Presently he added:

"You think I was a liar. Didn' ye?"

"I never said just that," Mark answered.

"Mm," grunted the other, and ate in silence. After a while, looking round him with a ruminant air, he made a long-considered assertion.

"I hate Iyin'," said he, "worse'n a Babtis' minister hate rum. Yea-ah. Tha's right. I'm a Roma Cath'lic, me. Tha's the aligion I belongs to. I hain't got learnin'. But I got a good head." He pondered a while. "I kin tell you when Easter come." And he named the date—correctly, so far as Mark knew. "Some folks reads it on a book, but I keeps it in ma head. I kin tell when the month comes in, and I kin tell when the month goes out. Got good head for remember, me. Tha's kind o' feller I am."

He rose, carried off the spoon and the empty dish, and disappeared to wash them among the rocks and foam. He returned bringing the canoe paddles and the pole, which he thrust high into the top of a row of bushes, where, as he explained, "no porcapines can't eat 'em overnight."

"You go to sleep," he growled. "I'll keep the fire bright. You see why we was hurry to git here. Don't ye? So's nobody couldn' past us on the carry. Can't go over them falls; got to carry round; got to see the fire, then see us. Yea-ah."

So saying, Lola cast an armful of dry wood on the lowering flames. With a gust of sparks, they sprang up again, revived. He stood looking at them calmly, heavily, as sober as an old dog before a hearth.

Warm, well fed, and half asleep, but not yet wholly at ease, Mark lay watching the Indian's face in the firelight. Though hard and wrinkled, it seemed

a good face. He ventured to repeat his old question:

"So you think father's up here?"

Lola gave a long, queer stare, then turned away as if angry.

"Don't you ast no questions," said Lola to the night, "an' I don' tell you no lies."

Mark remembered afterward that he woke more than once in vague alarm, but always dimly to see, through the ruddy gloom of the camp fire, a drooping figure that stood and listened or moved about like a slow, uneasy animal. He knew Lola was on guard. He fell asleep again.

They started early next morning, "carried" round the snowy tumult of the falls, took the river again, and did not pause for breakfast until the sun was high. Then, as they sat in a warm, quiet clearing among alders, an odd thing happened.

Lola had produced a very old brown box, or canister, of birch bark, which was made, he said, by his grandmother, Hannah Neptune. It contained maple sugar. They were sharing a lump of this delicacy, when from somewhere a wasp came buzzing and lighted on Lola's portion. The Indian brushed away the intruder, but it returned again and again.

"Mm," said he at last impatiently. "I got to kill that wossip."

A dozen things lay at hand, with any of which he might have killed it. But he sprang on foot, ran down the bank to his canoe, and returned carrying a sheath knife on a leather belt. He sat down, drew the knife, and very solemnly, with the flat of the blade, struck a mortal blow.

"There!" he sighed, flicking the little yellow body into the grass. "That wossip, he's dead."

"But why," said Mark, "not take your hand to him? Or a stick?"

Lola gravely shook his head.

"Al'ays kill a wossip with yer knife,"

he answered, "so's nobody can't git the upper hands of ye."

And he buckled the sheath knife to his hip, as though expecting a whole nest of hornets.

All that morning they paddled up the river, which, as they went, became more still and sluggish. Willows and white oaks overhung the water, or gave way to open marsh land; long grasses lay straining half afloat, rising and sinking gently in the slow brown current; and at last there seemed no current whatsoever, but only a labyrinth of stagnant pools, bordered with wild meadow hay.

"Now you show me," said Lola, with a provoking chuckle, "now show me Deadwater Brook. She's here. We got to go up Deadwater Brook. Where is she?"

Mark tried his best, looking everywhere about to find the likeness of a brook. The birch canoe lay motionless, surrounded by meadow banks, above which gleamed the empty sky and under which lay nothing but a margin of mud, pierced with musquash holes. Here and there along the ooze, a litter of pearly blue clamshells told where a musquash had eaten his fill.

"I don't see any opening," said Mark. But he continued to search, for into his head returned a saying of Sheriff Hardy's, how Deadwater Brook wriggled in "so black and still that everybody takes her for a swamp hole." He looked again and again, carefully. There could not be an opening in that marsh.

"Oh!" he cried suddenly. "Is it there?"

And he pointed to a string of lazy bubbles gliding imperceptibly from under matted grasses.

Lola, for the first time during their cruise, gave a laugh.

"Boy, you got an eye like a Micmac!"

With that, he sent the canoe flying

toward the bubbles. Mark dodged, and felt the meadow grass brush over him as it parted to let them go rustling through, like men burrowing into a hay-mow.

"There!" growled Lola when they slid into sunlight again. "I guess you hain't no fool."

They had found the mouth of the secret brook. The canoe floated on a little stream lost among tall grasses—a stream as black and turbid as tea grounds, and so dead that cobwebs and leaf dust covered the surface with a dry scum. All afternoon they paddled through the windings of this dreary creek, until they reached a place of trees and rocks where the water seemed to flow. Soon afterward, passing among the giant silver-gray bodies of fallen pines, they stole forth on a lake lighted by the sunset.

"I don' say nothin'," observed Lola. "Here's she's Hardhack Pon'. Mebbe we'll found somebuddy here. Mebbe not. I hain't say nothin'. Yea-ah. Don' you fergit that."

Hardhack Pond lay spread before them, bright in the center, dark round the western edges—a tranquil, tiny lake where nothing moved but green reeds among the jumbled granite boulders of the shore. An eagle flew over, winging high, as Mark and the Indian rested. That seemed a sign of loneliness. But while the long birch, with way still on her, went lapping through pickerel weed and the pads of water lilies closed for the night, both man and boy made exclamation.

"Smoke! Yea-ah!"

"I think—I think we've found him!"

They nodded at each other, and began paddling once more.

Eastward, from behind an evergreen point, thin smoke curled into the upper region of the sunlight, and drifted inland among pines.

"Yes, sir!" cried Mark, exulting. "We've found him!"

It seemed a race, but yet a long, slow race, until they could round the point. There, in a little cove deeply hidden by the pines, stood the camp from which the smoke went mounting—a gray hut, close above the pond, with open door facing the full western light. It was not, however, the retreat of a single fisherman. The hillside bank and the shade of the pine boughs appeared, at a first glance, to be crowded with people. Three men were bending busily over a fire, while a fourth man lounged by the shanty door. Their figures were all gilded by the sunset, like the red aisles and columns of the woods behind them, and the trembling reeds in front reflected along the water's edge.

"Ahoy!" called Mark. "Father!"

His cry went echoing upward in those aisles. It had an instantaneous and a very strange effect.

The three men jumped to their feet, stared, hesitated for a moment, said something to one another, and then, seizing from off the fire a large metal pot, carried it, stumbling, with great haste and confusion, into the shanty.

Against all custom of the woods, they gave the canoe no word or sign of greeting.

"Hmm!" said Lola. "Don't like us. No. Tha's so. Don' like our looks, do they?"

By the time he had brought his *Sea Rider* to shore among the reeds and boulders, out came the three men from their hut. In the same confusion they slammed the door, and locked it with a padlock.

"Don' mean us fer to taste none o' *their* supper," murmured the Indian.

Meanwhile the fourth man, a tremendous, lanky fellow in blue overalls and a gray cloth hat, came slouching down toward the water.

"Here, you!" he cried, in a loud, forced, nasal voice. "Who sent for you round here?"

He halted above them on the bank, peering from under his hand.

"You kin clear out!" he added sourly. "What ye after, anyway?"

Lola returned a civil answer.

"We was a-lookin' for Juds Boswell," he murmured. "Tha's all. Jest a-look-in' fer Juds Boswell. You hain't seen him, s'pose, nowheres, hev ye?"

The lanky man stood still for a moment, as if thinking what to answer.

"Naw," said he. "I hev'n't, nor I don't want to. You go on yer ways. We can't feed nor house the whole town-ship. No, I tell ye. There ain't been no such person round this camp."

The speaker lowered his hand. As the light disclosed his face, Mark started in surprise. This man glowered at them with a single eye. Its mate was but a pouch of shriveled eyelids, inflamed and pitiful, like a scar. Under the cloth hat brim his hair shone red as copper in the sunset.

"He's the one!" cried Mark, carried away by indignation. "He's the one that cheated the widow!"

The man's face went suddenly pale.

"What's that?" he snarled, and made a step forward. "What did I hear? You say that ag'in!"

But Mark was now too excited to reply, for he had recognized something more about that red head.

"Oh!" he stammered. "You—you, you're wearing——"

The other cut him short with a wave of the arm.

"Clear out, the pair of ye! We don't want no kids a-yallop'in' round us, nor no blame dirty Injuns prowlin' about for to steal."

At these words Lola rose in the canoe and very deliberately stepped ashore. Mark saw trouble coming. He had no time, however, to be afraid. Out he jumped on the rocks, to follow Lola; and he would have done so had ten such adversaries barred the way, for this red-haired Cyclops was wearing a

thing he had no right to. Mark knew the cloth hat for his father's—the shapeless old gray headgear which Judge Boswell always wore a-fishing.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAMPERS ON HARDHACK.

Lola dragged the nose of the birch canoe ashore. Mark, trying to help, hauled with him. The tall reeds brushed their faces as they rose to climb the bank, and it seemed a strange thing to walk through peaceful, bending rushes toward a quarrel.

The one-eyed man stood waiting, slouched, his arms akimbo. Lola went quietly up to him without haste. Mark, bubbling over all kinds of accusation, found no breath for words.

"My name's Loy'la Pierpold," began the Indian plainly. "Injun folks they call me the Bear sometimes. Wha's your name?"

"Non' o' your 'farnal business!" grunted the lanky man, scowling. "But I ain't 'shamed of it, comes to the word; my name's Chubbuck."

Though casual and subdued, their talk rang somehow dangerous in Mark's ears. He stayed close behind Lola. The two men stood face to face, each planted squarely in his tracks.

"Wha's that you says to us down there?" Lola pointed toward the canoe below them. "Sump'n about stealin'. Deef, I was, mebbe; didn' ketch the rights of it."

At first the one-eyed man, Chubbuck, disdained to answer; he looked sneeringly down; and with his great height he seemed to have all the advantage, the power, and the prestige. Tough, bony, long of reach, he towered over the Indian, who stood in his old drooping posture, with knees bent, humble, downcast mien, and eyes meditating some far-off general question.

"I tell ye what I says," drawled Chubbuck, with a conceited grin. In his fist

he held a plug of tobacco, which he carried slowly to his mouth. As he tore off one corner with long, yellow teeth, his hand was trembling somewhat. "I says, we don't want no mangy Indians a-prowlin' round fer to steal. Nor we don't, neither."

Lola glanced up. By comparison he looked small, round, and flabby.

"That hain't no way to talk," he protested, quietly but severely. "Injun don' steal. I got good rights, good rights fer to be here. Yea-ah. Tha's so. Good rights. My gran'father, he own all this woods one tam, afore Put Lofe came. Yea-ah. I never stealded. Never took so much as a fox hind laig outa 'nother man's trap, no, sir, me. That hain't no way fer to talk."

Chubbuck slowly began to chew his tobacco. Muscles played along his lean, freckled cheeks, clear up under the roots of his fiery hair.

"Ain't it?" His solitary eye gleamed hard and contemptuous. "Well, you jes' don't need to listen. Pull up your hoofs, that's all you haf to do. Clear away, the pair of ye!"

Mark's courage had not failed, but only his voice. He stepped forward between the wranglers.

"Where," he squeaked, "where did you get my father's hat?"

Chubbuck scowled both with his eye and with the red-rimmed socket.

"Git out!" said he curtly. "It's one I bought my own self. Never seen your haley old father. Git out!"

Then Mark recovered his speech.

"It's not true!" he shrilled. "You have! You give me that hat!"

Why he should so desire the hat, as a hat, he never stopped to think, and never knew; for Chubbuck suddenly swung forward, and with one bony paw made a sweep at his head. Mark dodged, but caught the slant edge of the blow, and went rolling into a patch of sweet fern. He was up almost at once, dazed and blubbering with fury.

The first thing he saw was Lola's hand grasping behind Lola's back, clutching at a belt, a sheath—and the knife which had killed the wasp. The next thing was the flash of a blade in the light from the burning lake.

"Oh! Stop!" cried Mark, running in. "Don't! Wait! Stop!"

He caught Lola's arm in both hands as it went forward from the hip. Even during the same moment, and while carried off his feet, Mark found time to learn, with wonder, that the Indian's arm was not flabby or fat, as it looked, but solid and heavy as bone.

"Leggo!" Lola was panting. "Leggo, boy, ongrab! He's aimin' to fire on us!"

The words meant nothing, had not Mark been whirled ahead by that iron forearm until he saw Chubbuck over him and Chubbuck's eye glaring and the long, bright shine of a pistol whipping upward in Chubbuck's fist. Whether he understood what was happening and tried to stop it, or whether the force of Lola's wrenching threw him blindly into a useful place, Mark afterward could not tell; but he went headforemost against a pair of dirty blue overalls, seized them and a pair of knees inside them, tackled, and fell, just as he had often fallen, playing football at school, with a bigger fellow on top. Something cracked—a revolver—so loud that his ears rang.

"Hi, good! Hi, good!" sang Lola.

Mark sat upright in the same patch of sweet fern, as before. A cloud of dust floated golden off the ground. Beyond it shone the bare red head of Chubbuck, who sprawled on the slippery pine needles, and kicked out, and tried to roll over sidewise toward a glittering object which lay in the midst of the luminous cloud. It was the fellow's pistol, a long, ugly, nickel-plated thing. Mark no sooner recognized it than he, likewise, began to scramble and roll—so fast that he rolled clear over it, and had

to reach backward, clawing in sand and pine needles. Somehow he caught it, evaded a pair of grasping hands, and rose to his feet holding the pistol by the wrong end.

"Here, here! This won't do, boys!" piped a little, thin voice. "This won't never do at all. Quit your nonsense! Behave, now! Quit your nonsense——"

The voice ran on, babbling and whining. It had a familiar sound. Mark paused only to get a good working grip of the weapon he had so strangely won; then he looked up, and found the other three men of the camp standing near. Two of them were strangers—a dark-faced, greasy, foreign pair, who looked like any street loungers. The third, he who babbled and whined, was Tommy Cody.

The fallen Chubbuck, meanwhile, had risen, slapping dust off his overalls and cursing—but not like a man who wanted any more fight.

"Who begun this?" quavered Cody, in his ridiculous, timid voice. "Can't hev it! Can't hev fightin' round *my* camp, I tell ye!"

No one at any time could feel afraid of Tommy Cody, the village butt and famous thin man. Now, as he chattered, a mere thread of a creature in dirty black "cutaway" and limp trousers, he seemed ready to sink through the ground with fright, just as once—according to the sheriff's fable—he went down through a sled-stake hole. His little, hairless, yellow face, puckered and pointed like a quince; his mild blue eyes blinking, half silly, half sagacious; his fragile body tottering there between terror and pomposity—all this was poor old Thomas Cody, the same as always, who never harmed a soul.

"Hello, Tommy!" cried Mark, feeling almost at home again.

"Hello!" replied the fragile one mechanically. "Hello, hello! How are ye? Who begun it? Can't hev it!

Won't hev it! How'd ye git here? Hello!"

"Where's father?" said Mark of the single idea.

Cody blinked several times, looking from one to another of his sullen comrades.

"Dunno, dunno!" he gabbled. "Your father, hey? Dunno. Judge Boswell, hey? Your father said to me he was a-goin'—— Dunno. He wa'n't here. I hain't seen him."

Chubbuck and the swarthy mutes gathered morosely behind him. They made an ill-favored group to face the glowing sunset. One of them muttered something.

"Yes!" cried Tommy Cody, and nodded. "You—you—you look-a-here, boy!" He put on a feeble air of authority. "You gimme back this gen'leman's pistol. He says you begun it. Boys got no right to go round takin' people's firearms away. Don't belong to ye, neither. You give the gen'leman back his gun."

Lola had neither moved nor spoken, but remained there, quiet, suspicious, bright-glancing, with knife in hand.

"Don' you do it!" he now cried sharply. "Muckle on, aholt of 'er. Pass 'er to me. Yea-ah. I'll keeps 'er."

With that, shifting the knife to his left hand, the Indian softly put forth his right and took the long, nickel-plated pistol. At once the four campers drew back, recoiling.

"I guess," murmured Lola thoughtfully, "we got the upper hands of 'em. Yea-ah. Um! Tha's so."

A long silence fell. Tiny lake waves plashed and chuckled below, under the resting *Sea Rider's* flank of birch.

"Dern the whol' business!" growled Chubbuck, and, turning away in disgust, he went and sat on a stump by the fire, which had sunk, neglected, into a broad heap of coals. "Dern the whol' muckin' business!"

Clutching his red hair with tremulous

fingers, he stared at the half-burned cedar tripod which straddled the fire bed. Like many another coward, this one-eyed man could carry and flourish firearms, but not stand up barehanded before an enemy. The other two men retreated presently to where he sat, and, after a few more vague, foolish, distracted questions, Tommy Cody sidled over to join them. They held a muttering council round the fire.

Mark looked inquiringly at his friend. Lola stood silent and watchful, as before; but now he slowly gave a nod, which signified better than words that they two were the acknowledged masters of the camp. Meanwhile he sheathed his knife, and stuck the naked pistol under his belt, conspicuously in front.

"Wait!" he murmured. "Jes' wait! See what they says to us nex'."

And so the Indian began wandering about, ambling onward a few steps, returning, then halting dead to stare at the ground, or the treetops, or out across the sunset lake; always with the same vacant thoughtfulness, like a melancholy bear. Once he stooped, took up a white pebble from the ground, stared at it aimlessly, and put it in his pocket. As for Mark, he now spied, under a bush—where it lay, kicked aside and forgotten—the precious object of their quarrel, the gray hat. He pounced on it, then ran to Lola in triumph.

"It is my father's hat!" he announced.

Stamped on the inner band were the letters "R. B."—the initials of Mr. Richard Boswell.

"Yea-ah!" said Lola, looking wise. "Tha's right. P fer Juds and R fer Boswell. Yea-ah. We got 'im!"

Mark, as he brushed the hat free of dust and pine needles, felt his spirits greatly rise. To see and handle this shabby old piece of gray cloth, brought him, by some queer fancy, near to his

father, close, as it were, on the missing footsteps.

The voices round the camp fire became audible; all four men were arguing at once; and, though Chubbuck's gleaming head wagged stubbornest, he suddenly ripped out a final oath, and, squirting tobacco juice among the coals, sat like a man overcome, hangdog and sour.

"Hev it your own fool way, then!" he sneered.

"Go on, Tommy!" urged the two dark men, with foreign gestures. "Go on, Tommy! Tell 'em!"

His little yellow face more puckered than ever, his thin frame still more withered, Tommy Cody drew near, hesitating, shambling, as though his pipestem legs failed under a heavy burden of doubt and care.

"Look, boys!" he hailed, with a false note of cheeriness. "Le's us hev some talk. Us fellers don't pick no quar'ls. Sure not. Us fellers don't want to fly at one t'other's thro'ts, as the old sayin' is. Look-a-here!"

Giving Lola a wide berth, he passed to the other side of Mark, and laid his arm affectionately over the boy's shoulder. It was a feeble arm and a quaking.

"Now, son," he began, in a low, hurried voice. "Now, son, you hark! I ain't a-goin' to tell no lies. We did see your father. You know me, Mark. Everybody does. Your father and me's old friends. He's always good to me. Hed I but follered your father's advice, boy, I wouldn' be now——"

He broke off, with a choking sound. Mark suddenly glanced up at him. The queer little starveling face was all drawn painfully askew, and the lips trembled, the foolish blue eyes blinked with a real emotion.

"Bible truth, Mark," whispered Cody. "I'm a-scairt. That Chubbuck, he's a danger's man. I reely am a-scairt of him. I'd ask ye both to stay supper with us, but—but——" He paused,

then weakly concluded: "But I can't. You best clear out, and that's a fact. I'm dretful sorry; but if you boys was to stay here, we'd all be fightin' again like tomcats."

He removed his quaking arm from the boy's shoulder, and with pitiful anxiety stood watching the effect of his words.

"Last time I was to town," he continued, pleading earnestly, "didn' I leave your father's message for ye? Didn' I? And wasn't you sick abed? Says I, the judge he tolt me to tell you he tolt me, he was goin' furdur in, deeper, to fish. Well! Didn' I?" Tommy was now blubbering outright. "You know me, son. The judge, he knows me. Nobody says the's any harm in Tommy Cody, do they? No. Never was inside a jail or a lockup house in my life, 'cept maybe two, three times, Fourth o' July, Queen's Birthday, likes o' that. Was I? No. Well, there, now!"

Somewhat bewildered by this fervent plea, Mark made no answer. It was Cody who continued their discourse, bending down as though to whisper in Mark's ear.

"Now, listen!" said he, and glanced timidly back toward the camp fire. "You go take the judge his hat. She's his; you was right; and we give her up to ye free and fair. He left us that hat by accident, kind of. He'll be wantin' her, too. And you tell the judge I never picked no fight. Tell him us fellers ain't doin' aught but— Tell him the fishin' ain't no good here; better stay where he is. Like a good boy, now, you go carry your father's hat to him."

Mark laughed.

"Where is he, then? We'll go fast enough. I don't want anything better."

Tommy drew a long breath in relief. All the wrinkles in his little face turned suddenly from careworn crow's feet to

the strangest network of smiles. He seized Mark by the arm.

"Come down here!" he cried briskly. "'Tain't fur. Come on down, Lola! I kin show ye. 'Tain't no distance."

It was comical to see how openly the poor, frail simpleton rejoiced at getting rid of his visitors, as he hurried them down the bank to their canoe.

"Spang over there!" said he, pointing across the lake, which was now a bottomless gulf of amber light. "Round the fust point, then open up Loon Cove, so; and there's the mouth o' the brook, where your father went." Tommy poured out a stream of tedious instruction. "Can't miss the brook; plumb afore your nose. If she was a bear, she'd bite ye. Good-by, boys! Glad to seen ye. So long! Good luck to ye both."

Lola, by a motion of his hand, sent Mark aboard the *Sea Rider*. With a gloomy, suspicious air, he followed, and shoved out the canoe through a rattle of parting reeds.

"Goo'-by!" he grunted; and, under his breath, as he began to paddle: "Humph! Foolish. Yea-ah."

The shore quickly receded. Tommy's grin and fatuous waving hand were blurred by the green lines of the reeds. Mark had one backward glimpse of the pine grove, the cabin, locked inhospitably, and the morose trio staring from that sylvan fireplace, where a faint bluish twist of smoke mounted among glowing, red-barked pillars. Then, like a dream, all the evergreen hill floated away into distance. Lola and he faced a world of primrose-yellow flame, high in air, deep in water, both elements forming one limitless glory, save where the western woods divided them by a bar black as midnight—a double fringe of dark spruce pinnacles, half upright, half inverted.

"What can those men be doing?" said Mark. "That's a queer camp."

Cool shadow surrounded them. The

canoe slid under the edge of evening, close to land, round the point, and into a cove of dark-green water. A mink, taken unaware on the shore, dove silently under Mark's paddle blade like a brownish streak, no sooner guessed at than gone.

"Dunno," answered Lola at last. "They didn' mean us fer to know. It hain't fish they's after. No, sir."

A moment later he ceased paddling. "Turn roun'!" said he.

Mark did so. The birch drifted on through dark-green twilight.

"See," muttered the Indian, fumbling in his pocket, "what I founded!"

And he drew out from his pocket that white object, like a small, flat stone, which Mark had seen him pick up at the camp.

"Ketch!" He tossed it carefully. "What's you call that? It hain't fish bait. It hain't man vittles."

Mark sat staring at the unexpected thing he had caught in his hand.

CHAPTER VI.

POPPLE HOUSE.

"What you call it?" asked Lola.

At first Mark would have thought it a curious bit of limestone. Then, turning it over in his palm, he saw that the thing was not of nature's handiwork, but of man's. Irregular in shape, a rough disk broken across the middle, it bore a deep impression, as though stamped by one half of a circular seal. Mark scratched with his thumb nail the broken edge, which came away frittering in white powder.

"Plaster of Paris," he concluded.

Lola grunted wisely.

"Oh, yea-ah! Plaster. Fer the rheum-tiz," he replied. "I heerd of it onct. Mustid plaster. Some folks 'lows it to be good."

"No," said Mark. "Not that kind."

He scrutinized the clean, round rim

of the impression. It was milled. Within its half circle appeared a fragmentary device—the profile of a woman's head.

"Why!" he exclaimed. "Why, Lola! It's a cast!" Staring through twilight, he wondered why the Indian did not share the thrill of his discovery. "A cast, I tell you, or a mold! For making money. They're coining half dollars in that camp over there. And Chubbuck passed them on the Widow Johnquest, when he was drunk, in her shop. You wait till Sheriff Hardy catches him!"

Lola began paddling, like a man who had other interests.

"Tha's so?" he inquired vaguely. "Makin' money, hey? I heerd tell o' that, too; never seen it done afore." He steered the canoe toward a gray granite beach. "Time we was buildin' a hovel and gittin' our supper to eat."

Mark sat astonished at the sight of such barbarous indifference.

"But, Lola!" he cried. "That's what they're doing, those fellows! That's why they drive away visitors, and no wonder! Don't you understand? They are coiners—counterfeiters. They're making money."

The Indian merely hooked his paddle between two rocks, and brought his craft ashore.

"Good fer them!" he murmured. "Good fer them! Some folks kin. Wisht I could. Now you climb out, an' we'll cook the supper."

He would listen to no further explanation. As they worked side by side in the dusk, cut poplar saplings, and laid boughs to build a leafy shelter, Mark went on talking, indeed, but found his words entirely wasted. Lola was hungry, and said so. Nor would he speak further on any subject until their house for the night stood ready under the stars and a fire was leaping before it, and supper smoked in a dish on the ground. They sat down side by side,

facing the fire, beyond which the bottom of the canoe, upturned, glistened wet like crystal in a patch of grass. All the cove lay still and lost in darkness. The topmost leaves of the living poplars pattered with a sound as of tiny rain-drops.

Lola ate heartily in silence, then stared, musing, at the fire, then spoke in a mournful vein:

"How's folks make money, Mark? I heerd white men talk, many's time, say: 'So 'n' so, he's a-makin' money.' 'That store, she's a-makin' money han' over fist.' How's they do it?" He sighed. "Machin'ry, mebbe. I seen sardines a-makin' onct int' the fact'ry. Um! Yea-ah. They doos the money sort o' same way, s'pose. Like how the sawmill make aidgin's?"

"Something like," replied Mark. "The government makes it in a kind of factory. But these men over here——"

"Ho, no!" interrupted Lola, shaking his head. "Gov'ment don' *make* money, Mark. You donno. Gov'ment *gits* money. Gov'ment take it away f'm other fellers. Yea-ah. Gov'ment, he take it, take the land away, too; gives you a paper, mebbe; tha's all. Man, name o' George Wash'ton, he was gov'ment; he taken all this land away on my father gran'father, promise to pay him a slat o' money, hund'ed year ago. Can't never do it. Too poor. Gov'ment hain't got none, Mark. You's wrong."

Mark, knitting his brows, tried to meet this argument.

"Money," he began, "is made in a mint."

He had read about mints, but never seen one; and, while he expounded as best he might, Lola laughed him to scorn.

"A mink?" said the Indian. "'Twas a mink doved under us w'en we was a-türnin' int' this bay. You's tired. You's talkin' foolish. They's a little money ketchin' 'em. And minks kin

swim. But they hain't much else to minks."

Mark tried again, and did somewhat better. He talked earnestly, holding the broken plaster cast so that both of them might study it in the red firelight. Lola scratched his ears, and thought, and nodded once or twice.

"Now, don't you see?" Mark urged. "What these fellows make is *bad* money!"

Lola's face became a brown puzzle.

"Tha's so. Um! Likely," he grumbled. "Guess 'twould be kind o' bad. Tommy Cody, he couldn' shave a hoop pole ner fit an ax handle. An' the cock-eye, there, he'd never make nothin' straight. Yea-ah. Guess tha's true. Guess *their* money would be two botches an' a bungle."

Somehow, Mark felt, the right and wrong of this affair were being overlooked.

"Why, Lola!" he cried. "It's worse! It's meaner! It's low down! This red-head man we fought, this cockeye, what do you suppose? He took things out of Mrs. Johnquest, the widow, her store! Things to eat and wear. And the money he paid wouldn't buy that poor old woman so much as a last year's potato peeling. It's no good!"

The Indian's broad face gradually woke, brightened, and grew hot with anger.

"Huh? Hey?" He jumped on foot, and paced a few rapid turns before the fire. "The widder? *I* knows *her*. They cheats the widder, hey?" He burst forth suddenly with a great oath, and Mark loved him for it. "W'y, boy! W'y, boy! They cheats her?" He stopped and glared at Mark over the fire. "They stalded f'm old Mis' Johnques'? What kind o' way's that to do? By gorry, I gits mad!"

He shook his fist, very slowly, in a measured fashion which gave weight, dignity, and power to his wrath. He paused. And Mark, remembering how

this man had not once lost his temper even during the fight, saw now, with a touch of dread, that Lola's face had altered. Between firelight and obscurity, it was an older and a harder face, glowering with fixed eyes, the lips drawn back.

"In the ole days, when we gits mad ——" He broke off, and pointed at the fire below him. Voice, look, and gesture made him seem for the moment an apparition who had stepped from the darkness, not of the night behind him, but of an ancient and revengeful past. "W'en we, our people, gits mad at that kind o' man, we digs a pit hole in the groun', an' we fills the pit hole full o' hemlock bark, an' then we takes him an' burns him up in a hot fire, quick. Yea-ah! Tha's what we do, a-cause they deserves it!"

He moved away, muttering. Mark saw his dim shape pass back and forth in the gloom by the water's edge. When he returned, he came shuffling along, the same dull, patient, downcast Lola of every day.

"We'll ketch up evens with 'em!" he declared quietly, and flung wood on the fire, so that a great explosion of sparks burst upward. "Um! Yea-ah. Now, le's go to bed, Mark. Don't cost ye nothin' to board at Popple House. Tha's so. Hain't it?"

As they lay down beneath a roof of poplar leaves already wilting in the warm firelight, Lola unbuckled his belt, to put away the captured pistol and the sheath knife.

"It only shows ye, Mark"—yawning, he moralized the day's event—"shows jes' what I tolt ye. They couldn' git the upper hands of us. Al'ays take yer knife blade to kill a wossip."

So saying, he twisted himself into his blanket, rolled over, shifted his feet a few times, and began to snore. Mark lay listening, with a complacent idea that he, at his age, could stay awake

longer than this weathered old campaigner of the woods.

"I must think what we ought to do," he told himself. "Lola is not very strong at thinking."

In this agreeable conceit, he watched the firelight flicker across their ceiling—golden mist and tiny, black-tongued shadows that played among the withering poplar leaves.

He fancied he was thinking all the while. His eyes, he knew, had never closed for a moment. But of a sudden the fire was out, the poplar house dark as desolation, and a glimmer of gray light hanging aloft strangely over the treetops. A crow somewhere cawed raucously at long intervals, as though but half awake. The repeated note was that of morning.

"Morning, no mistake," thought Mark.

A low, white bank of fog lay smothering the cove.

"I've been sound asleep all night!" Mark chuckled at his own chagrin, and turned for another nap. In doing so, he discovered that he lay alone under the shelter, beside an empty blanket. Lola was gone.

The discovery fetched Mark upright. What could have happened here between dark and daybreak, sleep and waking? He sat and gave ear to the morning stillness. The crow uttered one last drowsy caw.

"Lola?" called Mark, on the chance that his companion might be close at hand.

Nobody answered. The boy rose and went outside. Their fire was long dead—gray ashes, encircled by a border of half-burned sticks. Overhead, to the right, a few pale western stars were fading above the ragged band of vapor and black spruce points; to the left, the sky showed overcast with a sour dawn, dead colored, like the ashes and the water mist.

"Lola!" he cried.

At the sound of his hail, a treetop rustled near by, and off went flying the crow whose voice had waked him. High over the mist bank flapped this uncouth black bird, to alight, swaying and balancing frowsily, on the tip of a tall fir. Woods and water rang with derisive cawing.

The cove seemed utterly forlorn, even at that moment; and at the next, Mark learned it was no mere seeming; for, as he peered along the misty confines of the shore, he found, with a bodily shock of surprise, that he stood there, in truth and indeed, alone.

The birch canoe was gone.

At first he remained gaping, doubtful of his own eyes. It was incredible that his friend Lola should have deserted him like a thief in the night. But it was true. The wet grass by the shore sparkled silvery, except where footprints darkened it in a line of drenching, trodden sprays, and where the canoe had left a dry pattern of her body shaped like a giant willow leaf. Lola had picked up the *Sea Rider* and vanished with her into the smoky dawn.

"What struck the man?" thought Mark. "Why should he sneak away like this?"

Following a first impulse, the boy set forth to patrol the shore; but he soon came to a halt, for everywhere the cold, wet solitude wrapped him round, the same brown edge of water simmered and steamed under low-hanging fog.

"Oh, well!" said he, for encouragement. "That Injun will come back. He can't propose to leave me for good."

Returning to the camp, he suddenly bethought him; and did what he should have done at the outset.

"Let's see if he took anything."

Surely the Indian had not touched their supplies. It was a hateful suspicion, and Mark blamed himself for it heartily. When he had stooped under the roof of poplar leaves, he rejoiced

to find their bags and bundles lying safe in the corner.

"It's all right," thought Mark, ashamed but relieved. "He's too good a chap——"

A second later, in alarm, he was down on his knees rummaging through Lola's grimy blanket. He lifted it, glanced underneath, shook out the wrinkled folds, then tossed it away and burrowed in the dry leaves and bedding. When he stood up again, his face was grave and troubled.

The Indian had taken something, after all. His belt and sheath knife were missing, and so was Chubbuck's old revolver.

Mark sat down on his blanket and stared into the melancholy dawn. Drenched to the bone from wading through grass and bushes, he had begun to shiver; but he hardly noticed that, his mind being elsewhere. A picture of Lola's face appeared to swim before him—not in its kindly, stupid aspect, but transfigured as he had seen it last night, when Lola spoke of burning people quick.

Was this the man who had stolen away, armed?

It was a bad thought to sit alone with, and Mark, leaning forward, chin in hand, fell prey to intolerable doubt. Instead of finding his father, he had lost his guide. This lake of mist and of somber treetops encompassed him like a curtain—a curtain drawn before a very hopeless world. No good of any sort would come from Lola's errand.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEVIL'S KITCHEN.

No good of any sort could come. Mark pulled his blanket round his legs and waited, shivering. Wet and cold, alone in a shadowy wilderness at that doleful morning hour when courage runs low, he found cause to remember that he had left home half sick, anxious,

and weaker than he was willing to confess. The lake mist mournfully shut him in with his forebodings. Even the crow had gone from the fir tops yonder. Lola's desertion wore a sinister look.

"Suppose he fights those people at camp?" thought the boy. "Indians like to get even, they say. Somebody may be hurt—or killed. It may be happening now."

Whatever happened, he could only sit there under his blanket and shiver, and be of no help or use in the world. These woods were filled with darkness and trouble. He had tried to remain hopeful, to picture himself and Lola as traveling always through sunshine, and at last, in some brightest part of all the woods, triumphantly reaching his father. Everything was to have come right. But now—suppose that everything went wrong?

He roused, and shook off these doubts.

"You fool," said he, "at least you can build a fire."

They had piled a stack of dry wood behind the hovel, under the long, overhanging poplar boughs. He brought an armful, and set to work reviving their camp fire. The red blaze of kindlings made at once a cheerful, homelike color amid the gray fog. Mark squatted over it, nursing the flame.

There was no sound; nothing told him to raise his head; but he glanced from the fire just in time to see a white thing stealing toward him through the vapor. Like a wraith turning solid and real, the birch canoe slid into the margin of brown water, and the blurred figure of a man, lifting a glossy paddle, stepped out on the granite rocks. It was Lola.

"Hello!" cried Mark.

The Indian climbed up toward the fire. He came barehanded and without a weapon. His broad face was calm, his old brown shirt covered with pearly seeds of moisture.

"Mornin'," he replied. "Woken too soon, did ye? Start'n' the fire? Tha's good."

He stooped under the hovel, and dragged out one of the food bags.

"What happened?" said Mark.

"Nothin'," Lola grumbled. "Where's teakettle?"

Not before they were eating breakfast did he offer to speak again.

"Rain. I kin smell them pon' lilies way here, clean f'm other end the lake. Um. Yea-ah. We're a-goin' to git rain."

Mark then grew conscious of what he had been too fretful and busy to enjoy—a cool fragrance of water lilies. Now that Lola mentioned it, all the woods and waters breathed forth a faint, incomparable sweetness.

"Rain's a-comin'," Lola nodded. "We better put on more boughses, make the roof tight."

The mist had melted, so that the cove lay clear and dark, a pool of mirrored evergreen. When the two campmates had chopped and laid on their house a double thatching of poplar branches and fir, the coming shower already marred that mirror with delicate rings, widening slowly. Lola brought ashore his canoe, from which, before placing her upside down, he took out his knife belt and the nickel-plated pistol.

"What did you do—with those?" Mark ventured. "What happened?"

"Nothin'," repeated his friend.

They took refuge under the hovel as the first great drops fell hissing into their camp fire. The perfume of far-off water lilies faded and was gone. Then suddenly, with a plashing outburst, the rain drove aslant the cove and transformed all to leaping quicksilver.

"No," murmured Lola. He sat watching the many-shafted downpour and the bright drops dancing upward. "Nothin' happened. I jes' went a-huntin'—a-huntin' fer a thing."

"Did you find it?" asked Mark.

"Yea-ah, I guesso." Lola's eyes puckered thoughtfully. "Guess I did. Mebbe. W'en the rain hol's up I'll go show ye. Then you kin see."

This proposal was by no means welcome.

"We ought not to waste time," Mark objected. "I want to go straight up the brook."

"Wha' for?" growled Lola in displeasure. "Wha' d'ye wan' to do that for?"

"Because my father's up there, of course," replied the boy. "Tommy Cody told us——"

"Huh!" The Indian cut him short. "Tom Cody, Tom Fool! Your father, he ain't up no brook."

Mark looked at his friend, who sat humped in a posture of meditation.

"Where is he, then?"

"Donno," said Lola, with a tranquillity that was maddening. "Can't say fer sartain. Hain't up no brook."

Mark barely restrained his anger. He was now thoroughly tired of this prolonged mystification. It cost him a sharp struggle to forbear, to hold his tongue and wait. At last, all in Lola's good time, he was rewarded.

"I can't say, Mark," continued Lola, "acause I was promise not to. The juds, your father, he tolt me shut up, not say nothin'. I'll keeps ma promise, me. Tha's kind of man I am. Can't tell nothin'. But I'm a-goin' take ye where he is. Um. Yea-ah. First, show ye what I founded, on the way; then take ye where yer father was. I guesso."

Mark unrolled his blanket, and stood up.

"Let's go now," he proposed, with alacrity.

The Indian shook his head.

"Not ontell this rain hol's up," he answered. "The juds, he won' run away, sech weather. Nobody won' stir out, but anglyworm and mud turtle,

w'ile she rain this hard. Se' down. Rain, she won' quit fer you fussin'. Se' down an' wait!"

All day they sat and waited, while the rain fell steadily, veiling the cove and opposite woods with a silvery mesh, now light and transparent, now coarse and blinding. The rain filled all the air with noise—a swish and spatter that never ceased, and a multitudinous drumming on the canoe bottom, where it hopped like shining bullets. Not a dry sound was left in the world, and the only smells were of wet earth and of acrid charcoal from the dripping ruins of the fire.

Lola squatted patiently, dozing at times, or murmuring some drowsy tale, some interminable history of his own days in the forest, or his father's or his grandfather's. Slow or fast, a day or a generation, the passage of time affected him not at all; but Mark wished the morning away, and found the afternoon no better. The gloomy semblance of daylight failed at last into an evening darkness.

"I think she quit now," said Lola suddenly. "She quit rainin'. Yea-ah. Pooty soon."

If any change were coming in the weather, Mark could not recognize it. Yet the Indian was right, for not long afterward the silver curtain of rain dissolved, the evergreen shore reappeared as a dark wall of bristling points, a few last drizzling lines vanished from the air, and Loon Cove lay before them clear and lonely under a threatening twilight.

"Now we're a-goin'," Lola mumbled. "Git the paddles."

They were not to go far, it seemed, for he left their bundles in the shelter and made no longer preparation than to buckle on his "wossip" knife and stick the captured pistol into his shirt bosom.

"Don' talk. Don' make no noise," he cautioned Mark. "Got to creepse

roun' on 'em, we have. Come on. Don' scoope yer paddle again' the side o' the canoe, neither."

Silent as a floating leaf, the long birch went out from shore. Lola steered straight across for the opposite woods; then, when almost aground, with a quick turn, headed her outward, close along the dark-stained granite border. By this maneuver, as Mark afterward saw, they crossed the cove secretly, and secretly put forth from its mouth; for the little promontory of the poplar house barred all view toward the east. No money-maker could spy them as they slid along shore. This end of the pond lay hidden from the campers—a lonely sheet of dull-brown water, so quiet that the surrounding trees dripped audibly, in a widespread, sodden whisper. This dripping solitude, under the low, cloudy twilight, was very cheerless.

They had stolen round the southern curve of Hardhack Pond, and approached within a half mile of the hostile camp, when Lola suddenly ran the canoe ashore between two fallen pine logs and a wild-pear bush toppling down the bank.

"Shind out!" he ordered, standing erect in a cavern of leaves. "As nigh as we dast paddle. We're a-got to hoof it."

Leaving the *Sea Rider* well hidden, they pulled themselves up through the wild-pear boughs and set off, the Indian leading, into a grove of yellow birches. Lola swung along, ungainly as a bear, but with a bear's deceptive speed, so that Mark, to keep at his heels, broke into a struggling trot through the wet fern and blueberry tangle.

"Where are we going, Lola?" he panted.

His companion did not reply. Glimpses of dark water now and then among the stout, golden birch trunks on the left told him that their course followed the outline of the pond.

"What are we——"

Lola flashed one menacing look over his shoulder.

"Hesh up!" he whispered, without pausing. "We hain't a to'd's hop away f'm them fellers."

Down through the last of the grove they hurried, into a soggy lane choked by alders—the ruin of some ancient corduroy road, now ribbed with green moss and shining puddles of rain water. Walking softly as on velvet, they traversed the lane, and at the other end were about to climb a mound of granite when Lola stopped short, reached one hand backward, caught Mark's arm and pinned him fast.

They both stood rigid. People were talking close at hand, and coming nearer.

"No, Mr. Chubbuck, I think you're wrong," said the whining voice of Tommy Cody. "You're mistaken; you're mistaken. Tell? The boy don't know nothing *to* tell on us. Him and that Injun has gone up the brook, as I was sayin'——"

"You!" sneered another voice. "You always are a-sayin'! But what you say wouldn't butter no parsnips. The whol' thing's goin' wrong. We can't afford to take resks."

And while he spoke, out from withered sumac bushes that crowned the granite knoll above, stalked the tall, red-haired man, with Tommy Cody shambling after. They came from the woods on the right, and now halted, barely ten feet away, in full view against the darkening sky. Mark would have dodged among the alders, but at his first movement, Lola's grip tightened and held him powerless. Lola stood like a piece of the rock.

"Well, well, mebbe. I don't set up to be no great," argued the scarecrow Tommy. "You know best, dessay. All is, Judge Boswell he don't see nothing wrong. The judge and me is old

friends. Guess the judge knows a thing or two. And he says——”

The tall ruffian made a gesture of impatience.

“Aw, you and your judge!” he cried. “You and him better close your fly traps, the both o’ ye!”

So saying, he slouched angrily forward, and, with Tommy babbling beside him, crossed the little granite eminence and disappeared among the lakeward trees. Thanks to his blind left side, to Tommy’s love of chatter, and to Lola’s prompt, animal cunning, there had been no discovery.

Till the sound of voices and footsteps died away, Lola remained a listening statue. Then he released Mark’s arm, and, turning, frowned.

“W’en you hain’t time to hide,” he whispered, “al’ays stand right still.”

With this rebuke, he began climbing the granite, a gray ledge striped with red iron rust from sled runners of last winter. Mark, as he followed, became conscious of a new discomfort; not that he was tired, hot, excited, and wet from head to foot, but that he had overheard something which left him strangely ill at ease.

“The way they were speaking of father,” he thought. “I don’t like it. They spoke—almost—as if my father was here—was one of them!”

A foolish thought; he brushed it aside. But somehow it returned to pester him as he hurried after his guide among the blighted sumacs. Swerving to the right, whence their enemies had come, Lola went silently along the “backbone” of the ledge, until it curved abruptly downward, to overhang a small, gloomy ravine. Here all was tumbled confusion—immense gray boulders piled on end, and wretched gray saplings that tried to live, twisting from under the rocks and straining leanly toward the sky. Lola slipped down among them like a cat. Heavily and

cautiously, Mark clambered from boulder to boulder.

“Now! I show ye. Um!” The Indian permitted himself to grin briefly but with satisfaction. “Yea-ah. This where they keeps they money! Come quiet.”

At the bottom of this hollow, where they stood together, a gurgling, runnelly sound passed underfoot without ceasing. Deep down, beneath the huge-piled fragments of granite, passed a brook. Unseen, buried forever, it made as pleasant variable music as if it were shining in the sun. With a voice no louder than the Indian’s, it caused in that rocky waste a little rejoicing.

They listened for other sounds. None came. Surely they stood alone with the brook.

“Come stiddy!” Lola beckoned, then started on through a gap or natural gateway between high boulders. “You’ll see um. Right there.”

He pointed into a sort of devil’s kitchen, or giant cellar pit among the rocks. But even as he pointed, his arm dropped, and he shrank back under the shadow of the gateway. Mark stared past him.

If this were the hiding hole for base coin, they had surprised one of the coiners. Kneeling among ferns, across the inclosure, a bareheaded man in drab moleskin busily worked at something. Mark saw only the man’s back at first, but now and again that busy head turned for a quick, suspicious glance from side to side. Half buried in dead, wet bracken, before his knees, a pot or bucket lay open. From this he took some white object—a cloth bag, which he hastily untied. Fumbling in it, he rose, and the watchers saw his hand drawn forth, full of silver money. There was a familiar cock of the head as he stood for a moment considering or counting.

And then the scene went giddy before Mark’s eyes. His heart was like a wild

creature kicking in a basket. He did not mean to groan aloud.

The man wheeled, facing them, startled and guilty.

"Oh!" cried Mark, and wrung his hands. "Father!"

CHAPTER VIII.

INJUN MEDICINE.

It was too bad to be true. The menacing twilight, the bare granite bowlders, the uncanny gray saplings, combined to give this place and this encounter a strange, dark, colorless unreality; but after the first shock of disbelief, Mark knew he stood there confronting a fact, a hopeless fact filled with terror. Here, then, was the end of their search. This man, surprised, guilty, caught with the vile cheat in his very hand, was father.

"Oh," said Mark, "I never thought you would!"

He broke off, trembling so that he was forced to lean against one of the gateway rocks.

"Why!" exclaimed his father, in a queer voice, between anger and alarm. "Why!" He slipped the telltale coins into his pocket and advanced. "What does this mean?"

Richard Boswell was a very young man for a judge; too young, some persons said, too easy-going, boyish, and ready to laugh. But now, as he came near, there was little sign of ease or laughter. His quick blue eyes had no merriment in them; his face, sunburned and rough with a blond stubble of woodsman's beard, was now exceedingly grave. Lithe and springy, a rather dashing figure in his old mole-skin kit, he seemed like a ready man turning at bay, greatly upset, but rousing from a secret and dangerous deed to face unwelcome discovery.

Unwelcome; that, to Mark, was the hardest thought. His father stood there

alive and well—and was not glad to see him.

"Why, Mark! What's all this?" he demanded sternly. "What on earth brought you here?"

The invisible brook continued its trundling music underneath the bowlders. Mark found it a hateful sound to hear as it went on and on, tinkling high, gurgling low, a mockery in this gray hollow of defeat.

"Evenin', juds," mumbled Lola, with unshaken composure. "I brung 'im, tha's all. Never tolt 'im a word. No. Jes' brung 'im. Howdy do, juds."

The Indian remained the only calm one of the three. Mark had never before seen his father so agitated, so alert, and dubious, and painfully on guard.

"How are you, Lola?" He answered mechanically. Not once did his blue eyes leave their study of Mark's face. Frowning warily, they seemed to wonder how much, or how little, the boy had happened to see. "I wish," he said regretfully, "I wish you could have chosen almost any other time. What's wrong at home?"

"Nothing," replied Mark miserably. It was not at home that the wrong lay.

"Then what made you come out here?"

"I thought you were lost."

His father's face lighted and softened, but only for an instant. The wary frown returned.

"You didn't receive my message? I sent you word I was fishing."

Mark could not bear to meet those eyes, so well known, but sadly altered. He hung his head, and with the toe of his moccasin dug at a vein of green moss in the granite.

"Yes, I know." He gulped, and swallowed as it were a great longing to shed tears. "I know you did. I—I supposed you *were* fishing."

And with that unlucky speech he fell silent. When he glanced up, he saw a

smile play round his father's rough-bearded lips.

"How did you know I am not?" came the retort. "There are many kinds of fish to catch, my boy, besides trout, bass, and pickerel. Queer fish, too. Eh, Lola?"

"Um. Yea-ah," replied the Indian, leaning against the other rock, with his face upturned and puckered, watching the sky. "Tha's so."

Mark said nothing. To hear this horror treated lamely as a joke was more than he could bear; so that when for a moment his father's hand lay, in the old, kindly fashion, on his shoulder, he could not help wincing and turning away.

"You don't look well, Mark," said the old, kindly voice. "What's the matter?"

"I'm all right," replied Mark shortly. The vein of green moss in the granite required much attention. He kicked at it stubbornly, as if to bury the lie he was telling. "I'm all right."

The brook flouted them with its hidden merriment.

"This is no safe place for us," declared Judge Boswell suddenly. "Go up on the ledge there, will you, and wait a moment?"

Mark obeyed wearily, dragging himself away from that dismal hollow in the rocks.

"If any one should come," his father added, "look sharp, and hide."

"Yea-ah," said Lola. "Can't ketch us."

On the ledge, among leafless, contorted sumacs, the two friends stood waiting. Mark pulled a few red seeds from a sumac ear, and mechanically put them in his mouth. They tasted sour, like lemon or sorrel, just as always. He wondered stupidly how a mere weed could remain the same, when all else had gone, and the bottom had dropped out of his world. He knew exactly what his father was doing down there

behind them. He saw, with a curious, inward clearness, how his father would stoop among those ferns, tie up the bag of coins, replace it, and cover all with dead leaves and rubbish as before.

"Rubbish to rubbish," he thought. "Nothing matters now."

And then a wild rebellion rose within him.

"It can't be true!" he told himself. But it was; he had seen it. What good came of rebelling? He threw down the sumac seeds, and crushed them under his moccasin. "Anyhow," he concluded grimly, "I'll stand by my father. Right or wrong."

His father came hurrying up the ledge.

"Look here, Marco Polo!" The familiar nickname was like a sting. "I am glad to see you, though you may not believe me." He paused; then, as Mark stood dogged and silent, he continued: "It was the wrong time, that's all; the wrong time for you to come here. I'm not free. Something—something worries me. I must see it through." His blue eyes were anxious and evasive. "But I don't like the way you look, my boy. Have you been ill?"

Mark told the same dull falsehood:

"I'm all right."

Judge Boswell shook his head.

"Lola," he said, and took Lola by the arm, "where are you camping?"

"'Cross Hardhack Pon'," replied the Indian. "Loon Cove. We built a popple house, fust p'int."

"Good! That's within reach." The judge nodded. "Now, Lola, you take charge of this chap, will you, until I come for him? As if he were your own boy?"

Lola thoughtfully scratched his cheek.

"Um. Yea-ah. Don't let him git sick. Mebbe."

The judge put both hands on Mark's shoulders.

"My dear old Sobersides," he con-

tinued quietly, "do keep yourself well. Mind what Lola tells you." His bearded and sunburned face, even in that clouded gloom, shone warm and loving. "I'll come get you inside the next twenty-four hours." He dropped his arms and stood back. "Remember, don't tell anybody where you saw me." He seemed to wait for a reply. "What?" said he. "You won't shake hands with your own dad?"

Mark reached forth and grasped his father's hand.

"Don't you fret about me!" he cried, with burning loyalty. "I'll never tell a soul!"

"Of course you won't!" His father patted him soundly on the back. "Now clear out! We mustn't be caught together. And take good care of yourself. I'll come across the pond as soon as these—as quick as ever this thing is finished—and we'll go home together. Good-bye for the present. Mind you watch him, Lola!"

With a parting nod and smile, the judge swung aff along the granite mound, his footsteps quick and springy and silent, like the gait of a hunter who has no time to lose. Once he looked back, still smiling, and waved his hand. Then the black pines swallowed up his lithe, drab figure and bare yellow head. He was gone—toward the money-makers' camp.

"I tol' ye," murmured Lola. "The juds, he's lookin' hearty. Hain't failed non', has he? Um. No. Didn't 'spect to found him here. Thought he'd be odder place. All same. We saved a journdey, ketchin' him halfway. Yea-ah."

Mark paid no heed to what the Indian was saying. As he crumbled to pieces another red cockade from the sumacs, so all his power of thought crumbled into pain and weariness.

"Well!" At last he stared about him in the darkening woods—a dreadful labyrinth where even the points of the

compass had lost their meaning. "Well, let's go home."

He started forward blindly.

"Here," called his companion, in surprise, "that hain't the way. You's got turned roun', you. Come o' me. Foller clos'."

Mark tried to do so, and, staggering downhill, made heavily after the shadow which was Lola. Night overtook them in the corduroy lane. He labored on, splashing through water, tumbling over hummocks of moss, rising and going forward, with that obstinate, smothered perseverance which one exerts in a dream. Lola went too fast, much too fast. Lola flitted from sight, somewhere ahead, and left him alone. Mark neither called out nor thought of caring. He found nothing in his heart, nothing in all the black wilderness, but a kind of aching indifference. Walking, face foremost, into a tree trunk, he fell as if clubbed; sat up with blood streaming from his nose, and then, crawling to his feet again, marched on without a word. How long the march was, or how far astray, he never learned, but when after more downfalls he tripped on a rotten log, Mark lay still in a litter of wet touchwood and fragrant boxberry leaves.

The rest of that night passed in a daze, half sleep, half consciousness. He remembered weeping, though not for himself. He remembered shivering, not with cold, but with fiery pains. Once in the darkness a tiny wild beast came snuffing the ground until, with a great sneeze of fright, it bounded backward and galloped off among the leaves.

And then later, still in darkness, a man was bending over him.

"Pooty way to do!" grumbled the man. "Go lose the juds' boy fer him. Pooty way to do!"

It was Lola. He seemed to scold himself continually, first in English, then in some unknown tongue.

Mark felt a pair of arms about him,

tried feebly to resist, then groaned and lay still. He knew nothing more, except that the arms were carrying him, that wet leaves brushed his cheek, and that water was lapping close to his ear through the bottom of a canoe. Afterward, long afterward, he lay swaddled by a huge fire, blinking at the withered leaves of the Popple House.

"I-gorry, boy," said Lola's voice. "I-gorry, didn' guess you was be so sick. No. You wait. I'll fixed the med'cine for ye."

The voice was little and remote; so were his own hands, little, light, far away; and he himself, this fellow whose life somebody had dreamed of long ago, now shrank to an atom in the darkness, only to grow and swell, dizzily revolving till its motion filled all space and strained against an outermost boundary.

"I'll die if that grows any bigger," he whispered. And then once more his being shrank and receded to a whirling pin point. "There!" he moaned. "It goes out. He's dying."

"No, you hain't," came Lola's steady answer. "Drink! Med'cine."

The drink, scalding hot and thick as gravy, tasted like all the herbs of the forest—a bittersweet, nauseous mess. He swallowed it only because he could not fight the giver. Presently he found himself awake, staring at the fire. Lola seemed very busy there. Like some broad-faced brown demon, the Indian toiled with a long, forked pole, shoving aside the logs even while they blazed. Mark closed his eyes; when he next opened them, the fire burned at the water's edge, removed there bodily, and Lola was brushing away the last coals from its former bed. Another doze followed. Another dreaming glimpse revealed a little cone of a hut standing where the fire had stood. Hemlock bark, evergreen boughs, and strips of white birch formed its patchwork walls.

"Come, git in!" Lola was carrying

him toward the hut. "Crawl int' your sweat house. I'll cure ye."

A helpless bundle of blankets, Mark felt himself lowered and thrust through a sort of doghole. Insufferable heat surrounded him at once. He tossed upon a fir bed, under which the ground lay scorching.

"Let me out!" he stammered. "Let me out! I can't breathe!"

"Hesh up! I'll cure ye," Lola chuckled. "Cure ye like a smok'd eel!"

Three times desperately Mark struggled to creep forth from that oven. Three times Lola shoved him backward, and clapped over the entrance hole a slab of hemlock bark.

"Let me out!" wailed the captive. "Please! Let me die in the open air."

"Lay still!" growled his jailer. "Pooty soon, med'cine she'll work. Needn' be scairt o' dyin'."

Mark fought once more a losing fight for one outdoor breath.

"I don't care," he moaned. "You might as well let me go. Wish I'd been dead before we found father."

Lola, squatting in firelight by the hole, gave an indignant snort.

"Pooty way to talk!" he replied sternly. "After all your father done fer you!"

"Oh, it's no use!" panted Mark. "You don't know right from wrong. You don't know what my father was——"

The words trailed off in a feverish whimper. Lola suddenly poked his head into the darkness.

"No, mebbe," he said, scandalized and vehement, "I donno much, me. But I kin tell a good man f'im a bum. Yes-sir. Go to sleep. Go to devil. Shut up. Foolish. Hain't nothin' wrong with *your* father!"

Mark surrendered. The stifling heat, the exertion, and the first queer, drowsy workings of that bitter draft now slowly overcame him. He lay quiet and limp. All at once the sweat ran

down his forehead like rain, and, next moment, drenched from top to toe under his blanket, he lost every desire to move or speak. The steam of the resinous fir boughs made his head swim.

Perhaps Lola did know. Perhaps; probably; certainly; why, of course Lola would know. Lola could find lost idiots in the dark. Lola could make medicine. Of course he knew——

"Hain't nothin' wrong with *your* father," thought Mark. He made it into a little, light-headed, quavering ditty. "Hain't nothing wrong with *my* father. Hain't nothing wrong; hain't nothing wrong——"

He fell asleep at some point in this comforting ballad.

CHAPTER IX.

AMBUSCADE.

In the long sleep which followed, Mark had only two dreams, and those obscure and doubtful. One contained voices talking somewhere in a region beyond his world of suffocating darkness. "No danger," came the words; "twill soon be over. But when you see my signal come at once. A white flag up among the pines——" "Yea-ah," another voice replied, "see it f'm this p'int—a white flag—come quick. Sure." For a moment Mark might almost have known the speakers, but even while he heard them, this first dream departed. The second, an apparition that never spoke, was like his father's countenance. It hovered close at hand, in a luminous mist; its eyes were his father's eyes, deeply shining with compassion and comfort, but before he could welcome it with speech or look it dissolved into the night again.

When he awoke, noonday blazed above the treetops. He was lying in ripe, yellow grass near the water's edge. Peace infolded him, not drowsily, but with a keen renewal of all his faculties. The sunlight, tempered by cool air,

seemed lazily to penetrate body and spirit. In all the conscious world there was not an ache or a twinge. The sky glowed marvelously clear, and as he sat up, rejoicing, the pond sparkled everywhere among its calm, eternally contented woods. Behind him a locust sang in the poplars. Before him cardinal flowers, leaning from the rocks, painted the brown shore water with streaks of brilliant reflection.

"Aah!" he yawned, stretched like a rousing dog, and stared about.

The place, a sheltered grass patch forming one edge of Popple House point, looked across Hardhack toward the campers' grove. Among silvery pine stumps near by, what he had taken to be a sprawling root suddenly moved and became legs. Lola hoisted himself from the grass and stood up.

"How ye feelin'?"

Lola grinned, and his grin seemed a welcome back to life.

"Feelin'?" cried Mark. "I could eat a bale of oakum!"

"Guesso," replied Lola. His face shone polished in the sun, like a comic mask of worn bronze. "I got ye somep'n better."

He slouched away toward the Popple House, whence he returned carrying a deep tin dish.

"Eat 'em." He placed it on the grass. "Meat and good herbses. Yea-ah. Good herbses. Never you min' what meat 'tis. I ketched it fer ye. You hain't the game warden. No, sir. I don' go gab myself int' no trouble, me."

Mark cleaned the dish. The name of that glorious meat he never learned.

Lying down again, basking away the afternoon, he felt the slow, full tide of strength steal tranquilly through his limbs. At first he had no desire to talk, but after keeping silence an hour or more he rolled over and saw through the yellow spears of grass that Lola sat as formerly, his back against one of the silver-gray stumps.

"What are you doing, Lola?"

"Watchin'," replied the maker of medicine.

"Watching what?"

"Them pines," droned Lola, "acrost the pon'. Fer to see what some feller hang up 'mong 'em. A w'ite flag, mebbe."

"What for?" inquired Mark, without greatly caring to know.

"Cause if he doos," came the pensive answer, "I mus' paddle acrost to 'im like all git-out."

A white flag; the convalescent wondered at this mild vagary; a white flag among the pines. Then, of a sudden, his dream returned.

"Who'd hang it there?"

"The juds, o' course," said Lola gruffly. "Who s'pose? Your father."

Mark sat up, and with new interest looked toward the far shore and its dark-green hill.

"Was my father here—talking? Last night?"

The Indian snorted as though put out of patience.

"Good gorry!" he cried. "Course he was! An' lit a match, an' peekened at ye!"

Mark sat thinking. It was no dream then; his father had come in the night, looked down at him with pity and tenderness, and then gone away. A feeling of estrangement, of lonely separation from all familiar things, came sweeping over him.

"Lola," he began, "I wish——" He boggled at the words, and ceased; yet it seemed easy to confide in this man who sat with his back turned, motionless, like part of the gray pine stump. "Lola, you saved my life last night. I almost—I wish you hadn't, if my father's going—if my father isn't what I always believed he was."

Lola, without moving, spoke out angrily.

"Good gorry!" he repeated, and then,

with quiet but tremendous conviction: "Your father, he's all right!"

"If he's making bad money?" returned Mark sorrowfully.

Lola detached himself from the stump, rose, and stood glaring at this outrageous affront.

"Your father wouldn't make it bad," he shouted. "Your father, he's got more sense'n you. Your father, he'd make good money!"

With a woeful smile, Mark dismissed the matter and lay down. The incorrigible pagan, muttering rebukes, went back to his watching. No signal appeared, however, on the far shore. The afternoon dragged by without incident or change, except when the sun left their clearing. Then Mark found himself caught up in Lola's arms, to be carried home to camp like a sick child.

Nobody came that night, or the next day. Lola's vigil among the stumps went unrewarded. But on the third day, after breakfast, as Mark was pacing by the fire testing his legs, he heard a sudden thud of footsteps and saw Lola come running up the cove.

"Flag's out!" he panted. "I mus' go!"

Mark reached the canoe first, and climbed into it.

"Can't leave me behind!" said he.

The Indian stared at him dubiously, then seized a paddle.

"May need ye," was his only comment. "Se' down!"

Mark had seen many a canoe race, many a famous paddler; but not once, before or afterward, did he know a canoe to fly as now the *Sea Rider* flew across that morning water toward the sunrise. Lola swung to his work like a machine. In long, rising leaps they clove the fathomless mirror of the sky, gaining on the dark pine barrier and two white specks that glimmered there, one aloft, one reflected below the shore. Soon they overran the latter, and rec-

ognized the former as a bath towel hung on bristling pine tufts.

Here the shore was deserted. Jutting boughs hid the camp. Lola swerved to the right, and sent the birch into a long, narrow creek which ran winding in behind the evergreen hill. Mark learned what he had not known—that this hill, bearing the coiners' grove, formed almost an island; for when they landed it was on a narrow strip of grass and pebbles, between the creek and a wide stretch of cat-tail swamp. The back of the hill rose gently, a sloping evergreen wood carpeted with brown needles.

"Here," grunted Lola, when he had bestowed the canoe among tall grasses, "you hide behin' that chok'cherry." He nodded at a great bush loaded with garnet-colored clusters. "You stay there. Don' let that red-head feller git pas' you fer to run."

Mark felt gloriously excited.

"How'll I stop him?"

For answer Lola reached into his shirt bosom and produced the old nickel-plated pistol, which he held out.

"Can't git pas' ont' the mainland no other ways but here," he explained. "S'pose you see him a-comin', you on-hitch—let her flicker twicet in the air. I'll come."

Mark received the weapon gingerly.

"But," he asked, "where are you going?"

Lola shook an impressive forefinger.

"Don' you leave this neck o' land," he replied. "Me, I got to ketch that red-head feller."

He spoke with no more concern than if he were going to catch a colt in a pasture. Unhurried, he went ambling silently into the pines and up the slope. The earliest sunlight followed his vanishing figure under the branches.

Mark took cover at once behind his appointed bush, and waited, sitting comfortably on a flat rock, the pistol alongside. The sun reached him after a time,

warming his back and sparkling red on the wet chokecherries. Not a sound came, either from the pines ahead or from the low-lying heath and glossy young birches of the mainland. The sun climbed higher. Ferns, on the tiny isthmus, began to droop and lose their glittering coat of dew.

Then footsteps came downhill from the campers' grove.

Mark sat ready, watching through his bush.

It was not the red-haired Chubbuck who came, but two men side by side. They began talking as they stepped out from the woods.

"I'll swear it for ye!" piped an eager voice. "I'll lay my oaf onto a stack o' Bibles high as Tower Hill! Never once I dreamt what this Chubbuck and the rest was makin'. There!"

The speaker was Tommy Cody. He came, protesting, with feeble, down-cast mien and aimless gestures. Beside him walked Mark's father. They halted in full sunlight on the grassy footway.

"Swear not at all," said the judge in the light yet serious manner which Mark knew so well. His blue eyes twinkled. "You may remember I once heard you swear in court." Then, with a change and deepening of the voice, he added: "Tom, by golly, I've known you ever since you read Beadle and Cap Collier behind your geography in school. You always were a sly old sleuth. Don't play it on a friend like me."

The poor, spindling Cody glanced roundabout, searching the creek on one hand, the cat-tail swamp on the other, as though seeking a place to plunge into and escape.

"I didn't know!" he whined. "I didn't know. Dick, git me out o' this. I only cooked fer the camp. Thought they was castin' bullets or somethin'. I never knowed 'twas money."

Judge Boswell reached into his mole-

skin jacket, and pulled out a handful of bright coins.

"It's not," he said. "They wouldn't fool a child. Horridly done; dago work; and, as usual, finished with quicksilver. Look at 'em. You wouldn't take one yourself for pay, Tommy."

The thin man refused to look. Tears hung on his wrinkled yellow cheeks.

"Never clapped eyes on 'em afore, Dick. Give ye my word."

Mark saw his father slip one hand under Cody's elbow.

"Tom, I've watched your camp the past week—and slept in devilish uncomfortable places. You're not really worth so much trouble, are you? But you've got a wife—she went to school in our day—and ten or fourteen children. So I'll take your word." The judge looked thoughtfully toward the young mainland birches. "Luck's an odd thing. Here I'm left a widower, and you——" He released the frail arm. "Tombo, God knows, you don't want jail for life. You'd better go cook on a vessel, say, for a year or two, and send your money home. I'll take your word."

Cody stood blubbering. Mark, from the chokecherry ambush, saw his father smiling. It was not altogether a happy smile.

"Come," said his father, pushing the thin man forward. "I'll take your word, and believe it—until you're five miles away."

The two passed within hand's reach of Mark, gained the heath, and presently were hidden by the little glossy trees.

Mark sat on his rock, overwhelmed with pride and shame; pride in his father, shame for himself and all his vile imaginings. This was the man whom he had doubted—this friend of the humble, true to the old homely ties, loyal even to the village fool!

"What a beast I am!" he thought.

But chiefly he wanted to shout for joy. A burden of despair had rolled off his back. This world of woods and ruddy-morning sunlight was transfigured. He had found his father.

While he exulted, a movement in the grove caught his eye. Down through the mottled pine shadows came a long, blue-clad figure slinking from trunk to trunk like a wolf. It made straight for the isthmus. Through a patch of sunshine bobbed a fiery head. It was Chubbuck.

"Stop where you are!" shouted Mark, jumping out from behind the chokecherries. In his present mood of jubilation he could halt a hundred such men. "Stop!"

And, raising the pistol, he obeyed Lola's word, "onhitched," and fired twice into the air. Long woodland echoes went ripping up the hill. A flock of blackbirds, terrified, rose from the cattails with a whir. At the edge of the clearing the red-haired fugitive quailed as though struck.

"Ho! You there, are ye?"

Glancing backward, doubling his fists, Chubbuck gathered his courage and dashed forth into the open.

"You can't pass!" cried Mark.

With his one malignant eye, the rascal squinted first at the creek, then at the swaying cattails.

"Git out o' my ro'd!" he snarled.

"No passing." Mark stood firm, with weapon pointed at the ground.

The man showed his long, yellow teeth.

"You can't stop me!" he stated cynically. "A thing your size? Why, you ain't got the innards to fire at a man barehanded—in cold blood. I know you ain't. What's more, *you* know you ain't."

He came deliberately forward. Mark felt his body grow taut. He was ready.

"Look out!" he said hoarsely.

Not more than a yard of grass lay

between them. He could see the red, empty socket straining as if to stare him down, like the fellow's eye.

"Come! Git! You can't."

Mark shivered. His joints went loose again. This man spoke the hateful truth.

"Gimme that!"

With a leap, Chubbuck had him by both wrists. There followed a moment of blind, puny, losing conflict, until, shaken like a rat, Mark fell backward on the grass with a bony knee in his chest and two enormous freckled fists wrenching his right arm round. It would break. He cried out in agony.

There came an answering roar. Something crashed and swept over them as if a tree had fallen. Mark saw the vacant sky above him. He sat up, coughing.

"Skunk! I don't want nothin' better than to kill ye!"

Like a shaggy brown bull, Josephus Hardy, the sheriff, straddled over the whole breadth of the grass.

"Stand up!" he bellowed.

Before him, glaring with a bitter, lonely eye, sprawled Chubbuck, oyer-thrown.

"Up!" roared the sheriff. A hot light of battle covered his big, honest, untidy face. "Ye widder cheat! Ye small-boy fighter! Up, and try on a man for onct!"

Chubbuck, seeming all freckles and pallor, slowly rose. Doubtful whether to fight or run, he opened and closed his hairy paws, then bent his head and rushed, letting drive an awkward, muscle-bound right arm. At the same instant with this feint, cleverly enough, he shot out a long leg in a kick, low, vicious, and foul.

"Ho, ho!" cried Josephus Hardy. "Ye would?"

The sheriff's arms made a dodging motion, a two-handed grapple which caught his foe under crotch and armpit. Chubbuck flew aloft, poised horizontal

in air above Hardy's head, and was flung like a cordwood stick splashing into the heart of the cat-tails.

"Did he hurt ye, Mark?" The sheriff's anger turned to a funny solicitude. "Did he break any bon's?"

But Mark stood holding his ribs with laughter.

"Look!" he crowed. "Oh, look!"

A dismal water god, oozing chocolate mud, wiggled and bearded to his waist with green scum, waded painfully toward shore. In this guise the unhappy Chubbuck sat down and collapsed.

"If I thought you was worth skin-nin'," quoth the sheriff, not quite sure, "by jibbers, I *would* kill ye!"

"Oh, by no means," advised a friendly voice. "The pelt's too dirty."

Judge Boswell had returned from the mainland. He reached one hand toward Mark, who sprang and took it.

"Why," said the judge, "I think we have them already! Here are the rest."

Down the pine hill, from the money-makers' camp, Lola came, bringing two swarthy, discouraged foreigners. One, whom he led by the ear, seemed to have been rolled among thorns; the other followed tamely, nursing a cheek that bled, and both were limping.

"Here they be," Lola reported, calm as a cattle drover. "Wouldn' hev treated 'em so rough, 'cept they tried to git the upper hands o' me. I never drawed knife ner showed it, juds. You tol' me not to. Got good brains fer remember, me. But I lost that red-head feller."

Sheriff Hardy laughed.

"Here's your beauty." He pointed down at his captive, Chubbuck, a weedy, fresh-water Triton lying under strings of mournful slime. "Though some ways his hair don't show jest the right color."

"Not quite," agreed the judge. "You've been making the red one green, as Macbeth used to say, Joe."

The sheriff seemed rather at a loss, but he groped in his pocket and fetched out a ball of strong cod line.

"Dessay," he replied courteously. "Anyhow, I perpose to add this sculpin to my string." He stooped, and began binding his cord round Chubbuck's ankles. "Don't ye kick. Your arms is free. You're a-goin' to paddle me all the ways down to Mis' Johnquest, her store, and kneel to her on your knees, damn ye, and beg a widder's pardon, and pay her one dollar. You'll paddle good and hard, too. Set up, I won't lam ye. Never hit a man yet on the ro'd to jail.

"Let me tell ye, judge," he added over his shoulder, "that ain't a bad son

of yourn. Stood right up barrin' the path, like an old he-pa'tridge."

Mark felt the grasp of his father's hand, and looked up at him. They both smiled. Each had many things to tell the other.

"You and I," said the judge, "must take more time to grow acquainted. Eh, Marco?"

Blackbirds came fluttering to perch once more among the brown torches of the marsh.

Lola, stolid and wise, moved in between father and son.

"Mark hain't got no sense," he murmured. "Not yit. Um. Yea-ah. But, juds, mebbe; I tell ye, some day he's a man's boy."

The Flute Player of Yale College

You remember a college man Paine introduced whose principal vices were playing a flute and chess! He had certain virtues which considerably overbalanced these vices and made him, among other things, one of the varsity crew. His name was

KARL TRUMAN

Karl comes back in a new series of stories which will begin in the next issue of POPULAR, on the stands March 23. This is not a serial but a series of tales each complete in itself; and they are easily the most human stories of a college man ever written by

RALPH D. PAINE

In the first story Karl Truman has the job of tutoring as "ornery" a pupil as ever worried his mentor.

Some discords, but a melody that will thrill you

W u n g

A TALE OF SAN FRANCISCO

By Robert Welles Ritchie

Author of "The Goblin's Treasure House," "The Sandlotter," Etc.

FIVE Chinamen perched on high stools about the matting-covered top of the fan-tan table played silently, furiously. The little brass cup with the black and white buttons in it passed quickly from hand to hand, and the counters spilled upon the matting with a continuous "put-put." By the right hand of each player was a stack, or stacks, of yellow gold and dull silver; there was a chirp and tinkle of money cast into the center of the board. The game was running high, and gold double eagles were more commonly staked against the throws than the smaller currency.

"Fifty more pieces of gold for Wung, favored of Heaven," chanted Chun Gow, master of the game for the House of the Five Brothers and professional dispenser of congratulation to the winners, cheer to the losers. "Our cousin Wung has been burning many dollars' worth of sandalwood to the Luck Joss."

He who was called Wung grunted, scooped in his gold with a hand set edgeways on the table, and with ferret eyes watched the fall of the counters. His fat, saddle-colored face was wiped as clean of all expression as the shoulder of a Cheddar cheese; only where there was a little tightening of the wrinkles about the corners of the crescent eyes did the strain and intoxication of the game manifest itself. Poll polished to the glow of bronze in the yellow lamplight; queue a little thin and gray coiled neatly on his crown; heavy

jowl and chin razored to a satin finish, this Wung was a little old, very clean, superlatively Chinese—and a born gambler.

"Wung, the lucky, takes it again! Boy, pass the rice gin around again. A drink to Grandfather Grasshopper who jumps only on gold!" Chun Gow's proffer of the Five Brothers' hospitality was accepted by all save Wung. He smiled suavely and fingered the twin stacks of twenties near the sleeve of his coat, but he did not drink. Not Wung. Particularly not when the little fan-tan buttons were hopping and skipping. So the play went on; two o'clock, three o'clock came and went, and still they played. Finally Wung rose and slipped on his mink-lined jacket. He skimmed his stacks of gold and silver with a quick eye.

"Keep it for me, Chun Gow, until I play again," he said. "Three hundred dollars is too much to carry in a pocket at this time of night."

The Five Brothers' gamekeeper lightly touched a pad of paper with his writing brush and handed Wung a receipt for his winnings. Wung shuffled out into the dark of Ross Alley, his hands in his sleeves. He had twenty cents in his pockets, and five of them he gave to the conductor on the Union Street car. The lights of Chinatown winked into darkness behind him, and he went up to the black shadows of the sleeping city. It was four o'clock when he let himself into the basement

door of the Hollis home and went to his room. Then——

Hills shuddered, valleys crinkled, the subcellar of earth roared under the collapse of trillions of tons of surface structure. Silence of star space for one minute—two; a single brick, falling, smashed silence. Everywhere from the stricken city, from the wrecked miles of it, rose to the morning moon a white haze of plaster dust. The thing was overfinished.

Mrs. Hollis and her two girls stood, arms laced, in the doorway of a bedroom waiting for the second shock, the tidal wave—the end of everything. They were in the dark. They were alone in the house save for Wung, the cook. Presently came to their ears the *suff-suff* of his slippers down in the hallway.

"Mis-see Hol-lis! Mis-see Hol-lis!" The Chinaman's voice was lifted in his accustomed parrotty screech.

"Yes, Wung?" Mrs. Hollis answered faintly from the head of the stairs.

"Mis-see Hol-lis, chim-ley him makee fall-down whole dam kitchen-side—makee fall-down tloo loof, tloo washee-loom. Plenty blick him makee kitchen fill-up. One side houseafi'—nothah side houseafi'—bime-bye evely side houseafi', maybe-so!"

"Wung—Wung; what in the world are you trying to say?" The mother's voice trembled a bit and she clutched her daughters tight to her. Patiently and with the same emphasis Wung repeated his message of woe.

"Chimney's down?" Mrs. Hollis repeated dully. "Kitchen full of brick and—and 'houseafi'—houseafi'——"

"Look!" Helene, the oldest of the girls, whispered, and she pointed to the oval of a mirror on the wall opposite the three gray eyes of the window. Over one side of the dull shield of light played a liquid, floating radiance, rosy pink. It rose and fell, fluttered and flickered. The only positive light in

the room's gray shadow, this vivid, moving wraith of rosy glow was magic—pure magic. It held the three fascinated. Mary Lyell hobbled to the nearest window—she had cut her bare foot on the glass of the broken chandelier—and looked out.

"Oh!" she breathed. "Oh!"

Mother and sister joined her at the window that overlooked the hazy blocks of the city below. Fires—here, there, yonder on the broad rise of Telegraph Hill; short, stiff feathers of flame splayed out against the whitening east. In the windless dawn the flames were lethargic—seemed to lift by compulsion. Terrace upon terrace of roofs were reddened, and in the nearer fire glow stubs of chimneys stuck up from roof lines like amputated finger stumps. The pearly haze of morning began to be smudged by thin smoke. The mother and girls at the window gazed, enthralled.

"Mis-see Hol-lis! One piecee candle hab-got. Llectic light him no good; gas him no good. Li'l' piecee candle on'y t'ing makee light."

Wung's high cackle was at the bedroom door; a feeble glow of candle light showed through the crack. Mrs. Hollis drew a blanket over her shoulders, and went to him. That Wung was fully dressed and in his street clothes did not at once appeal to his mistress as unusual. She only saw that he smiled, that his fat face was unperturbed and stolidly self-contained.

"Mis-see Hol-lis, must makee cook blekfus in back ya'l," Wung gravely announced. "Chim-ley him makee fall-down——"

"Yes—yes, Wung; do the best you can." Mrs. Hollis took the candle and turned back into the bedroom. Wung lingered.

"Mis-see Hol-lis, you all-li'? Li'l' gels all-li'?"

"Fine and dandy, Wung. Same to

you!" came Mary Lyell's hearty hail from the bedroom.

"Give us a picnic breakfast in the yard, Wungsy," Helene added, "and don't bother about ice cream and leming pie."

They breakfasted an hour later on the back steps, holding their plates on their laps. The dining room was inches deep with plaster and broken glass; the kitchen a wreck. Chunks of the fallen chimney as big as barrels lay scattered on the side lawn. Wung had artfully constructed a miniature oven of loose bricks over by the big fuchsia bush; the top of the laundry stove served as the business side of his contraption, and he stoked with splinters of pine from the smashed kitchen floor. The old servant, efficient and sure-fingered as ever, trotted from furnace to steps with his skillet of bacon and eggs, his steaming coffee and plate of bread. Not a sliver of the bacon was overdone; no speck of dirt on the golden moons of the eggs. The breakfast was a comfortable triumph.

On the part of the girls it was a lark also. Perched airily on the railing of the porch, and balancing their plates on crossed knees, they addressed the Chinaman as "garçon," told him to have a care in the carving of the canvasback. Mary Lyell's injured foot was shoeless; the swathing of bandages under the stocking gave it the appearance of a giant tulip bulb. But the cut foot, the wrecked house, even those pale fires they had watched from the bedroom windows were now forgotten. Excitement dyed their fresh, round cheeks, put a crisp sparkle in their eyes. The spirit of the uncaring years just short of twenty was gloriously theirs. But mother—poor mother, who always just had to be worried about something—was white-faced, and in her eyes lay a fog of fear. She said she wished dad were there instead of up at the mines. The girls laughed at her fears, and—

the big cloud pushed out over the house line to throw a shadow on the flowering garden. It was broad and black, and a constant upward thrust of air had it boiling in a surf. A sound of surf should have proceeded from it, so tremendous were its rollers. Its edges curled under like sable willow plumes. The lucent blue of the sky drew back and away from the black stain, leaving it suspended—a thing not of sky or earth.

"Mis-see Hol-lis, bettah eat nothah egg—plenty blekfus now. Maybe-so nothah time no blekfus. Maybe-so we makee move this house soon time. Him houseafi' maybe-so."

Mrs. Hollis stared dumbly into the smiling eyes of the cook, where he stood solidly on the steps before her, his skillet held invitingly out. There was something rocklike about the old Chinaman; his moon face, all gathered into little wrinkles about the slits of eyes and wide, flat lips, had the benignity of some sunny, moss-yellowed boulder. Wung, who had always been in his place in the Hollis household since the girls were out of perambulators, was now in his place, dependable. Even when the chimney lay scattered in unsightly chunks, when half the house was wrecked, when that moiled cloud heralded doomsday. Wung was in his place.

"Wung, if—anything happens"—the mistress' words halted brokenly—"if anything happens you—you will take care of us. You will, Wung?"

"Wha'-fo' makee fool talk, Mis-see Hol-lis! Wung snorted loudly and turned back to his oven. Mother and daughters sat huddled together on the steps, hands joined and eyes lifted to that spreading cloud that grew every minute blacker. Then silently they went to the front windows, looking down over the wide gore of the city, and stood gazing at the tragedy.

"We'll have to be taken in—some-

where," the mother faltered. "It—the fire—will soon be here."

"We can go to the Saintsleys, up on the Heights," Mary Lyell suggested. "Surely it will never get that far."

"Yes, we can go there. We might as well begin—to pack up."

"There go the people now, momsey. Look!" Helene pointed down to the little plaza at the convergence of two streets, perhaps a half mile away. The converging streets and the plaza were thickly spotted with hurrying mites, all traveling in one direction, like ants on a trail. The mites came out from under the low pall of smoke into the hot sunshine, and poured confusedly into the funnels of two hills giving onto the bay and beach wastes beyond. Without end was the army of the fugitives. Their march was as steady, as unswerving as the advance of the prickly red hedge at their backs. The three in the window, about to be homeless, gazed for long minutes upon the host they must join. Their attitude was detached. They sat as spectators of a grim pageant, the pageant of a city's agony.

It was Wung who brought them back to the real. He set a trunk from the attic down on the bedroom floor without comment, returned with another, and then retreated to the yard to wash the breakfast dishes in a pail full of water heated atop his furnace. It was the last pail full of water from the pipes; they sighed and went dry with its drawing. Nevertheless the Chinaman washed his dishes with triumphant persistence. After the last plate was dried he went out onto the streets to requisition an express wagon. Mother and the girls set about the melancholy task of selecting indispensables. One trunk—the one containing the silver—was packed and the other nearly filled when Wung came boiling up the stairs and into the room. His eyes blazed anger; the short hairs about the base of his queue bristled.

"Mis-see Hof-lis! Mis-see Hol-lis! You got-chee Mis' Hol-lis levelvah? Levelvah! Levelvah! Wung makee shoot one 'splesse-man!"

"Why, Wung!" Mrs. Hollis looked up, startled, from a bureau drawer. "Shoot an expressman! We want a live expressman, not a dead one."

"One 'splesse-man down Bay Steet, him say movee tlunk fo' twenty-fi' dollah. Twenty-fi' dollah! I say tlee l'il' womens all 'lone two tlunk hab-got. He say twenty-fi' dollah or no movee tlunk. You got-chee Mis' Hol-lis levelvah, please."

"Wung, I'm ashamed of you! Go downstairs this minute and don't say another word about shooting anybody. We can drag our trunks on the end of straps." The mother turned quickly to hide the twitching corners of her mouth. Wung disappeared. A few minutes afterward they heard a great noise of pounding in the dining room. Before the last treasure was stowed in crowded trays the Chinaman reappeared at the door, grinning.

"All li', I catch-em 'splesse-wagon," he chirped, and he shouldered a trunk. They followed him downstairs and out the front door to the stoop. On the sidewalk waited Wung's express wagon—the big kitchen table stood upside down, four legs in the air. The girls' roller skates, two pairs of them, nailed to the four corners of the table top, converted the outraged slave of the kitchen into a serviceable truck. Wung, bristling with pride, had the trunks stowed in the table's square cockpit in the winking of an eye. Then he brought from the wrecked pantry stores for his argosy—a bread tin, coffeepot, half a dozen cans of meats and fruits, a glistening uncut cake—on cake-making the Chinaman would stake his immortal soul—and an armful of slender hock bottles. "Maybe-so li'l' wine plitty good one-time."

In the minute between tears and

laughter when Mrs. Hollis turned the key of the front door and descended the steps of the home with the reluctance of parting, Mary Lyell suddenly sat down on the lower step and pointed at the bulbous stockinged foot sticking out grotesquely beneath the hem of her short skirt. She giggled flightily.

"See that! Just look at that!" she babbled. "We forgot—that's—got to go with us—too."

Mother was on her knees, the injured foot coddled in her lap. She smiled through tears.

"My baby! What are we going to do? You can't get a shoe over that foot; we mustn't take off the bandages! Oh, dear, I simply——"

"Wung fix-um." The yellow Achates snatched the house key from his mistress' hand, and pattered through the door. He was back shortly, in his hand a Chinese shoepack of well-worn felt, wide as a mule's hoof. It fitted softly and comfortably over Mary Lyell's bandaged foot. Wung lifted the girl to the top of one of the trunks in the table dray and took his place at the two rear legs. He began to push. The modest ark of refuge moved easily over the asphaltum with a conscious chattering of its hidden casters.

"Good-by, house!" called Mary Lyell, twisting about on her trunk and waving back at the blankly staring windows.

"When you burn, house, old sport, burn like a gentleman!" Helene shouted in farewell.

II.

They were before a house on a hill far back in the city's newer residence quarter. Mother and Helene sat on the curb, Mary Lyell on her trunk, while Wung pushed the bell button on the stoop again and again.

"Never mind, Wung," mother called in a voice a little flat and tired. "The

Saintsleys have evidently moved out already."

Wung came down the steps and joined the council at the curb. His fat face was bland and smiling.

"Girls, I don't know where we can go except to the park," mother said, trying to smile. "We're paupers, you know. See; all I have! The bank—of course——"

She opened her reticule, and spilled out on her lap five silver dollars and two fifty-cent pieces. The silver looked very dull and valueless. Six dollars in the face of the city's obliteration and the inevitable fight for food. A woman, two girls, a Chinaman—and six dollars!

"Wung, have you any money?" she asked a little timidly.

"No hab-got," Wung answered gruffly. His eyes suddenly shifted from Mrs. Hollis' face as he spoke, and he hastened to busy himself at stowing anew some of the table's cargo that had shifted. Every covert indication of Oriental embarrassment damned the Chinaman as one about to lose face. Mrs. Hollis could not know, of course, that Wung, the missionary boy, Wung, in good standing at the Jones Street Guiding Hand—had three hundred odd to his credit at the Five Brothers fantan rooms on Ross Alley. When the soft-footed servant of the West puts on his black "chink hat" and slips out of the basement door into the dark he skips across the one hundred and eightieth parallel in an hour, and his doings are as far from his mistress' ken as the China coast.

"All aboard for the park!" chanted Helene, quick to ease the tension of the moment. "I'll swim out in Strawberry Lake and catch a park duck fer the starving family."

Without further word Wung took his place at the table legs and headed the migration down a broad avenue, at whose end lay the green and flowered

miles of the park. Helene walked ahead by the side of her sister, the table's passenger; mother plodded, heavy-limbed, by the Chinaman's elbow. A strange company. But no stranger than the endless caravan of which it was a part.

Wung pushed the table for many blocks in silence; great embarrassment hung heavy upon him. He did not look once at the pinched white face of his mistress; for shame he could not. Finally he spoke very low so the girls should not overhear:

"Mis-see Hol-lis, six dollah all you hab-got, Mis-see Hol-lis?"

"Yes, Wung. I intended to get some money from the bank to-day. Now I cannot."

Another block before the shuffle of thousands of feet was broken by him.

"Maybe-so blead—meat him need plenty money fo' buy, Mis-see Hol-lis. No money hab-got; no meat fo' eat. Six dollah——"

The Chinaman did not finish; the broken sentence was eloquent. Mrs. Hollis, suddenly feeling a poignant need for support in weakness she would hide from her daughters, turned to the shuffling yellow man at her side.

"You believe in God, Wung," she said simply and with no interrogation or challenge in words or tone.

"Yep, Mis-see Hol-lis; Him velly fine man—good for Chinamans," Wung answered.

"Well, God will provide for us, Wung." She voiced her faith with the directness of a child.

"Yep; Him feed Him sheeps," the Chinaman answered with a conscious air of having said the pat thing. "Him got-chee plenty money. Evely Sunday plenty Chinamans, plenty Americamans gib Him ten cent. Maybe-so Him gib Mis-see Hol-lis one-two dollah fo' buy blead—fo' buy meat."

"He don't do things that way, Wung," she reproved, and silence fell between

them once more. Wung, still burning over his disability to provide, had caught at this transference of responsibility with eagerness; a charitable God might save his face. The thought of that three hundred dollars credit at the Five Brothers—three hundred dollars that would buy bread and meat for Mis-see Hol-lis and the li'l gels—was a canker on his soul. Stolidly he pushed the table until, with all the multitude, he and his charges were shadowed by the leafy freshness of the park. Flowers were rioting there, and green lawns gave invitation to the heart-sick and foot-weary. From the gate on into the deeper woodlands the army of refugees spread in bivouac. Piles of household goods spotted the sward in ugly disarray; flaming coverlets and blankets burdened the tops of shrubs as hasty tents against the sun; folk lay sprawling in the sleep of exhaustion.

Under a black pine not far from the lake Wung halted his convoy. He lifted the trunks from the table cuddly and righted that trusty conveyance on its proper legs as a monument to stake his claim to the location. One of the precious tins of meat was opened under his deft fingers, bread was cut, a bottle of hock uncorked. Mother and the girls spread the picnic lunch on their knees and ate in silence. The nervous elation that had started the girls away from their doomed home with song on their lips was sped now. Their heads drooped in fatigue; a realization of their plight, of the immensity of the disaster, sobered them.

Suddenly Helene sprang to her feet with a glad "Hello!" She waved both hands and danced in her excitement.

"Oh, you Bob Sharon! Come on up and call on us!"

Down on the broad roadway fifty yards away two young men who dragged a trunk at the end of straps stopped at the hail and shaded their eyes, searching. One of them recog-

nized the slim figure against the pine green, and instantly waved his hat in return. The trunk veered and came bumping up the sward behind the two pullers. A ruddy-faced youth in a sweater and hunting corduroys jumped forward and pumped the eager hands of the girls.

Greetings were chattered breathlessly. Each strove to be first in recital of adventure. Young Bob suddenly be-thought himself:

"Girls—Miss Hollis, Miss Mary Lyell Hollis—my friend Jack Hooper from Dartmouth. Mrs. Hollis, Mr. Hooper."

The husky, tow-headed boy in flannels and blazer who had followed Bob from the road bowed and grinned delightedly.

"Here's where we camp," Bob then announced with determination. "You folks need a couple of men to guard you; now don't you, Mrs. Hollis? Please say yes."

"We have Wung," Helene put in roguishly.

"Down with the chinks!" The youth waved a fist over his head in mock gesture of sand-lot oratory. "We're unattached—folks all up at Tahoe—only Jack and me in the old homestead when the quake came. We've got the family heirlooms in the trunk there—a waffle iron, sister's last winter's furs, two boxes of dad's cigars, and—necessities like that. You'll need somebody to stand in the bread line for you—yes, there's going to be a bread line, everybody says—so why not us?"

"I think we'll be very glad to have two such competent protectors," Mrs. Hollis said, with a smile. "You have cigars and a waffle iron; we have cake and canned peaches; we should not suffer."

With alacrity the two youths dragged their trunk up to the rampart of the Hollis two and the perambulatory table. Then they stretched themselves at the girls' feet and were ready to hear and

to narrate episodes of the Great Adventure. Wung, who had drawn a little apart from his charges at the arrival of the two boys and busied himself cutting young and tender "feathers" of the pine for a bed, kept his ears cocked. He heard the offer of the joint camp accepted, saw the strong young fellows dispose their trunk in a position of joint possession. The Chinaman ceased cutting boughs, folded the long blade of his knife-back into the handle, and stood irresolute for a minute. A decision reached, he padded noiselessly back of the pine, through a copse of laurel, and in circuitous route to the park gate. Beyond stretched the broad avenue, out and up to the distant line of hills, where boiled the pitchy cloud. Wung started down the avenue in the face of all the oncoming host. He loped in a waddling dogtrot.

III.

It was mid-afternoon when Wung stood on the crest of Nob Hill, looking down into the burning heart of the city. He was one of hundreds drawn there by the hypnotism of the five miles of flames to gaze—and gaze. About him stood the deserted palaces of the nabobs; great bleak houses of aloof magnificence awaiting, like the nobles of the Terror, the striking of the leveling hour. Below the pitch of the hill huddled the roofs of Chinatown; giant lanterns on the joss-house balcony nodded and swayed in the hot wind from the red desert beyond. Wung started to edge through the crowd at the California Street dip when something happened. Around the corner from a side street trotted a little company of sailors, each with his bayoneted rifle swinging free at his side; a boyish lieutenant was in the lead. The sailors cut a wedge out of the crowd—perhaps fifty men; Wung found himself one of the sequestered.

"Now get in that house there and carry out the paintings!" the lieutenant barked. "They're too valuable to lose."

A shock-headed man at Wung's side planted his feet wide apart and loudly blustered. Something clicked, and the lieutenant's arm came up over the nearest shoulders. A cocked revolver was leveled at the head of the protestant.

"I don't want to have to do it, but——" said the lieutenant very softly.

Wung, already trotting briskly toward the great iron gates of the art institute, saw the shock-headed man dart ahead of him, first through the doors. With the others of the impressed volunteers, Wung was hurried into the mazes of the art gallery. Ladders were brought from the basement, and under the direction of the competent lieutenant with the revolver heavy canvases were lowered from the walls and carried out to a waiting dray. Wung worked with an elderly, puffy gentleman who wore spats—perhaps a bank director on every other day but this, but now ladder holder for a Chinaman in the public cause. It was grilling work at top speed. Through all the eastern windows showed the advancing tide of fire, potent spur to effort. The flames began to burn a deeper red with the coming of night before the task-master in the blue uniform dismissed his unwilling crew.

Wung, hands raw from the rasping of wires, and his back aching dully, scuttled down the hill for Chinatown. The steep street was deserted; its mean houses stood with doors ajar like dumb mouths of sufferers awaiting near torment. The far end of the thoroughfare, where the skyscrapers stood, was a gorge of whirling smoke, flame-shot. Cinders, crisp and crackling, fell under Wung's felt soles. The air was hot and acrid. Time for what the Chinaman had to do was pressing.

He turned into the first of Chinatown's network of rabbit tracks. By

the light of red lanterns several shadowy figures worked desperately over a dray at the far end of the alley, but immediately before him the narrow slit between blank walls was empty. He took three little running steps toward the distant lanterns, then——

"Halt!"

A soldier stepped out of shadow and threw a rifle crosswise of the Chinaman's chest. Wung collided with the steel so smartly his breath came in a startled grunt.

"Wha's malla you!" he snorted in a fine attempt at bluff.

"Can't go down there, John. Dynamitin'," said the soldier.

"No can stop." Wung tried to edge around the barrier of the gun. "Cousin hab-got; must see."

"Beat it, you fool chink! Can't you see——"

A flash of light, a roar, and the far end of the lane dissolved in a cloud of dust. Wung whirled and plunged back to California Street. Fear shriveled the heart in him, but could not down the mastering idea that had pushed him here to the edge of the pit. He turned into Sullivan Alley, and started on a trot along one narrow sidewalk, his eyes on the flame light reflected from opposite house fronts. He saw a countryman crouching below green lanterns on a balcony with the body of a slave girl drooping over his shoulder; gold was in her hair, and seed pearls hooded her ears. Wung called out, and the Chinaman on the balcony drew a revolver and fired at him. Wung bent double and leaped over the cobbles in zigzag flight. The spark of light from a bayonet at the next corner drove him into a deserted restaurant and to the roof. Near—so near he could feel its searing breath—was the line of fire. It filled the sky. Wung squeaked at the sight and took to one of the rat channels over roofs—the secret alleyways of flight between

chimneys and over cornice edges used by the tong fighters in emergency. He knew them.

Once to the street at a crossing, and back again to the roofs; he was making for Ross Alley and the House of the Five Brothers. Over a cornice he pecked and saw the street below filled with his countrymen, the last salvage line in the advance of the fire. They rushed in and out of stores, loading hand trucks, baskets, vegetable carts with stuffs. Seeing no soldiers there, Wung dared to come down and pursue his course among them. He wormed a way into Ross Alley, went to the lookout wicket at the House of the Five Brothers, and pounded on the grating. No answer. He tried the door; it was locked. The Chinaman's heart skipped a beat, and he leaned weakly against the partition by the lookout wicket. Too late! His body cried out in weariness, a great fear was on him; but the mastering idea drove him. Out to the street he went and hailed a frantic merchant who staggered under a pile of silks:

"Where is Chun Gow of the Five Brothers?"

"Do not bother me, idler; Chun Gow, the gambler, is at the house of his cousin, Fuey Ong, in Jackson Street."

Wung tucked his hands in his sleeves and started at a quick trot for the house of Fuey Ong in Jackson Street, a block away. Behind him breadths of poppy-colored flame were flung to the zenith; the fire was already biting into that part of Chinatown where the soldier had stopped him and the dynamite roared. Wung did not wince. He came to the rookery on Jackson Street, pushed into a hurly-burly of Chinamen about the door.

"Where is Chun Gow of the Five Brothers, cousin of Fuey Ong?" Wung shouted.

"There he goes down the street," one answered, stretching a pointing arm down the fire-lit gulch. Wung sprinted.

Ahead a hurrying figure, hearing the pad-paddling of pursuit, flashed a white face over shoulder, saw the pursuer, and broke into a run.

"Chun Gow! Chun Gow! Stop! It is Wung, your friend!"

The flapping pantaloons ahead flapped the faster. Chun Gow swerved, shot across the street, and dived into the black entrance hole of the theater there. Wung, cursing by the flowered profanity of Kwangtung, followed. As surely as Chun Gow knew what Wung wanted, Wung was resolved that he would get it. Though his heart pounded anguished protest, and his old legs trembled under driving, the single purpose in him was strong—strong.

The black maw of the theater swallowed them both. A creak of boards sounded to Wung's right, then the soft closing of a door. Wung's feet knew the trail; they took him unerringly to the door and down the unseen steps beyond—down, down to the labyrinth beneath the sidewalk and street where the despised actors hived like insects in stifling cubicles. Here, where daylight never penetrated and stale opium smoke deadened the little air that stirred, were burrows and blind passages, secret galleries of escape from the blundering hand of white men's law—the sink of all Chinatown. Usually the way was lit by feeble wicks burning in nut oil; now with all the yellow beetles fled before the fire, darkness was there.

A creak of boards, the scratch of finger nails on wood, little sighings of breath expelled—these were the sole guides to Wung in chase. He strained his ears, bent all his faculties to the business of hearing, and, step for step, he pursued. A thrill of exultation, the joy of the hunter possessed him. The quarry was clever, knew the trails; but so did Wung. Here, too, was feud born in darkness. Because Chun Gow had run when a creditor called on him to stop, relations between them were

suddenly stripped to the primitive. In the dark two men, one a thief by the impulse of a second, fleeing; one despoiled and vengeful, pursuing. Cunningly, stealthily, with the placing of each foot a matter of exquisite pains, Chun Gow led deeper into the labyrinth. Wung followed, flattened against the walls so that a shot down the narrow passage would pass him. His big clasp knife, with the heavy blade opened, lay in his right hand. He grinned.

The touch of slimy stone was under Wung's groping fingers; his feet trod brick. 'Aha! So Chun Gow was taking the passage under Pie Gow Alley to the Suey Sing Tong rooms. He would be too late—too late. Wung poised like a beagle and listened; he heard the faint click of a fragment of brick falling on brick, and took three running steps forward. Somewhere very near a latch was raised slowly—slowly; a hinge muttered, and—a murky red glow as from the mouth of a furnace shot through the blackness of the tunnel. With a yell Wung leaped for the figure that was cut in black against the red beyond. A shot thundered. A bullet burned Wung's scalp. He closed with his man and struck and struck.

A half minute later and Wung's hands were fumbling under a blouse. They found something round and heavy and lumpy—a bag that gave a clear tinkling when shaken. By the fierce light from beyond Wung took a hasty peek into the buckskin bag and was satisfied. He leaped to his feet, slammed the door of the passage against the red terror, whirled, and fled for his life through the blind mole tracks. When he started to climb the stairs to the theater entrance a streak of red under the door at the stairhead appalled him. He thrust open the door. A burning beam dropped at his feet. The black arch of the theater ceiling was gridironed with fire.

Wung squealed, and leaped to the

street. Fire laid a fence across both ends of the block. The buildings opposite were smoldering. Into one of their opened doors he rushed, sped up interminable stairs to the roof, and there, under the reaching fingers of death, dodged and ducked in a grim game of tag.

IV.

Dawn came to the park dully and weighted with pillars of smoke. On the vast lawns, spotted thickly with ugly huddles of humankind, shapes stirred, tossed in the fretfulness of waking, blundered foolishly in and out among the bushes. Under a big pine near the lake a blanket was stretched across two azalea shrubs screening sleepers; at a little distance two youths, one in a sweater, one in a blazer, sprawled in sleep. Behind the pine tree a Chinaman squatted over a fire of twigs, blowing the flame under a coffee-pot. He had laid out near at hand a sheet, picked up somewhere out of the trash of refugees' flight, and on this emergency tablecloth were spread two loaves of bread, an opened can of peaches, slices of cold corned beef on green bay leaves, and, crowning glory, a white, uncut cake. A chaplet of tea roses, fresh and dewy, wreathed the cake.

"Mis-see Hol-lis! Mis-see Hol-lis! Plenty daytime. Blekfus him leddy. Coffee him makee boil."

Wung's parrotty cackle roused the sleepers under the stretched blanket. Mary Lyell's tousled head was thrust out into the sunshine.

"Why—why, Wung Hollis! Whatever—"

"Blekfus him leddy," Wung repeated casually.

"Momsey! Helene! Wake up! Wung's back, and a terrible sight!"

Two other heads joined Mary Lyell's at the blanket flap. Three pairs of eyes surveyed the Chinaman horrifiedly.

His clothes scorched and smirched with cinders, round face blistered a lobster pink, and with a broad ribbon of watered silk bound about his shaven poll and dyed red over one ear, Wung was not his immaculate self by a wide margin. Nevertheless he stood their inspection calmly, a little defiantly, and said again:

"Blekfus him leddy. Coffee him makee boil."

"Wung, *where* have you been?" Mrs. Hollis' voice tried to be severe, and somehow failed.

"Been see um cousin," Wung answered innocently.

"Wung! That's a falsehood. Why did you desert us yesterday—leave us alone and run away?"

"Not alone. Two plitty boy come stay here. Wung go see um cousin." The Chinaman turned and trotted over to his fire. Further inquiry was stopped.

The boys were roused. Faces were washed at the lake brink with much laughter. The refugees sat down about the sheet tablecloth to the morning's bounty there spread. Wung pattered about his fire, stirred it, tipped

the lid of the coffeepot up and down, broke little sticks for fuel. He seemed caught in a nervous furore. Under his arm he shot anxious glances back at the group about the white cloth.

Mother was the first to sit down. Her plate was there, beside it a big tin cup, turned bottomside up. Carelessly she slipped a finger under the cup's handle and lifted it. A stack of shining gold—gold double eagles, a score of them—freed by the cup's lifting, slid into a round mound of light.

Wung furiously stirred his coffee.

They looked at the chips of yellow glory for a long minute, then mother sighed tremulously.

"Wung!" she called. "Wung!"

Wung furiously stirred his coffee.

"Wung, come here!"

The Chinaman straightened from his crouch, and shuffled over to the corner of the sheet. His scorched face was innocent as a cranberry's.

"Wung!" Mother's voice broke, and her eyes were swimming. "Wung, what do you know about—this? Where—"

"Maybe-so God Him feed Him sheeps," Wung answered piously.



SIGNING THE FIRM'S NAME

SIGNING the firm's name without sufficient authority is a dangerous proceeding, which has often landed the firm's employee behind prison walls. In Wall Street, however, the phrase has an entirely different meaning.

Some years ago a favorite Yale football player and captain of his team became a bank clerk. He was Gordon Brown, a nephew of J. Pierpont Morgan, and probably the proudest day of his life was that on which he was promoted to the privilege of "signing the firm's name"—in other words, of affixing the signature of J. P. Morgan & Co. to checks, contracts, and important documents. It is the most important signature in Wall Street, and the pen tracing involves greater consequences than any other name. The signature of the promoted clerk was at once distributed to the important banks in the district, and also sent abroad, to London and Paris, for purpose of identification.

Signing the firm's name is a position of great trust in banking houses, and not infrequently is considered as a step toward partnership.

Kitchener's Coup

By H. M. Egbert

Just how much the Turkish-Italian war had to do with the great world conflict it is impossible to say, but the author of this story declares that England had a hand in that war and her quid pro quo was the assurance that Italy would draw out of the Triple Alliance when war with Germany came, as come it must, according to English statesmen. This story, told by an ambassador at large, throws light on England's part in the notorious Tripoli invasion.

I BELIEVE I am the only man who has ever browbeaten Kitchener to his face. It is this circumstance that I propose now to relate.

In the summer of the year 1911, Europe was astounded by the news that Italy, which had long coveted Tripoli, was massing an army with the object of seizing that Turkish province with hardly a pretense of justification. As she held command of the sea, and there were only ten thousand Turkish troops in Tripoli, the success of the proposed act of spoliation appeared a foregone conclusion unless Turkey could move a force through Egypt for the purpose of defending her last African possession.

Now Egypt, although occupied by Great Britain, was nominally a Turkish province. She paid a tribute to Turkey of three million five hundred thousand dollars annually. The khedive is a vassal of the Sultan; Turkey has always claimed the right to use Egypt as a base for warlike operations. The very army which overthrew the khalifa at Khartum moved under the Turkish flag.

With a large force in Syria and another on the east littoral of the Red

Sea, it seemed only a matter of time before Turkey could throw enough men into Tripoli to drive the Italians into the sea.

Therefore the moment I heard of Italy's coup I began to wonder what part Great Britain was playing in the crisis.

Three weeks previously Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign minister, for whom I was engaged in the unofficial task of investigating certain influences which were making for war in Europe, had written me a very friendly letter, suggesting that the recently constructed dam at Assouan, on the Nile, was one of the world's marvels, and that a sight of it would well be worth my while as soon as my affairs permitted me to leave Vienna, where I was then staying.

I had taken the hint and gone to Cairo, where, being acquainted with many members of the English governmental staff, I spent a very pleasant fortnight, not, however, too much engrossed in social pleasures to prevent me from keeping my ear to the ground, to listen for sounds and rumors.

Lord Kitchener had just been appointed to the supreme command in Egypt. Nominally the khedive's ad-

viser, he was to be actually the ruler of the province. British prestige, which had sunk to a low ebb during the period of his predecessor, was expected to reach the heights which it occupied when Lord Cromer's nod was law all through the valley of the Nile.

We had known that Lord Kitchener's appointment, coming unexpectedly as it did, was of high significance. He had been summoned hastily to Downing Street; something was in the air, and we had all felt it; his movements, as always, were veiled in mystery, and none knew whether he had already sailed or was still lingering in England. Meanwhile there was nobody in charge at Cairo with power and authority to issue commands in England's name.

They knew it, that polyglot crew of Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Levantines; and Cairo buzzed like a bees' nest with intrigues. So that if ever the khedive was tempted to defy his British masters and display his notorious pro-Turkish sympathies, now was the time.

So when I descended to the dining room of Shephard's on a certain morning and read in a newspaper that Italy had addressed an ultimatum to Turkey, I knew that I had not been recommended to investigate the Assouan Dam for nothing.

I had hardly finished breakfast when Atterbury, who was in charge, came into the dining room. There was a suppressed excitement in his manner, despite his attempt to appear at ease.

"Can you come out on the veranda at once, X?" he asked.

I went out with him. The veranda was deserted, for Egypt does its shopping and pays its visits in the early morning, before the heat grows intense, and exercises in the late afternoon. Atterbury sat down with me beneath the shade of a palm and pulled some papers from his pocket.

"X," he said, turning on me sud-

denly, "I didn't know you were here on government business. This is an important matter. You have some credentials?"

I handed him Sir Edward Grey's signed letter, and the special consular recommendation signed by the foreign office and personally viséd—which makes all the difference in the world—by the British ambassadors at Vienna, Berlin, and Rome.

He scanned the papers closely and drew in a long breath.

"This dispatch came this morning, via Brindisi, in the consular mail bag," he said. "It is from our ambassador at Rome. He advises me to use your services to the fullest extent. Do you know why, X?"

"I gathered something from the newspapers——" I began, but he checked me.

"Yes, but do you realize that we are hung up in the air?" he said, displaying unrestrainable excitement. "You are absolutely the only coadjutor I can find. Those fellows in the office are either raw Englishmen or native clerks. Saunders, who could have helped, is down with fever and delirious. Ponsonby is home on leave. There is nobody but ourselves to handle the most ticklish situation since the days of Arabi. The cables are cut——"

I jumped in my seat. That meant business indeed—it might mean war all over Europe. Cables are only cut when events of the highest magnitude are impending.

"I spent three hours deciphering the code alone," said Atterbury, "and the moment I had straightened out the meaning I hurried to find you. Well, we have had no cable messages for two days. Who cut the cables? Not Italy, but that Turk torpedo boat that put into Alexandria on Friday morning and got out last night unobserved. Well, Kitchener has disappeared, apparently, en route for Egypt. He ought to have

been here yesterday. It isn't his way to linger.

"Now, X, I have to trust you entirely in this matter. Italy has declared war on Turkey, and, before doing so, she sounded our government in London. Would we declare Egyptian neutrality and bar the Turkish troops that would be hurried down from Damascus, where their eighth army corps is posted? If we would refuse them passage, Tripoli falls like a plum into Italy's lap. If we refused, the game was up. Of course, we had no right to declare a Turkish province neutral. But we've done it, X."

I whistled. It might mean war with Turkey, and a Mohammedan uprising in India.

"No doubt England receives her *quid pro quo*," pursued Atterbury. "And, needless to say, that consists of Italian neutrality in the coming war with Germany. It's a thieves' bargain, and I'm not proud of my country. We're as bad as those Italian robbers. However, the sole point that concerns us now is: Who is going to make the khedive declare neutrality and stop the eighth army corps at the frontier?"

"Lord Kitchener," I answered. "Did you ever know him to be in the wrong place at the right moment?"

Atterbury laid his hand on my shoulder, and his face assumed an expression of great earnestness. "X," he answered, "I am firmly convinced that Kitchener has been murdered en route. There is no other explanation for his absence at such a critical juncture. Now——"

He then unfolded to me the daring scheme that he had conceived. The conversation began on the hotel veranda and was continued in the palace, where, as the English representative, Atterbury occupied a suite of rooms.

The amazing nature of this proposal did not appeal to me. I met it, on the veranda, with a direct negative. At-

terbury then asked me to luncheon at the palace, and afterward began again.

"X, it is the supreme crisis in England's destiny," he said. "The eighth army corps is already mobilized in Damascus. If we fail Italy now, it may mean our extinction as a nation when Germany, aided by Italy, strikes at our national existence."

His arguments began to shake my resolution. In vain I derided the plan as impossible and fantastic. I began to see that the difficulty of the suggestion lay not so much in its impracticability as in its audacity.

He wanted me to impersonate Lord Kitchener and overawe the khedive.

"Kitchener's reputation as a martinet has preceded him," he urged. "His presence alone would overawe the khedive or any of his ministers. Do you suppose his timid little highness would have the courage to refuse a peremptory demand made in England's name? Why, if I were twenty years older, I would play the rôle myself, although I do not bear the slightest resemblance to Kitchener, and you do."

"The resemblance is not a striking one," I protested.

"No, X, but you must remember that just as most negroes look alike to us Europeans, so most Europeans look alike to Orientals. I am confident that if you go boldly into the audience chamber and hold out the proclamation of neutrality, and demand that Abbas affix his signature, you will simply hypnotize him into doing so. You must remember that the thought of any one impersonating Lord Kitchener would be perfectly inconceivable to him. Besides, it is sixteen years since Kitchener was in Egypt, and he has greatly changed since then."

"But his highness must know Lord Kitchener well——" I began.

"On the contrary," answered Atterbury, "he has only been face to face with him on one occasion, and then

for a bare five minutes. That was when the khedive went up the Nile to bestow his benediction upon our arms after the capture of Khartum. Kitchener never went near the palace in the old days; he was always training his men in camp or fighting on the frontier. Besides, Abbas hated Kitchener so much, as the fist of the British raj, that he wouldn't go within a mile of him."

And, as I hesitated, Atterbury drove home his thrust.

"X," he said, "I hear that the khedive returned to the palace suddenly last night, after his journey in the delta, and that he has not had his flag hoisted because he means to give a secret audience to-day to Essad Pasha, commanding the eighth army corps, who has arrived in town. I have ordered a special train from Alexandria. I will stop at Bitter Wells, to which point I shall take you in my machine; we will climb aboard there, and you, in the guise of Kitchener, will return to Cairo with me and seek your audience with his highness."

So I assented. It seemed a desperate situation; and yet, with so much at stake and my commission to serve the empire to the best of my ability, I could not refuse.

We motored out into the desert an hour later, and, about half past three, the special train, consisting of an engine and a single coach, appeared. We climbed aboard, sending back the automobile with the chauffeur. A scream, a few loud puffs, and we were flying back toward Cairo across the mud flats of the Nile Valley.

During the hour's run I changed into the khaki uniform which Atterbury had provided for me. There was a long line of colored ribbons on the left breast, souvenirs of my victorious campaigns. In my pith helmet, with the sword clinking at my side, I flattered myself that I did begin to feel something like Kitchener, and the illusion

was complete when Atterbury handed me the proclamation in its silk roll, to which I was to obtain the signature of the nominal ruler of Egypt.

Atterbury continued to prime me with instructions during the run. We must insist upon admittance to the palace; I was to refuse to be put off with evasions. I was to get the khedive's signature at any cost and under any difficulties.

I confess my heart was beating fast and heavily when we drew into the dusty station at Cairo. News of my advent had evidently leaked out somewhere along the route, probably through some newspaper correspondent at Alexandria who had seen the special train and guessed its purport, for a huge throng was pressing forward against the rope barriers which surrounded the strip of Oriental rug on which I was to set my viceregal feet. Coptic policemen kept the way clear for me. It was insufferably hot and dusty, and the cheers of the crowd were ear-splitting.

As I stepped out with Atterbury, the hands of the police went up to their helmets in salutation. We passed between two oceans of humanity. Then we were in an automobile, and rolling toward the palace, with a running, screaming mob behind us.

In the cool courtyard a half troop of soldiers presented arms to us. A gorgeously dressed flunky opened the automobile doors, and an ancient Egyptian, wrinkled as a mummy, in a frock coat, striped trousers, and patent-leather shoes, salaamed before us.

"Your excellency, permit me to present Hilmi Pasha, the chief minister," said Atterbury.

I nodded curtly, as befitted my reputation. I knew the real Kitchener by reputation as a man of courteous kindness; but I was sure that the Kitchener of legend was the only one they knew.

"I had the pleasure of being pre-

sented to your excellency seventeen years ago," piped the old man, in French.

I turned my back on him, and, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a transient look of hate come upon his wrinkled face. Truly, if ever Kitchener arrived, he would find one enemy ready-made for him. But I anticipated that the news of Hilmi Pasha's reception would reach—and intimidate—the khedive before I did.

"Your excellency, the members of the cabinet are waiting to present their address," piped Hilmi again.

"My dear Atterbury," I said, "will you make this old fool understand that I have not come to be received by his cabinet but by his highness?"

This time the old fellow made no attempt to disguise his look of hatred. He bowed in a jerky way and tottered inside the palace precincts. I saw, as we were ushered in, a large apartment at the left side of the great marble hall, containing about a dozen Egyptian gentlemen, each in a frock coat, striped trousers, and patent-leather shoes. I heard the high, cracked, chattering tones of the old chief minister. The story of my insulting conduct was not being lost in the telling, I felt sure, for none of them ventured out with the address.

A suave Oriental in evening dress, with orders like small saucers scattered promiscuously about his breast, came forward, smiling, between two lines of powdered footmen.

"Your excellency——" he began.

"That will do!" I said sharply. "Inform his highness that I request immediate audience with him."

"But his highness——"

"Returned to the palace last night," interposed Atterbury.

The little man, who was evidently one of the khedive's secretaries, seemed quite flustered by Atterbury's remark.

I believe he had intended to deny that the khedive was in the palace.

"I will see, your excellency," he murmured. "Will your excellency ascend to the anteroom?"

We went up the heavily carpeted stairs, past more flunkies dressed in the khedive's colors, standing like wooden statues outside tobacconists' shops. I found myself in the first of a series of magnificent reception rooms, with waxed floors, and the gilt mirrors and plush upholstery that appeals to the Oriental taste. Upon the walls were large, execrably painted pictures, in violation of the Mohammedan prohibition of representations of living things. In the first room, where we stood, two aged beggars were waiting with petitions.

"I will see his highness at once and ask whether he will receive your excellency when he has finished giving audience——" began the little secretary.

It needed no knowledge of Oriental courts to understand the meaning of this insult. It could mean nothing less than that the khedive was meditating a coup against Great Britain. He would never have dared flout the representative of England otherwise. It did not need Atterbury's exclamation of indignation to make me understand the situation.

But I think the method I adopted was one that had never been used in the khedive's court before, for I caught the smug, smiling little man by the throat with my left hand and drew my sword. I saw the complacency upon his face turn to terror. The beggars looked up from their meditations and cackled.

"Now, you blackguard, run and tell his highness that unless he receives me instantly I shall slit his throat!" I roared, in indignation which required very little affectation to produce its effect. Such is the vanity of man that at that moment I felt like Kitchener; I

acted as the Kitchener of legend would have acted.

The little man flung himself upon his knees.

"Pardon—pardon, your excellency. For Allah's sake, put away your sword!" he pleaded. "I am at my wits' end. I don't know what to do. I haven't seen his highness since last night. He told me to admit nobody but——"

"But Essad Pasha!" cried Atterbury. "How long has he been closeted with him?"

"Half an hour," stammered the little secretary, terribly frightened.

I swung the little man to his feet and whipped him across the shoulders with the flat of my blade.

"I will speak to his highness!" I cried. "Walk and show me the way to his apartments! At once, or I will spit you like the Nile crow you are!"

The little secretary preceded me, shaking like an aspen leaf. Behind us the flunkies, terror-struck, had gathered, and stood chattering like a flock of daws. I heard a buzz of excited speech upon the stairs. As I half turned at the entrance to the second anteroom, I saw the frock-coated Hilmi Pasha peer around the jamb of the outer door. He caught my eye and disappeared in a twinkling.

It occurred to me then for the first time that the Egyptian cabinet had assembled to read me a proclamation of Egyptian independence, but that my warlike attitude toward their leader had decided them to let me hear it from the khedive's own lips. Doubtless some coup was on the point of execution. But I was at the source of the plot.

The flunkies who guarded the approaches to the several rooms fled in abject terror as I advanced, my threatening sword point at the back of the little secretary. Now we were in a wing of the palace. An immense open space, carpeted with costly rugs, the walls

concealed behind a multitude of sweet-scented flowering plants, gave upon a number of doors. Black Nubian slaves, on guard, sprang to their feet and stared at us in consternation, rolling their expressive eyes. Their terror was not less than that of the flunkies behind us. And all through the palace there resounded that buzzing murmur, as though my every act had already become known everywhere.

There was no need to ask which were the khedive's apartments. The look upon each slave told me. I flung the little secretary from me and strode to the high doors bearing the khedive's monogram in Arabic upon each panel. And in my eagerness to complete my task, I lost all fear.

"Open!" I shouted, hammering with my sword hilt.

I hammered and shouted; and suddenly the door was flung open, and two figures stood before me. One was that of a young man of military bearing, but now looking anything but martial as he stood humbly before the other, a tall figure with a turban round his head and attired in the loose, flowing garments which his highness affects at home. Instantly every slave was on his face.

I knew his highness at once. I thrust past the other figure, and, pulling the document from its silken case, pushed it beneath the khedive's nose.

"You have put an insult upon Great Britain's representative in Egypt!" I cried, in French. "You shall put your signature to this pledge of neutrality immediately, or a protectorate will be proclaimed in Cairo!"

The khedive looked at me, and seemed to wilt away.

"Come in, your excellency!" he muttered, in apologetic tones. "You will not humiliate me before my servants?"

I followed him inside the room, a spacious library with a desk at which he had evidently been seated with the

general, for two half-consumed cigars still smoked upon their trays. At a door at the farther end I saw the spectacled face of a pale young Egyptian secretary.

"Go!" shouted the khedive, in Arabic, and the man disappeared noiselessly. The khedive motioned to me to be seated. But I stood up before him. I laid the document upon his desk.

"I must have your highness' signature immediately," I said.

"Your excellency——"

"I will not discuss the matter with your highness. The sirdar has instructions to take possession of the palace within half an hour unless I appear with the proclamation signed."

"But, your excellency, I have already informed General Essad Pasha that I——"

"Your highness must rescind your promise."

"That Egypt remains neutral," replied the khedive. And, looking me full in the face, he smiled.

He touched the black mustache, and it turned brown. He pulled the turban from his head. He straightened him-

self. His being seemed transformed. Suddenly I realized that I was looking into the face of Viscount Kitchener himself, of whom the Arabs say that he can assume as many disguises as the devil himself.

All the courage went out of me. I trembled before him. I did not know what to do; if the door had been open, I believe I should have run. This man had come to Cairo secretly, as was his wont; he had deceived not only the palace slaves, who had probably never dared look their lord in the face, but the khedive's personal attendants. How had he managed it?

He put his hand on my shoulder and smiled at me.

"You have done the right thing, X," he said quietly. And that is the highest praise Kitchener knows.

But what had he done with the khedive?

He solved that problem at least by clapping his hands. The pale-faced secretary appeared.

"Tell his highness that there is no reason why he should deny himself to his friends any longer," he said.

We had a Wall Street novel by W. E. Scutt some months ago which we know you liked a great deal. There is another story by Scutt coming in the next POPULAR which you are going to like still better. It is a big, book-length novel called "When Thieves Fall Out," and you will get it complete in the issue on the stands March 23rd. It has all the elements that make a noteworthy book—romance and adventure and suspense and force. It has to do with a concession in South America and a man on the trail of a crook—a long trail which takes him to Paris, and his adventures there are as surprising as they are fascinating. There is no war in the story, for the action takes place before the ultimatums began to fly over Europe. A story with a "punch" we should describe it.

That Worrying Woman

By Robert V. Carr

Author of "Virtue Is Its Own Reward," "Cowboy Lyrics," Etc.

The practical man tells of his adventure with an author lady who was of the superior-female type and had little respect for the male sex. A story of the desert

IN my time I've read a lot of those yarns about a man and a woman lost in the timber or on a desert island; but I always read them with a sort of pitying feeling for the writer. Always do those yarns wind up with a love affair; right sickish, I'd call them. Then the woman is generally made out to be too much of an angel, and the man has too many struggles with himself. Matter of fact is that there are few women who can lay claim to being angels. And all this talk about a man falling in love with a woman just because they happen to be alone some place is just the idea of some writer. Some writer started writing it that way, and a big bunch of them followed suit. Now it is almost against the law for a man to write a story of a man and woman on a desert island and not have them fall in love. I may say, as man to man, and one prospector to another, that there are women I could be on a desert island with for nine hundred and ninety-nine years and have no struggle with myself. The only struggle I would have would be getting as far away from her as the island would allow. I've seen some women that, if a man was on a desert island with them, he'd go out and live with the fish rather than be around them.

While I'm on this desert-island-he-and-she proposition, I want to say that I'm leading up to a happenstance in my

own life. As a friend to a friend, give me time.

In my time I knew a girl or two—back there when I was twenty or so. I had some fool's gold ideas then about women; thought they were different than buck men. But twenty years on the desert has taught me that women and men are much alike, and that a woman is no more of a mystery than a man. Fact is, a woman is easy to read if your head is not clouded with foolishness regarding her. I'm a practical man, and I look on women in a practical way.

Now this Matilda van Dorn Brown was a woman who wrote pieces for some paper. She was one of those women who do unusual things and then write about them. Matilda figured that she could cross the United States, desert and all, alone in an automobile. She was a headstrong woman who had a good opinion of herself, and a poor opinion of men. I'm telling you the facts in a practical way.

So Matilda starts out on her cross-country trip. Everything goes all right till she hits the middle of the desert; right then things begin to happen. First the machine broke down. Matilda, thinking that she knew everything in the world, tried to tinker the machine into running shape, but, after she had scattered its insides around over a section or two of sand, she gave up. Just

as she give up the idea of repairing the machine, along comes a sandstorm that kept her under the machine for a day or two. Then the wind went down and she concluded to walk around over the country and find help. She found me at Sidewinder Wells, with three burros, and headed for the Candy Hills.

I'd located a good prospect in the Candy Hills, and was coming back from the county seat after recording the claims. I had a deal on to sell the claims. Idea was to go back and do a little developing. If the claims showed up as well as they did from first tests, I had a buyer ready and willing to dig up real cash money. Then this Matilda breaks in on me.

Almost immediately she started to talking—telling me what to do. She was a large, fleshy woman with little snapping black eyes and not much hair to speak of. I should say that she was hitting forty pretty close.

First she tells me about the automobile and what she had experienced. Then she tells me that she is a special correspondent for some paper; and then she waited for me to fall dead over the news. But I didn't fall dead. I'm a practical man, and a woman is a woman to me. Then she tells me that she was the first woman who ever attempted to cross the United States alone in an automobile. All along she kept putting in impressively that she was *the* Miss Matilda van Dorn Brown.

Then she said, or rather ordered:

"You will take me to the nearest town. You will be paid for your time."

She said it like she expected me to jump and get ready to lug her to the nearest burg. But I'm a practical man, and didn't jump worth a cent. Twenty years in the desert makes a man so that he doesn't take orders from every fat woman who comes along. Anyway, I didn't like the tone of that woman's voice. She was just a little bit too sure of herself.

Next thing she said was: "You will prepare me a warm meal. I am nearly starved. By the way, what is your name?"

"William Henry Seever," I informed her; "commonly called Bill Seever."

I pulled out my name a joint or two just to show her she had none the best of me when it come to names.

"Well, then, Mr. Seever," she began ordering like a section boss, "you will have to hurry. I have no time to lose. I will ride one of your burros. If I can reach a town in two days, I can secure another car and continue the trip by another route. I did not anticipate such annoyance and delay. Hurry, now!"

About that time I concluded to break the news to Matilda van Dorn Brown—the Matilda van Dorn Brown. I was headed for the Candy Hills on private business; that was my fixed program. If she thought I was going to drop everything to pack her a hundred miles or so, she had another guess coming.

While I was thinking over her remarks, she began rummaging around my packs just like she owned them.

"Here," I told her, short and sharp, "keep out of those packs! You're not running this camp!"

She straightened up and raised her nose slightly, giving me a cool stare.

"In the future," she said, as though speaking to a horned toad, "you will address me in more gentlemanly tones."

That did make me good and mad.

"Look here," I told her straight from the shoulder, "you're off on the wrong foot! No woman can come into Bill Seever's camp and give him orders. I don't want to hear any more of that superior talk out of you. As for taking you to town, you'll go when I get ready; otherwise you'll go alone. First thing, if you're going to make this camp your home, you want to get the idea in your head that I'm boss. I'll head back for town in three weeks. But I'll do this

much: I'll give you a burro, water, and directions. Take it or leave it; but if you stay in this camp, you talk soft and walk easy. Do I make myself plain?"

"Disgustingly so," she replied. "But," she added, with a lot of sarcasm, "I suppose you will permit me to breathe the air, even if you will not give me a bite to eat." Then she got good and mad. "Do you think I'll remain in your miserable camp for three weeks, you low brute, you?"

"Suit yourself, old girl," I said carelessly. "If you had acted like a white woman should, I might have done all I could for you; but you're one of these superior females who thinks she knows it all, and you're going to have a chance to prove it. I'm going to treat you as I would treat any man who come into my camp asking for help. You'll do your share of the work, and you'll keep a civil tongue in your head, or you will not eat."

"No man,"—and there was a screech in her voice—"ever presumed to make a slave out of me, and no man ever will. You're a great big cowardly cur. I will leave this place, and if I get out alive, I will score you until the world will hunt you down like some vicious animal."

"Oh, all right," I said, pleasant enough, "go on with your scoring. I'm not crazy for your company. Walking is good. Keep to the west."

She choked and gave me a killing look, and then left camp. I didn't pay any attention to her. I knew that she'd be back. So I started to cook supper.

I was frying bacon, and attending strictly to business, when I looked up, and there stood Matilda, wrinkling her nose. I guess she liked the smell of the sizzling bacon.

When grub was ready, I turned to her and said:

"There it is. Help yourself. If you stay, you cook breakfast."

"Do you think I can eat that filthy

stuff? Why, you didn't even wash your hands."

"Well," said I, "if you can eat without washing your hands, I guess you can stand the idea of my cooking it that way. But you can leave it alone. It suits me."

"You're taking advantage of my helplessness," she snapped, but a good deal of the pepper was out of her voice. "If I were a man, I'd——"

"Hold on," said I, "before you go any further. If you were a man, do you know what would happen?"

She kept still, and so I told her.

"There would be just two things happen: I'd hit him and he'd hit the ground. Think it over, and thank your stars you're just a snappy fat woman."

With that she went right up in the air like a setting hen off a nest.

"You insulting, depraved animal, you!" she screamed.

But I had started to eat; and that seemed to calm her. She had quite a struggle with herself, but finally quieted down and grabbed her share of the grub. Yes, she ate her share and more, too. There was nothing backward about Matilda. I'm telling facts.

After supper I cleaned up the dishes and put them away.

"Watch me close," I warned her. "You'll have this trick to do in the morning. I will not have a worthless woman around camp. You'll cook or move."

She had absolutely nothing to say, but I could see that she was thinking like a rattler ready to strike.

I lighted my pipe, and took the burros down to the hole and watered them. When I returned to camp I found that Matilda had taken my two blankets and made her a bed about a hundred yards from the fire.

"Nothing small about that woman," I thought, as I walked over to where she was camped. She was seated on a

blanket, her shoes off, and trying to straighten out her hair.

Up she come like seven wild cats.

"Back to your camp, you miserable brute!" she ordered. "Have you no sense of decency?"

My answer was fair—just fair. I'm a fair man.

"I have a sense of decency," I said slowly, so she could get my full meaning, "and it does not include being a hog."

I picked up one of the blankets.

"That's it," she jawed, "just because I am a defenseless woman, you take advantage. Oh, you great, big, selfish——"

"Enough!" I yelled. And she shut up—that is, long enough to get her breath.

I started back to my camp.

She screeched something after me, but I didn't get it. I had the blanket, and that was all I wanted.

I put 'out the fire and turned in. I had just got three winks when I awoke to find Matilda standing over me with my gun in her hand.

"Now," said she, "I guess you'll obey orders. This weapon makes us equal. Get up and pack those burros. We'll start for town right now."

By cripes, the woman kind of tickled me. She thought she could bluff old Bill Seever with a gun. Anyhow, the six-shooter wasn't loaded.

I turned over, and snuggled down in my blankets.

"Go on and shoot," I yawned, "if you think that'll help your case. Shoot while shooting is good."

Then a kind of anger came up inside of me, and I threw the blanket and jumped to my feet.

Jerking the gun from her hand, I gave her full directions what to do.

"Now," said I, "all foolishness stops right here. Get back to your bed, and don't let me hear another word out of you. Move, I tell you!"

"I'll not move a step, you cowardly dog!" she gritted out between her teeth.

As there was nothing else to do, I picked her up and carried her back to her camp and dumped her on her blanket. Of course she fought me, and screeched like a wild cat, and, I believe, she said some cuss words a time or two. She weighed, I should judge, right close to one-sixty; but I weigh two-thirty, and never been sick a day in my life.

"I'm sick and tired of fooling with you," I told her. "If ever a woman needed a good spanking, you do. If you don't hush, you'll get it."

She was still for quite a spell, and then she asked in a small, little voice:

"Would you really do it—really spank me?"

"Bet your sweet life I would," I assured her. "Mend your ways, or I'll take you in hand."

She dropped back on the blanket, and I started back for camp. As I turned away, I said over my shoulder: "Look out for snakes and scorpions."

I do not know why I said that; probably just to be saying something. She made no reply.

I'd barely got rolled up in my blanket when, with a yow, yip, and a ki-yi, here she come again.

"I'm stung!" she yelled. "A scorpion stung me!"

I sat up, and asked: "Where?"

"In the limb," she said, with a dying wail.

That just provoked me.

"What in Sam Hill are you, woman?" I yelled. "A tree?"

"Well, then," she cheeped faintly, "in the ankle."

With that I got up and stirred up a fire.

"Roll down your stocking," I said, "and let's have a look."

She fooled around a spell, and finally stuck out her bare foot. When I had

examined her scorpion bite, I had to laugh.

"Fool!" she snapped in her old way. "What are you laughing at? Didn't you ever see a woman's ankle before?"

"Yes," I admits, "and, for the weight, none better turned."

Somehow she had no come-back for that. I had told her that she had a pretty ankle, and she couldn't find anything to kick about.

"But the fact is, Matilda," I went on, "you flopped around in your sleep and got a cactus in your ankle. You thought a scorpion bit you, when you just got a cactus sticker or two in your ankle."

I got my pinchers and pulled out the stickers.

When that was done, I straightened up, and said:

"Now get back to bed, and keep still. I'll call you when it's time to get breakfast."

She walked back to her camp, light-footed and careful, but she had nothing to say.

"Three weeks with that woman," I thought, "and Bill Seever will be headed for the insane asylum. She's a terror."

But I was firm set on going to the Candy Hills. Nothing can change me from my routine.

Morning come bright and early, but that worrying woman was up before I was awake, and she had a new deal. She proposed to make it so hot for me that I would lug her to town to get rid of her.

There she sat, like an Indian, waiting for me to wake up so that she could start in with a line of abuse. She opened up on my looks.

"I've seen lots of male idiots," she said, in ordinary conversational tones, "but I have never seen one who looks the part like you do—so thoroughly. Your nose looks like a deformed potato. And what a mouth! Did you ever hear of a little article called 'a toothbrush'? No; certainly not. And

that face—not washed since the year one. Poor peaked head—simply on his shoulders to hold up his hat."

She said a lot more regarding my looks, and I let her talk till she run down. But a woman is in poor business panning down a man regarding his looks. I'm a good, single-handed talker myself, and I had a before-breakfast feeling.

So I remarked, kind of looking her over:

"You certainly have great descriptive powers, Matilda. I suppose you just have to do about so much quacking, being web-footed like a duck. Did you ever count your chins, Matilda? I guess that's the reason you're such a blabby woman, you got three chins to work with. Then that hair of yours—in a singular sense, Matilda."

"Stop," she panted, "or I'll murder you right here!"

I changed the subject.

"Do you see that skillet and coffee-pot?" I asked her.

She threw up her head like a balky mule.

"Grab them and get breakfast!" I ordered. "We start for the Candy Hills right after eating."

"I suppose you realize that my paper will have searching parties out after me, and that I will give them the full particulars of your cruel and inhuman treatment, and that you will be imprisoned—"

I rolled up my sleeves, and started toward her.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, her voice dwindling down to ordinary size.

"Give you your before-breakfast spanking," I told her flatly. "If you can't cook without being spanked, I'm the boy who can start you on your way."

Say, she just flew at the cooking outfit. I kept a straight face, and went on and watered the jacks.

I was gone for quite a spell, and when I got back she had what she called breakfast ready. She stood back, waiting for me to say what I thought about her as a cook. She seemed a little anxious to know.

The coffee was all water, the flap-jacks looked like 'dobie bricks that had been stepped on, the bacon was burned black.

I didn't say a word; just dumped out the whole mess, and cooked something we could eat.

When grub was ready, I said: "No wonder you are still 'Miss.' Most men don't care to die a lingering death. Take me, and I want to live a while yet. I know of a better way to perish than eating your cooking, Matilda."

She had nothing to say, but she ate my grub all right, although now and then she sniffed a little.

After breakfast I lighted my pipe, and took a good look at her. She flounced around a little uneasy.

"You claim," said I, "to be a smart woman, but you can't even boil water. What can you do, anyway? You claim to have a great mind. Very well, let's hear about that great mind. Recite me a good poem, or quote me something from a really good book. You might start in with 'Thanatopsis.' Come now, trot out your mental superiority, and give us a line of 'Thanatopsis.'"

I waited, but she only looked at me, her chins quivering.

"I never heard of it," she faintly admitted, and her voice was mighty small. "I'm a newspaper woman."

I could have showed her my little library that I always carried with me—the best thoughts of the world's thinkers, but I did not think it worth while.

I just left her sitting by the fire, and packed up Jack and Jenny and Timmy.

While I was packing the jacks, I said to her:

"Can you do this?"

She shook her head.

"I guess there isn't anything much you can do," I threw in for good measure, "except work your jaw."

For a wonder she did not get mad, and I felt a little sorry for that rough jolt.

When everything was ready, I said: "Come on, Matilda!" and headed for the Candy Hills.

So we hit the trail. I had nothing to say to her on the way. Once, just before we reached Coyote Springs, she started to say something, but I paid no attention to her, and she gave up the idea of talking.

At Coyote Springs I killed a rabbit, and dressed and cooked it, Matilda watching me close.

She had kept still about as long as she could, and started into talking like a gale of wind. But I didn't pay any attention to her. That somehow bluffed her. She talked and talked and talked till she run down, and never a word did I say.

After dinner we started out again. At times she made an attempt to talk, but I just walked on, never paying any attention.

She was getting nice now, even showing a desire to please me. I just walked on.

When we'd stop to rest, I'd settle my face down into hard-rock lines and just look at her as if she was the smallest thing in the world. She started to flutter. I saw that she was beginning to realize that *the* Miss Matilda van Dorn Brown wasn't so much, after all.

We reached my camp in the Candy Hills just before dusk. I had a brush wikiup there, and I let Matilda have that. I fixed up a camp under a big mesquite for myself.

The woman had got so now that she waited for me to speak; she seemed to be thinking, too.

I cooked supper that night, but in the morning she was up bright and early, and had breakfast ready

She did fair with that breakfast, for she had been watching me close.

I ate the breakfast, but said nothing. It never does to start in bragging on a woman's cooking—a woman like Matilda—too soon. Let 'em wait for their bouquets; they'll appreciate them when they get 'em.

Then I gathered up my tools, and went to work. I was pecking away down in the hole when a strange sound made me straighten up and listen.

By cripes, that worrying woman was actually singing!

Suddenly a thought slammed me between the eyes.

"Suppose," I asked myself, "she would become contented, and want to stay? Gee whizzlum, she wouldn't be above marrying me before I could help myself."

I knocked off a little before noon, and came into camp. I swear I wouldn't have known the place but for the fact that Matilda was there. She'd rigged up a broom out of greasewood, and swept the camp clean. Then she'd fixed up a piece of canvas for a table spread, and polished the dishes. She had cleaned up herself, and looked fresh and bright.

But I kept a straight face, and made no remarks, although she kind of hung around, waiting for me to speak. Still, I'm a fair-minded man, and I was compelled to say in a careless way: "Matilda, you're improving." That's all I said, but it made her smile. Also she looked at me kind of queer, and ran to get me a bucket of water to wash in.

After I'd washed, I showed her some rock I'd brought up from the claim. Not that I wanted to keep peace in the family, but I thought it would do no harm to be fair.

"It's rich stuff, Matilda," I told her. "It will bring me twenty-five thousand if it brings a cent. I don't know but what I'd better locate you some claims

joining, now that you've concluded to play fair with me."

"Oh!" was all she said, and ran to fix dinner.

We had dinner all snug and cozy, and I was soon at work again, the rock showing better and better all the time.

I knocked off early, and went out and shot a rabbit. I dressed it, and Matilda fried it. She had got the hang of cooking, and was getting better all the time. I could see that she had the makings of a great home woman, if she had a man who would keep her under control. None of those little weak-chinned specimens could handle Matilda; she needed a firm hand. Not that I had any thoughts at that time of—well, I'm just stating what she needed. Also I'm dealing in facts.

A day or two slipped by in a hurry, with Matilda singing most of the time and doing her work like she was in love with it. Seeing that she was playing fair, I now and then turned in and helped her. Of course I kept the camp in wood and water.

She had now quit talking about herself, or about going to town. She seemed to be a changed woman, and somehow she began to look younger. She even got so that she was a kind of a joker, and one morning woke me up by tickling my nose with a little greasewood branch.

First time she called me William was down on the claim. I was working away down in the hole, and Matilda was sitting on the dump as contented as you please.

All of a sudden she said in a dreamy, far-away voice: "Do you know, William, I am beginning to like this life. What do I care about the old paper or fame or anything? Out here in this clear air, with plenty of wholesome food and companionship—"

I straightened up and gave her a sharp look. The worst had come to worst. She was getting sentimental.

I had thought a little along those lines, but had not give it a serious turn. Now, I was facing a fact, and there was no time to be lost. Take those headstrong women, and they go to extremes. When they're bad, all hell's a picnic to them; when they're good, heaven is no fit place for them to live. Only one trail out, rush her back to town.

I crawled out of the hole, and took her by the arm.

"Come," said I, "we start for town immediately. I've just concluded that it is not fair for me to keep you here. People might talk," I finished, a little weak.

She smiled, and looked around her.

"I don't see any people, William," she said, as sweet as could be. "Just us two alone in the wilds."

That did settle it. I made her go back to camp and get ready for the trail. I fixed up Jack so she could ride.

Before I helped her on the burro, she put a hand on my arm and looked up in my face as kind as a woman ever looked at a mortal man.

"William," she sighed, "you are driving me away, but remember that I hold you in the greatest esteem. I may have said many cruel, thoughtless words, but now all is changed. I feel, though, that you are doing all for the best."

I tried to say something, but somehow could not connect my tongue with appropriate words.

And that day we put in trailing back toward the nearest town. She had little to say, but, when she did speak, it was always with a smile. I began to feel a little weak—not physically, but mentally.

The afternoon that we got in sight of the town she pulled in Jack, and laid her hand on my shoulder.

"William," said she, "we are nearing the parting of the ways. I want to tell you again how much you have taught me. I thought I was a brilliant

woman, but that 'Thanatopsis' thing proved to me that I knew very little of literature. I can see that my life has been spent in just getting a smattering of things. I do not know how to do anything well. Why, William, you can do everything. You are so strong and capable that you make me ashamed of myself. Another thing, William, forgive me for what I said about your appearance. Really, you are a very handsome man. Your features are so strong—so intensely masculine. There is not a weak point in your make-up, William. Then you are so fair, so just and square. Oh, William, what a foolish woman you must think me!"

I started to lead Jack ahead, and then found I couldn't stir in my tracks. I tried to think that Matilda was a homely old maid, fat, and with three chins. But I couldn't control my mind. That mind just took hold of the lever, and run things to suit itself. I believe my heart was giving the orders, though.

I looked at her. By cripes, I'd never noticed what a fine-looking woman she was. Her face was a little red with the sun, but her neck was white and soft. And her eyes were different; they were larger, and seemed gentle. I looked back over the trail, and remembered how in a hundred ways she had been unselfish. A foolish idea came to me: I was going to be lonesome when Matilda was gone. I had tamed her, been fair with her, and now she was going away just when everything was moving along peaceful. Well, it wasn't her fault; I was the one who had rushed her to town. Facts, facts, all facts.

"I know I shall miss you," she began again in a sorrowful voice. "It has been such a comfort to have some one to lean on, some one to protect me. Oh, William, we women who work do not always do so from choice. I was happier out there in that little camp

than I have been for ages. I learned to cook, didn't I, William?"

"Yes," said I; and patted her shoulder soothingly. "You're a good little cook."

Then she started into crying softly. She had me there. It wasn't the crying of a mean-tempered woman; it was the heart crying, the soft kind.

I'm a fair-minded man, and always stand ready to help out a suffering mortal. I saw that Matilda was in need of a little petting right then, and I gave it to her. Don't tell me that a little petting doesn't do good. Time and time again, when I've been down in the depths of despair, if somebody had come along and patted me on the back and said: "Brace up, Bill!" I'd come out of it like a flash.

"There, there!" said I. "Don't cry, Matilda. Everything will pan out all right. I may have acted a little rough, but I'm your friend. Why, we're partners, Matilda. Don't you forget that I staked you claims right adjoining mine. We're partners, and you can always look to me for a lift."

She looked up and smiled, and Jack, the burro, looked around kind of curiously.

"You big old goose," she said, so low I could just hear it, "I do not want to be your friend."

I kept patting her, and turned her words over in my mind.

"Don't want to be my friend?" I asked, after a spell, kind of puzzled.

I forgot to say that I was standing close to the burro, and that Matilda's head was on my shoulder. I don't remember how her head dropped back that way, but it was there.

"No," she whispered, "friendship is all right as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough."

I saw a light.

Said I: "We might get a ranch. I have some money, and will make more. Will you have me, Matilda?"

For a spell she was quiet, and then she twisted around, took my face between her two hands, and kissed me.

Then she laughed.

"What else is there for me to do?" she asked me, just to be teasing. "If I don't do as you tell me, you'll spank me. And I always was afraid of being spanked."

"Aw, Matilda, don't rub it in!" was all I could say.

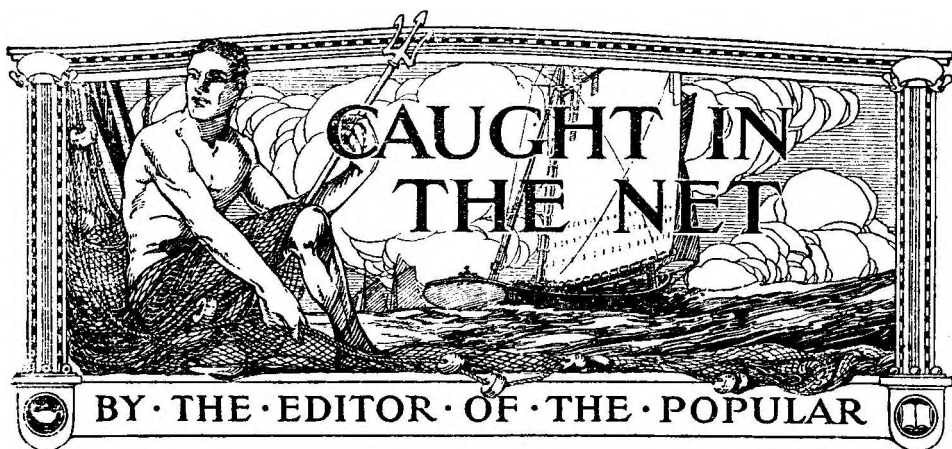
By cripes, it's dinner time. Come on in, and eat a dinner. I'll back Matilda against all the cooks in the world.

But, say, don't those yarns about a man and a woman on a desert island make you kind of tired? I call them sickish, with the two of them always falling in love. I'm a practical man, and mushy sentiment doesn't show any free gold to me. Facts, facts, give me facts every time.

THE KING-PIN OF WALL STREET

WALL STREET is supposed to be the habitat of the best-dressed men in the country, so it may be interesting to those who aim for like distinction to know that the pearl, par excellence, is the favorite gem affected by most financiers.

Of all the stick pins worn in Wall Street, probably the big pearl that was constantly seen in the scarf of J. Pierpont Morgan, the elder, was the king-pin, and for all that is known it may have set the style for the financial district. The banker, who was a connoisseur in so many things, was a fancier of pearls. His big pin was gray, and pear-shaped. It was sometimes supplanted by a pin of three round pearls, set in clover-leaf fashion, but the great pin was his favorite.



FOREIGN EXCHANGE

ALMOST any day one can see an auto truck or an open dray standing at the back door of the New York subtreaury's assay office. A score or two of small kegs that look as if they might contain white lead are rolled aboard. The driver lights his pipe, says "giddap" to his horses—or something else to his motor if it doesn't work—and starts off. There are one or two other men in the vehicle, also smoking pipes. They act as if the driver might be giving them a lift to save them car fare. That is all there is, mechanically speaking, about shipping the millions of gold that have been going out of New York in the last twelvemonth—an outflow that has attracted the world's attention and been the many-sided worry of two continents.

New York has been and is the only free market for gold on the globe—the only place where it could be bought without restriction. In the vaults of the Imperial Bank of Russia, in the steel caverns under the Julius Tower at Spandau, in the treasure citadels of the Banks of France and of England are millions on millions of American double eagles and bars of gold from the mines of the United States—the sinews of war that the great powers of Europe have been building up with feverish energy against the present crisis in their affairs.

Just why gold instead of paper shifts back and forth between America and Europe, and just why it should be hoarded, are more or less mysteries to the average person outside the banking and money-changing industries, and the deeper one goes into it the more complex it becomes. The business of foreign exchange itself is so complicated that experts in it command big salaries. But its essentials are comparatively simple.

London, for example, sells New York a hundred million dollars' worth of merchandise or securities. New York, in the same period, sells London ninety millions. Up to the latter amount no transfer of real money is necessary, because debits and credits—in the form of drafts or bills of exchange—can be matched against each other, and both sides can be paid without the transfer of a single coin. But the ten million balance or difference cannot be paid in this way. If money is "easy," London may be willing to wait for three months or six, and New York will give its note, with interest, payable at a certain date. By

that time London may be owing New York ten millions, and again there may be only a shifting of paper.

But in such times as the present, and under such conditions as prevailed during the first three-quarters of 1914, London, Paris, Berlin, and other great financial and trading centers were selling all they could to New York, and stipulating payment of the balances in gold. This caused such an outflow of the precious metal from this country as never had been known before.

The "rate of exchange" between New York and London, for example, is governed by the law of supply and demand, like the price of potatoes or anything else. The more bills that New York has to pay in London, and the fewer that London has to pay in New York, the higher goes the sterling rate. It was above five dollars for each pound sterling several times in the first three months of the war, and once it was more than six dollars. Normally it is around four dollars and eighty-six cents. The principal elements that enter into the extra cost of transferring credit from one country to another is the cost of shipping the actual gold. Insurance rates for gold in times of peace are nine hundred dollars per one million dollars, and freight and dockage charges one thousand one hundred and twenty-five dollars. To these items must be added about five hundred for interest while in transit. But the war rates have been far in excess of these—so high, in fact, as to make sending gold across the Atlantic out of the question, which is why ours has been going to Canada instead of to London and the Bank of England.

FISH FARMING

FISH farming is a rapidly growing industry in this country. It is the most profitable "lazy man's job" that there is. A running stream or an acre or so of pond can be made to bring in more money than a well-tilled five-acre farm. The Federal government and many of the States, through their fish commissions, not only will give the inquirer, free of charge, all instructions how to start a fish farm and to conduct it, but also will supply him with the necessary young fish or eggs most likely to thrive best in his locality and to be marketable to the best advantage.

A private fishpond is being recognized by farmers all over the United States as being a splendid source of food supply. It costs little or nothing to maintain, and there is sure to be far more fish than one family can eat. The demand for species of fish adapted to pond culture is increasing far more rapidly than the supply, and farmers with fishponds have no difficulty in getting good prices for all they can spare.

Many fish farmers sell eggs and small fishes to other fish farmers, as well as to the government, the States, and private clubs that have their own fish preserves. Many of them make a specialty of this work. Fish eggs can be shipped anywhere—even around the world—if they are kept cool and moist. This makes it easy for the fish farmers to find a market regardless of how far it is away.

If fish farming were without any uncertainties whatever, it would be an ideal way to make money, although it is one of the best as it is. Fish are subject to diseases which at times cause large losses to fish culturists. The Federal fishery service and that of the States are investigating fish diseases constantly, and finding

ways in which they can be prevented or remedied. Most of them come through the contamination of streams. If the water is pure, the fish farmer has little cause to worry. All he has to do is to gather his crop, sell it to the best advantage—there is a steady market with an average price of seventy-five cents per pound for game trout—and spend his money.

GIVING THE VOTE FLUIDITY

ONE excellent result of the political upheavals of the last few years that will never be lost is the fluidity it has given the vote. Nothing is as dangerous an enemy of progress as fixity. When a definite number of voters can be labeled and counted on to vote in blocks without any higher motive than to be "regular" Democrats or Republicans or Progressives, then is danger.

The election just past indicates a steady and remarkable growth of independent sentiment, a big increase in the number of voters who think and vote their thoughts. As an illustration take Livingston County, Missouri. This is one of the old conservative counties of a conservative State. Fifteen years ago a voter of either party who was known to scratch his ticket was looked upon with about the same degree of enthusiasm and appreciation as a scab in a labor-union convention. But in the election just past one Democrat received a majority of nine hundred and sixty-three votes, and one Republican was elected by three hundred and fifteen—a variation of nearly thirteen hundred votes out of a total ballot of four thousand four hundred. And as many voters who voted their party ticket on these two scratched for other candidates, there were probably over sixty per cent of the voters who did not vote a straight ticket.

A similar freedom of choice is indicated all over the country, which indicates the time has gone by and will never come again when the party name and the party whip will be able to make the voters perform.

THE COST OF DISCOURTESY

THE value of courtesy cannot be stated exactly in dollars and cents. Literally it is inestimable. But the cost of discourtesy and inattention has been appraised and assessed from time to time in courts of law in the form of judgment for damage. Because the railroads, through their employees, come in contact with about a billion passengers a year, the bills they have to pay on this account are considerable in the aggregate, but owing to their vigorous campaigns for courtesy they are gradually growing less.

It costs something to stop a train, when it is once under way, and back it to the station it has just left. But, everything considered, it costs far less than five thousand dollars. That is what one railroad had to pay recently for not doing so. A woman riding in a parlor car was carried past her station. The train was hardly started again when she chanced to hear the name of the station mentioned. The conductor happened to be going through the car at the time, and the woman asked him to stop the train and let her off. He refused, the woman was carried to the next station, and arrived at her destination three hours late.

She sued for the loss of time and the mental agony she had suffered. Her claim that the railroad had not paid proper attention to her was sustained.

In a large Eastern city a cabman had his vehicle at the curb near one of the entrances to the station. One of the railroad's employees told him to move on, and incidentally swore once. The cabman was not a passenger. He was on railroad property. Yet the "big D" the station man used cost the company one thousand dollars.

A passenger on a train out of New York was told by the conductor that he was going beyond the station his ticket had called for, and that fifteen cents more was due. In the course of the ensuing dispute the conductor called the passenger "a — fool!" The fifteen cents was paid under protest, suit was brought, and the railroad made a hard fight, but the jury saw things from the passenger's point of view to the extent of a twenty-five-hundred-dollar verdict for the conductor's discourtesy.

In a small town in the Middle West, one winter day, a passenger who was obliged to wait an hour in the station for a delayed train complained that the place was cold. The station agent disagreed. They had some heated words, and later the passenger sued the railroad for damages—not altogether for the station agent's remarks, but also for the discomfort he had suffered from the cold. He did not allege any ill consequences, but he recovered seven hundred and fifty dollars—enough to buy quite a lot of coal.

MOVING FADS

THERE is one good thing about fads—they move on. Even the dancing fad does.

If every fad dragged into the limelight by the hair of its head stuck, what a time we would have! If all the health cranks and food cranks and dress cranks who landed on us stayed, wouldn't this be a howling wilderness of woe?

Everybody that comes along and shouts loud enough and long enough can get some followers, whether it is to wear hoops, shave the scalp, or live on raw turnips.

Not long ago a man seriously undertook to demonstrate that our houses must be built like beehives. Get back to the bee sort of movement. The present year another has urged the public to live in trees. Then there were the early risers, the thirty chews to the biters, the Greek robbers and sandalites, and a thousand others who all had a sure cure for the soul and an unfailing remedy for the body.

Luckily these things don't stick too long. There is good in some of them—and the good will linger. But the fad that is going to revolutionize the whole human race, banish disease, blues, boils, and the high cost of living soon discovers that it has hit the wrong world, and flies off into space.

The old stand-bys of eat plenty, sleep well, work hard, and stay outdoors as much as possible about covers the whole thing.

Rock in the Box

By Berton Braley

WHEN you're workin' up in a stuffy stope
Where you simply steams and stews,
An' the dead air acts like a dose of dope
An' you wanta lie down an' snooze,
Then the shift boss raps on the bloomin' chute
In kind of a fiendish glee,
An' you hear him holler—the hefty brute—
An' "Rock in th' Box!" says he.
"Hey there, get busy, you big galoot,
An' dump in a car or three;
Come, chuck some ore in that empty chute,
Rock in the Box!" says he.

An' when you're takin' a little smoke
An' "taperin' off" a bit,
An' tellin' yer partner a funny joke
An' laughin' until yuh split,
That shift boss raps on the chute below
An' ruins the joke for ye,
An' "Hey, wake *up!* Wake up, there, bo!"
An' "Rock in th' Box!" says he.
"Hey, dump in a dozen cars or so,
This isn't no damn pink tea!
So gimme some ore in this chute below,
Rock in th' Box!" says he.

So whether you're workin' away like sin
Or soldierin' half the day,
The shift boss allus is buttin' in
An' tryin' to "make her pay."
Though the chute is bare as a bald man's head
Or full as a tick, maybe,
He's allus hollerin': "Are yuh *dead?*
Hi, Rock in th' Box!" says he,
"This chute is hungry, it must be fed;
You gotta wake up, by gee!
Hey, quit yer snoozin' up overhead,
Rock in th' Box!" says he.

But a shift boss has to git the rock
Or he'll lose his job, you see,
So pick up a scoop when yuh hear him knock
An' fill up a car or three,
An' give him a-plenty of good rich rock,
When "Rock in th' Box!" says he.

The Hound of Marat

By John R. Coryell

Something entirely new for POPULAR readers—a romance of the French Revolution. Many of the scenes of this story of 1793 are those of the present-day conflict, and the interest is thereby intensified for us. We may also compare, if we will, those times of blood and insensate rage with these hours of terror and horror. The author, a newcomer in our circle of writers, but a skillful tale-teller, knows his ground and period. Best of all, he has a thrilling, heart-gripping story to relate. We predict that you will find yourself in need of patience to wait for each installment as it comes out, even when we give you huge slices of the tale in four numbers of the magazine.

(In Four Parts—Part I.)

CHAPTER I.

FRANCE was in a sorry plight. Within her borders all was chaos, for the lower classes, weary of carrying royalty, aristocracy, and church on their bent backs, had revolted. Filled with a lust of blood, they were killing, killing, killing. The aristocrats were hunted like vermin, and when caught were killed like vermin.

They had killed their king; they had attacked the principle of royalty; so the other kings of Europe, dreading their turn perhaps, were speeding to the rescue; the Prussians were already over the borders.

Thus matters stood in the early summer of 1793. Never had a sweeter June been seen in France, but for the human turmoil. The air was soft, the skies were blue; the vines and fruit trees were laden.

Two men sat by the roadside eating a frugal meal of black bread and cherries. They ate with the gusto of hunger, but there was in their manner none of the enjoyment of a healthy appetite in the course of being satisfied. On the

contrary, they ate hastily and with furtive glances up and down the road. Both were travel-stained and dusty. One was big, brawny, powerful; the other was as tall as his companion, but of a more slender and elegant figure.

They were in the grateful shade of the trees on the outskirts of the forest of Argonne. Below them, to the west, could be seen the silver line of the River Aisne; and on its banks, marked by spires and tall chimneys, spread the little town of Sainte Menehould. To the east and well to the north and south stretched the great forest.

"I feel better, my Jean," said the slender one to the other, "since we have passed that town. It was there, you know, that our good king was taken and carried back to Paris to be murdered."

"Alas, Monsieur le Comte!" sighed Jean, looking sadly at him.

"Assassin!"

"Oh, my master!"

"It is plain you mean to betray me, Jean."

"Nicolle then, if you will have it so."

But Jean's tone was so deprecating and at the same time so resigned that the other burst into a gay laugh, which, however, he checked at once with an air of pretended alarm.

"I believe," he cried, "that I have committed the indiscretion of laughing like an aristocrat. Is this better?" And he broke into a clownish guffaw, in which he was instantly joined by Jean with noisy frankness.

"A man would have to laugh with you on his deathbed," exclaimed the latter, a note of adoration in his tone. "Here you are, hunted like a very wild beast; with men on your track who would tear you in pieces; and yet you are as merry as in those blessed days when the most important thing we had to do was to set snares or to find the trees which bore the biggest nuts. Alas, the good days! Will they ever come again, Monsieur le Comte?"

"Assassin!" laughed the other.

"You are right; I shall yet betray you; I who would gladly die for you."

This was said with such earnest simplicity and withal so lugubriously that his companion clapped him on the back, and, with some raillery and more tenderness, cried out:

"Oh, Jean François, what a lad you are! If I had but ten like you—so big, so brave, so true, so devoted—I would throw off this dirty red wig and these vile rags, put on the best bravery of the Comtes de Lestourmière, and march with my head up through this bloody France, proclaiming my aristocracy."

"Ah-h!" breathed Jean François, his honest blue eyes shining, "that would be fine. Then there would be blows, eh?"

He squared his great, sinewy shoulders and filled his broad chest full of the fresh June air. The young Comte de Lestourmière laughed exultantly as he watched the signs of his follower's martial spirit; then, of a sudden, he caught the big, rough hand that was

nearest him and pressed it with both of his, which by contrast looked very small and slender.

"If only we had lived two hundred years ago—you and I, Jean François, my lad!" he cried enthusiastically. "Then there was fighting for all who craved it. I should not then have been slinking out of France in a dirty disguise, trying my best to look like a filthy sans-culotte. Well, after all," he went on, with a sudden change of tone, "what have I to complain of? Is it that there will not be enough fighting to do?"

He ended with a laugh, which, however, Jean did not echo. On the contrary, he doubled up his huge fist and shook it angrily toward the town. "If they are wise they will let us alone," he cried angrily. "What have you done to them that they should wish to kill you? Have you not been their good friend always? Have I not seen the tears run down your cheeks when one of their little brats died? Oh, Monsieur le Comte——"

"Assassin!" laughed his companion.

"It is better that I keep still."

"No, Jean François, I wish you to talk; I even command you to do so, since you are certain to say fine things about me. Ah, if only the whole world saw me through your eyes, what a good thing it would be for me! I should soon be made pope at the very least. But seriously, my stupid Jean, why is it that you will call me Monsieur le Comte now when all your life until a month ago you called me only Monsieur Raoul?"

Jean François had not complicated mental processes; so he opened his blue eyes wide and answered simply: "Now you *are* Monsieur le Comte; you have been since those miscreants in Paris murdered your father that dreadful day."

Raoul patted him on the shoulder as he might have caressed a faithful dog.

"But I was formerly vicomte, yet you did not call me so."

Jean shrugged his shoulders and answered, with the utmost simplicity: "In those days you had no misfortunes."

"Ah! Ah!" murmured Raoul, deeply touched. "You make me weep." He brushed his eyes with his hand; then, with a sudden, characteristic change of manner, he cried out: "But come! There is one good thing results from these bloody times—that little fop of a Raoul appreciates his Jean François."

"Bah! Bah!" said Jean, blushing like a girl. "As if you were not always too good to me. True, if there should be some fighting, I can do something."

"Glutton! Because you are such a giant you think all the fighting is to be yours. I expect to give a good account of myself, mind you!"

"Ha, ha! Do I not know that? They who expect to see those white hands of yours doing a girl's work will learn something. I never can get used to it," he said, eying Raoul's elegant hands contemplatively. "They look like silk, and they feel like iron. St! St!"

At the sudden note of warning, Raoul's face dropped the amused smile it had worn, and he turned his head to see what Jean gazed at so threateningly. Two men in the uniform of the republican army were coming up the road toward them. They must have entered the main road by a small path through the woods.

"I will take the big one," said Jean, under his breath; "you take the other."

"Will you wait, then?" whispered Raoul. "There may be no need."

"That uniform makes me choke."

"You will obey me, Jean?"

"You know it."

"Call me by name so that I may be sure you do not forget your lesson."

"Nicolle. But bah! There are only two of them."

"Then let us be cool. If they say nothing to us, why should we trouble

them? Are we to kill every Frenchman who wears the uniform of the republic? *Parbleu!* Let us get out of France and into the Prussian army before we talk of that."

"You are right, and I am a fool."

"If they talk to us, let me answer. Fill your mouth with cherries or bread, and try to look pleasanter. You look as if you had the colic."

All this was spoken in a low, hurried voice, but ended with a loud, rough laugh by Raoul. The two men meanwhile had come sufficiently near to enable those who watched them to see that one wore the stripes of a corporal, while the other was plainly enough a common soldier.

Raoul would have permitted them to pass without a word, but the corporal, with a peremptory air, cried halt as if he had had a company behind him; and he and his companion stopped in the middle of the road in front of Raoul and Jean, and began to scrutinize them.

Raoul assumed his stupidest manner, and stared at them, with mouth wide open. Jean grew redder and redder, and began to chew furiously, quite forgetting that the stones were still in the cherries he had taken into his mouth, until they began to crack between his powerful jaws.

"Service of the republic!" said the corporal. He addressed himself to Jean, very naturally, he being the larger of the two. It was, however, Raoul who replied to him, Jean keeping his jaws at work regardless of the cherry pips.

"Well?" demanded Raoul stupidly.

"You have food; we have none," said the corporal sententiously. "We are hungry. Service of the republic!"

Raoul tore off a bite of bread with his teeth, and began to chew it, at the same time suppressing a chuckle of glee at the sight of the rage on Jean's face.

"There is an inn three miles farther on," said Raoul, with full mouth.

"A good patriot serves his country

as he can," declared the sententious corporal; "you will serve the republic by feeding her soldiers."

It was so plain that the man did not mean to go on without pushing his request to the extremity of force, that Raoul quickly decided that it would be wise to yield at once, the sooner to be rid of them.

"I will give him apothegms as well as bread," said Raoul to himself. "He will be lucky if Jean François do not give him thumps as well as cherries." He swallowed his mouthful, and gravely spoke aloud: "Eat now that you may die later. It is glorious to die for one's country; pleasanter to live for her. To each one his fate."

All this was said soberly and with a broad, rustic accent; yet there was a belying gleam in Raoul's brown eyes that made the corporal study him with a puzzled scowl.

"You speak," he growled, "as if you had been fed on proverbs. I hope your bread is less dry than your speech. Is your comrade ill?"

Jean François, in fact, looked as though he were suffering. Being filled with animosity toward the two soldiers, in the simplicity of his nature he raged to show it, and was restrained only by the wish of Raoul.

"He has been subject to fits from his early youth," he said. "Refrain from looking at him, and he will recover. My good Jean, conquer yourself. It is necessary."

Devotion to Raoul was Jean's religion. These two men, like all of their kind, thirsted for his master's blood; therefore Jean raged to fall upon them and choke, pound, kill, rend. But if Raoul assured him it was necessary to restrain himself, he must do it. He swallowed his cherries, pips and all, with a gulp, then pushed the cherries that yet remained toward the two soldiers. Raoul tendered the bread, saying:

"Service of the republic! Eat! Eat as you go, that you may lose no time."

A scowl twisted the face of the corporal, and he half turned to his companion, then quickly changed his mind, took the loaf of bread, and said, with an ugly sneer:

"That would be too unsociable; good comrades are not so plentiful that we can pass them by. Sit down there, Jacques!" He pushed his companion so that he sat by the side of Jean, and then himself dropped on the grass not far from Raoul.

There was an appearance of design in the way in which this was done that at once aroused suspicion in Raoul's mind; and when he glanced at Jean to note the effect on him, he discovered him stretching his brawny arms and legs. Jean was manifestly making preparations, and Raoul leaned back against a convenient tree, his blood beating quicker time in his veins, but his face more than ever expressionless.

In a few seconds he had calculated the chances, as the corporal had evidently also done; for Jacques, who was big and brawny, had been assigned to look after Jean, while he had reserved the slighter Raoul for himself. Raoul had not an instant's doubt of the existence of design in the corporal's disposition of himself and his follower. He drew a long breath, and set himself to watch every movement of the corporal.

The corporal and Jacques, however, as if quite at ease, placed their muskets across their laps and set to on the bread and cherries, proving by the fierceness of their attack that they had not been pretending hunger.

Raoul was filled with disgust, and Jean was a prey to rage, until, having exchanged a glance with his master, he discovered that he was not to be long withheld; whereupon he pleased himself by taking stock of the bone and sinew of the big soldier.

"You two fellows will make good

soldiers," said the corporal suddenly, after the severest pangs of hunger had been assuaged. "Go along with me, and I will have you taken into our regiment. Colonel Reynal will listen to me."

He tore off a huge morsel of bread, and, while cramming it into his mouth, narrowly eyed Raoul. Jacques indorsed his superior, nodding his head with a sidewise jerk and ejaculating with a full mouth: "Corporal Maniquet is in favor. The great citizen Marat——"

Raoul and Jean shuddered at that ominous name; the corporal broke in complacently: "You are a fool, Jacques. I have told you so many times." Jacques gave the military salute in token of complete acquiescence with his superior, and the latter went on: "But it is true, as he says, that great and good citizen, who lets the blood of France as once he let the blood of his patients, for health's sake, holds me in esteem." He tapped his breast, and smiled hideously. "I have the proof of it here. By the way, citizen, I don't know your name."

"Nicolle Brigaud. There are many parts of France in which it is not known."

The corporal smiled somewhat as one might expect a wolf to smile were that serious animal to so far forget himself. "You are a maker of proverbs, and a wit. You are sure to be better known, Citizen Brigaud. Besides, it is no more than one might look for in a man who has brown eyes and red hair."

"Then Corporal Maniquet will be better known," said Raoul, feeling that matters were becoming more definite. "You have red hair and brown eyes, too."

"My eyes are red—a different red from my hair, if you will, but yet red. It may be that they have taken their color somewhat from that which they have looked on so much lately. They have seen the blood of many *ci-devants*."

Jacques laughed boisterously. "Citi-

zen Maniquet," he shouted, "did his share of the killing at the Abbaye last year. I know it, for I stood by him; and when a *ci-devant* escaped him, I finished him. I did not get the blood off for a month. As for my corporal, I would not have known him—he was blood to the eyes."

Raoul clenched his hands without knowing what he did. He was familiar enough with the awful massacre of the Abbaye, but to be within touch of one of the "killers" made it seem like a new fact to him. He dared not look at Jean, but supposed he must be controlling himself, since no comment was made on his looks.

"I have been cleverer since that time," said Corporal Maniquet, taking up the talk in a sinister way. "I remember when I smashed one old *ci-devant* on the head with my iron club his blood smeared my face. I must have swallowed some of it, I think, for no one has been so quick as I to know a *ci-devant* from that day to this. Citizen Marat calls me his hound. What small, white hands you have, Citizen Brigaud!"

Raoul started. He had been listening like one stunned and dazed, but this remark roused him. The crisis was near; he knew it by the sneer on the man's brutal face. He smiled.

"Yes, my hands are small and white," he said, holding them up to full view; "but they could fasten about a man's throat and stay there for the good of France."

"Ho, ho! Don't look at me with such a flame in your brown eyes that don't suit your red hair, Citizen Brigaud! And look at Citizen Jean! He has that terrible colic again. Jacques, give him plenty of room lest he should injure you as he rolls about in his pain."

They were all four eying each other now, like wild beasts. But the corporal had had a hand in the death of so many aristocrats that he was contemptuous

for one thing, and for another he was disposed to have a little sport—the sort that the feline tribe has with its prey.

“As we came along,” he said, “we heard a good deal about the escape of the *ci-devant* Comte de Lestourmière. I was interested because it was I who denounced the father, whom we guillotined last month. The son will be sent after him next week. Ah-h!”

Raoul had telegraphed to Jean, and together they had thrown themselves on the other two. The soldiers had been too sure of their prey. Perhaps Jacques in his stupidity had not even understood what was expected of him. At any rate their guns were useless; the struggle was one of sinews and skill.

For three weeks Raoul had lain in a charcoal burner's hovel, on the verge of discovery all the while, and brooding constantly on the murder of his father and the wrongs of his class. Now for a week he had been hunted, sometimes face to face with his pursuers, who did not recognize him, though often they were persons he had aided in the days gone by. Yesterday his faithful Jean François had found him, had recognized him in spite of his disguise, and had said doggedly that he would not leave him. After that it had seemed to Raoul that all the bitterness had left him, and he had been as gay and light-hearted as in the old, happy days.

But now, as his slender white fingers clasped the wrists of the corporal and held them rigidly, the thoughts that had filled his brain as he lay in the hovel came back to him. He was the proscribed, hunted aristocrat, an individual of the class that had ruled so long and had been turned upon and rent at last. He was blind to the wrong he represented, but saw keenly the wrong that had been done him. And the man into whose red eyes he looked now represented the class that had made him into a hunted animal.

The corporal vainly tried to wrench

his wrists from the implacable white fingers. He glanced swiftly at Jacques. Raoul's eyes sped after his, and a cruel smile parted his lips. Jacques had plainly recognized the fact that he had met his master. The corporal's face became faintly yellow, and a sense of finality sent a weakening shudder through him. He opened his lips to cry out for help, but swiftly, as if divining, the slender fingers leaped from the wrists to the throat, and there was no cry but only a horrible gurgle.

They swayed and stumbled about until they fell; and then they rolled and writhed for a while. When Raoul at last rose to his feet, Jean had him by the arm and was asking: “Are you hurt?”

“I believe not, my Jean. And you?”

“Bah! It was even no fun. I had expected better things of him. Your man was the better of the two.”

“Let us drag them out of the way and bind them,” said Raoul, glancing quickly up and down the road.

“Drag them, if you will; they need no binding.”

Raoul shuddered as he looked more carefully at the prostrate figures. He remembered now a sudden yielding. That was when death came, he thought to himself.

Jean, less impressionable, and seeing that Raoul did not move, strode over to where the body of Jacques lay, and carried it behind some hazel bushes back from the road. A few minutes more, and the body of the corporal lay by that of his follower.

“Now let us go,” he said, touching Raoul on the shoulder. “The sooner the better.”

Raoul started. “I believe I was sorry to have killed him,” he said, then shrugged his shoulders. “After all, he was a vile wretch. No, we will not hurry. I remember he said he had something in his breast pocket. We will look at it.”

CHAPTER II.

Jean promptly and without repugnance went to the body and unbuttoned the coat. There was a soiled wallet in the inner pocket—nothing else. Jean continued his search until he was sure he had discovered everything—and altogether there was very little.

"Not a sou!" he grumbled. "Some papers in the wallet, and for the rest—bchold!" And Jean let some miscellaneous odds and ends fall from his capacious hand to the grass. "He was a virtuous patriot, this citizen corporal! Canaille! While you look at the papers, I will see what my Jacques is worth to us."

He turned away, and Raoul leaned against a tree while examining the contents of the wallet, his expression one of supreme disgust, his aristocratic fingers even betraying a sort of disdain by their gingerly touching of the greasy leather. The incongruity of being particular about the wallet after having had the owner's throat in deadly touch did not strike him.

"Not much in it," he muttered to himself; "and not likely to be of much use to us." He took out several folded papers and looked at the top one. "*Le Contrat Social*," was printed on one side, and on the other was written, in a clear, scholarly hand: "Service of the republic. The Contribution of Gaspard Maniquet to France. Done with his own hand." Under this, in what seemed at first red ink, but which Raoul presently recognized as blood, were a series of dates and numbers, executed in a wretched scrawl, the most conspicuous of which was: "1792, September 3d—13." The totals were carefully kept in a final column; and the last, which was quite fresh, brought the last total to twenty-seven.

Plainly enough, it was a list of aristocrats done to death by the man in the name of liberty. He crumpled the paper

fiercely, and threw it from him. For all he knew, his own father was represented by one of those sinister numbers.

Two or three of the papers he could make nothing of, so threw them away, too. The next was an official-looking document, addressed to Colonel Reynal, commanding the twelfth regiment of infantry, stationed at Verdun. It was sealed. Raoul started to break the seal, then remembered that the dead man had been on his way to join the regiment, and that his credentials would probably be under the seal. He put the document in his pocket, the germ of an idea in his brain.

He unfolded the remaining paper slowly, his thoughts occupied with the notion that was growing in his head. A small piece of paper lay in the folds of the larger, and he read that first. Instantly he uttered a sharp cry, and crushed the paper in his hand.

"What is it, then?" demanded Jean, leaping to his side and looking fiercely up and down the road.

"Two human beings condemned to die! Oh, that monster, Marat! This paper, with these few words, gives to death two persons—a man and a woman; a nobleman and his daughter. Do you see that name at the bottom, Jean? That is Marat. He, more than any one, killed our good king. He is the enemy of tyrants, you see, my Jean; and that was why he drove them to kill the gentlest king that ever ruled a kingdom; and that is why his name on a bit of paper like this condemns to death whoever is named above it."

"If I had him here!" cried Jean, holding out his two great hands as if about to grasp an imaginary throat. "They say he drinks the blood from the guillotine."

"It is enough that he sheds it. I suppose there is such a paper in the hands of some one, with my name on it."

"Your name?"

"Surely. Why else am I running like

a hare from my home? It was a dilapidated old château, it is true, but my grandfather had a good time while he lived, so the estate had to suffer; but yet it was home, and I don't like running away from it."

"When you return, you will have wealth and honors," said Jean proudly, but with a little touch of coaxing in his tone, for he did not like to see his young master droop his head. Nor did it last long. Raoul looked up, and smiled into the solicitous face of the other.

"Much good may it do the man who has the slip of paper with my name on it. I have a little plan, my Jean, which I hope will take us out of France in a few days." He patted the official paper as he spoke, then glanced at the signature of Marat. "He wastes no words, that Marat. 'Henri Antoine de Lazire, ci-devant marquis; Yvonne Louise de Lazire, his daughter. Dead or alive.' It is brief enough, I think, Jean."

"Ah! Ah!" murmured Jean.

"If this paper be all, however," Raoul laughed, tearing it into tiny bits, "they will live yet a while. I am glad to be of some service to them." He opened the other paper, and began to read it, his brows knitting as he did so. "Aha!" he cried presently, "it seems the Marquis de Lazire has been giving the republic some trouble. It was he who showed the Prussians and Austrians into this very forest of the Argonne through Verdun last year. That time General Dumouriez drove them out. Now it seems they are returning in greater force, and the marquis has been in communication with them. He is discovered to have been in hiding in the Château d'Entraigue, and our friend, the corporal, there, has the credit of finding it out. Shall I tell you something, Jean?"

"If you please."

"If I knew where this château was, I would go there and give that noble gentleman warning. But I don't know,

and so the best I can do is to remember him and his daughter in my prayers. Yvonne is a pretty name, my Jean."

"Too pretty to belong to a dead girl," assented Jean. "Shall we go now? I never thought this republic would amount to much; now I am sure of it. There was nothing on that fellow, Jacques, that a decent beggar would take. Shall we go, then?"

Raoul was tearing up the paper which betrayed the whereabouts of the marquis. He paid no heed to Jean's words, but suddenly broke in: "Do you know what I have been thinking, Jean?"

Jean burst into a short laugh. "If I knew what you thought, Monsieur Raoul, I would be as clever as you."

"And you are not as clever as I, are you, my Jean? And what a fortunate thing it is! Surely there would not be room in this world for two such clever ones." They both laughed at that, for Raoul had a merry way of saying trifles. "But," he went on, "the clever thought I had was this: 'Suppose you and I masquerade as those two?' We might put on their clothes and come near to the frontier without ever a word being said to us. Here are my credentials; and I answer for you."

Jean gaped in unfeigned admiration. He had always known that his young master had more wit than any one else; nevertheless it was always amazing to see the proofs of it. "I would never have thought of it," he said simply. "And see! You have a red wig."

"But brown eyes," laughed Raoul.

"I came very near smashing him when he said that. But I should have known that you would be equal to him. What nasty red eyes he did have! Do you believe he had any hand in the killing of your father?"

"No, I think he lied. He guessed who I was, and was having some fun with me. Ah-h! I don't like putting on those clothes. I don't think it was a clever idea at all. But I must. Come!"

It was too disagreeable a task to linger over, so it was accomplished quickly. "Now, Jean," said Raoul, "you will not forget that I am Corporal Maniquet?"

"I will tell you why I shall not forget," replied Jean, with a grimace. "That fellow Jacques was a dirty rascal, and my nose constantly reminds me of him; so that if his clothes on you do not recall the corporal, Jacques' clothes on me will."

"Jacques, you are a fool!" cried Raoul, in the manner of the corporal he impersonated.

"Yes, my corporal," replied Jean humbly, making the military salute. Then both of them laughed immoderately. Any sort of fooling was a relief just then.

"Have you considered where we are going, Jacques?" demanded Raoul.

"We *were* going to Verdun," answered Jean, opening his eyes wide.

"So were Corporal Maniquet and his friend Jacques."

"So that if we go there——" began Jean, and stopped, as if the remainder of the sentence were not worth the saying.

Raoul nodded his head. "Precisely! If we go there, we shall be incorporated into their dirty republican army, and perhaps be discovered. The late citizen corporal may not be the only one who objects to brown eyes with red hair, you see. Besides, it will be more difficult to escape from the army, to say nothing of the risk of being shot by a stray royalist or Prussian, who would see only this vile tricolor, and would be blind to the aristocratic blood that flows beneath it."

"Then we will not go to Verdun," said Jean, with conviction.

"If not to Verdun, where?" demanded Raoul, imitating the corporal with infinite relish.

"Ah, where!"

"Jacques, you are a fool!"

Jean saluted. "Yes, my corporal."

Raoul roared with laughter at this repetition of a jest that bade fair to grow hoary with age. Jean followed suit merrily, asking nothing better than to see his beloved master so light-hearted. Raoul slapped him heartily on the shoulder, crying out:

"What a treasure you are! But come, then! Since I am in command of this important division of the dirty republican army, and must make a plan of campaign, what do you say to Pierrefitte? Verdun is about twenty-five miles to the east, and Pierrefitte nearly the same distance to the southeast."

Jean scratched his head in perplexity; it seemed to him that he had detected his master in a miscalculation, and that was almost like heresy. "But no doubt you have forgotten," he said hesitatingly, "that we have many sympathizers in and near Verdun, and that they are reds, sans-culottes, or whatever is worst at Pierrefitte."

"Very true; but you forget that we are sans-culottes and soldiers, and will have good treatment in Pierrefitte. I shall say we are on a mission—a secret mission—and you will see that they will help us to escape."

"I am a fool!" cried Jean humbly.

Raoul gave the salute in acquiescence, and both laughed like two boys.

"Besides which," said Raoul, becoming serious again, "if by any chance we do meet any soldiers we shall not be so far out of our course going toward Pierrefitte as if we selected some more friendly place—if there be a place any more friendly."

Their destination being settled, they took briskly to the road, and strode on, keeping to the byroads as much as possible, but even so unable to avoid meeting many persons; for, although it was the season when work was pressing on the farms, it was yet more emphatically a time when men must exchange views and news; the more so that peasant

France had awakened, wild-eyed, to a sense of its power, and was crazed to do and to talk. Thus the roads were never deserted; and Raoul and Jean found that while their stolen uniforms afforded them protection from suspicion, they also gave them an uncomfortable prominence.

Raoul soon accustomed himself to that, however, and with a thoroughly reckless humor played the part of the sans-culotte corporal, showering, as Jean said, apothegms like benedictions, and fairly swimming in the blood of aristocrats.

So much talking naturally kept them from making the progress they wished to make; and when evening came they had gone but half the distance toward Pierrefitte. They stopped at the most obscure and least-frequented inn they could find, and procured a modest meal of bread and an omelet.

For a while they talked as tired men will, in a desultory way, but as the food and even the sour wine revived them, they discussed the situation to some purpose, and decided to push on to Pierrefitte, far as it still was from them. They procured directions from the innkeeper, and took to the road again.

They started briskly enough, but walking in the darkness over an unknown road is a wearisome task at the best; and, as they were already tired, they soon ceased talking and plodded silently on for hours, until Raoul finally gave in.

"I can go no farther, Jean," he said; "besides, it seems we should have come to Pierrefitte by this time. We may have taken the wrong road. So come to the roadside, and let us sleep. At least the grass will be soft and the air pure and sweet."

"It might be anything else and I should never know it," yawned Jean, feeling his way to the side of the road. "Ah! I am so sleepy."

"Till morning, then, my Jean Fran-

çois; and when you wake up, do not forget that you are Jacques and a fool."

"I have saluted you, my corporal."

They both laughed, and slept.

CHAPTER III.

"Wake, Monsieur Raoul! Wake! Wake!"

It seemed to Raoul that he had but just closed his eyes; moreover, he was in the midst of a most delightful dream.

"Let me sleep!" he grunted petulantly.

"But you must rouse yourself, dear Monsieur Raoul. Here comes a rabble of soldiers, canaille, women."

Raoul remembered first that he was a fugitive, and started up, ready to fight or run; then he recalled his disguise and heaved a long sigh of relief. Meanwhile, his eyes, winking away the remains of sleep, stared with wonder along the road.

As Jean had said, it looked as if approaching them was a rabble of soldiers, women, and social dregs. From a slight eminence on which they stood, the fugitives could see the whole straggling procession, from the head which was within a few yards of them now, to the tail, consisting of a limping cripple, who, three hundred yards in the rear, made desperate efforts to keep up with the others.

It took but a few seconds for Raoul to separate the seemingly heterogeneous crowd into definite parts. A company of soldiers guarded a number of women and girls, who, huddling together piteously like a flock of frightened sheep, shrank from the cowardly missiles and foul epithets showered on them by the unkempt rabble of both sexes that swarmed all about them, indifferently restrained by the guard. The women were plainly of the better class; a few were matrons of middle age, a few were young mothers with babes held tightly to their breasts, but most of them were girls, some not over fourteen years old.

"And we cannot do a thing for them!" Raoul murmured hoarsely, his hands clenched, his chest heaving.

Jean looked like a mastiff held in leash; and, as if to strengthen the likeness, a low, growling noise issued from his throat. "If I look," he groaned, "I shall throw myself at them." He turned and stared with fierce intentness toward Pierrefitte, which was in plain sight. Raoul, on the contrary, kept his eyes on the passing crowd.

The prisoners, huddled in the center of the company of soldiers, paid no heed to the two men standing by the roadside; the soldiers, with lax discipline, grinned at them in a friendly way, and even called out a coarse greeting, or made a brutal comment on their prisoners.

Fortunately no comment was necessary from Raoul, either to the soldiers who took the two strangers for some of themselves, or to the hideous creatures of both sexes who composed the yelling rabble, and who hailed them with coarse and brutal jests, or with fierce acclaim.

Raoul was moved by an intense curiosity to know what the poor, helpless women had done that they should be haled along in such rough fashion; but he feared that he and Jean had already made themselves too conspicuous in standing there in full view; and he would have permitted the entire cortège to pass without a word. That was not to be, however. The officer in command of the soldiers, a lieutenant, who was walking near the prisoners, had caught sight of the two strangers in uniform, and had made his way to them, suddenly standing before Raoul and saying peremptorily:

"What are you doing here?"

Raoul had the presence of mind to remember that he was but a republican corporal, and that it was his place to salute a superior officer. Jean copied his action mechanically. At the same

instant Raoul's heart went down, for on the metal plate of the officer's cross belt was a conspicuous 12. This, then, was a part of the regiment to which Corporal Maniquet had been assigned! It seemed as if every possibility of the situation passed through the brain of the hunted aristocrat.

He answered quickly: "I am from Paris, on my way to join my regiment."

"What regiment?"

"Twelfth infantry."

"You have papers of some kind?"

Annoyed by the peremptory and persistent inquiries, which had somewhat an air of suspicion, Raoul called his reckless spirit to his assistance, and, pulling out the envelope from his inner pocket with a flourish, after the manner of the real Corporal Maniquet, said: "Behold! I owe my stripes to the good will and opinion of my friend, the great citizen Marat."

The ominous name was received respectfully by the officer, who glanced at the envelope and immediately returned it to Raoul. Some of the rabble, who had stopped to listen, caught the name that meant so much to France at that time, and a loud yell of ferocious joy broke from their throats. And by a magic peculiar to mobs, the word was circulated that one was there who knew the great Marat.

There was not time even for the officer to tell Raoul that the regiment was at Pierrefitte instead of at Verdun, before the cries of the hideous throng rose about him, while unkempt, ferocious men and women crowded close to Raoul and Jean, forcing the officer to content himself with pointing to the little town.

The lieutenant rejoined his company, and Raoul and Jean, with a swift look of horror at each other, saw the rabble leave the prisoners to congregate about them. And it was no mitigation of their concern to see that they were the ob-

jects of the friendliest attention of the ragged, loathsome crew.

"A friend of Citizen Marat!" shrieked the woman who had climbed up the bank and was standing by Raoul. He turned and looked at her, scowling involuntarily. She was not looking at him, however, but at some one on the outskirts of the crowd. He followed her glance with an instinctive impulse of self-preservation, at the same time drawing back from the creature.

For all her dirt and the disorder of her attire, the woman had a certain ferocious comeliness. The person she looked at was as brutal and repulsive a wretch as ever he had seen.

Raoul felt the imminence of danger. He caught Jean by the wrist, and whispered huskily: "Remember! My life is at stake. You are Jacques, and I am Maniquet."

With a humor that was as grim as it was simple, Jean raised his hand in salute. He couldn't have done a better thing, for it brought about a revulsion of feeling in Raoul. The horror which contact with these embodied specters of the revolution had stirred in him gave way at once for his naturally reckless courage. He laughed roughly, slapped his companion on the shoulder, and stepped nearer to the woman.

"What have they done?" he demanded, indicating the prisoners.

She stopped smiling instantly, and three deep, vertical lines came into her forehead between her black eyes, converting her from a wild, disheveled beauty into a fury. She thrust her left arm across his body, and pointed after them with quivering finger.

"They are the ones"—she used a vile word to describe them—"who, when the Prussians took Verdun last year, went to meet them with baskets of sugared fruit. Now they go to Paris, where your friend Marat will take care of them."

"Ha-a!" roared a voice, in something

between a laugh and a growl. "I think Marat will write one of his famous bits of paper, and they will carry no more sugarplums."

This was the man the woman had beckoned to. He was of massive build, unshaven, unwashed, tattered, bloated; and yet there was something in his bloodshot eyes that told of a power to compel and control. Raoul felt a murderous impulse surge up within him at the sight of the man.

"It is Citizen Hulin," the woman said proudly; "the Marat of Pierrefitte."

The mob set up a shout at this, and gathered in the road in front of them, as if expecting some sort of spectacle. Hulin gave his shaggy head a toss, and looked over the upturned faces with an air of conscious leadership. Then he turned and stared, with the easy insolence of power, first at Raoul and then at Jean. The woman went on, as if completing an introduction:

"The citizen corporal belongs to Reynal's regiment; he is a friend of the Citizen Marat."

"The great citizen," said Raoul, in Maniquet's manner, "calls me his hound. He says no one has so keen a scent as I for a *ci-devant*. And there is a reason for it, is there not, Jacques?"

"Yes," growled Jean.

"I was at the Abbaye with my iron club. From head to foot I was covered with the blood of the *ci-devants*. I must have swallowed some, too, for since then I have been able to tell a republican from a *ci-devant* almost at a glance."

The Marat of Pierrefitte burst into a roar of hoarse laughter at this; the woman smiled appreciatively, and the mob howled.

"You have come to Pierrefitte just in the nick of time," the woman said.

"Aha! So he has!" Hulin cried, clapping Raoul on the shoulder in good-fellowship. "We are going to smoke out a *ci-devant* this very day, and it will be

rare sport, I tell you. Come! We will escort you to your regiment, and you shall tell us about Citizen Marat as we go."

"My regiment is at Verdun," answered Raoul, anxious to be rid of the rabble; "and it will be better if I do not go into Pierrefitte."

"Your regiment is at Pierrefitte," the woman said. "It arrivèd yesterday afternoon."

Raoul and Jean exchanged glances, but it was all they could do. Not that it would have mattered much, however, if they had been able to talk the matter over, for the one thing that was certain was that they must go on to Pierrefitte with their escort.

"We shall be saved a walk, then," he said carelessly. "In the meantime, even patriots must eat. Is there no place where we could get a bite of bread and a glass of milk?"

Hulin and the woman exchanged glances. "Susanne," said the former, "they are friends of Marat."

"Bread and milk are not too plenty in the republic even yet," said Susanne, turning to Raoul, "but I will share with you what I have. Come, then!"

"To Pierrefitte!" roared Hulin to his rabble.

"To Pierrefitte!" howled the mob.

With a grotesque courtesy, Hulin indicated the road to Raoul and Jean, who perforce stepped down from the bank, and, by the side of their leader and the woman Susanne, and surrounded by the curious crowd, took their way to Pierrefitte.

"It needs but courage," Raoul found the chance to whisper to Jean.

"It is nothing," Jean murmured, and made a grimace indicative of his contempt of Hulin and of the rest of their foes.

"Your man, there," said Hulin, pressing so close to Raoul that the delicate gorge of the latter rose, "is a fine fellow for bone and muscle, heh?"

Jean looked him over slowly, as if making notes for future use; Raoul answered carelessly: "Bone and muscle? Oh, yes! But Jacques is a fool."

Jean saluted with a wry face and a grunted "Yes, my corporal," which made Raoul laugh furiously. The jest was better than ever with the new setting. Raoul went on, as soon as he could control his laughter:

"You must forgive me, but he makes me laugh when I look at him. That is why I love him so well that I never part with him. And he is a pretty good *ci-devant* hunter himself.

"Aha!" murmured Hulin, interested.

"Yes," Raoul went on, "I have seen him take a throat with his fingers and—*pf!*—the man no longer had any use for his breath."

"That is the sort!" cried Hulin, in exultation. "I hope you will be with us to-day when we smoke out our *ci-devant*. The citizen colonel thinks I do not know, but I do. He came from Verdun on purpose, but I have been meaning to pay the *château* a visit this long time."

"What *château* is that?"

"D'Entraigue. We have not run them down before because the people in the village are such fools that they have what they call devotion for their little Nathalie, *ci-devant* *marquise*."

"D'Entraigue!" repeated Raoul, with a start, remembering the name.

"Aye, the old nobility. There is a priest there who keeps telling them of kindnesses doled out from the *château*."

"Such fools!" sneered Raoul. "As if kindness counted!"

"Right!" screamed Susanne. "As if that counted! They forget that they have been slaves of the D'Entraignes for centuries; that they have supported them in luxury and idleness; that they have borne all the burden and had none of the necessities of life. Kind to them! If the D'Entraignes have given them of their plenty in order that their dupes might work the better for them, even

so they have but returned a small part of what for centuries they have stolen from them. Bah! Let me get hold of their little Nathalie, and they shall see!"

Hulin laughed in fierce approbation; the eyes of the mob were fixed on Susanne in admiration. She, however, seemed to have forgotten them all, for she strode on, her eyes glowing somberly, looking fixedly into space.

"She was a novice in the convent in Pierrefitte," Susanne went on, with increasing vehemence. "I wish I had known it when we tore it down. She would not have gone back to her chateau to plot treason against the liberties of France."

She stopped, as if her emotions choked her utterance. Raoul asked: "She has done you some wrong, then? You hate her so bitterly."

Susanne turned and stared at him. He shrank from the wild, fanatical expression in her distended eyes. The mob seemed to gather closer to hear her answer.

"Done me wrong? Yes. She robbed me of my liberty; robbed all of France. The girl? I never saw her. It is the class I hate."

"Down with the aristocrats!" howled the mob.

"Besides," said Hulin, his cold ferocity contrasting strangely with the mellow tones and rapt utterance of Susanne, "the little *ci-devant* has been harboring traitors. Her uncle, the *ci-devant* Marquis de Lazire, has been hiding there and sending word to the Prussians; so to-day your regiment is going to find him and his little Yvonne. And we shall be there; eh, citizens?" A frightful cry was the response. "We shall be there and help smoke them out. And we have a visit or two to make in the village. Ha!"

Raoul shuddered at the howl that answered this appeal, but his horror was still greater when he looked into the

gaunt, haggard, unwashed faces that bore the impress of age-long hunger and privation.

He seemed to visualize what it would mean if those tenderly nurtured girls fell into the hands of these half-crazed monsters; and in that moment was born a determination to save them, if he could. His own safety seemed so little to strive for, his own life so valueless.

"They can only kill me, if they catch me," he thought to himself; "but those poor girls! I know what has been the fate of such as they." And there flashed across his memory the awful stories he had heard of the treatment of high-born maidens by the maddened mobs. "I will save them if I can."

Susanne had taken up the talk again as the shouts of the rabble subsided, but Raoul did not heed her. He linked his arm in that of the leader, and bent toward him confidentially, mastering the loathing he felt. Jean stared in wonder, but warned himself that his young master had a good reason for acting so, and that he must be on his guard not to betray his discontent.

"Is it certain, Citizen Hulin," asked Raoul, "that the *ci-devants* will be smoked out to-day? I have a reason for asking."

"Oh, as for its being sure, I don't know; but I think it is so," and he smiled knowingly, as if there were more he could tell if he would.

Raoul poked him in the ribs to intimate jovially that he appreciated his cleverness. "Aha!" he said admiringly. "You are the sort my good friend Marat would like. I know that very well, for if I have a nose for a *ci-devant*, have I not one also for a patriot?"

Citizen Hulin, having tasted power, had learned to like its customary sauce of flattery. He winked both eyes at once, poked Raoul in the ribs, and broke into a laugh.

"As for me," cried Jean, sniffing, "my

nose tells me mostly when a patriot is about."

"Jacques, you are a fool!" cried Raoul sternly.

Jean swallowed hard. He had permitted himself to speak when he should have kept silence. He made the salute and the response, "Yes, my corporal"; but it hurt him to see Raoul arm in arm with that filthy Hulin. Raoul, however, turning with a frown of displeasure from Jean, was more than ever friendly with Hulin.

"Where is this château, then?" he asked, looking about, as if expecting to see it on one of the hills.

"It is on the other side of Pierrefitte—five or six miles to the northeast."

"But how is it that the patriots of Pierrefitte have waited so long to smoke out the traitors?"

"I have told you that their own peasants are devoted to them."

"And are there so many that you did not dare go there?"

"It is not that; but it is only within twenty-four hours that we have learned that the *ci-devant* marquis was there. Before that the game was not worth the candle. Now we have the army with us. They will take the *ci-devant* and his little Yvonne, while we have the château and little Nathalie."

It seemed to Raoul that for a minute he could not see for the blood that suffused his eyes. The horrible suggestion of evil that was in the hoarse tones of the man as he spoke of Nathalie, who was already almost the bride of the church, made him wish to kill him. He drew a long breath, and said, in a low tone, not trusting his voice to speak aloud:

"They may be warned, and escape."

"No!" cried Hulin triumphantly. "They cannot escape. I have men posted all through the woods, and all about the château, and no one can get out alive who has not the password."

"You work like a soldier, you, with

your password," laughed Raoul, slapping him on the shoulder.

"And the password," cried Hulin, leering at him; "what do you think it is? You will never guess."

"Something in Latin, no doubt. You are so clever I would be surprised at nothing."

Hulin was delighted with the flattery, but he affected to scorn the idea. "Latin! Leave that to the priests. What do you think of the word 'Susanne'?"

"Come, then! That is a clever idea!"

"Is it not? No patriot in Pierrefitte could forget that name; although some of them could forget anything else."

"The citizeness is popular?"

"They love her; they fear me. She loves me."

It would be impossible to describe the manner in which this was said. The fellow was almost sublime in his egotism.

"Ah!" cried Raoul, affecting admiration. "When I see the Citizen Marat I shall tell him there is one in Pierrefitte he would do well to know."

"Bah! Bah!" murmured Hulin, fairly purple with delight.

"And the strange thing is," said Raoul, lowering his voice to a confidential tone, "that you are doing a thing now that he is very particular about."

"But what, then?" demanded Hulin eagerly.

"What do you think my special mission here is? Do you think it is to join the regiment and go out to kill Prussians? No, no!"

"You have a mission, then?"

"Oh, oh!" murmured Raoul, with a mysterious air.

"It is a secret?"

"It is special, but I am given discretionary power. I should indeed be blamed if I did not take you into my confidence."

"For the good of France!" said Hulin, trying, as men will, to cover his

eagerness for the secret with a pompous phrase.

"For the republic," whispered Raoul, who had learned the value of sententious utterance.

Hulin was impressed, but, after waiting several minutes in vain for Raoul to divulge the portentous secret, he demanded: "But what is it, then?"

Raoul looked at him intently, as if searching his soul; then answered solemnly: "Suppose I tell you it was I discovered the treason of the *ci-devant* De Lazire?"

"Oh, oh!"

"What if I tell you it was I denounced him?"

"Oh, oh!"

"What if I tell you that my mission here is to effect his capture, to secure certain papers he has?"

Hulin turned and caught his hand, which he gripped vigorously. "You shall have him and the papers."

"Thanks to you," said Raoul. "And you shall read my report, as well as the private letter I shall write to my friend Marat. You shall see if I take the credit to myself, or if I give it to you."

"Bah! Bah! Who asks for credit? Service of the republic!"

"Honor where honor is due," said Raoul, with a magnanimous air. "Besides, the Marat of France should know the Marat of Pierrefitte. Is the good work all done yet? Is the republic yet in the hands of her best sons?"

Hulin had visions of future greatness. "I should like to know the great citizen."

"I can count on you, then, to let me work in my own way. I do not ask it; I assert it," said Raoul, hardly able to repress his eagerness.

"You are right."

"You will have rendered a great service to the republic."

"What else should a patriot live for?" was the magnificent response.

They had come to Pierrefitte by this

time, and Raoul judged that pretty nearly the entire population was comprised in his escort.

"Where is the twelfth?" he asked of Hulin.

"On the other side. But you will eat before you join it. Here is the *Pied Cow*, Susanne's cabaret."

It was not a neat cottage, nor inviting in any way; but Raoul reflected that he would be exacting indeed who would expect a citizenship to be more cleanly in her house than in her person. It certainly looked a place where milk, of all things, would be the most scarce, unless perhaps it might be water.

The mob was dismissed by Hulin, after a few impassioned words by Susanne and some more practical ones by him on the subject of plunder which might be expected later in the day, ending with this fine peroration: "And now to your firesides, my friends; to your homes, fellow citizens! The friend of Marat wishes to confer with me on affairs of state. Go! I shall not forget you when France has need of you. Sharpen your knives! Get ready tinder! There will be use for both."

"You are an orator," said Raoul, seating himself at a little table in front of the wine shop; "in that you are more like Robespierre than Marat. I think you will not find many who have the qualities of both."

"Bah! Bah! You Parisians know how to say those things. Susanne, you will bring the citizen corporal some of that special vintage, will you not?"

"He shall have the best I have," she answered, from inside.

Perhaps Hulin had a doubt of her being as good as her word. He went inside, saying he would return in a few minutes. Then Jean, who had been containing himself with difficulty, leaned over to Raoul.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he said. "Why do you do this? You take him by the arm, and I want to take him by the throat."

Raoul caught Jean by the wrist in a fierce grip, and looked into his eyes with a terrible expression. "I am going to save some ladies from shame and dishonor, Jean," he whispered. "Will you not help me?"

"I will pray God to make me less a fool," Jean answered, in a tone of trouble. "What shall I do?"

"Try not to show your anger and disgust."

"Yes, yes."

"And be ready to die."

"That is nothing," answered Jean sublimely. "I am not fit, but I am ready."

Raoul laughed softly, and slapped Jean on the shoulder. "Who else is like you?" he cried.

Susanne came out with a tray, followed by Hulin. They all drew up to the little table.

CHAPTER IV.

If the bread and wine had been much worse than they were, Raoul would not have complained, being so hungry. As for Jean, he had many times eaten poorer food and been content. Hulin ate and drank like a wolf whom experience had taught not to lose an opportunity. Susanne ate nothing.

"Ah!" sighed Raoul, after a while. "I wish I had been as wise as you."

"What then?" mumbled Hulin, with full mouth, but squaring his shoulders a little in token of accepting the compliment, even though ignorant of the immediate cause of it. "How wise, then?"

"I should not have joined the army. I could have done better in this affair if I had been free. I do not wish the *ci-devant* to escape."

"Be easy; he cannot escape."

"They have friends everywhere," said Raoul; "and one can never be sure. That is why I wish I was not a soldier. I would go now to this *château*, and I would watch there until you came.

They would not escape me. Marat has done me the honor many times to say that no *ci-devant* ever escaped after my eyes were once on him."

"Well," cried Hulin, opening wide his bloodshot eyes, "why do you not go, soldier or no soldier?" He leaned forward and tapped the table with his finger. "We must not lose the *ci-devant*."

"I will go," said Raoul, as if making up his mind suddenly. "If you do not betray me, no one will know that I did not join my regiment at once. Will you put me on my way?"

"Are you ready?"

"Quite. Jacques, attention!"

Jean started up at once, but as quickly sat down, saying, in a low tone: "Soldiers!" Raoul and Hulin stood up and looked. A small squad of men was coming down the street in military order. Raoul resisted the impulse to run or hide, and sat down, saying, with a shrug of the shoulders: "Now there is nothing for it but to join the regiment, I'm afraid."

The squad came on with regular step, and was soon near enough to enable Raoul to see that it was in command of a sublieutenant. It was not evident for a few minutes whether the officer saw him or not, for he led his men impassively on until they were in front of the tables. Then came a curt "Halt!" to the men, and a no less curt "Fall in!" to Raoul and Jean, who had risen and were saluting.

"But, citizen lieutenant, I am just come from Paris to join my regiment," expostulated Raoul.

"What regiment?"

"Twelfth infantry."

"This regiment. Fall in!"

Here was a man who was not to be disputed. Even Hulin's indorsement of "A friend of Marat" did not move the officer. Raoul, with a glance at Jean, took his place between the files of soldiers; the officer gave the command and led his men to the end of the street.

There he turned and marched back through the street again.

He was so evidently out picking up stragglers that Raoul was presently freed from the uneasiness of wondering if his disguise had been penetrated. Two other soldiers were found and made to take their places by the side of Raoul and Jean; and then they were marched to a cottage near to which the regiment had evidently passed the night.

The sublieutenant went into the cottage, and came out after a few minutes with an officer in a captain's uniform.

"You two, step out!" said the sublieutenant to Raoul and Jean; and, as they obeyed, he turned to the captain and said: "These are the men who say they are from Paris."

"Papers?" demanded the captain.

Raoul saluted and handed his envelope to the officer, saying: "There were others, but they were stolen from me on the way. I ought to see Colonel Reynal. There is something I have to say from Citizen Marat."

As Raoul had hoped, the name of Marat was something to conjure with, even in the army. The captain gave a start, looked quickly from the packet to Raoul, and said: "I will take this to Colonel Reynal myself."

He went to an adjoining cottage, while the sublieutenant, as if relieved of responsibility for Raoul and Jean, marched his squad away.

The two fugitives looked at each other. Raoul was touched by the tranquillity with which Jean stood there, waiting for whatever might come.

"This is a fine trap I have led you into, my dear Jean!" he said, in a low tone.

Jean's eyes lighted up, and a smile spread over his face. "At least we are in it together," he said simply.

Raoul shook his head slowly. "I sometimes ask myself, Jean François, why it is that you love me, and the only answer I can give myself is that I al-

ways so abused you when we were boys. Unless"—and a sudden smile brightened his face—"this is an idea, oh, Jean François—unless it is that you are a fool."

"Yes, my corporal." And Jean, to the inexpressible delight of Raoul, saluted solemnly.

He burst into a roar of laughter, and Jean's honest face expanded into a broad grin. Jean, in fact, had never been master of so good a jest before; and he enjoyed it more and more as it attained a greater age.

They were still laughing when the captain came out of the colonel's cottage and signaled Raoul to come toward him. Jean followed, as a matter of course. "Colonel Reynal wishes to ask you some questions," the captain said.

Raoul saluted, and started to enter the cottage, but stopped and looked back as he heard the captain say peremptorily: "Not you! Wait here!" He knew Jean so well that he hastened to say to him: "Wait for me, Jacques. I shall not be long."

Jean hesitated a moment, then said doggedly: "Well, I shall wait here, then; but if you do not come soon I shall enter."

"You will forgive the foolish fellow, citizen captain," said Raoul. "We have been through much danger together because of the aristocrats, and he cannot forget that there is no longer any peril. He may remain here, may he not? The great Citizen Marat always permitted us to hunt together."

"He may remain, but he will be shot if he tries to enter there without permission. As for you, go in and do not keep Colonel Reynal waiting."

With a nod at Jean, Raoul entered, followed by the captain. The colonel was sitting at a table reading the document which Raoul had given the captain. It was plain enough from his knit brows that the matter under consideration was not of a simple nature. Raoul

wished he had contrived to get a look at the paper before delivering it.

"You are Citizen Maniquet?" demanded the colonel, looking up and studying Raoul's face.

Raoul noticed that he had not been addressed as corporal, and he was well enough versed in military matters to know there was something odd in that.

"Gaspard Maniquet," he answered, determined to confine himself to as few words as possible until he understood his position better.

"There were some other papers, I am told." And the colonel glanced at the captain, as if to indicate his authority.

Raoul noticed again that he did not speak as a colonel to a corporal, and at once the suspicion entered his brain that the corporal's uniform had been worn by Maniquet for purposes of deception.

"Not for you, citizen colonel," he answered. "I would have shown them to you, however, if they had not been stolen from me. They related to the *ci-devants* over yonder."

"Your authorization, perhaps?"

"Yes, a bit of paper with the signature of my friend Marat on it"—Raoul laughed something in the manner of Maniquet—"and a description of the hiding place of the *ci-devants*. Chateau d'Entraigue, about five miles beyond Pierrefitte, et cetera, et cetera. But I do not need them. Does that tell you that it was I who denounced them?" he asked impudently.

"No, but it says I am to give you such assistance as you need."

"Ah-h!" cried Raoul, beginning to understand that he was really an important person, and that it behooved him to play his part with more assurance. "As the great citizen Marat so often tells me, I am the hound with the keen scent, but behind the hound shall always go guns to bring down the game. Yes, of course, I shall want assistance. I have my Jacques, who is a host in himself, but I shall need half a dozen

besides. If I have a vanity it is to let none escape whom I pursue. I have twenty-seven to my credit already. These two will make twenty-nine. I have a little list which I keep, and each one is put down on it with his own blood."

Aversion and perhaps some fear were depicted on the faces of the two officers. The colonel answered:

"Circumstances have altered since this was sent to me. You find me here instead of at Verdun, because already I had heard of the hiding place of the traitor who was sending information to the enemies of his country. I shall send a company with you, commanded by Captain Pourtales."

"That will be this afternoon," cried Raoul; "but I shall want to go at once to see that they don't escape me."

"They will be ready in fifteen minutes," the colonel said, looking at the captain.

"In fifteen minutes," the captain repeated.

Raoul was in despair. He could not pretend that such zeal would be displeasing to Marat. It would be better to applaud such celerity and trust to his wit to circumvent it later.

"That is good. That is like a patriot," he exclaimed, in Maniquet's patronizing way. "When I make my report it shall not be left out of it that Colonel Reynal was zealous for the republic. Shall we go, then, citizen captain?"

The captain looked inquiringly at the colonel. "Go, Captain Pourtales, with all speed," said the colonel; "and do not forget that your orders are to bring back with you the *ci-devant* Marquis de Lazire and his daughter, alive."

The colonel laid an emphasis on the word "alive," so that Raoul knew it was meant for him, as a sort of notice that there was to be no adding to his list without due formality of trial. The real Maniquet, no doubt, would have bristled at this, and would have flour-

ished his order from Marat, but Raoul was very well pleased to deny himself that bit of acting.

Saluting in silence, the captain left the room, followed by Raoul. And when they were outside, the latter discovered that Captain Pourtales would probably be as good as, if not better than, his word; for a company was drawn up in the open space in front of the cottages, evidently waiting only for the word to march.

"Ah!" he cried. "It would look, citizen captain, as if you were afraid some one would be ahead of you at the smoking out."

"I would not like the patriots of Pierrefitte to be more zealous than I," he answered, eying Raoul as if to see the effect of the words on him.

It flashed instantly into the brain of Raoul that an effort was being made to rob the rabble of Pierrefitte of the chance to burn and plunder.

"In that you are right," he said emphatically. "And I can tell you that if you had waited until this afternoon you would have been too late, for Citizen Hulin knows your plans and means to be on hand with his patriots."

"You know him, then?"

"He gave me my breakfast this morning."

"And you," said the captain hesitatingly, "you do not wish him to rob you of the glory of this capture?"

"As for me," answered Raoul, "it is not glory but the good of humanity and of France that I work for. But see, citizen captain! There is one of the Pierrefitte patriots who is watching us. And there he goes to tell the Marat of Pierrefitte what is under consideration here. I think it will be a race between you."

"You are right, Citizen Maniquet. Let us be off!"

"But they will get there first, nevertheless, for they will know the short cuts across the fields."

"Then my precautions will come to nothing, and——" The young officer stopped, as if not daring to proceed further before the friend of Marat.

"Why? You will not be far behind; and a word to your men will serve to control the—the patriots."

"Can I be sure of my men against the patriots? What would they say in Paris if I put anything in the way of the execution of the will of the people?"

"But these aristocrats are wanted alive in Paris," said Raoul. "My orders were so worded. Come! I have a plan. Hulin shall not say he has outwitted Maniquet, the hound of Marat. Have you two horses?"

"None."

"Then we will do without horses, and together we will work for the good of France. And be sure that Marat and Robespierre, too, shall know how you have aided me. This is the road to the château?"

"There is but the one road. You pass through a little hamlet before you come to the château. The château is nearly a mile beyond that."

"Then Jacques and I will run there and get ahead of the patriots. I have held more than twice their number in check before this. I will hold them till you come up. But be quick!"

"Go, then!" acquiesced the officer.

"Come, Jacques!" cried Raoul sharply, hardly able to believe that he had won his point so easily.

They started on a slow run down the road, and as they went they heard the word of command given to the soldiers, and presently, looking back, they saw the company following them at the regulation pace.

"If we can keep up a run, Jean," said Raoul excitedly, "we shall have a half hour to spare. That should be time enough to warn our friends."

"There are some hills," answered Jean composedly; "but I remember

harder runs than this you and I have made."

Racing together, they reached the top of a hill, and, while recovering breath, looked about them. It was an excellent point from which to study the country, which rolled away in a series of wooded hills and fertile valleys.

"There is the village!" cried Raoul. "Ahead of us, Jean! Do you see it? The château is beyond that. And look! The forest stretches far away to the north and east. Ah! There is sure to be some one who knows paths through the forests. Indeed, so clever a man as this marquis must have his way of escape well planned. Come! I begin to hope. We have only to beat everybody there. What are you looking at?"

"You were quite right about the short cut, Monsieur Raoul," answered Jean. "Do you see them hurrying along down there in the valley?"

"*Mon Dieu!* And the valley runs straight to the village! We shall have a mile farther to go than they. If that Hulin beats us there and catches our friends, I swear I will kill him if I die the next minute."

"Better beat him," said Jean. "Do we need our coats?"

"You are right. Throw them over the hedge." In a moment they stood in their ragged shirts.

"The guns?" queried Jean.

"We may need them. Let us keep them as long as we can. Ah! Now I think of it, we have only to beat them to the village. If we can get past the village we shall have a little time. Hulin will never leave the village until he has done a little killing and burning there. He knows the soldiers are behind him, and that knowledge will make him brave."

There is something in human nature that makes it rejoice in a race, merely because it is a race. If there had been nothing at stake, it is altogether likely that Raoul and Jean would have put

forth their best endeavors to reach Entraigue before Hulin and his rabble. They were filled, however, with a passionate determination to accomplish the thing they had set out to do. Human life hung on the issue.

They ran as swiftly as they dared, but, although two can cover the ground more rapidly than two hundred, yet a level road is easier than a hilly one; and three miles is less distance than four. So it was not strange that, going less swiftly, the mob approached the village in the same proportion as the two runners.

"Keep your bayonet, but throw the musket away!" said Raoul, setting the example. "We must get there first."

They were panting laboriously, but they kept on. And presently they had the discouragement of no longer seeing Hulin and his followers; though, instead, they began to catch the sound of that most fearful of all noises—the blood cry of a mob.

They had no breath to waste in speech, but they exchanged a horrified glance, and then, tired as they were, quickened their pace.

They were in the village almost before they knew it, but they had distanced the mob, though they could hear its hoarse murmur behind them. At first they thought the village was deserted; but, as they passed the first hovel, the road made a sharp turn, and they saw that a large gathering of peasants blocked the way.

Raoul, remembering that the villagers were friendly to the family at the château, led Jean directly at the throng. He meant to persuade, if he could, or force his way, if necessary.

"Let us pass!" he panted hoarsely. "No harm to you! Let us pass!"

The peasants opened before them, and Raoul fancied they were making way; then he was undeceived, for, as he went forward, a priest confronted

him and stopped him, his manner solemn, composed, courageous.

"What is it you wish?" he demanded, in the authoritative way of his calling.

Raoul afterward remembered the delicate, refined face, the slight, dignified figure, and the calm, compelling voice. All he thought at the time was that here was a man to be absolutely trusted.

"Father," he panted, in a low tone, so that no one else could hear, "I am come to warn and to save, if possible, the Marquis de Lazire and his daughter. I am a gentleman, the Comte de Lestourmière. Behind me is the rabble of Pierrefitte. Hark! You can hear the roar. Behind them marches a company of the Twelfth infantry. I pray you open the way for us, for if any one can save the marquis, I can. In God's holy name, I pray you! There is no time to lose."

The passion of entreaty in Raoul's voice could not fail to carry conviction. Besides, although he panted and spoke in a husky, broken voice, yet his was the tone of the aristocrat. The eye of the priest seemed to see to the depths of his soul. For an instant only he searched the depths of Raoul's eyes, then held up his crucifix in silent query.

"By my soul's salvation, it is the truth!" Raoul panted, kneeling, and kissing the cross.

"Make way! Let them pass!" the priest said to the peasants, who, staring in wonder at the strange scene, huddled aside and would not have closed together again but for the sharp command of the priest after he had led Raoul and Jean through.

"You can do nothing with these men," Raoul said quickly. "They will be outnumbered. Better seek safety. Which is my way?"

"I have trusted you on your oath," said the priest, putting aside his words of advice as if not worth consideration. "I will not threaten you with the curse

of God if you have deceived me. I shall detain the rabble and the soldiers as long as is in my power. The marquis may already be safe, but he is a willful man and may have delayed to his own destruction. He was warned in time. If too late to aid him, do not forget that Mademoiselle Nathalie is there. She is almost a bride of the church, however, and may need less protection."

"On the contrary, she is marked for infamy and destruction," Raoul answered quickly. "I will not forget her. Come, Jean! We may cheat the scoundrels yet. Good father, adieu! Do what you can, and know that we are here to rescue or to die trying."

"God be with you!" the priest said solemnly, bestowing the benediction. "The way lies straight before you."

The two young men crossed themselves and ran on.

CHAPTER V.

They ran more easily now, helped by the short rest. About a quarter of a mile beyond the village they came upon the entrance to the park. The driveway was smooth and well kept, and, as the eye wandered through the shaded vistas under the noble trees, the evidence presented itself everywhere that here was a spot which the bloody, destructive revolution had not yet reached.

But it was roaring and howling only a short distance away now; it was even silently lurking behind the trees in the park itself, for, as they ran, they caught glimpses of fluttering rags, with now and again the glint of a gun barrel.

"I wish we had not thrown our muskets away," Raoul said, as they ran on side by side.

"Then we might not be here now," was the sensible response.

"Perhaps. Look for hoofmarks! Listen for sounds that might come from the château!"

Once only they stopped to listen for sounds from the village; and there came to their ears a quick succession of reports from muskets. With set faces they started on again. A few minutes brought them to the edge of the woods, whence the grounds about the château began and went undulating in broad sweeps of closely cropped grass, broken by noble groups of ancient trees, and ending at the walls of the château garden.

A pair of great iron gates broke the wall about the château garden. They tried to open them, but they were securely fastened. They dared not waste time, and a moment's study convinced them that it would be impossible to batter down the strong gates. They would have climbed them but for the cheveu-de-frise which surmounted them.

Between the gates and the château stretched one of those beautiful, formal gardens which had come into fashion in the time of Louis Quatorze. They could see several pea fowl strutting on the terraces; and on the driveway near the gate were freshly made rake marks. There was no sign, however, of human presence.

Raoul could see by the impressive loneliness of the place, that the alarm had been sounded; but how much had been done for the safety of the inmates of the château he could not even conjecture. Perhaps they fancied their defenses sufficient; perhaps they had deserted the château and were in some secure hiding place. But the words of the brave priest came back to him that the marquis was a willful man and might not have escaped in time.

In an agony of apprehension, his thoughts filled with visions of the poor girls who might fall into the hands of the republicans, he stood but few seconds in idleness at the gate. He had learned, in the marauding days of his careless, happy boyhood, that few walls were insurmountable; this could hardly

be one of the exceptions. He leaped back and quickly ran his eye to one side and the other.

"Quickly, Jean!" he cried, and ran, followed by the other, to a part of the wall that promised fairly for his design. He stood sidewise, close by the wall, bent his head, and braced himself firmly. "Now, Jean! Up first! You can pull me up better than I can you."

Jean understood, and wasted no time in expostulation. It was not the first time he had taken part in such an undertaking, though the last time seemed long, long ago now. He climbed to Raoul's shoulders, reached up, and by an exertion of strength pulled himself up so that he could sit astride of the wall. To knot his long handkerchief and lower it to Raoul was the work of a moment; and a few moments more sufficed to see them both in the garden.

They were not long in reaching the main door of the château. They could find no bell by which to summon the household, and the door was securely fastened.

"We dare not waste time, Jean!" cried Raoul. "Let us break down the door with these vases," indicating two huge vases in which flowers were growing.

"You were looking for some one, perhaps," suddenly said a tremulous voice. An old man in livery had come around the corner of the château.

"You are of the household?" Raoul cried. "I seek the Marquis de Lazire. Do not deny that he is or has been here. I am a friend, and can help, possibly, save him even yet. But every moment is precious. Where is he?"

"I do not know," the old man said; but Raoul could see by the expression of doubt that came into his eyes that he was not speaking the truth, and was wondering if this was a case when he should do so.

Raoul hesitated a moment, and looked about to see if any of Hulin's watchers

were about to see; then suddenly lifted his red wig, saying, in a tone of passionate earnestness:

"I am the Comte de Lestourmière. I have come here at the risk of my own life to warn and save the Marquis de Lazire and his daughter; to save Nathalie d'Entraigue as well. Behind me come the mob of Pierrefitte; after the mob a company of republican soldiers. I swear it by the wounds of Christ. Trust me or be responsible for the cruel death, even the shame and dishonor of the ladies who are here or who have fled. Listen!"

A cry of despair broke from the old man, and he wrung his hands piteously. There came sounds of shooting from the direction of the village; and when the distraught old man raised his eyes to heaven as if for counsel, he saw the black smoke over the doomed village.

"If you are deceiving me——" he faltered.

"I am risking my life every moment you hesitate; and if you refuse to speak you may count yourself the executioner of your young mistress and her friends."

"They have gone," the old man gasped.

"How long since? Tell me!"

"Just gone."

"How did they go? In which direction?"

"What shall I do?" wailed the poor old man.

"Show me which way they went; point out a way to intercept them. The woods are filled with wretches from Pierrefitte, and if you do not put me in communication with the fugitives soon they will be shot down. You can hear them shooting in the village. The killers are there, and will soon be here. Listen! Do you hear that roar? Do you know what it means? The mob is coming. It will be here in a few minutes, and then it will be too late to save anybody."

The words poured out of his mouth with a passion that carried conviction.

"Come!" said the old man wildly. "I will reveal everything to you; and may the curse of God be on you and yours forever if you are deceiving me."

He went down the steps and trotted with piteous decrepitude around the château, tossing his hands and wailing as he went. Now and again he stopped to invoke a curse on Raoul if he were deceiving him; and once he stopped suddenly and went close up to the young man and stared fixedly into his eyes.

"Poor old man!" said Raoul pitifully. "You may trust me. Assure him, Jean, that he may trust me."

"As God hears me," cried Jean vehemently, "you may trust Monsieur Raoul."

The old man stared at Jean, as if he had not before been aware of his presence; then, as if satisfied, turned and went on again, not stopping until he had taken them some distance beyond the stables of the château to where they came suddenly on the wall of the garden, hidden by tall shrubbery.

The old man unlocked a little door that was almost hidden among clambering vines. He opened the door and pointed to the woods that came to within ten yards of the wall and were more dense than on the side by which Raoul had approached.

"There is a path there," he said, in a low tone, still gently wringing his hands. "They have gone that way—Monsieur le Marquis de Lazire and—the other two. You can easily catch them. Oh, *mon Dieu!* They are shooting!"

Three shots fired in quick succession, followed by agonized screams, smote their ears. Without a word Raoul sprang along the path, Jean close upon his heels. The old man darted back through the door, and slammed it in an agony of terror.

"There!" cried Jean presently.

Raoul had seen, too, and had sprung from the path to where a man, dressed in the D'Entraigue livery, was lying on the earth. It had been the man's movement in trying to raise himself that had attracted their attention.

They bent eagerly over him, and he gazed up at them with the eyes of death. Raoul opened his lips to ask him a question about the marquis and his charges, when his eye was caught by a glint of gold on the hand that lay limp by the dying man's side. He looked more carefully and cried out:

"You are the Marquis de Lazire! I am too late, alas! Your daughter—where is she? Jean, he cannot answer. Look for her while I remain here. Monsieur," he went on, kneeling by the dying man's side, "I am the Comte de Lestourmière. I hoped to save you. Can you speak? Is there anything I can do?" He pulled off his wig as he spoke, so that it might bear evidence to his disguise.

The marquis made a frightful effort to speak, but the result was only a rattling sound in the throat, accompanied by a look of despair in the glazing eyes. Then the marquis rallied his failing consciousness and made a movement toward his breast with his right hand. It was his last effort. His eyes fixed themselves on Raoul's face in a frightful stare; there was a convulsive movement in the throat, and then stillness.

"He is dead!" breathed Raoul.

He started to his feet, and then, moved by a sudden impulse, knelt again and thrust his hand into the breast of the dead man's coat. He withdrew it with a low cry. It was stained with blood, still warm. But, believing that the man's dying gesture had a meaning, he conquered his repugnance and again felt there. This time he found and secured a packet of papers.

Almost mechanically he removed the ring from the dead hand. If there were

any doubt, it would serve to establish the identity of the dead man.

Jean came crashing through the trees. "Monsieur Raoul!" he cried. "The ladies are being carried toward the châteaueau by a dozen men."

Raoul leaped to his feet, and thrust the papers and the ring into the bosom of his shirt. "Quick, then, Jean!" he cried.

Jean started on a run, Raoul following. Suddenly that sinister roar which both recognized smote their ears.

"The mob! Quicker, Jean! Ah! We shall be too late for them also."

Jean hurried indeed, but it was blind work for him. He had seen a group of men carrying two women dressed in black, and then had hastened back to Raoul. In truth, the sense of peril all about them filled him, and his one vehement thought was to be with his young master. Now he was taking the general direction in which he had seen the men go.

They caught no glimpse of anybody, but the roar of the rabble grew louder and louder, and there was something in the sound that irritated Raoul into a fierce anger.

They came to the garden wall, and followed it. Presently they saw a surging crowd at the iron gates. Raoul's heart sank. If Jean had led him aright, those delicate girls were now at the mercy of the cruelest of wild beasts. He caught Jean by the shoulder, and stopped him.

"Jean," he said hoarsely, "if they are there, we have but one thing to do."

"What, then?"

"We have our bayonets. We will get close to those ladies. You will take one; I the other. Dishonor is their doom; you know that. Well, thrust your bayonet into the heart of yours; I will do the same with mine. Then"—and his eyes grew terrible—"at the canaille and kill and kill till we drop."

Jean's broad chest heaved. He took

Raoul's hand in both of his. "We have played together, Monsieur Raoul; it will be very pleasant to die together."

He turned instantly, and ran on; and Raoul could see a movement of his shoulders which he recognized; and the sight of it cooled his blood and even brought a grim smile to his lips. When they had been boys together, and there had been fighting to do, which had been often enough, Jean's great blue eyes had opened wider so that the whites could be seen above and below the iris, his lips had parted so that a line of gleaming white had shown between the red of his lips, and his shoulders had performed a sort of rotary movement as if he were engaged in testing the elasticity of his muscles. And no boy, however large or old, would ever fight a second time with Jean; his lust for fighting was even harder to contend against than his terrible strength.

The mob had passed through the gates by the time they had reached there. One gate was on the ground; the other hung by a hinge. The beautiful garden was already a scene of wreckage. The sight of its formal, quiet loveliness had enraged the rabble, and they had torn flowers up by the roots, overturned statuary, and mutilated everything. And all this without pausing in the rush toward the chateau, by the steps of which they were now congregated in a swaying mass.

"They are there—with Hulin," Jean said, having raised himself by the broken gate hinge so that he could see over the heads of the crowd.

Raoul sprang forward and forced his way into the crowd, Jean following close, and with his brawny arms, one on each side of Raoul's head, flinging men and women aside as if they had been dolls. So they made their way to the steps, up which Hulin and Susanne had gone, dragging with them two slender figures robed in the black garb of a religious order.

This Raoul saw, and noted also the white face of the priest he had met in the village. Indeed it seemed to him that he saw everything there, comprehended everything. He saw the blood-hungry eyes of the faces upturned to the group on the spacious landing step; he saw the brutal lust of passion in the eyes of Hulin, and the cruelty of fanaticism in the flaming eyes of Susanne; he saw the shrinking, black-robed figures, and could divine their despairing faces under their impenetrable veils.

"Hola!" roared Hulin, recognizing his acquaintances of the morning at once. "You are here then, friend of Marat. And you have blood on you. Aha! I thought you had been left behind for once. Well, we have our little Nathalie, you see. Where is your *ci-devant*?"

Through the roar of the mob, Raoul caught this, and as he leaped up the steps to the side of Hulin, he answered: "My *ci-devant*? See his blood! Here are the papers," tapping his breast. "Now for the girls!"

Adroitly he pushed himself between Hulin and the cowering girls, and drew his bayonet from his waistband. Jean, with his set look and flaming eyes, followed his every movement with a similar movement of his own. He was terrible to look at, but Hulin suspected nothing. He feared nothing for himself, but only for the girls.

"No, no!" he cried. "They are not to die like that. Besides you have nothing to do with them; they are our pretty Nathalie and her maid, Clarice, also pretty. You shall see their faces, and you shall have a kiss from the one who pleases you most, because you are the friend of the citizen Marat."

He started toward the girls, and as Raoul did not move, but stood with the haft of his bayonet firmly grasped, an explanation and a massacre must have ensued but for a cry from the mob, which was not greatly interested

in the girls while there was plunder to be had.

"Burn the château! In! In!"

It was one of those occurrences, trifling in itself, but important in its relation to other things. The vanity of the leader was pricked by that cry which had not originated with himself. Hulin stopped short and looked over the faces below him, their hideous hilarity exchanged at once for a threatening, bullying look.

"Some one is in a hurry!" he belated furiously. "Some one is not content with what I do. Will he step out and show himself? Come! We may know who is your leader."

He folded his arms and looked over the crowd. Disclaiming cries came from every quarter, combined with assurances that he was their undisputed leader and that he should go on as he thought best. It was grotesque, but too terrible to excite mirth. Hulin nodded his head like one pacified, and then with an abrupt gesture shouted:

"Here is that little *ci-devant* who has fed on the souls and bodies of the poor of *Pierrefitte*, but who is too fine, too good to touch them with her own sweet, delicate body. Are we to let her go without a word? No, no! There is time to settle with her, and then to tear down the *château* which has been the nest of our oppression so many centuries. Here is the friend of the great *Marat* who will go back to Paris and say whether we have done well or not. And I promise you some pleasure from the little plan I have. What do you say?"

"Go on! Go on! Go on!" screamed a hundred voices, and it seemed to Raoul, as he studied the upturned faces, that they expressed as much childish pleasure as ferocity.

He had meant to turn and say a swift word of comfort to the trembling creatures, letting them know that he was their friend, but when he made a

movement to do so, he saw the glowing eyes of *Susanne* fixed on him. So he turned his back upon her, and his eyes met those of the priest, gazing at him as if asking him what he did there. He made answer instantly with a swift sign of the cross on his breast and a significant gesture with his gleaming bayonet. The priest understood, for he raised his eyes heavenward, after looking his gratitude at Raoul.

"Now you shall see!" cried Hulin, making a magnificent gesture to put Raoul aside.

"But tell us what your plan is that we may better enjoy it," said Raoul, refusing to move and thinking that before he thrust his bayonet into the heart of the poor girl behind him, he would first try it on this beast.

It seemed to him that he had never been cooler than at that moment. He found himself carefully studying the broad chest of the ruffian, so that he might make no mistake when the time to strike came. And he was putting off the fatal moment as long as possible, hoping definitely for the coming of the soldiers, and hoping vaguely that out of even this volcano of evil and terror he might snatch safety for the threatened girls.

If one of Hulin's own followers had presumed to demand an exposition of his plan, he would undoubtedly have crushed him with his scorn, but since it was the friend of *Marat* who asked, it was different. The demagogue drew himself up, hesitated for a few moments, and turned once more to the rabble. He was not averse to demonstrating his oratorical powers.

"*Citizen Maniquet*," he shouted, "asks for my plan so that no particle of enjoyment may be lost. He is right. Listen, citizens, patriots, Frenchmen! The aristocrats have been the fathers of many peasants. There are thousands of homes in France where tears have been shed over babes because they

were children of shame. Our sisters, our daughters, our mothers and wives have never been spared. Tell me! Do you know of any children who have been born in the châteaux of France of peasant fathers? Have the pretty, dainty little aristocrats mothered our nameless brats? Answer me, he who knows of one!"

He had been leaning over his auditors, screaming at them, indeed, but holding them by the power of a passion that seemed real enough. Raoul felt the hand of Jean grasp his arm. He looked into the distended blue eyes and murmured huskily:

"Wait! It is not time."

It was the disheveled women who like furies shrieked back the answer to Hulin, and by their looks they seemed to anticipate his purpose:

"None, none! Never, never!"

Hulin bent forward again and scanned the sea of faces with that trick of the demagogue who prepares his auditors for his choice bit. By degrees the yells subsided to a hoarse, low roar—the silence of mobs. Then Hulin turned suddenly toward the two girls, and pointed his quivering finger at them.

"Shall not the tables be turned? Shall not the little aristocrats be the mothers of patriots? Shall we not now avenge the wrongs of our sisters and of our wives?"

It was the men now who roared back the answer; the women laughed horribly.

"Aha! You like my plan, citizens? And what do you say, citizen?"

Appealed to thus suddenly, Raoul for a moment was speechless, but recovered his presence of mind quickly and shouted his answer so loud that none could fail to hear:

"My friend, Marat, was asked a question like that once. I will answer in his words: We kill aristocrats, but we do not outrage women."

"Who talks of outrage?" roared

Hulin, with a coarse laugh. "I am proposing to give these girls good republican husbands. Do you not see the priest there? Why do you suppose he is not already doing a witch's dance for us under some tree? It is because he is to perform a ceremony these girls will understand. What do you say to that, friend of Marat?"

"Never will I lend myself to your infamous design," cried the priest, with fierce indignation. "Better, far better, that they should die than live under such conditions."

"Yes, kill us, canaille that you are!"

It was one of the girls who had spoken, and Raoul turned quickly to look at her. He noted now what had escaped him before; one of the girls trembled and crouched with terror, while the other, standing erect by her side, her hand on her shoulder, seemed to promise her protection. He had fancied them both quailing in the face of the terrible mob. He held his head higher in pride of blood to see how the well-born lady maintained her courage at such a time; and he smiled encouragingly at her, forgetting that his disguise would but make his smile hideous to her. He knew it was the lady who had spoken, for although her voice was muffled by the thick veil, yet her speech and her imperious accent betrayed her.

Hulin roared with laughter, and the crowd did likewise. Then Hulin held up his hand to command silence. "The little aristocrat," he cried, "would rather die than give birth to a patriot, it seems. Now we will give her her choice. Pierre Dobue! Citizen Dobue! Where are you?"

"Here! Here!" And the most hideous wretch, it seemed to Raoul, that he had ever seen was pushed forward by the laughing crowd.

"Ah, yes! There you are, my beauty," roared Hulin. "Now then! You and I offer ourselves to these two aristocrats, and"—here he looked the

savage beast he was, and paused that his words might be heard by all—"Marat or no Marat, if the *ci-devants* refuse us, then they shall belong to all. Am I right, citizens?"

The awful howl that went up from the mob was sufficient answer. For a moment Raoul had the impulse to act; he tightened his grip on his bayonet and glanced at Jean, who, pale as a ghost, nodded his head. Then another startling thought came to him, and he caught Hulin by the arm, at the same time elevating the hand that held the bayonet and motioning the crowd to silence.

"Will any one say after this that the citizens of Pierrefitte have not a leader worthy of them?" he cried as soon as he could be heard. "There now is an idea that will make my friend Marat laugh, and the great citizen is one who seldom laughs. To make the aristocrats mother the children of patriots is a thing that has not before been thought of. It was reserved for the Marat of Pierrefitte to add to the ideas of the republic."

The mob howled with delight, and Hulin made a self-conscious gesture of deprecation that was belied by the satisfied expression on his face.

"I cannot better the idea," Raoul went on, "but I have a favor to ask of your great leader and of you. You know I am the friend of Marat; you know I came here to catch the *ci-devant* Marquis de Lazire, after first denouncing him to the Committee of Safety. The *ci-devant* lies over in yonder park, and here is his blood. He will betray France no more. The papers which France wants are here." He showed the packet he had taken from the body of the marquis. "I ask no reward for what I do for France, but I would like to take a bride back to Paris. Give us—my Jacques and me—these two aristocrats so that we may take them to Paris and say to the great citizen: This is an idea of those patriots of

Pierrefitte; this is how the men of Pierrefitte are led. What do you say, Citizen Hulin? What do you say, patriots of Pierrefitte? What do you say, Susanne?"

The face of Hulin was lowering, the faces of the rabble expectant, the face of Susanne wrathful. Raoul drew a deep breath and stood ready to act. There was no sign of the soldiers, and he was determined to save the girls in the only way he knew rather than let them fall into the hands of the rabble.

Hulin opened his lips to speak, and Raoul saw denial in his angry eyes. Before he could utter a word, however, Susanne had stepped close to him and restrained him by a touch. He looked into her eyes for a brief moment and stood silent while she spoke.

"Citizens," she said, "shall we deny the friend of Marat? Let him have the little *ci-devant*. Is there any one hates her more than I? I say let her be married to him by this priest so that she cannot say it was no marriage. Let him take her to Paris, where they understand how to deal with aristocrats. Shall we deny the thing the friend of Marat asks?"

Raoul understood that it was jealousy that moved her. He almost held his breath until Hulin spoke, which he did after a short pause, during which he glanced viciously from Susanne to Raoul.

"What does it matter to me," he growled, "who teaches her to be a republican? Come, then, citizen priest, to the ceremony! And you, patriots of Pierrefitte"—here he cast a triumphant glance at Raoul—"let your wives and daughters witness the ceremony while we give them an illumination. Susanne, will you see them married?" He was cheating Citizen Maniquet of his share of the plunder.

"Yes," she answered somberly.

"Come, then!" He waved his hand and ran at the door. It had evidently

been unfastened, for it opened readily, and Hulin disappeared through it.

It was pandemonium for a few minutes while the men poured into the château, struggling for precedence, but through it all the girls and the priest were surrounded by the women, whose haggard faces, disheveled hair, and burning, staring eyes made them almost more frightful than the men.

"Come, curé!" said Susanne as the last of the men disappeared within the château; "there is no time to lose."

The women crowded close. For a moment Raoul thought of darting through them and making a dash for liberty with the girls and priest, but he dismissed the thought in its birth. He and Jean alone could easily have done it, but with the girls it was too desperate a venture when failure would mean such horror for them.

The priest studied Raoul despairingly, as if he would once more assure himself of his honor and good faith; then said:

"The wrath of God will overtake you, woman——"

"The vengeance of man will overtake you," Susanne interrupted, with flashing eyes. "You have nothing to do but perform this ceremony."

"And if I refuse?"

"These girls will be given to the men, and it will be your deed, not mine."

The priest bowed his head for a moment; then, after another look at Raoul, addressed the young lady, who was manifestly struggling with all her force not to betray the emotions that racked her.

"Mademoiselle Nathalie," the priest said, "I advise you to submit to this marriage. It is not a choice between this and death, but between this and an infamy and dishonor for which you will be in part responsible if you choose it by refusing what is offered you."

"*Mon Dieu!*" was her only response.

Her companion clung to her and moaned.

"Take their veils off! Let us see their faces!" screamed a woman.

"No," said Raoul, pretending to be in a jovial mood; "that is for me to do when I have my bride alone. I shall not know what I am getting until I have her by herself. Come, priest, do your work! I may be a little awkward since this is my first experience, but there must always be a first time. Come! Come, my Jacques!"

He would have liked to whisper a word to Mademoiselle Nathalie to relieve her trouble, but she was too closely surrounded to render such thing safe.

When he looked at Jean to see that he understood, he could have laughed at the expression on his face, for the misery that betrayed itself there reminded him that Jean's one fear was of the other sex.

There was still no sign of the soldiers, and now Raoul wasn't sure that the marriage wouldn't be the best way, anyhow. The pope would have no hesitation in annulling the marriage on a representation of the facts, and perhaps it would be easier for them all to escape if the ceremony were performed.

Whatever might be best or worst, however, did not enter into the situation, for Susanne urged the priest on, and he, knowing no reason for delay, entered upon the ceremony. He did indeed suggest confession, but was scornfully told that as the marriage would be valid without that it would be useless.

It was a spectacle not to be forgotten, and Raoul never did forget how he stood up with Jean to be united to those two shrinking figures in black, surrounded by a congregation of hags, such as only that bloody revolution had ever called into existence.

All through it, too, there was a horrid accompaniment of yells from the château, the breaking of glass in the

windows as mirrors, vases, furniture, statuary were hurled from the house. Men rushed out and back again, dragging such things as had taken their fancy, tossing them in heaps and hurrying in again for more.

Black smoke began to issue from the windows; the noise grew and grew in volume so that the words of the priest were hardly audible. The women joined in the hubbub with screams of laughter and shouts of gratified hate.

At the demand of the priest for a ring, Raoul remembered the one he had taken from the hand of the marquis, and, after fumbling in his shirt for some time, drew it forth, saying it was all he had. His bride shrieked at the sight of it, evidently recognizing it, and called him assassin and murderer. But she subsided quickly and made no protest when it was slipped over the slender, white finger she thrust forth from the covering of the veil. Jean had no ring but a silver one he wore on one of his great fingers, and there was a scream of laughter when, in his clumsiness, he imprisoned two of the fingers of his bride with it.

But the ceremony came to an end nearly as the mob rushed out of the château in a body, driven by the flames that were devouring everything. There were a few moments of pandemonium, ended by a cry of: "The soldiers! The soldiers!"

"Away! Away!" yelled Hulin. "But first the priest!"

It must have been arranged for, for in a twinkling the holy man was snatched up and carried to a tree. And so quickly was he surrounded and noosed that while Raoul and Jean were furiously fighting their way through the crowd to his rescue, he had been jerked up into the air, and was still when they were near enough to see.

Raoul restrained Jean, saying: "We cannot save him. We must not forget the others."

The mob, meanwhile having had their taste of blood, snatched up whatever they could carry, and poured out of the gate and scattered in the woods.

Raoul looked about for his so strangely made bride and saw her disappearing through the door of the burning château, dragging her companion with her.

"Stop! Stop!" he screamed. "Come, Jean! We will find them and explain. They will perish in there."

He ran with all his might, followed by Jean. He saw the massive door shut, and, springing to it, began to pound on it frantically, crying out:

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle! You do not need to fear us. I am a loyal gentleman. I am the Comte de Lestourmière. You shall be freed from the marriage. Jean! Jean! They do not hear. They will perish."

Shocked at this terrible ending of the horrid farce of marriage, the two men made every effort to force their way in, but the door was a stout oaken affair that easily resisted all their efforts. Suddenly Raoul bethought him of the back entrance, and ran thither with Jean after him.

From the only entrance they could find there, however, flames were issuing in such volume that it would have been sheer death to have plunged into them. Raoul went swiftly on until he had made a circuit of the château, blaming himself bitterly that he had not enlightened the poor girls before leaving them to rescue the priest.

As they reached the front of the château again, two black-robed figures sprang into view on a small balcony on the upper story. The heavy black veils were thrown back, revealing two pale, frightened faces; one delicate and refined, the other pretty, but of a commoner type. They both caught sight of the two men at once, and both emitted cries of despair and pleading.

"Hear me!" Raoul cried, snatching

off his wig, utterly reckless of the approach of the soldiers. "I am a gentleman, Comte de Lestourmière. I came here to help you escape. If I played the part I did toward you it was to save you. The pope will annul the ceremony when we explain it to him. Trust me! Oh, trust me!"

"Save us! Save us!" the girl cried frantically. "I am Nathalie d'Entraigue, and have never done harm to any one."

She rung her hands as she spoke, as did also her maid, and then a wild scream broke from them as a burst of flames from within scorched their gowns. Raoul cast a swift glance around in search of something that might help them in that emergency, but seeing nothing, said to Jean:

"You must catch them in your arms, Jean."

"Yes."

"Mademoiselle! Listen to me!" cried Raoul, wondering that one who had been so brave in entering the building through the flames should be overcome with terror now. "You must jump into the arms of my faithful Jean. He is strong as a giant and will save you. Jump then, mademoiselle! Jump or it will be too late!"

Alas! The frightened creature could not summon the courage to do as he bade her; it was not even certain that she had understood. She turned to look at the licking flames now close behind her; she beat the hot air with her little hands in a paroxysm of terror, and then sank on her knees as if in prayer, her maid screaming and wailing in an agony of fear and leaning over the low rail as if minded to leap into Jean's outstretched arms.

All too late. Not only did the flames leap out and infold them, but the side wall, already undermined by the action of the fire, suddenly bowed in and fell, carrying both girls into the red mouth

of flames, from which there came but one agonized scream.

Raoul, almost crazed by the sight, would have flung himself into the ruin in a vain endeavor to succor the victims had not Jean clasped him in his arms, pleading:

"Monsieur Raoul! What good could you do? They have gone to God!"

Raoul covered his face with his hands. "Accursed republic!" he cried. "Bloody France!"

CHAPTER VI.

"Come!" said Raoul, starting suddenly. "Let us get away from here. The soldiers will be here any moment." He strode away toward the back of the château.

"I was wondering, Monsieur Raoul," Jean said to him, "if we might not now throw off these dirty rags and clean ourselves. There are plenty of clothes here," indicating piles of clothing that had been brought out by the plunderers.

"Why not, then? I am sick of masquerading. Quick, Jean! There are swords, too. Here is a fine blade." He picked up the blade and hastily selected the parts of what had been a sober hunting suit. "Do you not remember that there was a pool just outside the wall, Jean? We will wash there."

"It will help us to forget, perhaps," said Jean gloomily. He had chosen a forester's coat and breeches and a gentleman's linen, there being no other sort in view.

They hurried away, and at the pool in the forest beyond the garden wall they stripped and bathed.

"The danger may be increased," said Raoul as he donned his clean linen, "but I have made up my mind I would rather die a gentleman than live a sans-culotte. *Sapristi!* It is as if these garments had been made for me."

"It is not the same in my case," said

Jean, who was with difficulty incasing his muscular thighs in a pair of breeches made for a man at least two sizes smaller than he.

"Why will you be so much bigger than other men?" cried Raoul gayly.

"They were the biggest I could find."

"They will stretch and the seams will hold," said Raoul composedly. His own clothes fitted him so well that he found it easy to be philosophical.

"If they *will* hold," murmured Jean, looking at his legs doubtfully.

"Oh, Jean François!" suddenly broke out Raoul. "Dolt, idiot that I am! Hasten! Hasten!" He finished his toilet with swift, careless movements, stamping his foot and making gestures of disgust, while Jean obediently hurried, staring in wonder at his master, and finally saying:

"But why do you call yourself names, Monsieur Raoul?"

"Do you remember there was a Mademoiselle Yvonne?"

"Yes, yes! I had forgotten."

"And I, alas! But she must be somewhere in the forest. She was not with her father, for that evidently was Mademoiselle Nathalie. It is not likely that she was in the château. No doubt she is wandering about in the forest. And, Jean! What if Hulin should remember! Perhaps he is seeking her now, and those men know these woods."

"Maybe it was mademoiselle I married," said Jean.

"That was the maid, Clarice. Did you not see her on the balcony? And her hand, was it the hand of a lady?"

Jean reflected a moment, and it seemed to Raoul that a sigh escaped his lips before he answered: "It was a nice little hand, Monsieur Raoul. My ring went over two of her fingers. Did you not hear those witches laugh?"

"But this Mademoiselle Yvonne," cried Raoul, starting into activity again. "We must find her. Are you ready?"

"Yes, Monsieur Raoul."

"Come, then!" said Raoul. "One way is as good as another, I suppose. By the way, Jean, do you remember that when that old man let us out by the little door in the wall he shut it again?"

"Yes."

"But it was open just now when we passed through it. I wonder if it signifies anything. Hello, what is that?" Jean had picked up some black garments and was holding them up for inspection. "Novices' gowns and veils! Ah, we have seen such things before, have we not, my Jean? They belonged to those poor creatures who perished in the fire. But what are they doing here? You would not think a patriot would care for such things. Besides, we saw them burn up. They might be duplicate sets. But what are they doing here? Ah, well! Throw them away; we have no time to lose."

"They make me melancholy," said Jean, dropping the garments.

Raoul smiled sadly. "Ah, my Jean! I know how it is with you; you are thinking that such another opportunity to get a wife will never come again. There was no courting, no proposing, no waiting; just here she is and take her."

"I would have tried to do what was right, Monsieur Raoul."

"You always do, my Jean. Poor things! But do you know, Jean, that when Mademoiselle Nathalie stood up there begging to be saved and showing no courage at all she did not seem like the same girl that had asked to be killed rather than to be married to me."

"Ah, Monsieur Raoul, she did not know you when she said that," explained Jean gravely.

"Dear old Jean! You think me irresistible. But bah! How horrible it all was! It seems to me that I can't shake it off. If I do not jest I shall weep. Do you see any stragglers?"

"I see nothing. But of course you

did look horrible, Monsieur Raoul. Ah, not as you look now!" he cried admiringly. "And I, too, no doubt looked like one of those beasts."

"Worse, Jean. You were enough to scare a maid out of her senses. You were a true sans-culotte with your filthy rags and your grimy hands and face. But worst of all you had your fighting look on and seemed as if you meant to swallow the poor girl the moment the ceremony was over."

Raoul laughed, and of a sudden checked himself. "The body of that poor marquis! And some one has been here. See, Jean! The body is stripped."

It had indeed been stripped, and the clothing had been ripped and torn as if something had been sought for in its folds or lining.

"They were looking for money or jewels," said Jean.

"And it means that the canaille may be here now. We must be cautious, Jean," whispered Raoul. "Carry your sword in your hand."

They talked only in whispers, and kept a closer watch about them. And it was well they did, for they had not gone more than a mile deeper into the forest when they heard voices, at first indistinct, and then louder. They stopped and looked at each other.

"Men," said Jean softly, his eyes beginning to dilate.

"And patriots," added Raoul grimly. "Shall we avoid them or creep up on them?"

"Oh, if you please, Monsieur Raoul."

Raoul laughed softly, and his own eyes were as bright as Jean's. "I would like to try my new sword. Let us go quietly then."

They went on, sheltering themselves as much as possible behind the great trees that stood along the path. After a while the voices became so distinct that words could be caught now and then, though they were meaningless.

And presently they had glimpses, through the foliage, of men moving about.

"There are not many," Raoul whispered.

The white could be seen all around the iris of Jean's eyes. He only nodded his head. They crept on and on, hearing more distinctly all the time, but making nothing of the words until Jean grasped Raoul by the arm, saying huskily and with a great joy in his tone: "Hulin!"

Raoul had recognized the voice, too. He smiled as he looked at Jean.

Then came a sudden cry that sent the blood shivering through their veins. It was a woman's voice and conveyed more of agony than words could express:

"No, no! Kill me rather!"

CHAPTER VII.

Raoul and Jean exchanged a glance of horror, and with one impulse leaped into a run. Whether there was one or a hundred men to encounter they did not care.

Other shrill cries of terror and anguish followed the first and served to spur them on. There was not far to go, and as they ran they saw that two women were struggling with two men, while four more men stood watching, and laughing while they looked.

Raoul guessed that these must be Yvonne de Lazire and her maid. But whoever they were they needed help; moreover, Hulin was there. The group was so occupied that no one noticed the approach of the rescuers, so that two of the wretches went down with sword thrusts before any alarm was made.

The other men instinctively threw themselves on guard with their muskets to ward off the swords, which, with lightninglike swiftness, were already threatening them, and the two men who were engaged with the women leaped

to their muskets, which lay on the leaves. Hulin was one of these two.

Hulin and his companion were the dangerous ones, for they had time to shoot, while the other two could only strike and parry, so furiously did the swords threaten them.

"Watch the guns, Jean!" cried Raoul, seeing the disengaged men waiting for an opportunity to shoot or ready to club them if the chance came.

"Yes," responded Jean briefly.

So, despite the frantic efforts of the men facing them, they kept them always between themselves and their friends. And their swords seemed to twine about the musket barrels and to pull at them with uncanny strength; they pushed them down and raised them up, glided like serpents over and under them, circled them like flames, and at last evaded them altogether and passed through the bodies of the men.

The men cried out and began to sink; Hulin and the other wretch at once raised their guns and fired, and the shots would probably have been fatal at that distance had not the slighter of the two girls, with a rare courage and coolness, darted between the two men and pushed them so violently that their bullets went wide of their mark.

"Ha!" cried Raoul, his eyes sparkling while he removed his hat in a salute as ceremonious and elegant as if the scene had been the most peaceful in the world. "We are indebted to you, mademoiselle."

His man was on him while he was still adjusting his hat, Hulin having found himself engaged by Jean, who had not thought of the elegancies of life at that moment. Raoul easily kept his man in play while nonchalantly finishing the adjustment of his hat, which, it may be said, was not the worse placed on his head because a young lady of beauty and spirit was watching him.

"If I were not so sure," he said to his antagonist, "that you were doomed

to the uttermost depths of hell I would prolong your misery in this world; as it is——" He sprang at the wretch and attacked him with a fury and activity unmitigated by the possibility of interference, and tempered only by a perfect coolness that enabled him to take advantage of the first opening and bury his sword to the hilt in the fellow's breast.

"An unworthy use to make of a gentleman's weapon, mademoiselle," said Raoul, wiping his blade on the fallen man's sleeve, "but one does what one must. Ah, my Jean refuses to dishonor his sword, you see!"

"You are not hurt?" she asked solicitously.

"Not a scratch, thanks to you," and he once more removed his hat ceremoniously. In spite of his gallantry, however, he could not take his eyes from the struggling men.

At the onset Jean had engaged his man with his sword and had played with him for a while, until, seeing his opportunity, he had, just as Raoul finished his man, dropped his sword and caught Hulin's musket by the barrel. At once it became a contest of sheer strength.

Hulin was a powerful man, and if Jean could have been frightened by looks he would have been terrified by the expression of that brutal face. But Jean was still more powerful, and the face of a woman was the only thing that held terror for him.

"Ha! I know you!" panted Hulin.

"You will know me better." He twisted the gun to an upright position between them, and then strained to force it over so that the wrists of the other would have to give way. Hulin resisted with all his strength, his eyes growing larger, his breath coming pantingly, drops of sweat rolling from his forehead. Over, over, steadily over the gun went. The clean strength of Jean was irresistible.

The men looked into each other's eyes. If there was a wolfish glare in Hulin's, there was implacable hatred and the menace of death in the white-encircled ones of Jean. And the line between his parted lips was pitiless.

Suddenly Hulin let go his hold on the gun. As quickly Jean dropped it and leaped on Hulin, his hands encircling his throat. The doom of the demagogue was sealed, for the sinewy fingers tightened and tightened remorselessly, until, with awful countenance and hideous efforts to cry out, the burly form grew limp.

"Ah-h-h!"

Raoul started and looked down at the figure by his side. He had quite forgotten the young lady during the fierce seconds of the struggle. Her long-drawn sigh made him remember, and he wondered how much time had elapsed.

"A thousand pardons, mademoiselle!" he cried. "I should not have let you look."

She turned her head slowly, and their eyes met. He started, and the thought flashed into his brain that if he had fairly seen that face before he would not have found even that combat the most absorbing thing in the neighborhood.

"It was terrible!" she said. "Ah, how grateful to you I am! It was a Heaven-sent rescue!"

Raoul's hat was in his hand, and he was wishing there was a modish wig on his head so that he might appear to a better advantage before this, the most wonderful creature he had ever seen. Though, indeed, nothing could have become him so well as his own wavy, brown hair.

"If I have the honor of addressing Mademoiselle de Lazire," he said, his hand finding its way very naturally to the region over his heart, "it is not entirely by accident that I have found you."

Her eyes were fixed on his face while he talked—deep sapphire was the color of them, he was sure—and they lighted up with eager interest in his words as he had never seen eyes light up before.

"I am Yvonne de Lazire," she said, and Raoul caught himself in the midst of a desire to determine which most charmed him, her wonderful eyes, her red lips and white teeth, or her sweet voice. "You say it is not an accident that brings you to my rescue?"

Raoul brought himself back to the world. "No, I was seeking you, mademoiselle; you and your father——"

He stopped short in his speech, and stared as if he had seen a specter. Mademoiselle Yvonne, at the mention of her father, had made a little gesture of despair, and Raoul had caught sight of a peculiar ring on her little hand.

"My father!" she repeated, staring at him wonderingly.

"Yes, your father. What was I saying? Oh, yes! I beg you to forgive me, mademoiselle, but that ring on your finger; is it—was it——"

She looked from his face to the ring, and then, with a gesture of aversion and a sudden pallor, snatched the ring off her finger, saying as she hesitated, as if almost minded to throw it away: "It was my father's ring," and then thrust it into her bosom.

A bewildered expression crept into Raoul's face. He looked at Jean as if for inspiration. Jean, however, had his back turned to them as if to avoid the grateful looks of Elise.

"We found garments belonging to novices as we came through the forest," Raoul said, with a seeming irrelevancy that made Yvonne wonder.

"We had worn them," she answered, studying his face curiously.

"Yes," he murmured absently, his eyes devouring her rapturously, "I—I thought so. But—but we must not stop here. Do you know these woods?"

"Not at all. We were hiding in a

pit yonder when these men found us and dragged us out. And you, monsieur?"

"I am a stranger here. I was escaping out of France when I learned by accident that a nobleman and some ladies were in danger here, and came to see if I could be of any service. Will you wait over there, behind those bushes, mademoiselle, while Jean and I hide these bodies lest they be found and send others seeking us. You will permit me, I hope, to dedicate myself to your service?"

"Oh, so gladly, monsieur! My father is dead, and I have no friends near. It is very good of you."

"It is an honor to serve you, mademoiselle," he said, bowing low. "Will you wait for us there, then?"

She noted his nervousness, but laid it to the danger that threatened them. She took Elise and led her to the bushes. Raoul joined Jean and bade him help drag the bodies to a ditch near by. When the last body was thrown into the ditch, however, Raoul took Jean by the sleeve and demanded: "Do you know whom we have saved from these beasts, Jean?"

"Mademoiselle——" began Jean in surprise.

"Mademoiselle nobody," interrupted Raoul in a trembling voice. "We have saved Madame la Comtesse de Lestourmière and Madame Jean François Rouget."

Jean stared and caught his breath; then entered a violent protest: "No, no! We saw them in the flames. It is not——"

"But I say yes. Do you remember the open garden gate? Do you remember the novices' gowns thrown away? Well, I have seen on that little hand over there the ring I took from the hand of the dead marquis."

"Oh, oh!" murmured Jean. "This is terrible. What shall I do then?"

"That is simple, my Jean. You shall say nothing of that terrible wedding; you shall pretend you know nothing of that pretty maid."

"As if I would like anything better."

"Forget all about that Maniquet and that Jacques."

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte."

"Good!" laughed Raoul, patting Jean on the arm. "You did not salute. Now we will return."

Yvonne and her maid waited for them anxiously, and it seemed to Raoul that if any further proof of their identity had been needed, the way in which the two were now grouped would have furnished it, for it was thus they had stood together on the steps of the château when he had first seen them.

Raoul remembered that he had felt a thrill of pride in her high courage then, but it was more than pride that thrilled him now as he looked into the questioning sapphire eyes. It was a subtle something that went quivering through him like a sickness, that oppressed his breathing, that at once abashed and lifted him up, that made his eyes luminous and his voice soft.

"Let us go now," he said. "Anywhere away from here. Come!"

"More of them," said Jean suddenly.

The maid caught the mistress by the gown, the hand of the mistress caught Raoul by the arm, sending a thrill of joy through him and bringing his eyes flashing to hers with passionate, unspoken assurances of eternal fidelity.

"Where, Jean?"

Jean pointed, and they all listened. Faint shouts fell on their ears; sounds they were all terribly familiar with. No doubt the rabble was spreading in the forest, seeking the leader, perhaps.

"Let us go! Let us go!" panted Yvonne, tugging at Raoul.

The Lot Lottery

By John Holden

An incident of the Hudson Bay Company's lottery sale of two hundred acres in the heart of a rapidly-growing city in the Northwest when people of every degree and age jumped at the once-in-a-lifetime chance to secure a substantial Something for Nothing

FIFTY dollars—for one night's work? You said fifty *dollars*, mister?" The tattered hulk on the park bench lifted incredulous and bloodshot eyes from the naked toe that peeked coyly through the ventilator in his boot and fixed them on the young man who had alighted from the big blue automobile. "What is it you want done?"

"Sorry—can't tell till you agree." The stranger's words were as snappy as his manner.

"Oh, I guess I know." The tramp's lips curled in a sneer as he surveyed the other's natty raiment. "Some shady business you're afraid to tackle yourself, eh? Well, bo, there's nothing doing. Big Bill may be broke flat as a homesteader in spring, and hungry, too, but he's no crook."

"Tut, tut, man! It's nothing like that. This job's as honest as peddling Sunday-school tracts. I need a big, strong man for a little while, and I'm willing to pay four times what the job is worth to get him quick."

"What d'ye want him for?"

"To represent me in a little deal. You'll be through to-morrow noon, at the outside. It's easy money—though there might be a little rough-house. Guess you could stand it, couldn't you?" The dapper young man eyed the hobo's six foot two of husky physique admiringly. "Ten down and forty when the job's done. Are y' on?" He pulled

out a roll of bills and fingered it tantalizingly.

"I dunno—I dunno." Bill rubbed a sausagelike finger on his stubbly chin reflectively.

"Of course, if you're afraid——" The moneyed one replaced the roll of yellowbacks and sniffed disdainfully. "I can find a dozen bums who'll jump at the chance."

"I ain't scared of nothing," Bill flared. "You're sure it's honest, eh? All right—gimme that ten-spot."

"When I've got your signature on the contract." The tempter brought forth a typewritten document and a fountain pen. "Sign on the dotted line, please."

"What the devil's this?" Contracts were decidedly not in Big Bill Morrison's line. He glared at the young man, and edged away from the document as though he feared it might jump up and bite him.

"Well, you see, it's this way——" The tempter's voice suddenly became ingratiating and sirupy as a subdivision salesman's. "I want a man to represent me in a rather important affair. You're liable to get a lot of money that belongs to me. Not saying that you'd try to get away with it or anything like that, you understand, but just the same it's only business to have the agreement in black and white. Read it—but hurry. We've got to get started right away."

Thus placated, Bill commenced to

feel his way through a bewildering maze of legal phraseology. "Now, therefore," "do hereby covenant and agree," "party of the first part hereinbefore mentioned" The going was pretty rough, but finally Bill made out that he was to represent his employer, James Riley, in some unnamed lottery. The agreement bound him to follow implicitly the instructions of Riley, no matter where he might be required to go or what he might be asked to do, and if he should win anything at the lottery, all such winning was to be turned over to Riley. At last Bill affixed a cramped but very binding signature.

"Now I'll bet I'm in for it," he croaked.

"Tut, tut!" Riley was all animation. "Hop into the car, Bill. We've got to move fast. Never can tell how the people'll take a thing like this. Any good with your dukes? Big enough, if you've got the sand. What lottery? You'll find out quick enough." He bundled Bill into the car and rocketed off toward the city's business section.

A balmy evening breeze crooned a soothing lullaby in Bill's grimy ears as the big machine whirled along the splendid south driveway of Alberta's capital city. Over the mile-long, high-level bridge it thrummed, the muddy Saskatchewan far below slipping underneath them like a dun-colored ribbon edged with green and purple. The monumental Parliament buildings moved by in stately grandeur. The machine turned into Jasper Avenue and hummed past various brightly lighted restaurants. Luscious displays of thick red steaks, golden pumpkin pies, and delectable slices of cold roast beef glided by in mouth-watering panorama.

"Don't I get any eats, boss?" Bill queried plaintively. "Can't do much rough work on an empty stomach."

"All right. Get a move on!"

The car stopped, and Bill entered

a quick-lunch emporium. Hastily he stuffed some sandwiches in his pocket, and, on second thought, included two bottles of champagne—champagne cider, if one took the trouble to read the small print on the label. "The bottles might come in handy as clubs," he reflected.

Presently the car stopped again in front of a frame office building, the ground floor of which was occupied by a real-estate office. Bill was piloted through a dark, narrow passage around to a door at the back, through which sounded the low hum of many voices mingled together. Riley rapped sharply on the door. A bolt rasped, and the door opened.

"Stay there, Bill, till I need you!" he instructed, and was gone.

Thick smoke hung like a London fog in the little room. Probably a dozen men were there—several hobos, one or two evidently dazed by a swift wallop from Fickle Fortune, but still in the ring, a few cigarette-smoking youths.

"Hello! Here's another victim!" A pasty-faced youngster sang out a greeting.

"Say, bo, did you get next to their graft?" queried another. Answered in the negative, he continued: "We're all in the same boat, old top. No one knows what we're hired for. Some real-estate game, I'll bet. Maybe a government land grab. Well, here's how! Have something, pard?"

Bill "had something." For an hour or so they discussed the probabilities. A man who had been through an Oklahoma land rush, and looked as though he had been through a threshing machine, related hair-raising experiences bristling with gunshots. The owner of the flask imbibed deep drafts of liquid courage and voiced his valiant qualities in Viking strain. The whole company was keyed up and eager for adventure.

Suddenly the door burst open.

"All right, boys—this way!" Riley shouted.

Loaded into the blue car, they flew through the streets with a reckless disregard for life and limb. The machine skidded around corner after corner, siren-like mad, and finally came upon a line of humanity that already was three blocks long.

"Now, boys! All into line together!"

The car jolted to a standstill, and the occupants scrambled into place. Bill found himself somewhat apart from the others, in front of a young man and behind a woman—a frail, little, oldish woman, so far as he could discern in the gloom.

In the pale rays of the close-to-midnight moon Bill could see humanity scurrying to a place in the line like chickens to a handful of corn—young men, middle-aged, schoolboys, white-haired grandfathers, even a few women. The line quickly stretched to the end of the block and disappeared around the corner. In a few minutes Bill was astonished to see it forming in a side street near, after having wound clear around the block—and still men came to lengthen it farther.

"What's up?" he exclaimed, when he had recovered his breath. "Has the city gone crazy?"

The youth looked at Bill doubtfully and edged off a little. "Heavens, man!" There was a note of alarm in his voice. "Don't you know what you're here for?"

Bill explained the whys and where-fors of the case.

"Oh, I see. Well, it's the Hudson's Bay Company. Their reserve goes on sale at nine o'clock in the morning."

The youth went on to explain that the oldest chartered company in the British empire owned some three hundred acres in the heart of the rapidly growing city. They had secured it years before for a song, and now they were selling it at from two thousand dollars

to twenty thousand dollars per fifty-foot lot, and the whole city—the whole country, in fact—was insanely anxious to buy. First choices were to be drawn for. The numbers were negotiable, and fifteen thousand dollars had been offered for No. 1, which would entitle the holder to buy the four lots he considered best.

No wonder people of every degree and age were jumping at the once-in-a-lifetime chance to secure a substantial something for nothing. Middle-aged men of comfortable circumstances and girth felt again the fire of their lean and perhaps hungry youth as they raced with bootblacks and laborers for places in the line.

A poor man, white-haired, penniless, and alone, forgot for a few brief moments his age and decrepitude when a younger man tried to elbow him out of his position.

School-teachers were there, classes forgotten. Professors from the university rubbed elbows and matched wits, not always triumphantly, with newsboys and peddlers. Bookkeepers and clerks lost sight of probable discharge in the dazzling allurements of unearned riches. Pillars of the church were there—a little shamefaced, perhaps. The real-estate gambling spirit that had spread over western Canada like a contagious fever in the old days reached its apex that eventful day, and no class was untouched. Even the most sanctimoniously orthodox are apt to gamble a night's sleep against fifteen thousand dollars.

Youthful nocturnal gadabouts reaped a harvest. Boxes to sit on brought from twenty-five cents to a dollar. Sandwiches and hot coffee found eager purchasers at absurdly high prices. A few foresighted ones had brought blankets; but the great majority, Bill among them, huddled against a board fence like homeless dogs and snatched a few chilly winks.

Toward morning Bill was suddenly aroused by his youthful neighbor.

"Wake up! Wake up!" the boy insisted. "There'll be hell to pay in a minute!"

Down the line a gang of roughs were working, their progress marked by groans, curses, the thud of clashing bodies as they attacked the line endeavoring to secure places—one here, one there, anywhere and anyhow.

The little old woman grasped Bill's strong arm and clung to it in an agony of apprehension.

"Never mind, ma'am—there's no danger," he comforted. A marauding brute stepped close to the old lady—glimpsed the menace in her giant protector's eye—stepped back hastily, but not hastily enough. Bill's hand closed on his coat collar. His other hand, clenched to a bone-smashing sledge, swung on the intruder's jaw. The bully's teeth cracked together like a lath broken over one's knee. He staggered back, clawing at empty air, and sat down with the grotesque jerkiness of a mechanical man. A squad of policemen swarmed on the scene, and the fracas was over.

"You're cold, ma'am? We'll light a little fire." Bill wrenched a paling from the adjacent fence, and soon tiny flames were crackling cheerfully. The little old woman curled up beside the fire and gradually slipped from the cares and hopes of an unkind world into the solace of roseate dreams.

Bill sat drowsily on the opposite side of the fire—thinking—thinking. The age-worn, care-creased countenance, half hidden in the flimsy folds of a cheap shawl, stirred strange emotions in his flinty heart. His own mother—she would look something like that now. Fifteen years it was since he had run away from home. "Don't leave me, Will," she had begged on her knees. "I'll try to make father treat you right." She had clung to his arm—

just like the white-haired old lady had a moment before. He had promised faithfully to return in six months, but six months later he was on the other side of the continent, down at San Francisco. Then he had planned to be home at the end of another six months. But he hadn't made it—was in jail, in fact, when he had meant to be home. He hadn't stolen the watch, either—but some tramp had, and he was a tramp. After that his desire to lead a better life had become vague and hazy. Oh, well, hoboing had its ups and downs, same as any other existence. He had had a good time, and he had never done any real harm, thank Heaven!

The little woman moaned in her sleep—a tender, plaintive cry, like an anguished mother calling for her loved one. Tears filmed Bill's eyes—the first in years. He placed fresh fuel on the fire, and drew his ragged coat over the old lady's shoulders. "Mother—mother——" he murmured sleepily. "I'm coming home. I'll be with you soon—with money, too. I know I'll draw something big to-morrow."

Recollection slapped him in the face.

"No, not with money, either. Being a worthless hobo and a fool, the money I'll win won't be mine. I'm a dog and an idiot, after all. If I hadn't been crazy hungry after that long ride he couldn't have tempted me. I'd have found out about this drawing myself. I'm coming back, anyhow, mother—back—to you—mother." The scraggly chin sank to the frayed shirt bosom, and Bill Morrison, the unlovely hobo, was again a boy, curly-locked and lovable, on the little Eastern farm.

The first glinting rays of the morning sun stung the long serpentine line to action. Comfort-loving men, arriving late, purchased the places of their more alert brethren. The advance guard of the speculative element ranged along the sidewalk, seeking what places they could secure cheap for cash. The price

of a position in line quickly mounted from a few dollars to a hundred near the front and forty or fifty farther back.

Poverty-haunted individuals who found themselves in the line more by luck than good management thankfully exchanged their easily-won places for a week's wages in the workaday world, and later muttered maledictions on their luck when the same places brought three or four times the amount of their windfall.

Frowsy sons of leisure, to whom, the evening before, a dollar looked big as the moon, now deported themselves as noble lords of the realm are supposed to do, and addressed mere merchants, bankers, and brokers, plebeians for the day by virtue of their being without the charmed line, in terms of patronizing superiority.

Merchants virtually closed up shop. The city went wild over the huge lottery—the biggest in the history of the prairie provinces—and, as the sun's height and broiling capacity mounted, curious crowds surged through the streets.

Egotistic but crestfallen people explained to equally chagrined friends how they came to overlook the splendid chance to get something for nothing, and, perchance, finally concluded that they were not so smart, after all.

"Oh, yes, the Canadian West is a splendid country—too fine, maybe." The little old woman accompanied her thanks for a proffered soap box with a little burst that betrayed heartache and sorrow.

"Too fine?" Bill looked at her curiously.

"It's a strange thing to say, I know. But when a country lures mother's sons away it's apt to be hard on the mothers, isn't it?"

Again an arrow of self-contempt quivered in the hobo's consciousness. "You're looking for a son?" The

thought that his own mother might be looking for a son—himself—tempered his coarse voice to a sympathetic softness strangely discordant with his rough appearance.

"Yes," she said. "You wouldn't know him? No, I guess you wouldn't. He must be a big man now—something like yourself if——" She broke off confusedly, and Bill regretted his tattered attire for the first time in years. "He left home when he was a boy. He hasn't written for ages. I thought him dead till I met a lady who said he was homesteading in Alberta. I've hunted and hunted, but it's no use. To-day I'm hoping—but I mustn't bother you with my troubles."

"Not at all—maybe I can help. You're hoping to draw a prize so you can go on looking for him?"

"Yes—I hope to go up North."

"What's his name?"

"His name? It's William Clark—if he still lives."

The old lady dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief, and, occupied with her own thoughts, did not perceive the searching glance that the tattered but kindly tramp turned on her.

"You live——" he queried.

"Hanford, Nova Scotia," she replied.

"I—I hope—you—find—him." A strange huskiness throbbed in Big Bill Morrison's voice. Memory, groping through the dim, misspent years, had solved her problem. He knew where her boy was—but tell her?—and break her heart? Never!

"You must be getting faint," he said. "We'll hold your place for you—won't we, fellows?" turning to his companions in line.

"Sure—go ahead and rest yourself, lady."

"Thank you, gentlemen. I *am* feeling a little faint. I'll be back soon." The little old lady dried her eyes and made her way slowly and a trifle unsteadily up the street.

Throughout the long morning Bill and his companions kept edging forward. Riley appeared at intervals, with sandwiches and lemonade for his hired men.

Many of the waiters, holding their positions in their own right, grew weary of standing in line and dubious of fortune's favor and sold their places. The man in front of Bill early succumbed to temptation. The man behind finally relinquished his place, too.

The sun swung to its zenith and commenced to slip down on the other side, and still Bill and his companions had not reached their goal.

The big prizes were not drawn, either—a fact which brought great rejoicing to the tailenders.

At last only half a block separated Bill from the clapboard temple of the Goddess of Chance. Then a quarter block—and still the little woman had not returned.

Bill was fourth from the door when she burst through the guerdon of the curious.

"I was taken ill," she gasped. "Oh, I'm so—glad——"

"Here, what's this?" The man in front of Bill entered an indignant protest. "You can't get in line now, madam."

Bill tried to explain.

"G'wan—can the hot air!" the new possessor of the position behind snarled. "What d'ye think we paid a hundred bones for, anyhow? To see some dame get in for nothing?"

A policeman upheld the protestants.

"Sorry," he decided, "but if the lady ever had a place she's lost it. We couldn't have that sort of thing, you know. There'd be no keeping order at all."

"Keep moving!" some one behind growled his impatience.

With face buried in her handkerchief, the little old lady moaned softly

to herself—a pitiful bit of flotsam in a sea of selfishness.

Bill glanced quickly up and down the line. His employer was nowhere in sight.

"Here—slip into my place!" he commanded. He shoved the pathetic figure into line and disappeared in the crowd before she had recovered sufficiently to fling a word of thanks at him.

From the middle of the packed street he watched her. She entered the office. She reappeared, and an ear-splitting roar shattered the tense atmosphere. "She drew number four!" The news ran through the crowd like wildfire, and the cheering echoed down the street like the salute of a regiment.

A speculator flashed a roll of bills in her face. "Two thousand dollars for your number!" he shouted.

"Twenty-five hundred!" bid another.

"Shut up, you pikers!" a deep voice boomed. "Three thousand, madam!"

Bill saw her surrender her ticket and slip the huge roll of yellowbacks inside her bosom.

"Thank God!" he murmured fervently; and, for the third time since he had laid eyes on the wan-faced, little old lady, he winked back the unmanly tears. A new spirit seemed to possess him. His slouching figure straightened up, erect as a poplar. The slinking badge of trampdom vanished from his once-handsome features, and, under the unkempt beard, the pride of manhood again glowed. Big Bill Morrison was no longer a tramp.

But he was fated to drop from the heights of exaltation with a thud.

"Here he is, officer!" Riley's erstwhile debonair countenance had metamorphosed into a wolfish leer of mingled rage and triumph. "You'll get five years for this, you dog!" he screamed. "Sling the swine in the rottenest pen you've got, officer!"

Bill marched to the police station with

a cheerfulness that astonished the policeman, and, as the steel door clanged behind him, he grinned.

"It's worth it," he exulted as he stretched himself on the hard mattress.

Half an hour before court opened next morning a keen-faced man, well dressed and a trifle gray about the temples, entered the private office of the police magistrate.

"Good morning, Raymond," greeted the magistrate, rising and clasping the visitor's hand cordially. "What down-and-outer is due for an uplift this time?"

The visitor drew a chair up to the magistrate's desk, and from an inner pocket brought forth a circular letter, illustrated with a half tone. He spoke rapidly and convincingly in a low, tense voice that gradually became louder under the stimulus of genuine emotion.

"I want him to have the whole sum," he concluded. "When a hobo treats a poor old woman like that fellow did yesterday it's not too late, to make a man of him. Who knows what influence set his feet in the path of vagabondage? Who knows what little move in the game of life saved us from the same career? We're not so much better than some of our down-and-out brethren—not by a darn sight, Jim!"

"All right, Raymond," acquiesced the magistrate. "It'll be a feather in our cap, too."

An hour later Bill Morrison's case was called. Obviously a tramp, a certain poise in the man's bearing drew the eyes of more than one court attaché.

"Prisoner at the bar," spoke the magistrate, "I will not ask you if you are guilty or not guilty. Your case is dismissed!"

He turned to the complainant: "You, sir"—and his words snapped like the lash of a whip—"you are under arrest!"

The desperate look of a hunted animal leaped to James Riley's eyes; but, before he could move, his arms were pinioned, and glittering steel bracelets clicked around his wrists.

"James Savage," continued the magistrate, "you are under arrest for obtaining money under false pretenses in San Diego, California.

"You," turning to Bill, "are to receive the reward of one thousand dollars offered for the capture of this man. Of course, you were merely instrumental in effecting his apprehension; but, as a reward for your gallant conduct yesterday, the other party waives all his rights. Further, I have been asked to hand you two hundred dollars advance on the reward money, and to advise that you change your manner of living."

For the fourth time since his encounter with the faded old lady who searched in vain for a lost son, Big Bill Morrison's eyes filmed.

A few minutes later he entered a store. A smug-faced clerk looked him over in ill-concealed disgust, but, half an hour later, bade him good-by with a well-defined note of respect in his priggish voice.

Bill spent over an hour at a barber shop, but he emerged a well-groomed, well-poised man, in the prime of life, and with a certain masculine attractiveness that caused more than one woman to glance twice at his stalwart frame.

He made his way along a drab street to a certain cheap lodging house, nervous and flushed with joy, like a young man calling on his first sweetheart.

"Dear old mother," he murmured softly to himself. "I wonder if she'll recognize me as the tramp of yesterday—the ragged outcast with a borrowed name? And yet"—he slowed his pace as he thought out a new phase of his problem—"I suppose I'll have to tell her all."

Inside Stuff

By Donn Byrne

Author of "In a Cellar," "Biplane No. 2," Etc.

There is more to this than a description of a prize fight—much more. There is play of emotions that will stir you as much as the actual physical encounter. And we may say that so far as the physical encounter is concerned we have seldom read anything so graphic. As a piece of descriptive writing, no matter how you feel about boxing, we advise you to read this.

THEY might have kept their eight thousand dollars, Doran thought bitterly, as he went back to his corner after the first round; they might have kept their eight thousand in their pockets. If he hadn't agreed to lie down in the twelfth round, he would have been put out in the eighth. Good heavens! Couldn't they have left him at home in peace, and not have brought him back to shame and humiliation to-night?

The house settled down to a humming criticism of the round. There had been nothing in it but slow, shuffling footwork, careful sparring, and a few light taps to head and chest. That was the way good fights began, they said; and this ought to be a good one, if the length they had waited for it were anything to go by. They had seen young Nelson, the Swede, rise from preliminary to star bout, and to-night he was getting his chance at the world's championship. But old Dan Doran—how hard it had been to get him back into action! Here they were at last. Nelson was getting his chance at the title, and it looked as if it were going to be a corking good fight.

From his corner Doran was taking in every detail of the setting with a feeling of curious satisfaction. It was two years since he had fought, and put out Humphreys, the slogging New Zealander, in the eighteenth round of a terrific battle. He remembered how the house had staggered to its feet at the last slashing rally, and how they had held their breaths when he had finished the fight with a smashing right cross to the jaw. And here to-night were the same white canvas floor beneath him and stout hempen ropes about him and good oak planking that gave to his feet like a springboard. And overhead was the gigantic arc light that hissed and sputtered like an engine. And on all four sides of him lay the sea of white faces stretching into the distance like blurs of linen cloth. Old memories of forgotten fights welled up in him. There was the familiar, hoarse shouting of peanut men and lemonade boys and program sellers. There were the tense, expectant faces of the newspaper reporters and the cheery smiles of old devotees of the ring who had seen him win his title and fight for and hold it time and time again. He felt as if he

were coming home after a long journey, and that little landmarks were recalling themselves to him and welcoming him among them again.

There was a sharp-barked order from the referee. The seconds clambered out of the ring. There was a long shudder and shuffle as the audience settled themselves back in their chairs. Clouds of blue tobacco smoke eddied and swirled toward the ceiling. The gong rang out like the bell of a church, and the second round was on.

As Doran rose and walked forward, the pleasure of the old surroundings faded off and he felt bitterly that this was his last fight and that he was faking it. Old champions must go and new champions come, he knew; but this lad might have had the title for all he cared. When he put out Humphreys he had sworn it would be his last fight, but they wouldn't leave him alone in his New Jersey farm. They had to drag him out to satisfy the public that Nelson was the better man. And, not content with that, and knowing he was hard pushed for money, they had bought the honor of his ring career as a peddler buys old clothes.

They were sparring now. Doran noticed, with a tinge of envy, the huge shoulders and tapering waist of the challenger. How easily his arms moved, he thought, like a piece of well-oiled mechanism! There wasn't much brain behind the bulldog face and closely cropped forehead, but the man could move as lightly on his feet as a dancer, and there was the rosy tinge to his skin that told of youth and unspent energy and of huge reserves of strength. He remembered the glimpse of himself he had caught in the weighing-in room that morning, the bulging, knotted muscles that years in the ring had set and stiffened, the great veins standing out on his forearm that showed he was past his prime, the deep-set eyes that should have been reading a farm journal in-

stead of probing the mind of a ring opponent, the little hollows in his cheeks, the hair beginning to grizzle and thin at the temples—

The Swede's right went out in a quick feint, and Doran dropped his head to avoid the smashing left lead that followed. There was a blow along his ribs like the stroke of a giant hammer. His right snapped home a short uppercut to the body, and they reeled to the ropes in a clinch.

He ought to have blocked that right-hander, he said to himself, with a quick flush of shame. He wasn't thinking fast enough—he was stale. They might have kept that eight thousand dollars.

The house had half risen to its feet at Nelson's rush. They had seen that before. That had finished the ring career of Sapper Murphy, and of Frank Boyd, and of Battling Hughie Madden—that vicious left drive to the jaw and right swing to the ribs. They hadn't expected to see Danny Doran go under to it, but they couldn't sit still while it was being tried. They were relieved to see Danny pushing against his man in the clinch. They settled down again. This was going to be a fight.

The referee pried the men apart, grunting with the effort. The Swede was grinning behind his guard. If he could put out the old fighter before his time, why, so much more credit for him. If he couldn't, there was the agreement that the champion would lie down in the twelfth round. At any rate he was safe. The title was his. But he had felt his right go home to the ribs true and heavy. He would put out this old champion, he felt, whom the world's best men had battered at and left standing for seven years, while they had succumbed to his ring generalship and craft one by one; he would show them that the fighting Swede was all that his backers said of him.

Doran wished he could put it all out of his head. He wanted to concentrate

on the flicking, flying brown gloves in front of him. He wanted to keep his eye on the point of jaw that peeked in and out of the challenger's left shoulder, and on the challenger's ribs, and on the little knot of muscle below his breastbone. He must put up some kind of a fight even though he was to lie down.

The Swede's long left lashed out like the kick of a horse. The champion caught it on his right wrist and countered heavily on the mouth. A couple of muffled hooks and jabs at close quarters, and they were in a clinch again. The boards groaned beneath their wrestling steps, and the hemp ropes strained and creaked. There was the gruff command of the referee to break away, and the gong clanged the end of the round.

Even Dave Rogers would hardly speak to him—"Red" Dave, who had trained him for a hundred fights. He remembered every fight when Dave had knelt by his side in the corner, advising, directing, telling him the weak points of an opponent, explaining to him the secret of a guard, or how to lure his man on to the pile-driving right cross that had won him so many battles. Dave was waving a towel in front of him to-night, but there was no advice or encouragement or praise from him. He was afraid to look up and see what was in Dave's eyes.

What the devil had he ever done it for? he asked himself savagely. Why had he ever been tempted? He remembered the Sunday they had crowded into the farm parlor, big and burly and prosperous looking—Brogan, the sly theatrical man; Collier, who owned the boxing club, and Barton, the Swede's manager.

"Give the lad a square deal, Danny," they had said; "let him fight you for it. Don't let it be said you threw him the title for charity. 'The Charity Champion' they're calling him already.

Be a sport, Danny. You were always square. Be it now."

And that was the way they had got him to fight again. If he had only stuck to that!

The announcer called the third round. There was a moment's pause, and the referee ordered the seconds out. The gong broke into a reverberant trill, and the men shuffled forward to the center of the ring. There would be no action for a few rounds yet, the house agreed; they hadn't felt each other out sufficiently. When the real fighting came, it would be a story to go down in ring history. It would be the story of the old champion, with his craft and his caution and his science, calculating time and distance to the slightest fraction, conserving every ounce of energy, against this turbulent, bull-necked fighter, throwing away strength and stamina riotously, boring and rushing and taking his punishment and relying on brute strength and punch to win.

The men shuffled around the ring in the opening spar, the old champion crouching well forward, his hands open and hardly moving; the challenger upright, his left well out, and fiddling with both gloves, as if they were operated by a set of wires. The house rose to its feet with a shout. Doran's left had snapped home clean and straight to the challenger's head, flicked out again, and driven it back between his shoulders a second time. A fierce rush from the Swede, and the champion had rushed home an uppercut to the jaw and slid into a clinch. The house roared with applause as his right glove cracked twice into the kidneys before they broke away.

A short, rapid spar. A vision of four brown gloves cutting through the air like the lashes of whips. Light leads and counters muffled and blocked. The monotonous shuffle of the men on the resined floor. The clatter of telegraph keys reporting the round over thou-

sands of miles of wire and cable. An ineffectual clinch or two in which the boxers swayed to and fro and the boards groaned and the ropes creaked. A grunt as a right went home, and the bell ended the third round.

That wasn't so bad, Doran thought; he could still box. The old timing and science that had kept him his title were his yet.

"Good old Danny!" somebody shouted from the ringside. "You've got him going."

Then despondency fell on him like a pall. He had no right to praise or encouragement. He was cheating all these people. He was faking the fight. What the devil ever prompted him to come back? The boy could have got along without the money.

It was for the boy he had wanted it. He was to get the chance Danny never had. In a few years he would be through at high school, and would go up to college to study law. The meager thousands Danny had saved wouldn't go far when the five years' course was paid for, and there was still the interim to be taken care of between the time he got his degree and the time he collected a practice.

It was this that had weighed with Danny when the promoters came to lure him back for the fight, and it was this that had weighed with him when the Swede's scout had slipped into his training quarters with a shifty glance in his eye and an evil smile on his twisted face.

The training had been going badly. The punching bag would not dance and drum under his hands as it had done two years before. His step was not so springy when he set out for the morning trot. He tired too quickly under the medicine ball, and his sparring partners complained that his punch had not the snap and sting that had made their job such a hard one when he was training for Humphreys.

The scout had been thrown out on his head the first and second times, and then Danny had listened to him, and he was thrown out again. And then Danny had agreed to it. Eight thousand dollars and a chance for the boy on lower Broadway!

He couldn't win; he knew that. The old fire had gone. And why, he argued to himself—and he knew he was wrong—shouldn't this young fellow pay well for it if he wanted so badly to be champion of the world? It was worth something in these days of vaudeville exhibitions and theatrical circuits.

He had told Dave, the trainer, of it shamefacedly the day before the match.

"I never thought you'd do it, Danny," the trainer had said; "I never thought it was in you."

Dave had hardly spoken two words to him since. Only the memory of the very old days when the champion had fought ten rounds for a five-dollar bill brought the trainer to the ring tonight.

His seconds pulled the stool from under him, and he dropped into his crouch barely in time to avoid the challenger's thundering rush. Hooks and jabs pelted home on his ribs like rain. He was giving ground. He tried to cover up and fall into a clinch. A right hook went home to his neck with a force that jarred him from head to heel. A left swing blocked, and he was holding on. The house gripped its chairs in wild excitement. This new challenger was a terror; even Danny Doran couldn't stand punishment like that. There was a humming buzz of comment as the men broke away.

Doran felt strangely out of it. It was as if he were at a preliminary where an inexperienced novice was being cut to pieces. There was a time when he could have met a rush like that with stinging rights and lefts to the face that would have taught his man to keep his dis-

tance. A half dozen more rushes like that, he felt, and he would be out.

The Swede was sparring now, his huge bulk thrown slightly backward, his massive left arm moving in and out like the crank of a piston. His feet tapped the floor like drumsticks. His right glove, close to his ribs, suggested a coiled-up spring. His shoulders jutted backward and forward in nervous, threatening feints. He was working Doran into a corner, where he could volley down on him with another terrific rush.

What was Doran doing? the audience wondered. He wasn't fighting, that was sure. Why, there was the Swede on him again, carrying him toward the ropes, pelting him with a shower of hooks and jabs. And Danny was covering up and looking for a clinch.

"Fight him, Danny!" somebody yelled. "Wake up! You're asleep." Somewhere back in the hall a boy hooted. He tried a feeble lead as they broke away, and the bell ended the round.

He couldn't fight. Somehow he hadn't the heart in him. There was something wrong. It was as if he had come into the ring with his hands tied, to be knocked out, to have nothing to do but to lose. He was just a piece of machinery by which the Swede was to become champion of the world; just something necessary to the battle, like the panting seconds, or the timekeeper's bell.

When he entered the club that night, he had thought of his return home to the farm with a feeling of warm satisfaction. His life would be there waiting for him, and the boy. He pictured them sitting in suspense in the parlor; his wife, big, capable, brown-haired, brown-eyed, firm-mouthed, silent; the boy lank, loosely built, red-haired, excited. How often she had waited up to welcome him back in her warm, silent way, and to dress the big blue

bruises and the angry red cuts! This would be the first time he had come home beaten in ten years. There would be a warmer welcome for him than if he had won, but the boy would be broken-hearted. But the price of his championship would be in his pocket, and the price of the boy's chance. At home they didn't know.

He wasn't so sure of the satisfaction now. He felt he would be more ashamed to meet their glances than to meet the eyes of Dave. If ever they got to know about it—— Good God! If ever they got to know about it!

He felt a wave of heartsickness sweep over him as he got up for the fifth round. His pink-skinned, swaying opponent took on the aspect of an executioner about to mete out justice to his criminal self. The roped ring reminded him of a picture he once saw of the gallows of a guillotine. The timekeeper and the referee were presiding officers of the law. The tense, white-faced audience were citizens come to see justice consummated.

His head was rocked backward and sideways with long-range, welting swings. A mass of pulsing, irresistible rock bore down on him. His neck and sides seemed to quiver under the strokes of a Nasmyth hammer. Unspeakably racking blows smashed home to his jaw and head. People were shouting in an immense, swelling volume of sound. The floor of the ring swayed like the deck of a boat; the flaming, flashing arc light became a lone star in a black sky. He was plunging forward into dark space and then grasping and holding onto something as a swimmer grips a piece of driftwood. Consciousness came back to him little by little, and he noticed, in a dull, surprised way, that he was holding his man off by long left jabs and mechanical footwork. The bell rang in a faint, distant murmur, and he staggered toward his seconds.

The crowd was strangely silent. A

sort of heavy gloom seemed to have fallen over them. They were seeing a champion passing; they were witnesses at the beating of the old ring general who for ten years had beaten the best men the world could produce. There was something terribly big about it, something infinitely pathetic.

"Poor old Danny!" he heard some one at the ringside say. "He's done for."

The flap of the waving towels rang out like gunshots. He could feel the cold comfort of the sponge passing over his face, and the slice of lemon between his lips. Somehow he felt that the crowd were sorry for him, that their sympathy had passed from the turbulent Swede adventuring for a championship to the tired old boxer defending it. If they knew what he was doing they would hail him with hisses and catcalls and execrations; they would have nothing for him but anger and contempt.

Back in the hall he could hear the hoarse, monotonous chant of the book-makers:

"Two to one against Doran! We'll give two to one against Doran! Two to one! Two to one! Two to one!"

A wild panic seized him. People were betting on him—old ring followers, boxers, and sportsmen. He felt suddenly like a thief. He wanted to get up and shout to them that they were losing their money. He couldn't win. It was as much as he could do to last to the twelfth round for the price of his championship.

There was a commotion behind him. He heard a faint cheer and a volley of handclapping. Davy, the trainer, looked away. He heard his name called:

"Hey, Danny! Danny Doran!"

He looked down. Peering up at him from the corner, he saw a broad, tanned face, with a broad, kindly mouth, shrewd blue eyes, and a nose slightly

twisted to one side. There was a closely cropped head that was going bald and gray at the temples. There were two ears battered out of recognition.

"What's wrong with you, Danny, man? What's happened to you to-night?"

Doran could hardly believe his eyes. It was Tom Squiers, Tom Squiers from whom he had won the title ten years ago—"Honest Tom Squiers" they called him then. It was like seeing some one from a dead world. Why, Tom had disappeared five years ago, no one knew where. They said he was down and out, that he had no money, that he was earning a few dollars coaching school-boys.

"Here, let me up in that corner! Hold this coat, will you?"

Danny saw him clamber into the ring. There was something uncanny about him. It was like a ghost walking into a warm, lighted room. Danny saw him take the sponge and smelling salts from a white-sweatered second, and bend over him. The house was roaring itself hoarse with excitement. Some of the older patrons had seen Squiers lurch, reel, catch the ropes, and slip to the canvas in the thirty-fifth round against Doran more than ten years ago. By heck! they said to themselves; there were fighters in those days; they were no vaudeville boxers.

Danny could hear the old fighter purring away as he held the salts to his nose:

"Why, Danny, you ought to put him out in a round. Get into it! Show them how we used to box. I came a hundred miles to see you fight to-night. Wait a minute! I was forgetting something. I want to do a little betting."

He dug his left hand into his trouser pocket. A roll of small bills came out. Danny could see that they were pitifully few. There could hardly have been more than fifteen dollars there;

perhaps not that much. Squiers turned to a second.

"Put that on Danny for me," he said, "and see that you get good odds, young fellow!"

The gong clanged out, clamorous, vibrant, imperious. Doran saw the huge bulk of the challenger rise slowly from his stool. He felt Squiers slap him smartly on the shoulder.

"Go in and win, old champion!" he was saying. "Go in and win!"

The house thundered applause as Doran rose. He saw figures rising at the ringside and cheering wildly. There were men he recognized, old backers, old fighters, old followers of the ring. There were Colonel Knox, who had helped him when the boy was born, and Jim Mann, who had backed him against The Kangaroo, and Gentleman John Brady, whose ring career he had finished seven years before, and Tony Lavigne and Cyclone Kenny, and other old forgotten faces. They were cheering the rafters off the club.

The Swede fainted with the left glove. In a moment he would feint with the right and come rushing in, swinging both hands. The right feint came. Doran braced himself and lashed out with right and left. He ducked the flailing swings, and drove a hook to the stomach.

"That's the stuff, Danny!" some one shouted. "Keep it up!"

They sparred a few moments. Doran could see two red spots on the challenger's cheek bones where the stinging hooks had caught him. He was excited and annoyed. The easy, contemptuous smile had gone from his face. There was a hard, flashing glitter in his eyes. Doran saw him bend slightly at the knees. He was getting ready to spring. The champion shot out his left.

Then again the trip hammers smash down his guard and ripping it up from below, the thrusting of the rock-like fighting machine against body and

head and jaw, the merciless crushing of the massive arms, the sharp, nervous jar of the kidney punch, a sharp blow from the Swede's shoulder to his mouth.

The referee slapped them on the backs.

"Break away, there!" he cautioned. "Break away! Take care, Nelson; this is a boxing match, not a free for all!"

They sparred again. Doran could not get out of his head the figure of old Tom Squiers clambering into his corner and the cheering, friendly faces at the ringside. There were thousands present to-night who had cheered him to victory in the old days, who were trusting him, who were laying money on him. And he was going to lie down. He felt dull and dazed.

What did they want him to do? he asked. Did they want him to win? He couldn't do that. His science and craft were nothing without the snap that sent a punch home like a rifle bullet, and the stamina that would freshen up in the minute's rest after three minutes' slogging punishment. He couldn't do anything without them, and they were gone.

The challenger's left caught him lightly on the temple, and he slid to the right in time to avoid the murderous drive to the ribs. Old Tom Squiers at the ringside had brightened him up. The old tricky footwork was coming back to him. Mechanically his eye saw an opening, and mechanically his left shot out to take advantage. There were a few snappy jabs to jaw and neck, a few swings ducked, uppercuts missed and hooks muffled, and he was in his corner again.

What did they want him to do, if he couldn't win? he asked himself. He looked at Dave flapping the towel in front of him, and at Squiers whispering unheeded advice into his ear, and suddenly the answer electrified him: To fight, if only to lose; to fight, as doomed defenders of a fortress fight; to fall,

as soldiers on a forlorn hope fall; to go down as a champion should, fighting; to play a man's part in a man's game, and to lose like a man.

To the devil with their eight thousand dollars! To the devil with themselves for sneaking, evil-minded, trafficking thieves! He was fighting his last fight, and he'd fight it square. He would play the game, the big game, a man's game.

He motioned Dave down with his gloved right hand. The scarred, badgerlike trainer leaned toward him.

"What is it, Danny?"

"I'm going to fight, Dave." He didn't know how to put it. "This lying-down business is off."

"Why is it off, Danny? Do you think you can win?" Dave's eyes were as hard and steely as before.

"No, I don't think I can win. I'm going to lose, but I'm going to lose fair."

Dave was down by his side like a flash. Squiers caught his towel and began cracking it like the lash of a whip.

"Get down lower!" Dave was directing. "Keep down, and he can't get you with that left swing!" Oh, it was good, Doran felt, to have him kneeling there in the corner advising and nursing him as he had done in every fight until now.

As he rose at the bell, it seemed to him that the thousands of closely packed, dim figures in the hall were men supporting him in the fight; that Dave and Squiers in the corner were lieutenants of his; that the timekeeper's bell and the sputtering arc light were standards of battle. By Heaven! he'd show him; he'd show this peddling boxer how champions lose!

The house had grown still and tense—the great fight they had expected was in full swing, the fight between the crafty old ring general and the hurtling challenger. The waxed shoes of the boxers slid over the canvas like the rustle of silk. The referee's feet pattered

as he sprang aside from the feinting, shifting fighters. The staccato rattle of the telegraph keys rang out like the beating of hammers. The pulsing, hissing breath of the audience suggested the winging of birds.

Again the swinging, thundering rush. Doran struck out savagely with both hands, and covered up. They swung around the ring in a clinch. Over the Swede's shoulder, Doran could see the figures in his corner leaping with excitement. Squiers was sparring viciously at an imaginary opponent, his eyes blazing, his grim, rugged jaw thrust forward. Dave was signaling to uppercut. He worked his right arm free cautiously, and lashed upward. There was a sharp, resonant crack as the punch went home.

"That's the style, Danny!" Squiers was yelling. "Send them in! Send them in!"

The voice of Squiers raised a cold fury in him. He remembered in a flash the little roll of shabby dollar bills. So they were to cheat old Tom out of that! He was to go home to his wife and boy with eight thousand dollars, and Tom was to go home without his last fifteen! His left thudded home on the face, and his right thundered over on the temple like a trip hammer.

They were struggling in a clinch. The Swede was snarling in his ear:

"What's this? The double cross?"

Danny wanted to answer. He groped for words.

"No!" he gasped. "No! It's the square deal. That's what it is."

The referee wrenched them apart. The Swede was balancing himself on his toes and swaying his shoulders threateningly.

"All right, you faker!" he shouted. "Just wait!"

Then it seemed to Doran as if great waves lifted him and smashed him up against the ropes. Giant drumsticks were beating a tattoo on his head and

shoulders. He fought back gamely with right and left.

The end was near, he felt. All right, he would meet it as a man should. The thought of the boy at home ticked into his mind like a message. He had been wrong. The boy should fight his own battle. That was what he would have wanted himself. He would fight as his father was fighting now. He would win if he had the stamina and strength and skill; if he hadn't, he should lose like a man. There should be no shameful secret conferences behind locked doors, no passing of soiled money between furtive hands—a clean ring, and the prize to the winner, and might the best man win!

Rounds and rests were lost for him. He dimly heard the gong, and went to his corner, and rose when the gong crashed again. He was no longer conscious of the even voice of Dave, of the presence of Squiers, of the panting, sweating seconds. He was at times sparring, at times leading snappy, smashing blows to head and jaw and body, at times clinching, at times reeling from the impact of jarring, deadening swings and hooks, and sending home counters like sword thrusts.

The house was too tense for shouting now. This was too great a fight to be true. Surely, they thought, no man could withstand those hurtling, cyclonic rushes of the giant Swede, with his arms swishing home like flails, and his great body behind them giving murderous force to every blow. And still there was the old champion crouching stealthily about the ring, his jaw and stomach well covered, his great, gnarled arms shooting out now and again like the paw of a cat and sending home those stinging, lightning punches that had made him so terrible in the old days. Neither of them could stand the pace long. Already the challenger's mouth was beginning to sag from the champion's flashing leads. And old

Danny's ribs were angry and red from the crashing force of the kidney punch. There was a scarlet weal on his cheek bone where an old gash had opened, and his stomach and chest were purple from the Swede's short, infighting uppercuts.

Back in the hall the bookmakers were shouting in a frenzy. Doran heard them faintly, as through a wall:

"Even money! We'll give even money! We'll give even money!"

He felt a warm glow through him. He had been fighting, then, and fighting well. When he did go down, they couldn't blame him. He had done his best. He had played the game.

The seconds dashed water at him as he staggered to the corner. Things cleared as the sponge passed over his forehead. The air from the flapping towels gushed into his lungs as from a blast pipe. In the opposite corner he could see the Swede's seconds working like fiends. They were slapping and pummeling the challenger's legs. The Swede must be feeling the pace, too, he thought. That was all right.

"What's the round?" he asked.

"The twelfth," a second whispered.

He felt himself go taut like a rope. This was the round in which he was to have lain down. He felt a great impatience while he waited for the bell to ring. This was the round he would probably be knocked out in, but this was the round he must fight above all others. He waxed his shoes carefully on the resin board.

And then suddenly he was sparring, his eyes focused on the blazing gray eyes of the challenger. He forgot the brown gloves and the swinging arms and the pulsing, iron body. To keep his eyes on his man and to go down fighting, that was what he must do—to go down fighting, like the old heroes of the ring, as old John L. had gone down, and Peter Jackson, and the fighting "Fitz." One last rally, and then de-

feat! And to have played the game, the big game, a man's game!

He met the rush with a rain of jabs, and then the ropes cut into his back. He was being swung around and pushed mercilessly toward a corner. There was a jarring smash to his head. He shook it off like an insect and flailed back.

The house was on its feet. He could hear them shouting like the beating of great surf on rocks. The sound seemed to quiver and vibrate. The ring beneath his feet trembled like a spring-board. He lashed out blindly again and again. He knew nothing but that he was fighting the last round of his last fight. His knees were sagging. Huge waves of crimson seemed to roll in, curl, and break before his eyes. His arms went out in great, titanic blows. There was a shock in his shoulders as his gloves struck home. The yelling of the audience crashed in his ears like volleys of thunder.

There was a heavy thud, and the ring seemed to rock beneath his feet. His right hand lashed through empty air, He caught the ropes, and staggered around again.

The referee was pushing him back.

"Stand away, Danny! Stand back! One! Two——"

Where was Nelson? He looked around stupidly. Why wasn't he fighting? What had happened? He caught sight of a huge, huddled figure lying crumpled on the canvas as through a haze of smoke. The thunderous shouting had ceased. In the dead silence he heard the voice of the referee count, like the slow ticking of a clock:

"Five! Six! Seven——"

He couldn't understand it. He should have been knocked out. And there was the Swede sprawling on the floor of the ring, and the count nearing the close.

"Nine! Ten! Out!"

Dave's arms were around him, he felt dully. They were leading him to his corner. The audience seemed to have

suddenly become a horde of shrieking madmen. People were swarming into the ring and grasping his hand. He tried to pull himself together.

Now they were bathing his face; now they were taking his gloves off; they were helping him down from the ring and toward the dressing room. They were in the dressing room now, Dave and Squiers and he. They were cutting the bandages from his hands. He could hear Dave grunt as he bent over them. Squiers was talking to himself quietly, in low, rambling tones.

There were the voices of seconds in the corridor outside. They were raised for a moment in high-pitched argument:

"Well, I got the tip that Danny was going to lie down, I tell you!"

"For Heaven's sake, don't make a fool of yourself! Danny Doran lie down? Why, man, you're mad! You ought——"

The tension inside him seemed to snap like a string and to leave him weak and helpless. His head fell forward on his chest. There was a choke in his throat, and a warm trickle from his eyes that reached the cuts on his cheek bones and set them smarting furiously.

Dave looked up at him.

"Ah, don't, Danny!" he said. "Ah, don't!"

The choke became a sob. The warm trickle on his cheeks a stream. Dave began patting one shoulder, Squiers the other.

"Ah, Danny, boy!" Dave was saying. "Ah, Danny!"

He couldn't stop the sobbing; he didn't want to. It seemed to him that all evening lean, sinewy fingers had been clutching his throat, and were now loosing hold. He felt somehow that he was being relieved, that the tears running into the open gashes on his cheek bones were healing waters, and the patting of the trainer's hands the touch of a kindly physician.

The Cant-Hook Man

By Frank A. Latour

The story of a wild ride with death and the fear-destroying thought behind it; told by a man who knows the life of the lumber camps

ASK any lumberjack in the "Broken Hills" who he is, and the answer would be, "Why, that's 'Fuzzy Jim'!" as though that title should have a nation-wide significance.

They are taciturn fellows, these woodsmen; but if you carry some good tobacco and refrain from asking too many questions, the chances are that you may learn that Jim's last name is Fowler, and that he is the best cant-hook man in the Broken Hills. And if, further, you have tact and do not get in the way just when a man is hitting his falling wedge those last few pokes that bring a leaning tree around in the way it should go, you might even get to hear the tale of what happened the winter we logged off No. 5, up there in the bench land.

You'd like to hear the yarn?

Well, to begin with, no one knows where Fuzzy came from originally. He had drifted into the community some ten years ago, and had taken up a home-stead in the timber, way back on the fifth bench, farther even than where Pete Swayne and his pretty little wife had wrested twenty acres of meadow from the wild.

No one knew where he came from, and no one cared much, for people in the raw country do not pry into a person's antecedents; but it was plain that he had license to roll his trouser legs any number of times, or even "dock" them, after the unique and useful lum-

ber-camp custom of service marks; for he knew logging "from L to G" and could handle a cant hook in a manner that caused even the old-timers to take notice.

One side of his heavily bearded face, none too handsome in any case, bore the scars of vicious strife in camps where brute strength is law, the hall mark of the "river dog," which showed that he had been vanquished in at least one fierce brawl and had the spiked boots put to him in regulation style by his victorious enemy. And by that sign and by the way he could jump a "climber" when loading, the wise ones argued that he was from the Bayou Chaleure, or the Black River.

Although he was still a young man, he never visited, and he was never seen at any of the dances or other festivities, and, as his cabin was back in the farthest corner of his quarter section in the hills, no one was interested enough to climb the long grade and over the rough logging road to visit the hermitlike bachelor.

Nor could any of the young women of the district lay claim to Jim's affections or boast of even the barest attentions from him. Indeed, he avoided all the women of the place from the start, and would even wait outside the store at Pinedale, making some lame pretense of adjusting his harness or gear until the women left, if there happened to be any there marketing.

Therefore it is not surprising that

Jim's anchorite tendencies soon ceased to cause comment. He was left severely alone, people regarding him and his existence in much the same light as the passing of the daily train, noticed only when it failed to appear. He remained a mystery which his neighbors never pried into farther than to lazily ponder over once in a while when some logging exploit of his brought them to a momentary realization of his existence.

For ten years he had been cutting timber off his homestead and hauling it to the mill or to the spur at Pinedale, three miles away. Twice a day, all summer long, his truck would rumble by at a certain hour in the morning and again almost to the minute in the afternoon, loaded with cordwood.

Every morning the children on their way to school would step out of the road to make way for the white mule team and its silent driver who looked neither right nor left. In all the years he had passed them daily, never a "good morning" had found its way out of the thick tangle of bristly mustache and beard that gave him his nickname, and, although he always passed the schoolhouse at a few minutes before nine, no child had ever ventured to ask that big, stern-eyed man for a ride because they were afraid of him; and he never offered—strange as it may seem—for precisely the same reason.

Carload after carload of his cordwood went out of the "spur," and hundreds of thousands of feet of his timber went into the mills, and the dollars came in slowly but surely. Still the same old felt hat, with the diamond-shaped air holes cut by Jimmy's handy jackknife, adorned his head in summer, and every succeeding winter saw his broad shoulders incased in the same old red "mackinaw" coat which no amount of wind or weather seemed able to affect.

His mules still tugged at the same old harness they came to the hills in,

mended and replaced until hardly a strap of the original harness remained, and the storekeeper at Pinedale always complained that Fuzzy never would buy a new harness as long as there was any baling wire left in the country. The meager nature of Jim's purchases was a constant vexation to the storekeeper, for the only thing he ever bought that was not absolutely necessary to sustain life was tobacco.

Men called him "close" and "narrer," but they never dreamed that the big, sour-faced man was a visionary of the most pronounced type. No poet ever surrounded himself with a rosier fabric of dreams than those which floated ever before the ears of his mules, at which he gazed with the most absorbed and minute attention, "like he was a-watchin' 'em grow, or wantin' to locate the hinge that makes 'em flop," as Bob Collins once remarked to the loungers at Pinedale.

He was dreaming dreams through the long summer days as, perched atop of his creaking load, he moved slowly down to the spur, and, like the veriest fanatic, he was laying his all at the feet of the fetish of his dreams.

All this I know now, but at the time at which I commence this tale I knew nothing much, except that I was beginning to see that although he was a rude and primitive man, Jimmy Fowler was, on closer examination, a different man than he appeared on the surface, and that people, in their estimation of him, had used him ill.

Up until I came there, two winters ago, nobody had ever stopped even overnight with Jim; but I had just drifted up from the sagebrush country and knew as much about falling a tree as I did about erecting the Pyramids, so that I could not afford to inquire very deeply into any little peculiarities of the man who was willing to take the trouble and risk of breaking me into the lumber industry. And so I became his "pard-

ner," and student in a business sense, and was regarded with mild wonder on that account.

Fuzzy somehow found something in me to like, and we were gradually coming to understand each other; but I had not yet become his "father confessor" and did not know the details of his little drama nor the motives that shaped its outcome.

Now the course of events brings me back to the morning we were taking logs off the slope below No. 5.

On this particular morning I was clearing road and swamping crosshauls for the loading team to move in. "Bud" Abbot was doing the loading, and Fuzzy with his mules was skidding.

Yes, I've overlooked the fact that you may never have been in the timber, so I will explain a bit.

We make it a practice, up there, to cut the logs in the fall and early winter and skid them up—that is, drag them out of the brush and pile them on skidways along the roads, so that when the first good skift of snow comes we can get out the sleds and commence hauling to the mills.

Loading logs, whether on sleds or on cars, among the "backwoods" homesteaders where the steam "jammer" or loader of the big, modern camps is never seen, is a task that calls for experience with the cant hook and plenty of agility.

To topload a sled properly requires good judgment, for the skinner who must drive the load over steep, dangerous, and poorly made roads continually stakes his life on the set and balance of the logs.

Sometimes, when the mercury burrows down like a ground squirrel smelling winter, and everything is slick and covered with ice, it gives a handy man with the cant hook all he can do to keep the logs under the chain and going straight.

This is where Fuzzy got in his fine

work. There never was a log, however unruly, that took to cavorting around on the skids but would settle down when Jimmy got his cant hook into it; and I want to impress it right here that a log in motion is a mighty uncertain quantity.

But to go back to my story: We had just got the first tier of logs on nicely when "Dad" Freeman happened along. "Keep at it, boys!" he called, as he came in sight. "That's the way I got my start!" Dad never had got any start that was noticeable, but that was his stock joke.

"Mornin'!" muttered Jim sullenly.

He disliked Dad and considered him a meddler; and then, besides, politeness wasn't Jim's long suit, so, without further words, he picked up his lines and started back into the brush after another log.

Dad watched his retreating form. "Fuzzy's a nice, pleasant cuss, ain't he?" he observed. "He's just the man I ought to talk to this morning, but I'd as soon tackle a grizzly bear with an air rifle. Not that I've got anything to say agin' him," he added, glancing sharp at me, "he's as good a man in his way as there is around here, I reckon; but there's no understandin' him at all."

And he sat down on a stump and gazed thoughtfully into the bowl of his pipe.

"No, sir," repeated Dad, filling and lighting again, "there's no understandin' the man. He ain't got no family to support that he needs to scrimp and save and deny hisself every comfort, and yet he don't seem to be the kind of man that saves just for the mean satisfaction of having money. He feeds his teams aplenty, and he ain't noways particular about hisself, which all miserly cusses are. A man that's particular stingy about reskin' his money is always afraid when it comes to reskin' his neck, and I've knowed that man Fuzzy to do

things that there ain't any man around this country ever did before nor since.

"You remember, Bud, when he clumb up on the big log chute, three winters ago, and stood astraddle of that jammed log and pried it loose, with three big fir logs hanging behind it ready to give him his everlastin' if he ever lost his balance on the edge of the chute as they shot under him. Why, they couldn't get a man to do that same thing until Fuzzy happened along, and he refused old Bowen's money with a funny grin like he relished the job too much to take money for doin' it.

"But that ain't nothin' to the crazy trick he did last winter! Look up there to where that logging road comes down off No. 5! If I was to tell a stranger to this country, who knew anything about logging, that a man shotgunned that hill with three thousand feet of bull-pine logs on his sled, with nary sand nor roughlocks on, the first thing he'd ask me is: 'Where's he buried?' But a man has done it and lives, and that man is Fuzzy Jim.

"Seems like he was particular radical about that time, for I heard him laugh like a fiend when his wrapper chain broke coming down that grade the day before, and him a-settin' atop of the peaker log.

"We've all of us come down off No. 5 one time or another with sand in the ruts or roughlocks wrapped tight around the runners, but I'll bet there ain't a man even then but what wished that grade wasn't so straight off. It sure is a fright!

"I never could see why Lindsey's outfit didn't make that grade so that you could come down on the other side of the hill. But one team and driver, more or less, toppled over into the cañon didn't matter much to Lindsey, just so he got his logs laid down at the spur by the shortest possible route; and takin' chances was meat and drink to them crazy devils of his. But even

among that wild crew you couldn't have found a man who was fool enough to shotgun No. 5.

"There was quite a bunch of us taking logs down the grade off No. 5 the morning that Jim made his great slide. Snow had fallen during the night, so we had to put more sand in the ruts, and all hands were at work digging a hole at the top of the hill to get sand from, when Fuzzy showed up without his pipe and lookin' uncommon wild—and, by the way, that's the first time I ever saw him without that pipe.

"He sat upon his load like he was waiting for us to pull out and let him get by.

"Better jump down, Jim, and help us dig sand; the grade ain't sanded yet,' Abe Dillon called to him.

"Sand nothing!' growled Jim. 'There ain't been but a dozen flakes fell last night, and your runners will scrape right through to the sand, all right! You fellows give me the colic. Why don't you set up a winch at the top of the grade and let yourself down by inches?' This last he said with a nasty sneer.

"That wouldn't be a bad idea, Jim,' Abe laughed back at him pleasantlike, 'and even if there isn't much snow in the ruts, what little there is is froze tighter than steel and as slick as grease. Better help us sand it while you're restin'.'

"Aw, pull out and let me pass; don't waste my time as well as your own!' he growled.

"Then Abe got riled up at his bossy tone and asked him real polite if he wouldn't be kind enough to go to the hot country for about five minutes.

"Fuzzy never said a word, but clumb down off his load with the ugliest look on his face that ever I saw on a man, and Abe pulled out a sled stake, with his face kind o' white. Every one of us expected a row and stood by handy to interfere, but Fuzzy only walked up

to Abe, stuck his hairy mug close up agin' Abe's, looked him in the eye, and said, slow and careful, in a cold, hard voice, that I ain't likely to forget: 'Abe Dillon, man, you don't know what a fool you be to blackguard me right now. Better move your team.'

"Without a word Abe went over to his team and pulled out into the brush.

"Fuzzy pulled up to the head of the grade, and I came up with a pair of roughlock chains, seein' he didn't have any with him, for I was fearful for the man; and I bent to wrap them on, sayin': 'You'll kill your fool self if you don't use a roughlock. Have some sense, Jim.'

"He only pointed to them with the butt of his whip and said, in that same slow, careful voice, dogged as his own mules: 'Take 'em off, Dad, and no more of this darn shenanigan!'

"'But, man,' I cried, 'you don't calculate to shotgun this hill with that load, do ye?' I asked him, all on edge. 'Think of your team if you don't value your own neck.'

"'You talk like a baby, Dad,' he laughed, taking up his lines and standing up on his load. 'I'll kill no team, and as for killing myself, never fear; I ain't runnin' in no sech luck,' and he cracked his whip and started, laughing soft and sourlike.

"The outfit moved sober enough for about fifty feet, as far as we had already spread the sand, and then they hit the slick crust.

"Well, sir, you've seen them circus pictures of a fellow dressed like an angel a-flyin' through the air on a two-wheeled cart. Now, Fuzzy didn't look like no angel nor sound like one, but his ride had all the circus-angel stunts I ever saw beat to ribbons!

"We all watched him in silence so thick you could 'a' cut it with a knife, exceptin' Abe Dillon, who ran down the grade hollerin' 'Jump, Jim; jump!' over and over again so fast that you

couldn't tell which word he commenced with.

"When the sled slipped off onto the ice, the team went into air like they were shot out of a cannon. Fuzzy reared back on the lines, and his shot-loaded blacksnake whirled over his head and came down with a crack like a 45-90, and then he commenced to cuss.

"Away they flew with a sickening speed down the long, steep grade. Now the cayuses would be sliding, all four feet stuck stiff ahead and layin' down in the breechin'. Crack! and a whoop of wild oaths; and the blacksnake would leap out. Into the air they'd go again, stung by the lash, their feet never touchin' the ground—as Al Kent, who watched them from the bottom, swears to this day—for twenty feet! When they lit, they'd spring again or hit the dead run, and only the steady, cruel pop of the whip and the yells of the driver saving themselves and him from instant death under that load of logs.

"And of all the wicked skinnin' and oratorical cussin' I ever heard, that man was a-doin' it, and we listened in strained silence for some time after the swaying sled whirled around the bend in a shower of ice scurf, and, looking around at each other with our eyes bugged out, we started on a run down the grade to pick up 'the remains,' for none of us ever expected to see Fuzzy alive again.

"We pulled up, gaspin', at the bottom, and found Al Kent a-settin' on a stump, moppin' the sweat off his face and makin' queer noises in his throat. He told us, in a stupid sort of way, that he saw Fuzzy's outfit leap out from a curve in the road like a cat shot with a bootjack, and he had barely time to jump outen the track when they flew by, all in one jump, so he swears most solemn, to the bottom, and never slacked their crazy speed till they hit Coyote Creek, where Fuzzy breathed his team and went on *a-singin'*! And I defy any

man to tell me when he ever heard Fuzzy sing afore nor since!

"That's the particular brand of devil Jimmy Fowler is, and I'd as soon attempt to dehorn Old Nick as to bresh his fur the wrong way; but it 'pears like I'm bound to do it. But here he comes now with another log. Give me a hook and I'll lend him a hand."

Having brought the log up to the skids, Jim went off after another, and Dad, beyond taking his pipe nervously from his mouth once or twice, made no attempt to state his errand.

If Dad had known Jim's story as I learned it later, he would not have wondered why the wild Irishman could sing after so perilous a ride.

Had he known that the night previous to that ride was spent hatless and coatless in wandering through the Broken Hills, and that no sleep had touched his fierce eyes; had he known of the passions and emotions imprisoned within him like a savage beast, growling in repression, ready to snap the leash of will that held them and leap to life in some vicious form; had he known how close Abe Dillon had stood to the Great Divide on that morning, he could have formed some idea of the seething tumult that had been quieted and appeased by that wild ride with death. The black pall had been lifted from his soul, and he sang from reckless elation.

Dad did not know that only two days previous to that ride Fuzzy Jim had added the last roll of bills to the sum that marked the goal of eight years' savings. Donning a black suit and hat that seldom saw the light of day, he struck out over an old "tote road" to the home of Pete Swayne's widow.

Before him, as he strode along, floated a vision of the only woman in the country round who did not seem to fear him. He recalled how she had made him some sirup from mountain herbs and sent it to him when he lay

sick and alone in his cabin, by one of her children, who laid the bottle within his reach and ran off like a frightened deer.

He remembered thanking her for her charity afterward, in a voice that would somehow stick in his throat, and she had told him, with a misty smile, that it was poor pay for the care he had taken of Pete's team when—when—— And the smile faded and the mist became a tear, and he drove on without a word but with strange new feelings in his heart.

That was all, except perhaps an occasional cheery word from the widow, but it acted upon that strange temperament like the call or vocation does to an aspirant to priesthood. It awoke a primitive devotion, and in his fanatic singleness of purpose and his entire ignorance of all social usage, other than he had gathered from a lifetime spent in lonely lumber camps, where women are something merely to talk about and speculate upon, he never considered any other outcome of his long, secret servitude than that which he pictured as he strode along.

He had just learned that the lodge which had been paying her a small sum monthly for her maintenance had gone up in smoke, and people said it would go hard with the widow and her children, but he smiled to himself as he thought how he would forestall her want.

The ranch was not the ranch of Pete's day. Great clumps of sarvis brush stood in the meadows which had sadly gone back to the wild. Fences were down, barns dilapidated, and everything about the place showed the need of a man's hand.

Jim found the little widow busy with the frugal task of mending children's garments, and the unfamiliar hum of a sewing machine wafted a cheerful domestic song through the open door as he entered. She gave him a chair and

made him welcome, at the same time regarding the black suit with a puzzled and apprehensive glance.

Jim's mental processes were like his ax strokes—direct and incisive—so, without prelude or preamble, he told the woman his errand there in a few halting and unsentimental words.

Genuinely surprised and deeply touched by the years of heart hunger and the unconscious yearning revealed in every stumbling sentence, she was silent for a little, and, when she spoke, her answer struck him like the blow of an unforeseen and unavoidable danger.

"Jim," she said simply, "if it was only myself, I might think about your offer. I believe there's good in you, Jim; but at times it seems uncommon hard to find. You're a strange, wild sort of a man, and I don't understand you, and you're more fitted to the kind of life you lead than to be a husband and a father—especially a father, Jim. My kiddies are powerful 'fraid of you, and most children won't come a-nigh you. You're makin' a mistake when you think to marry; 'tain't the kind of life most suited to you. With only myself it might be, but—well, I just can't give my children into the care of a man who would let them flounder to school through the snow for years rather than pull up and take them on. You don't understand children, and your kind of life hasn't made you fitter to have them round you. No, Jim, it can't be. I'm sorry it's been goin' on this way with you so long, but it can't be at all.

"But as for me gettin' along," she continued, with a sting of irritated pride in her voice, "I reckon that meadow will raise enough hay to keep us when hay is a decent price, and timber is going up now. I don't need a husband for my support. What I would want is a good father to my children."

It seemed to Jim, as he listened, that the room had somehow grown dark, and the air seemed chill in spite of the au-

dible crackle of the fire. His faculties were dulled, and he plucked at the lapel of his coat with a great, trembling hand, and repeated, in a dazed fashion: "Can't be, it can't be," like a man suddenly aroused from a drug-created sleep by a few words in an alien tongue.

What was wrong that he couldn't think? Surely something had happened to him. He felt just as he had felt that day that he was struck on the head by a falling limb. The same faint, cold, unnamable sickness; the trees had nodded strangely, exactly as a picture on the wall was doing now. The cabin had seemed a mile away as he stumbled through its door in the strange noon-time twilight, and the common sounds about him seemed to float dimly from a great distance to ears finely strained to catch them. It was even so now. And as he stood among the wreckage of his dreams, gripping the edge of the heater with a hand that felt nothing, gradually the mists that composed them drifted away in pitiable fragments.

Of course it couldn't be! What a fool he had been to suppose that the lean, hairy timber wolf would be welcome to lie down with the gentle ewe and her lambs, even though a lonely heart had brought him hither and tamed the dangerous wildness of his nature. And he laughed softly, sadly; but his eyes did not join in. He made no complaint nor further plea.

"I reckon you're right," he managed to say at length. "I ought to have used a grown man's sense about this long ago, but I just kept figurin' and plannin' till I guess I've planned away what little sense I might have had. You just forget about this here foolishness of mine, and I calculate to leave the country as soon as I can get a buyer for my holdings; and in the meantime I'll not bother you any.

"But there's one thing, little woman: this insurance business is goin' to work a hardship on you this winter, and you'd

better let me help you out in some way. Now there's a matter of some eight thousand dollars to my credit in the bank that I've been a-puttin' by ever since the spring after Pete died, so's I'd kinder have a little something for — Well, it's yours, little woman; it's been yours ever since the first dollar of it was put by, and you may as well let me give it to you and the little ones, seein' as I won't have no possible use for it nohow. Won't you? Nobody need to know about it."

The little woman flushed crimson. The depth of Jim's devotion began to dawn upon her. She realized now the service of Jacob he had imposed upon himself for her sake, and still withal she misunderstood and feared the man even while her heart glowed at the evidence of his sincere devotion. Taken aback, she regarded him silently, awed by the fire she had unwittingly kindled, and which for her children's sake she must now immediately extinguish.

She was somehow stung into a sense of shame by the generosity of a man whose fondest hopes she had just crushed with a none too tender hand. It seemed to her that it was like heaping coals of fire on his head, and for some reason, which must be left to those more versed in the unfathomable processes of the feminine mind and heart to explain, Jim's offer, or perhaps his clumsy method of tendering it, seemed instantly to arouse an unreasoning spirit of pride in the heart of the mountain-raised woman.

"Jim," she said, "I reckon I've got along these five years without your help, and I reckon I can do it for five more if necessary; and I don't know when I gave you the right to save up money for me, and it can't make any difference in my feelings in this matter. Thank you, Jim; keep your money, and perhaps it may help to make some other woman happy."

"But it might help you along with the children," he insisted.

"I can provide for them," she retorted, in a nettled tone, "and it seems to me that your charity might have commenced years ago instead of letting them trudge to school through the snow. No, Jim, I can't take either your money or your name, and we can't mend the matter any by further talk."

For a full minute Jim looked at the woman as only a man can look who has built his castle on the sand and sees the labor of his years thrown down by one great wave; and silently he turned and stalked off into the woods, like the stricken deer, who seeks some dark and tangled wild to rest and lick his wounds.

And so it was that Fuzzy Jim could welcome the perils of that ride as the only relief he could find for his pent-up emotions. It freed him from the train of thought that dinned with maddening insistence upon his brain, and the fierce exhilaration quieted the turbulence in his breast.

It was not strange, therefore, that everybody insisted that "Fuzzy was kind o' radical," for no one understood, and least of all Dad Wilson, or he would never have dared to reopen the old wound that Fuzzy tried to heal and forget.

It was nearing nine o'clock, and we were nearly finished loading up when Dad finally found courage to state his errand.

"I reckon you haven't heard about the little collection we're gettin' up, have ye, Jim?" he inquired nervously.

Jim looked at him with suspicious disfavor. "Don't know as I have," he answered.

"Well, sir, we've been a-noticin' that them kids of Mrs. Swayne's ain't got no more shoes than a jack rabbit, and they hadn't ought to be chasin' all that long way to school without some rubbers and some warm duds, and seems

like they ain't got either. Furthermore the storekeeper says that she ain't bought enough chuck in the past month to keep the life in a half dozen snow-birds, and she don't trade nowhere else, and she jest wouldn't let on she needed anything to save herself, an' it's gettin' nigh onto Christmas time, an'—well," he concluded desperately, "yer invited to dig up whatever comes handy and help us get these folks through the winter. How much can I put ye down for?"

For a moment or two Fuzzy made no reply, but stood silently picking splinters from his cant-hook handle with a curious pained expression on his scarred face which slowly gave way to a scowl of impatience that deepened into rage, until his twisted features grew almost hideous. With an oath he threw his hook down and strode up to the cringing old man, his tobacco-stained teeth showing bare between the icicles that hung from his mustache.

"You can put me down for nothing, understand? Nothing! No, sir; I'd see 'em in the ditch with their back broke afore I'd lift a hand to help 'em! Why, I've——" And, with a wild gesture of despair, he turned and plunged into the timber, leaving us staring, open-mouthed, after him.

Dad was the first to speak:

"How I wish the good Lord would take twenty years off my shoulders and put twenty pounds on this withered old carcass of mine for as little time as it would take me to choke that coyote to death! If it was the last thing I ever did, I'd pass over well satisfied."

We cooled the old man off a trifle by having him write us down for a handy sum each, and we turned back to help Fuzzy load what I had determined should be my last load for him.

We were loading on a smooth slope entirely free from brush or stumps, "a park," as such small natural clearings are called in the timber country. The

slope ended some fifty feet beyond the sleds in a straight drop of about ten feet to the road below, and we were loading uphill.

The first log was a big pine, covered with ice. Fuzzy was still agitated, and his hands shook so he could not handle the chains, and, after a few futile attempts to make the hitch, he called to me to take it, and walked down to the foot of the slope, cant hook in hand, and stood over the road watching some approaching school children with a sour, puzzled stare. Their childish laughter ceased as they came in sight of him, and the youngest Swayne boy stopped in the middle of an excited sentence when he happened to meet Fuzzy's searching stare. Jim abruptly turned his back.

Bud started his loading team, and the great, slick log rose on the skids with a lurch. I hooked it in the end to steady it. The next instant I heard a snap and a startled cry from Bud; my cant hook was wrenched from my hands and a length of chain whistled past my head like a whiplash, and the big pine went bounding down the slope.

At Bud's cry the children ran together like frightened sheep and stood paralyzed with fear watching the oncoming log that sped with the precision of a bullet toward them.

Helpless, I yelled in horror and closed my eyes, for in the instant the log was nearly upon them.

Fuzzy first saw it when a bare twenty feet separated the children and the log, and he bounded between, hook in hand. For a second that seemed an eternity I saw Fuzzy Jim flip back the "bill" of his hook, raise it above his head for a throw, and stand poised on his toes, gambling in fractions of a second his chances of dodging should he miss against a nearer and surer throw.

As long as I live I shall always be able to see the cant-hook man as he

stood in that century-long instant, so indelibly is the picture impressed upon my brain. The body, tense and rigid, like a steel band bent and ready to snap; the keen face, the coldly calculating eye, the arms descending in aim, and then—Crack! The hook, bill up, sped from his hands like an arrow and bit into the end of the log only to be crushed to flying splinters the instant it struck, *but it did the work.*

As a pebble will deviate the course of a rolling barrel, so the log, checked in its rushing course, leaped in the air like a live thing and crashed against a stump at the side of the park.

As he made the throw, Fuzzy leaped aside, but too late! Like a giant arm, the plunging log swept him with-it, and we found him white and still pinned down against the stump by one leg, cruelly mangled.

It was Christmas Day when Fuzzy Jim, cant-hook man no more, one leg amputated below the knee, opened his eyes in the little hospital at Pinedale. Dazed and semiconscious, a curious feeling in his limbs caused him to try to draw up his knees. As he did so, he closed his eyes and shuddered, and his massive frame went limp. A stifled sob escaped him, and two tears slipped from

beneath his closed lids and crept into his tangled beard.

Soon he became aware that a small hand lay in his, and some one sat beside him. He opened his eyes again. It was Iva Swayne. He dropped her hand and turned his head away.

She bent over him and drew his head toward her. "Won't you forgive me and let me thank you, Jim?" she begged.

"It's me that needs forgivin'," he answered. "I cussed old Dad off the place when he was only aimin' to fix ye up a little Christmas. I'm a low-down——"

"No, Jim, no! It's Christmas to-day, and O God!"—she sobbed—"what a Christmas gift you've made me. What a gift!"

He reached out and patted her hand.

"Steady now, little woman; steady now!" he said soothingly. "I'd give the hull of me piece by piece for you or your'n, and, Iva," he faltered, "seein' as it's Christmas an' all that, an' I cussed old Dad, an'—an'—well, if you're needin' anything up at the ranch, won't ye let me give ye a lift?"

She lowered her eyes and did not look at him.

"There is nothin' I'm needin' up at the ranch," she said, "onless'n it's you, Jim." And she buried her face in the pillow beside him.

Howard Fielding has sent us a mystery novel of peculiar excellence, and in a fortnight, when you read the story, you will agree with us. He calls it "The Brown Flare"—taking the title from the flare in a man's eye at a spy-hole in a door. A story that has much to do with Mexico and Big Business, though the scene is laid in New York.

Done In Oil

By Benjamin Richard Sher

Author of "Rubber Heels," "Misjudged," Etc.

Being the tale of a picture painted to order of a very shrewd manufacturer of garments who believed in treating an artist as he treated any other businessman

BUT, Mr. Alter, do you consider your business to be in a healthy state when your very own statement shows that your total assets to-day are no greater than they were three years ago?" Spitzten, the president and credit man of the Spongeless Woolen Company, was exasperated. He laid on the table before them the statements of 1911 and 1914 that Goldstein & Alter had brought. "No, gentlemen, I can't do it," he said, with a shake of the head.

But a little thing like a cold turndown never fazed Harry Alter, the junior partner of the cloak-and-suit firm. "Mr. Spitzten," he said, taking up the statements and holding them before the eyes of the credit man. "You got to take notice of this, that in 1911 we had it stock on hand seven thousand dollars, and no cash in bank; and to-day, in 1914, we got it cash in bank seven thousand dollars and no stock on hand!"

He dropped the papers and looked at the woolen merchant with a smile of satisfaction, as if he had cleared up the objection.

"Well, what of that?" demanded Spitzten. "That doesn't alter the result. If you have five ten-dollar bills in your pocket to-day, and to-morrow you have fifty one-dollar bills, you would still have only fifty dollars."

"Ah, but my dear Mr. Spitzten, you got to admit it yourself that there is so much difference between seven thou-

sand dollars cash and seven thousand dollars stock as there is between five thousand live fishes and five thousand dead ones."

The president could not help laughing at the truth of Harry's remark. He took the statements from Alter's hand, and continued to examine them. His eyes rested on the "padded" fixture item, and he was about to question the manufacturers about it when Alter, scenting trouble, tried to switch the subject.

"My, Mr. Spitzten, but that's a mighty fine picture of yourself you got it hanging there!" he exclaimed, pointing over the desk to where the portrait of the woolen merchant hung.

Unknowingly Alter had touched upon a subject that was very dear to Mr. Spitzten, even dearer than credits.

"Yes, boys," he said, lifting his eyes to the picture, "that canvas was painted by one of the best artists in this country."

"It is a very fine picture," Alter said, shaking his head approvingly and beaming with admiration.

"Beautiful!" added Goldstein, who spoke for the first time.

"Well, a man that is got all the money what you got it, Mr. Spitzten, is got to have it some pleasure in life."

"Yes, boys, and I work pretty hard for my money. It's no easy task to discriminate in credits."

"Yes, Mr. Spitzten, I guess you got it

to be a pretty shrewd man," Alter agreed solemnly.

"You have to be, Mr. Alter. You've got to be very careful these days."

"Yes, I guess there is a lot of swindlers in business to-day. It is very easy for a man to make up a fake statement that could fool anybody if he wants to be crooked. Me personally, I would rather have it a rich concern with a poor statement than a rich statement with a poor concern."

Spitzen gazed at length, first upon Alter, then upon Goldstein, then back at the junior partner again, and finally asked: "Boys, if I give you this thousand-dollar increase that you ask, will you meet your bills promptly, upon due date?"

"Absolutely!" Goldstein declared.

"Oh, sure, sure!" added the junior member.

"All right, then, boys. Your line of credit is two thousand five hundred dollars, and terms seven to ten months—sixty days extra. Good day, and good luck to you." He arose and shook hands with the garment manufacturers, ushering them to the door.

"Sam," remarked Alter to his partner, when they were out in the open, "it's a good thing I said something about that picture before Spitzen started to ask questions about the fixture account."

"It sure was," Goldstein acknowledged. "But that was a fine picture, Harry. That's what we ought to have in our office."

"What we ought to have?" questioned Alter.

"A picture of you and me done in oil," Goldstein answered.

"What for, Sam?"

"Oh, it lends tone, Harry."

"Well, a phonograph *gives* tone, and it costs much less," Alter retorted.

"I see that the styles you design are not the only thing comical about you,"

Goldstein snapped back, vexed that his suggestion should have been made the butt of a joke.

"'S'nough, Sam! I ain't gonna fight with you after we had it such good success with the woolen company. If you think that a picture of me and you will look swell, all right, then we'll get one. How much does it cost?"

"Anywhere from two hundred dollars up."

Alter emitted a shrill whistle of astonishment. "Don't you think we could get it a little cheaper if we got it a recommendation from Mr. Spitzen to the feller what made his? Maybe we could get one wholesale price."

"There is no such thing as wholesale price with artists, Harry; and, besides, you've been in the cloak-and-suit business long enough to know that you always have to pay more for anything if you come with a special recommendation, because the feller that sells you the article don't know whether or not the feller who recommends you is coming in for his commission; and then, again, it isn't good policy to let one of your creditors know that you are investing money in such an unsalable thing as a picture; and besides, Harry, I don't think much of Spitzen's picture. It doesn't look like him; it makes him look too quiet."

"Everything except the last thing is true. You know, Sam, we can't tell how Spitzen looks when he is quiet; me and you never yet saw him when he wasn't thinking of credits and looking suspicious. You know a man is got it an altogether different expression if he is in a warm bath or in a cold one."

Minnie, the bookkeeper of the firm, could not understand the meaning of the pleasant faces of the partners when they entered the offices.

"You were evidently successful at the woolen company," she ventured, at-

tributing their smiling countenances to that.

"Yes, but that isn't all, Minnie," Goldstein answered. "Harry and I are going to be as close to each other all the time as two beings can possibly be, and I'll bet you'll never hear a cross word come from either of us."

Minnie analyzed the happy mood of the partners, and then ventured to remark: "What's going to happen? Are you going to have your tongues tied?"

"No, Minnie," retorted Alter angrily, "though if some one in this office would get it their tongue tied, we would save a lot of telephone calls. Listen! Harry and I are going to have an oil painting from ourselves made, and hung in the showroom. See if you can find that photograph that we gave to the *Ladies Wear* last year for our advertisement, and then pick out a couple of artists from the magazines and ask them to call to-morrow," Goldstein ordered.

The next morning, while Goldstein was engaged in opening the morning's mail, a gentleman handed in a card with the name of "Jacques Ruddell."

"You are the gentleman, I believe, who wishes to be painted?" he asked, after introducing himself to the head of the firm.

"Yes, sir, my partner and I," Goldstein replied. "Minnie, tell Harry to come in." Alter trudged into the office with the shears in his hand, open, as if in readiness to snip something. "Harry, this is Mr. Ruddell, the artist."

"Pleased ter meetcher!" Alter declared, extending his calloused hand. "Now, Mr. Ruddell, we want it an A No. 1 picture of me and my partner. Expense is nothing to us if the picture is first class."

"I have painted such men as Mr. Ludlow, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Livingston, and the secretary of——"

"That's all right—by us you will get paid," Alter broke in. "You don't got

to give us no recommendations; all we got to do is look at you and we know you are all right."

"Thank you, thank you!" the artist replied, with a bow. "Is this to be a sitting, or from a photograph?"

"From this photograph," said Goldstein, taking a small picture from the desk.

"And how great an enlargement?" inquired the Frenchman.

"Like we stand here, but of course in a frame."

"That is, natural size, gentlemen?"

Both partners nodded.

"And are you in any particular hurry for it, gentlemen?"

"So soon we can get it, we want it," the junior member replied; "and if you will excuse us now, Mr. Ruddell, we will be very much obliged. Me and my partner is very busy to-day."

"Most assuredly, gentlemen. I will deliver the picture to you in a week." And the artist bowed himself out into the elevator that had just let off a passenger.

"Harry, you should be a little more polite to people," cautioned Goldstein. "There was no necessity for you chasing that feller out. He is a cultured gentleman."

Alter received his partner's reproach with a smile.

"That's all right, Sam. You will see by and by why I wanted he shall get out quick," and, bayoneting open the swinging door of the office with the shears, he returned into the factory.

Ruddell labored painstakingly on the portrait of the two cloak manufacturers. It was a new sphere to him, and he wanted particularly to please the business men, for most of his portrait commissions came through recommendations. There was a flicker of satisfaction discernible around his lips as he put the final touches to the picture.

When he pleased himself, he was certain that his work was good.

He computed the number of hours he had spent upon the canvas, and, multiplying that by the sum he had at the beginning of the year, placed upon the value of an hour's work, reached the sum of one hundred and seventy-five dollars. He looked admiringly at the picture, and was tempted to boost the price up to an even two hundred, but he overcame the temptation and shook his head. To him art was a business, and he conducted his affairs in a businesslike way. That probably was why he was a greater success than many a genius he knew.

The next morning, with the completed canvas under his arm, he arrived at the offices of the garment manufacturers, before either of the partners had come down. Minnie ushered him into the spacious showroom.

"Be seated," she said.

He accepted her hospitality with a "Thank you," and unwrapped the picture, holding it up for her opinion.

"Wonderful!" she gasped, opening her eyes wide in admiration and feasting them on the lifelike features of her employers.

"I hope the gentlemen will be equally pleased," he murmured.

Minnie made no reply.

The elevator door opened, and the voices of the partners were audible. Minnie ran outside to meet them, and informed them that the artist was in the showroom with their picture. "It's beautiful," she added.

"Minnie, please attend to the books, and don't speak so loud," Alter commanded. Then, turning to his partner: "Now, Sam, you let me do all the talking." And Sam nodded.

"How do you do, Mr. Ruddell?" Alter began, entering the room slowly and speaking very solemnly.

"How are you two gentlemen feeling this morning? It is indeed a brilliant

morning," the artist responded, full of enthusiasm.

"Not for us it ain't," the junior partner replied, in a convalescent tone. Minnie just told us outside that we got it a notice from two failures, and business is anyway bad." As he spoke he looked at the picture out of the corner of his eye, hiding his admiration by an exaggerated sneer.

"That is too bad," said the artist. "I am sorry that I should have chosen such an inopportune time to come. If you are in no spirit to see the picture, I will gladly call again."

"No, what's the use?" drawled Alter. "Sooner or later we got to pay you, anyway, and we might as well do it while we got it left a little money."

"Well, then, what do you think of it, gentlemen?" Ruddell asked, taking the portrait off the seat, where it had been standing, and holding it up for the decision of the partners. "How does it strike you?" he questioned, less enthusiastically, when he beheld the sour expression upon the junior partner's face.

"Well, I suppose you couldn't do much better from such a small photograph," Alter replied.

"Better!" exclaimed the artist, drawing himself up to his full height. "Why, gentlemen, I think the likeness is perfect. Not only have I followed this small photo in every detail, but I have tried to put into the painting as much of your character as I could remember from the impression I received during my interview with you."

"That is the same trouble we got it in the shop, Mr. Ruddell. The operators try to make the garments better than the sample."

"Well, gentlemen, what pleases me may not please you, and my aim is to satisfy those I work for. If there is any suggestion you wish to make I will follow it and submit the picture again."

"Don't take it so to heart, Mr. Ruddell. We ain't so particular. After all,

it is only a cheap picture. We will take it off your hands, and maybe some oder time when me and Sam is got time we will come to your factory and you can take the picture from us, just like you will see us."

"I am very sorry," said the artist dolefully. "I thought so well of this painting, too!"

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Ruddell. Don't worry. Let us get through with it. We got to pay you *something* for it. How much is it?" Alter spoke with the air of one asking the price of a drink.

"One hundred and seventy-five dollars, Mr. Alter."

"What!" cried Alter. "You certainly did see something in our faces that ain't in that little photograph if you think that we're gonna pay anything like that for such a picture. We are willing to be fair with you and pay for the materials what you used, and for the few minutes what it took you to make it; but we ain't going to give no charity to you, because I know it a man like you wouldn't want it." The look of righteous indignation that planted itself on the countenance of the cloak manufacturer was worthy of a moving-picture actress.

"No one has ever questioned my work or my prices, gentlemen. For the results I produce, my charge is exceedingly modest. If the picture does not meet with your approval, I prefer to do it over, and you can sit at your own convenience, anywhere."

"No, Mr. Ruddell, we ain't in the picture business, and if we wasn't such fine gentlemen we wouldn't even take it the picture for nothing; but we know everybody is got to live, and if you want it we will give you fifty dollars for it." Alter delivered his proposition in a manner that bespoke that that was all he had to say, and that it was up to the artist to either accept or reject his offer.

"I would rather present it to you, gentlemen." The sincerity in Ruddell's voice caused the garment man to blush and reply:

"We don't want that, Mr. Ruddell."

"Well, gentlemen, my time is too valuable to waste in argument," the artist replied heatedly, showing his first sign of displeasure and impatience. "You can have the picture for one hundred dollars."

"Now you are a gentleman, Mr. Ruddell, and if you are a gentleman, we will show you that we are gentlemen, too, and we'll split the difference and make it seventy-five dollars, and when Sam and I come the next time, you could make it up on us."

"All right; go ahead," the artist answered, in disgust.

"Now there is one more thing that we got it to ask you, Mr. Ruddell. We don't care for the money, but we always live up to our contract, and we like that the other fellow should do it the same."

"Well, what is it?" queried the painter, wondering what was coming next.

"If you remember, Mr. Ruddell, when you came here the first time, I said to you that the picture shall be in a frame. Now if you will just take the picture over to Mr. Gollop, the man what frames the pictures from our dresses, he will make a frame cheap. We would take it over ourselves, of cou'se, and take the price of the frame off your check, but we ain't got it the taste like you got it to pick out the right frame."

It was all too disagreeable for a man of Ruddell's sense of justice and temperament; he felt like tearing the picture, but he allowed his better judgment to curb his temper. He was too disgusted for further words. He wrote the address of the framer on his shirt cuff and walked out with the picture.

"So soon you come back, Mr. Rud-

dell, we will give you the check," Alter informed the artist, while the latter was waiting for the elevator; "and, Mr. Ruddell, please bring it a letter from Mr. Gollop that he is got the picture and a receipted bill for the frame. We don't trust dat feller Gollop."

The artist felt relieved when he stepped into the elevator. He was eager to get downstairs and breathe the fresh air once again, but it seemed that the day was to hold a series of annoyances for him. The elevator would not descend; even the benedictions heaped upon it by the boy would not make the lever move. Above the voice of the blasphemous operator Ruddell could hear the exuberant prattle of Alter. What caused that gentleman's humor to change so quickly was a source of curiosity to the artist, and, coming nearer the door of the elevator, he heard:

"Now, Sam, do you understand why I was not so polite to Ruddell the first time he was here?"

"Why?" queried Goldstein.

"Well, don't you see that if I was too polite to him he would have stayed a little bit longer and fixed a price, and then we would have paid what he said; but if he didn't ask no price, we could buy it, like we did, at our own figure; because once he made the picture it would be no good to anybody else. Well, Sam, I'm a pretty good business man, I guess, eh?"

"You are that, Harry, and the picture is a dandy; but I would have rather paid him his price than worked a trick of that sort on him; he seems to be a decent sort of a feller."

"Since when you so——"

Whatever else might have been said by the manufacturers escaped the artist, for the lever caught the clutch and the car shot downward. But Ruddell was an artist, and he was pleased to know that his work was really appreciated. He came out of the elevator with a

beaming smile, and hurried off to the picture framer's.

The partners were still talking about the painting when Ruddell returned. Letter in hand, he stepped briskly into the showroom and handed it to Alter, who in turn handed it to Goldstein, who read aloud:

"MESSRS. GOLDSTEIN & ALTER: Bearer has just delivered to me one picture in good condition, which he has ordered framed, and for which he has paid. Inclosed please find receipted bill. Yours truly,

"GEORGE R. GOLLOP."

"Minnie, make the gentleman out a check," Alter commanded.

"Thank you, sirs," Ruddell said, as he pocketed the check and shook hands with both partners.

"See, he wasn't mad at all," Alter remarked, after the painter left. "Dem fellers is a puzzle to me, Sam. They go to college, and is supposed to be smart, and a feller like I can always get the best of them."

"Oh, you're a wonder," Goldstein replied sarcastically, thereby terminating all further comment.

Saturday was dedication day. The partners came down with their wives. Alter was in high spirits. He beamed on the bookkeeper. "Minnie," he said, "telephone to Gollop and ask him if the picture is already in the frame."

After fulfilling the request, the bookkeeper informed him that if the picture was sent for it could be had at once.

"Send Jake right away, and tell Raff to bring in the showroom a hammer with a couple of strong nails."

The errand boy was dispatched, and little Ralph came trudging into the showroom with the hardware.

"Now, girls," said Alter, addressing his wife and Mrs. Goldstein, "where do you think it would be the best place for the picture?"

"Over there," responded Mrs. Alter,

pointing over a green-covered sample table.

"I would put it where it would have more light, right between both windows," the senior partner's wife suggested.

"I think it would be better over the sample table; then, when the customers look on the goods, they will see the picture," Alter explained, in approval of his wife's choice.

"Oh, no, we don't want anything to distract a buyer's attention," argued Goldstein. "I think the spot Libby picked out was an excellent one."

"I can see already, Sam, that it would be better if we got it single pictures," Alter retorted.

"Let us ask Minnie's opinion." Goldstein suggested, as a compromise.

"All right; we'll put it where Minnie says," Alter agreed.

Minnie, who had eyed the proceedings through the grated window between the office and showroom, pretended to be busily engaged when Alter called her.

"Minnie, don't you think that over here would be a good place for the picture?" the junior member asked solicitously, leading the bookkeeper over to the spot his wife had selected.

The girl did not answer, but surveyed the four walls contemplatively.

"This, I think, would be the best place," she said, finally putting her finger on the spot chosen by Mrs. Goldstein.

"Well, some people is got it funny tastes," Mrs. Alter murmured.

"The picture will get it a lot of dust between them vinders, Sam, and besides——" Alter was interrupted by the ringing of the telephone bell.

"Some one wants to speak to Mr. Alter," Minnie called, after answering the telephone.

"Hello! Who is it?" Alter bawled into the transmitter.

"This is Mr. Ruddell," was the re-

sponse he received. "I just called up to find out if you were satisfied with the framing of the picture."

"We ain't got it yet," said Alter. "We just now sent for it."

"All right; call me and tell me how you like it when you do get it," the artist requested. "My number is 333 Exchange."

"Sure," answered Alter, slamming down the receiver. "That feller will wait a long time if he waits for me to call him up. We would have it a fine business if we called up every customer and asked it how they like the coats. I'll betcha that is the first job he had," he remarked, as he strolled back into the showroom. "Well, as I said before, there is gonna be a lot of dust between——"

Again he was interrupted. This time by the entry of Jake.

"What is that?" he asked, as the errand boy handed him a package the size of a book.

"It's what Mr. Gollop gimme," answered the boy, starting to retreat into the factory.

"Wait a minute! Don't take off your coat, Jake; you got to go right beck. Minnie, call up that Gollop."

"Here he is!" chirped the girl, after a few minutes.

"Say, Gollop, do you also send the styles that we give you to frame to our competitors?" growled Alter, shaking the package the boy had brought in front of the telephone. "What did you send us here?"

"If I made a mistake, I apologize," answered the framer. "What did I send you?"

"I don't know," growled Alter. "I ain't opened it up yet."

"Open it up, please, and tell me. How do you know it isn't yours if you didn't unwrap it?"

"Because our picture is about twenty times bigger, that's how I know it."

Alter unwrapped the parcel sent to him, and, lifting the receiver to his ear again, yelled into the transmitter: "Say, you fool, you framed it the little photograph instead of the big painting."

"That is the only picture that was left here," the framer replied.

"Didn't the man what left that one with you leave it a great big one to frame?"

"No, Mr. Alter."

Alter put the receiver down thoughtfully. "Minnie," he said quietly, "please call up 333 Exchange and get that feller Ruddell."

He paced the office deep in thought while Minnie was calling the artist.

"Here he is!" the girl said.

"Hello, Mr. Ruddell!" the manufacturer began, in such a gentlemanly tone that Minnie took another look at her employer to see if it were really he talking.

"Yes, Mr. Alter, what can I do for you?" inquired the artist, in a very matter-of-fact tone.

"Say, Mr. Ruddell, didn't you make it some mistake with our pictures? We just got it back the little photograph what we gave for a sample, in a frame; and Mr. Gollop said that that was all you left it by him. Didn't you make it some mistake, Mr. Ruddell?"

"Yes, I did make a mistake," the painter replied placidly. Alter heaved a sigh of relief. "I made a mistake," Ruddell continued, "by not fixing the price of the picture beforehand and demanding full payment."

Alter remained immobile at the telephone. He was thinking of the best way to suppress the news from the women and his partner, when Ruddell spoke again:

"If you want your painting, send a hundred dollars over here *in cash*."

Alter might have said something, but he heard a click that told him the receiver on the other side had been hung up.

He sneaked out of the office, taking Jake with him. "I am going over to see Gollop," he said to his partner.

On the way over to Gollop's, he stopped into the bank and got ten ten-dollar bills and handed them to Jake with instructions to take the money to Ruddell and get the picture and bring it to Gollop's. "And here is a dollar for you, Jake; you shouldn't say to nobody where you was."

"Yes, sir," gulped the astonished boy.

"You always got to look out for them people what's so polite," he murmured to himself, while waiting at Gollop's for Jake to come from the artist's.



MILLIONAIRE DUMMIES

MANY a sixty-dollar-a-month clerk in Wall Street can tell you of the time when he was a multimillionaire—for a day.

As a rule, the directors and owners of the big industrial and mining companies, at the time of their incorporation, are merely clerks of the real promoters, who wish to conceal their identities until they obtain their incorporation papers.

"I'm one of the richest men in the country," the employee of a Wall Street trust company confided to his friends some months ago. And he was—from two o'clock of a Tuesday afternoon until two o'clock the following Wednesday.

The trust company was concerned in the creation of a steel corporation whose stock capital amounted to one hundred and fifty million dollars. The stock had to be transferred to the name of a dummy for twenty-four hours, in order to comply with some legal requirement.

A Chat With You

THEY say that good Americans, when they die, go to Paris. Many go there to stay before they die, some good and some bad. The good who go get there before the death angel hands them the ticket, and the bad—of whom there are quite a few—having little chance of Paris in the hereafter, make sure of theirs in this world. Paris is a world in itself and holds within its borders a number of other worlds. The man who goes to Paris generally finds what he is looking for. There's something there for all tastes. The respectable and economical tradesman, the boulevardier, the artist, the American adventurer—each finds a different sort of town ready for him. Du Maurier and a dozen after him have told us all about the Latin Quarter and the artists, we can read truthful descriptions about the middle-class natives in countless novels, and the dissipations of Paris have been told about hundreds of times for those who like dissipations. The American colony is a little different. It is comparatively new, it is growing all the time, it comes a little closer to our own notions of life, and we have always wanted to read about it.



IT is a highly colored, gay, interesting, and comfortable sort of world. Americans set free to a certain extent from the trammels of convention and living more as their nature dictates. The "man from home" is there in all his glory, so is the American business adventurer, the American girl who is hunt-

ing for a career, the American prize fighter, the American race-track man, the American sport, and the ordinary American crook who is afraid to come back to his own country. Once in a while in an item in the papers, in a story, we get a sort of echo of this world that makes us want to know more about it. Of course, it goes without saying that we are glad that people don't gamble as they did before the war, we are glad that business conditions are more stable than they were in California during the gold rush, we don't like the brutality and crookedness that seem to stick to the prize ring; but we must confess that we would like to have seen some of the dramas that took place on the old Mississippi packets when the planters had sold their cotton crops and were pouring the money out over the card tables, we would have enjoyed the freedom and vigor of the spectacle of life in the days of '49, and we know that sports of all kinds produce good stories. We get a whiff of the same sort of reckless dramatic atmosphere in the American colony in Paris. For a long time we have been hoping for some writer who could get that atmosphere into a story and show us our native sons as they lived and acted when destiny had shifted their settings to a far-off Parisian one. We have found him in W. E. Scutt, who has written the novel which will appear complete in the next issue of THE POPULAR, which is a full-size dollar-and-a-half book, and which is called "When Thieves Fall Out."

A CHAT WITH YOU—Continued.

EVERY good story has a moral in it, but the moral must not lie on the surface. Above all things, it must not be put there deliberately by the author. When that happens people may or may not like the moral, but they are sure to dislike the story. It is better for us to build up our own systems of morals and ethics from life itself and from stories that truthfully picture life than to have them handed to us ready-made. "When Thieves Fall Out" has its ethical lesson as every natural thing has, but it wasn't put there with malice aforethought, and it doesn't spoil the flow and excitement of the narrative. The Americans that Scutt introduces us to are of various types—prize fighters and gamblers and honest men. They are all interesting, all decidedly human. There is one man who leads a double life who is a character to remember, and there is one girl who will at once take her place among the nicest you have ever met in the pages of THE POPULAR. All the characters save one are Americans, and the exception is a French aristocrat, drawn so well and vividly as to be understandable to any one. It is a story of business intrigue, of mining concessions, of diplomatic enterprises, of sports and gambling. It is crowded with as much incident and excitement as any story we have ever read, and it has a plot that keeps the reader continually guessing. It is in no sense a story of the present great war, although it is a story of today. At one moment only the great conflict casts a passing shadow across the narrative, but if you are tired of reading about the war we can conscientiously recommend to you "When Thieves Fall Out." Mr. Scutt, the author, who is comparatively new to THE POPULAR, but from whom you will hear more from time to time, was formerly attached to the United States diplomatic

service. He has a rich experience to draw from, and he knows how to tell a story. In this case he has an exceptionally good one to tell.



IF you like horses at all, if you have ever enjoyed a race, we also recommend to you Henry Beech Needham's story in the next issue, "The Polite Horse." If the irresponsible gayety and charm of college life have any attractions for you, turn, in two weeks, to "Karl Truman's Vacation," in the same number. If you want to see the funny and human side of racial ambition and jealousy, read "Their Countries' Flags," a really funny story by a remarkable writer. If you like Canadian stories, there is "One Touch of Nature," by Lawrence Mott, a touching drama in the life of a Northwest Mounted Policeman. If you like mystery stories, read "The Brown Flare," by Howard Fielding; if you like the comedy of New York life, look for "It Can't Be Done," by Charles R. Barnes; and if you want a business story, read "Jake Pod and the Tourists," by William Hamby. All this, and more besides, in the next issue of THE POPULAR.



WE don't say these things to get you to buy the magazine. You are sure to buy it anyway, if you take the trouble to read these pages. The foregoing is a hint, however, that it might be well to order your copy in advance. It helps us and it helps the news dealer, and the next issue is such a good one that it may sell even faster than usual. There are other interesting things in it besides the stories. Among them an announcement as to some of our plans for the future. We have something really new and big to talk about, and we will do it in the next issue.

Good heating—good ventilation

A score of years ago houses were dark and cold, for windows were made small and heavily shuttered because of the chilling effect of large glass surfaces and the inefficiency of old fashioned heating. Today you can have plenty of light from large, attractive windows, with their feeling of hominess and good ventilation, for AMERICAN Radiators put their liberal, positive flow of warmth under or near windows to *completely offset* cold drafts.



AMERICAN & IDEAL RADIATORS & BOILERS

IDEAL SMOKELESS Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators distribute *unfailingly* an ample, gentle, healthful volume of warmth to every room, bay and corner. These outfits send no impure coal-gases or ash-dust into

the rooms; this means health protection and a large reduction of cleaning work and lessened damage to furnishings—great advantages to the womenfolks.

IDEAL Boilers are so easy to run—feed them once or twice a day, depending on the weather—remove ashes thrice a week—add a few gallons of water every three or four months—no need to rekindle the fire in the whole heating season.



A No. 5-25-S IDEAL Boiler and 400 sq. ft. of 38 in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing owner \$220, were used to heat this cottage. At this price the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent Fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which vary according to climatic and other conditions.

The larger sizes of IDEAL Boilers have two shaking levers—one to shake the rear half of the grate, the other shakes the front half. In this way the fire can be gently agitated in mild weather, or thoroughly but easily shaken and fire kept bright and clean in severe weather. The simple, easy-to-run features of IDEAL Boilers make them unequalled in the world. Every conceivable feature has been carefully and exhaustively investigated by our American and foreign factories experts, and wherever proved good have been and are being incorporated into IDEAL SMOKELESS Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators. The immense annual output enables us to offer these outfits at prices within reach of all. Accept no substitute.

These outfits are put in without any tearing up, annoyance to occupants or disturbing old heating methods until ready to start fire in the new. If you are ready to quit being a slave of the coal hod and are paying the bills and suffering the ills of old-fashioned heating, phone, call, or write *to-day!* Iron prices now rule the lowest in a decade and at this season you get the services of the most skillful fitters!

\$150 stationary Cleaner

Ask for catalog of ARCO WAND Vacuum Cleaner, with iron suction pipe running to each floor. Guaranteed unailing.



Showrooms in all large cities

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

Write Department 42
816-822 S. Michigan
Avenue, Chicago

April Ainslee's

In the complete novel, "From the Iron Gates," Elizabeth Burgess Hughes has woven about her charming heroine a mystery romance of real dramatic power.

Good Stories by Any Authors

rather than

Any Stories by Good Authors

AINSLEE'S readers need not be told that the following short stories are in our April issue because of themselves—not because of their authors' names:

The Romance of an Ugly Policeman, P. G. Wodehouse

The Personal Touch . . . Bonnie R. Ginger

The Rebellion of Maurice Maeterlinck Hyatt

Frank MacDonald

A Woman Therefore . . . Eleanor Ferris

Bill Heenan's Cure . . . William Slavens McNutt

The Advertising Agent . . . Katharine Baker

The Woman Without a Fate . . . Constance Skinner

Ainslee's for April

On sale March 13th.

15 cents the copy

Time to Think of Your Easter Clothes

EASTER will soon be here, and with it the balmy days of Spring. You will need new clothes, and if you want to dress in the *latest New York Styles*, you will need our Free Fashion Catalogue to aid you in making up your mind what to wear. Remember, we will be glad to send you a copy by return mail, if you will send us your name and address.

Our Catalogue of Spring Fashions is yours *Free* if you write for it. It will show you *ALL* the new styles that are

FREE

FREE



to be worn in New York this coming season, and the styles are quite different this Spring. It contains 278 pages of beautiful Illustrations and Descriptions. You'll be delighted with this Book. Write NOW and ask for Catalogue No. 67R.

6R78
Hat
\$298

6R76
Hat
\$398



35R75
Dress
\$598

Easter Bargains.

35R75. A Charming Coat-effect Dress made of an especially fine quality washable French linen. The waist is designed in Empire coat-effect with a deep plenum which hangs loose over the skirt below a stitched girde which is embroidered with braid in self color in attractive scroll design. The collar and the turnback cuffs which finish the three-quarter sleeves are of sheer white embroidered Oranide. A pretty touch is afforded by the girde effect and tailored bow of wide black velvet ribbon. The skirt is cut full, flaring at the lower edge. Has a stitched plait down center of front and back. The dress fastens invisibly in front beneath a row of small self-covered buttons. Colors White, rose, tan or Copenhagen blue. Special low price **\$6.98**

6R76. A Genuine Panama Hat for ladies or misses. This is a hat of extremely graceful shape made with high slant crown which is trimmed with a band of velvet ribbon, and at the right side is a beautiful large silk rose with green foliage and ends of velvet. The hat has a broad flat brim which measures 15 inches in diameter. It can be supplied in natural white Panama straw only with black velvet band, and either pink or American Beauty red **\$5.98**

35R77. A Beautiful Dress of all-silk Chiffon Taffeta. This is a dress of charming style with the waist designed in the popular Empire coatee effect, and made in the form of a short jacket, hanging loosely over a sleeveless lining. The standing collar is of black silk velvet ribbon and around the neck is a ruffle of Oriental lace, which is also used to trim the vest in front where the model is trimmed with a row of fancy crystal buttons. Coatee is plaited at each side of front and trimmed with a row of velvet buttons with taffeta centers. It is turned up around the bottom and edged with a band of black velvet. The long sleeves have flare cuffs also finished with velvet. The upper part of skirt is shirred, giving a pretty fullness to the lower part, which flares at the bottom and is trimmed with a row of velvet and silk buttons. The Empire girde and sash are of black velvet. Dress comes in Copenhagen blue, the new sand color, in navy blue, or black **\$9.98**

6R78. Handmade Dress Hat, made of fancy Silk Straw Braid. The crown is trimmed with a band of velvet ribbon ending in bow at right side. The trim is rolled up at left side where the hat is trimmed with a pretty shaded French tin Ostrich fancy and two Ostrich Aigrette effects. This smart hat comes in black with white crown, black rim, and shaded blue feather fancy, in navy blue with navy-blue and shaded ostrich, also in all solid black **\$2.98**

Sizes 32 to 44 bust, skirt length 40 inches. Also to fit misses an armal women, 32 to 38 bust, skirt length 38 inches.



35 R77
Dress
\$998

We Pay All Mail or Express Charges to Your Town

BELLAS HESS & CO
WASHINGTON, MORTON & BARROW STS.
NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

We Guarantee to Please You or Refund Your Money



This Coupon Saved Me \$6.50 on My Last Suit

It will save you at least that
much on your next suit.

Clip and mail it to us now while you think of it. We'll send you, free of charge, and without any obligation whatsoever to you, our big new Style Book, 64 of the latest Spring and Summer fabrics, and a complete measuring outfit, with which any member of your family can measure you as expertly as a tailor. In fact we guarantee to fit you perfectly from the measurements you send us, or you need not keep the clothes.

\$20 Suit Made to Measure \$13.50

Our method of dealing directly with you, eliminating all in-between costs and expenses, such as salesmen and commission men, not only makes it possible for us to make you a guaranteed \$20. suit for \$13.50 in the finest and smartest New York tailoring,—but has resulted in our building up the largest men's mail-order tailoring business in the world.

Send the coupon above—you have nothing to lose and much to save on your next suit.

Bell Tailors of New York, 122-124 Walker St., N. Y.



Style Book & 64 Samples FREE

For varied reading the Brooklyn *Standard Union* commends THE POPULAR MAGAZINE. "The stories," says the *Standard Union*, "range from politics to cow-punching, from balloon racing to golfing, from the detection of crime to big business, from a life on the ocean wave to baseball."

The Indianapolis *Star*, speaking of the timeliness of magazines, makes mention of the fact that "THE POPULAR had a novel dealing with the intimate life of the marines just a day or two before the Mexican difficulties had reached the violent stage, and the marines distinguished themselves at Vera Cruz."

"I'm through with Cheap Tires"

Every bicycle rider says that sooner or later. A good bicycle tire gives you your money's worth every time.

A cheap tire comes as close to being worthless as anything you can buy.

VITALIC

Bicycle VITALIC Tires Tires

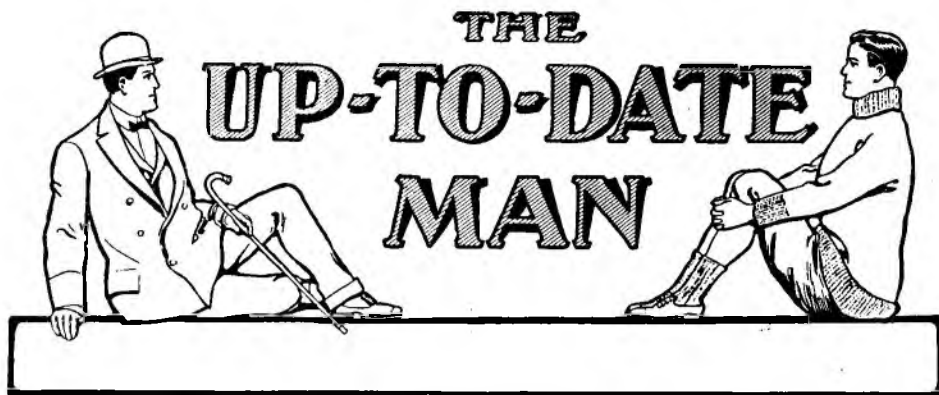
You can depend on Vitalic Bicycle Tires for months of hard riding because of the quantity of pure rubber in them and because they have an unbreakable, motorcycle tire fabric. Pay less than the price of Vitalic Tires and you get less rubber, weaker fabric and an undependable tire

*Send for Sample of Tire and for Story,
"The Man Who Rode On His Rims"*

Continental Rubber Works, 846 Liberty St., Erie, Pa.



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



The readers of the magazine may write to this department about any problem of dress. Every question will be promptly answered, provided that a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

THERE is no budging the fact that men's fashions come from London, just as it would be breath-waste to dispute that Paris is chieftain of women's fashions. America is interpretative, rather than creative, in dress, not because we lack originality, but because our "snobocracy" knee-crooks to Europe and clings to its coat tails.

So, this spring, as before, we will take our cue from London, playing up to its lead. The influence of the war upon men's fashions is noticeable in that it has sobered colors and dimmed much of the brightness of patterns.

There is a big pothor about "military styles," but except in our evening cape coats, laced boots, gauntlet gloves, and a sort of soldierly swagger in the perch of our hats and the tilt of our sticks, strictly military modes are inapplicable to civilian dress.

In spring topcoats, the most noteworthy change is the revival of coverts—see sketch—both long and short. The knee-length covert coat will be the most popular garment, but the shorter coat will be more exclusive.

All fashionable

topcoats are cut form tracing and hip curving. The old loose-back coat of the "throw-on," Balmacaan type, and raglan type has lost caste, except for traveling, country, and sports. Your town coat must flex to the figure, and the drapery of the skirt is rather full and flaring. The only loose-swinging coat in fashion just now is the very long military coat with a belted back, patterned after the greatcoats worn by foreign army officers in the field.

In sack suits there are important changes. The back drapes closely, and terminates in a slight bell flare at the bottom. It may have a center vent, two side vents, or no vent. The waistcoat is cut with a collar, flat or rolling, and to crease into the waistline, with a "button to skip" at the bottom of the long points.



Sleevetops are raised or puffed at the seam where they join the shoulders to give a close-clipped, clean-shorn look of military slimmess. Coat cuffs are plain or welted, seldom turned up, and coat pockets are half moon or crescent-shaped.

Trousers are not cut high to swing clear of the ankle,

The Budding Vogue of the Fancy Waistcoat.

\$1⁰⁰ DOWN

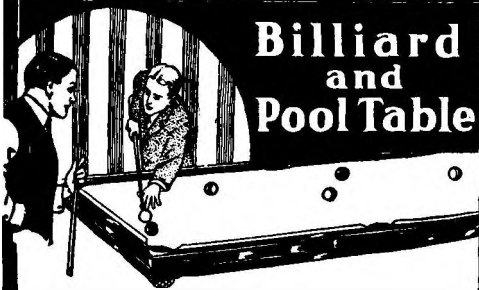
FREE TRIAL

ing on size and style) and a small amount each month. Sizes range up to 42-9 feet (standard). Complete playing equipment of balls, cues, etc., free.

You can own a Burrowes Billiard and Pool Table. Prices are from \$15 up, on easy terms of \$1 or more down (depending on size and style) and a small amount each month. Sizes range up to 42-9 feet (standard). Complete playing equipment of balls, cues, etc., free.

BURROWES

Billiard and Pool Table



You need no special room. Burrowes Table can be set on dining or library table, or on its own legs or folding stand, and quickly set aside when not in use. Burrowes Tables are used by experts for home practice. The most delicate shots can be executed with the utmost accuracy.

FREE TRIAL—NO RED TAPE

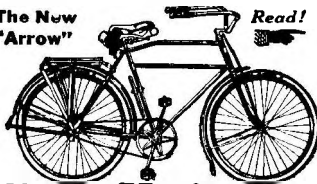
On receipt of first installment we will ship Table. Play on it one week. If unsatisfactory return it, and on its receipt we will refund your deposit. This ensures you a free trial. Write today for illustrated catalog giving prices, terms, etc.

E. T. BURROWES CO., 121 Spring St., Portland, Me.
Mfrs. Burrowes Rustless Insect Screens and Folding Card Tables.

The New "Arrow"

Read!

Electrically Lighted!



Easy motorcycle saddle—New coaster brake—motorcycle road guard—stand and parcel rack—motorcycle pedals—long rubber grip motorcycle handle bars—re-inforced motorcycle frame. Fisk Red Tread Clincher Tires—beautiful finish. Write.

New Motorcycle Type

Write for our new 1915 catalog. Read the wonderful 1915 improvements above. Nothing like this bicycle ever offered before. Other features. Low. Send for catalog. The New Arrow—the most wonderful bicycle value ever built. Perfect motorcycle type. All sizes for boys, men and women.

Pay As You Ride A small amount down brings you the 1915 Arrow—enjoy riding it right away—pay just a little each month *while you ride*. Write for rock-bottom direct offer.

Write Today Get our new free catalog of this wonderful 1915 Arrow and our rock-bottom offer. No obligations. Don't delay. Your name on a postal will do. Write today—NOW.
Arrow Cycle Co. Dept. 1144, 19th St. & California Ave. Chicago

"Old Town Canoes"

Make Canoeing Your Summer Pastime

Join the thousands who revel in this popular sport. Get a sturdy, light low-priced "Old Town Canoe" and unfold the glories of the great outdoors. "Old Town" is the canoe used by experienced scouts and guides. 4000 canoes just finished. Write for catalog of canoe views and name of dealer in your town.

OLD TOWN CANOE CO.
434 Main St.
Old Town, Maine,
U. S. A.



as hitherto, but are cut longer, break a trifle over the instep, and have a forward flare or "kick," not unlike the familiar sailor effect, but, of course, not so pronounced. This is an important change.

Another notable change is the dropping of the turn-ups on trousers for the plain bottoms, save in trousers for



The Spring Covert Coat and Other Smart Details.

confessedly country wear and the sports. This takes a lot of superfluous cloth away from the ankle, and lends a trimmer, closer-draping look.


The "cutaway sack" coat, so called because it resembles the conventional cutaway, is one of the favored spring fashions. Like the smart tailed cutaway, it fastens with a single button, just enough to give it a pivot or anchor-

DOZENS ARE ROBBED BY BURGLAR
BURGLAR STIL HOLD CITY AT THEIR MERCY
FINDS BURGLAR IN HER BEDROOM
HOUSES ROBBED
DIAMOND THIEVES LOOT TWO DETROIT HOMES AND LEFT
HAS STRUGGLED WITH BURGLAR

AUTOMOBILE BANDIT RAIDS CINCINNATI BANKS

BURGLAR SUBURBAN OF L. H.
Negro Arrests
CARRIED
OLD BURGLAR ENTERS THE PIT

AIMS AS EASY AS POINTING YOUR FINGER




National Crime Wave Caused by Bad Men Out of Work

Is Your Office—Messenger—Home—Helpless?

San Francisco Chronicle:—Burglars Still Hold City at Their Mercy. **Los Angeles Tribune:**—Burglar Slays a Rich Man in His Home. **St. Louis Globe-Democrat:**—Burglar Sets Fire to Suburban Home. House Virtually Destroyed. **Cincinnati Commercial Tribune:**—Banks Robbed. First Robbery 10.45 A. M. Second 12.15 P. M. **Lat** Secured from Provident Bank \$7600; from Liberty Bank, \$5610. **Boston Record:**—Thief snatches bag with \$2000. **New York Evening Post:**—Lone Burglar Drugs Apartment Victims. (Heard no sound but woke in morning; ill from chloroform to find valuables stolen.)

NO bank messenger, paymaster, cashier, office or home is safe in these times without a Savage Automatic. Why a Savage? Because even in the excitement of an emergency in the dark you can aim the Savage as easy as pointing your finger. Also because the Savage shoots 10 lightning shots instead of 6 or 8 as in other automatics. Get a Savage today. These times call loudly for Savage protection. Send for free booklet.

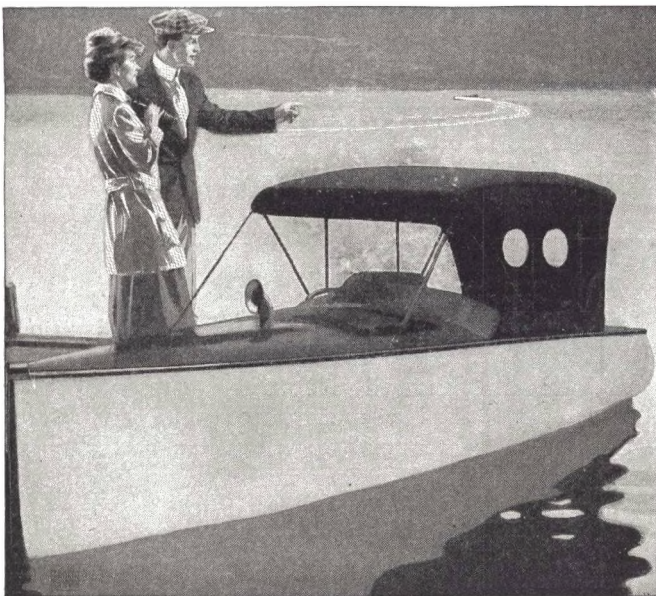
SAVAGE ARMS CO., 944 SAVAGE AVENUE, UTICA, N. Y.

THE  **SAVAGE AUTOMATIC**

SAFETY AND SERVICE

MULLINS BOATS

SAFETY AND SERVICE



Ready for the First Trip.

"I am glad we decided upon a Mullins Boat. There's another one out there! See how she glides over the water—swiftly—gracefully—easily—see how she answers the wheel—how the bright work glistens! We may well be proud of our boat."

Built of both wood and steel in the largest boat factory in the world, powered with 2 and 4-cycle motors, pronounced by 60,000 owners the most boat for the money in the country.


Send for interesting, free catalogue and learn where you can see a Mullins Boat

The W. H. Mullins Co.
65 Franklin St. SALEM, OHIO
Also Manufacturers of the Celebrated Charles River Model Canoe

Boston Garter

Velvet Grip

An essential of
Correct Dress
for Men



Liste 25¢
Silk 50¢

Hold's Your Sock Smooth as Your Skin

GEORGE FROST CO. Makers BOSTON

1915 Model RIDE a RANGER

bicycle and know you have the best. Buy a machine you can prove before accepting.

DELIVERED FREE ON APPROVAL and 30 days' trial. No expense to you if you do not wish to keep it. **LOW FACTORY COST,** great improvements and values never before equalled in our 1915 models.

WRITE TODAY for our big catalog showing our complete line of 1915 bicycles, TIRES, sundries and parts, and learn the wonderful new offers and terms we will give you. Auto and Motorcycle Supplies at factory to user prices. **Do not buy until you know what we can do for you.**

MEAD CYCLE CO. DEPT. F-38 CHICAGO

Don't Pay Rent



(269)

Don't buy a "blind," out-of-date typewriter. Own this genuine Oliver Visible for only 13c a day. No agents. We save you \$48. Sent on Free Trial. Write today for book of facts and low price.

**Typewriters Distributing Syndicate
166-1A, N. Michigan Boulevard, Chicago, Ill.**

"DON'T SHOUT"

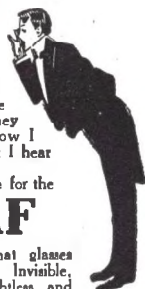


"I hear you. I can hear now as well as anybody. 'How?' With the MORLEY PHONE. I've a pair in my ears now, but they are invisible. I would not know I had them in, myself, only that I hear all right."

"The Morley Phone for the

DEAF

is to the ears what glasses are to the eyes. Invisible, comfortable, weightless and harmless. Anyone can adjust



it." Over one hundred thousand sold. Write for booklet and testimonials.

THE MORLEY CO.,

Dept. 758, Perry Bldg., Philadelphia.

age across your chest. The skirts part in front just like the cutaway, and it has the deep, low-lying lapels of that coat. You may wear the "cutaway sack" with trousers of the same fabric, or you may wear a black or Oxford gray "cutaway sack" with striped worsted trousers, as one does in formal afternoon dress.

In short, this coat stands midway between the formality of the cutaway and the informality of the sack, and it serves very well for occasions slightly, but not stiffly, ceremonious. Thus, it is much in vogue for dancing, the absence of tails suiting it admirably to that world-popular "indoor sport."

Brown and green are again the applauded colors in sack suits, and checks and plaids are the preferred patterns. Black-and-white checks and gray-and-white checks, a sort of half mourning adopted by Englishmen sorrowing for relatives lost in the war, are among the smartest designs of the budding season.

Fancy waistcoats—that is, waistcoats of a different color and pattern from the coat and trousers—are back in the good graces of the best-dressed set. These are cut of soft flannels and light silks, and in colors like dark gray, snuff-brown, and even white—see sketch.

Coats and waistcoats are often mated in this wise—single-breasted coats with double-breasted waistcoats, and double-breasted coats with single-breasted waistcoats. It is the pairing off that renders this fad smart.

The modish waistcoat always has cut-out or "athletic" armholes, so that it will fit better and not rumple up under the armpits.

Summing up the tendencies of fashion for spring, we find that it is veering away from all extremes and toward studied restraint. Colors, cut, cloth—all are subdued to tally with the thoughtful spirit of the times.

The "gay world," as society is often termed, is not so gay as formerly. Events have made individuals and peoples more serious and introspective, and fashion is quick to take on and reflect this soberer side.

BEAUNASH.



DIARY April 26, 1820

Captain Tappan is back from a voyage with many wonderful tales to tell. He brought with him some strange liquors, but agrees with me that there is nothing so excellent as

Old Overholt Rye

"Same for 100 years"

The verdict of those who have made comparisons is always the same as that of Capt. Tappan. With a flavor and bouquet exceedingly pleasant and a uniform quality, Old Overholt is always in the lead. Aged in the wood, bottled in bond.

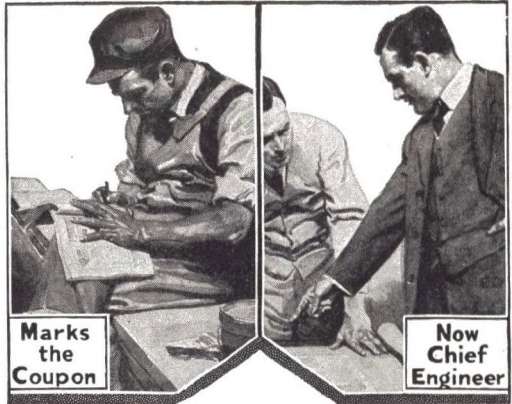


A. Overholt & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.



Bud Cigarettes

Plain or Cork Tip. Made of Selected Pure Turkish Tobacco, with a distinctive blend which is appreciated by smokers of discrimination and taste. 100 Bud Cigarettes securely packed in Red Cedar Wood Boxes, with Brass Hinges and Spring Catch. Send us \$2.00 for above box of 100. Sent post-paid to any address. You'll be glad to smoke 'em. The Bud Cigarette Company, 2 Rector Street, New York City.



The Man Who Wouldn't Stay Down

He was working twelve hours a day for seven days a week. He saw other men, with no more natural ability, getting ahead faster and earning more money. He realized that he needed training, and he determined to get it.

He marked the coupon. He found that the International Correspondence Schools could give him the training that he needed, and he began to study at night. His work improved. Soon he was made foreman. Now he is chief engineer, earning as much in a week as he used to earn in a month.

You can make good as this man did, in the work that you like best. If you can read and write and really want to make something of yourself, the I. C. S. can help you.

Mark the Coupon

Mark and mail the attached coupon. This will not obligate you in the least—and the I. C. S. will show you how you too can rise to a better-salaried position through their simple and easy system of spare-hour, home instruction.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Box 855 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> SALESMANSHIP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Lighting & Railways | <input type="checkbox"/> ADVERTISING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Expert | <input type="checkbox"/> Window Trimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MECHANICAL ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> Show Card Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Lettering and Sign Painting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> ILLUSTRATING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> BOOKKEEPING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenography and Typewriting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MIRE FOREMAN AND SUPT. | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STATIONARY ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD ENGLISH FOR EVERYONE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Contractor | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers Course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> English Branches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> CIVIL SERVICE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLUMBING AND HEATING | <input type="checkbox"/> POULTRY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AUTO RUNNING | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry |

- Spanish
 German
 French
 Italian

Name _____
Present Occupation _____
Street and No. _____
City _____ State _____

SOME QUESTIONS WITH ONE ANSWER

D^O you want novels in which not a word is wasted,
and which throb with action and endeavor?

D^O you want clean, whole-souled adventure that
takes you to romantic realms of reality?

D^O you want short stories that delight you with their
vitality and universality?

D^O you want your fiction-friends to be men and
women of high ideals and unafraid?

D^O you want authors who are sincere and convincing
—who depict life so that you know it better?

D^O you want a magazine that can be enjoyed from
cover to cover by every member of the family?

D^O you want something that will help you to forget
your own woes and ills, and those of the times?

THEN READ THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

EYEGASSES NOT NECESSARY

Eyesight Can Be Strengthened, and Most Forms of Diseased Eyes Successfully Treated Without Cutting or Drugging.

That the eyes can be strengthened so that eyeglasses can be dispensed with in many cases has been proven beyond a doubt by the testimony of hundreds of people who publicly claim that their eyesight has been restored by that wonderful little instrument called "Actina." "Actina" also relieves Sore and Granulated Lids, Iritis, Cataracts, etc., without cutting or drugging. Over one hundred thousand "Actinas" have been sold, therefore the Actina treatment is not an experiment, but is reliable. The following letters are but samples of hundreds we receive:—



Mr. David Suttle, Glen Ellyn, Ill., writes: "I sent for your 'Actina,' and when it came I told my wife I would throw my glasses away and give the 'Actina' a fair show. I did so, following directions, and soon felt my eyes were getting in normal condition again and now I can say my eyesight is as good as ever, and my headaches practically vanished."

Mr. Emery E. Detrick, 7124 Idlewild Street, E. E., Pittsburg, Pa., writes: "My eyes were very weak, and my vision was so bad that I could recognize people only at short distances. Since using 'Actina' I have discarded my glasses, my headaches are gone, and my vision, I believe, is as good as ever it was."

Mr. J. H. Frankenstein, 522 E. 20th Street, Cheyenne, Wyo., writes: "Regarding what the 'Actina' has done for me, I am proud to say I am not wearing my glasses at all. As for my cataract, it is almost gone and I have been troubled with it for more than sixteen years. A great number of my railroad friends are buying 'Actinas,' as you know by the orders you have received."

"Actina" can be used with perfect safety by every member of the family for any affliction of the eye, ear, throat or head. A Free trial of the "Actina" is given in every case.

Send for our FREE TRIAL offer and valuable FREE BOOK. Address Actina Appliance Co., Dept. 96N, 811 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

Made \$42.50 in 8 hours

writes Engineer of Oregon. Hundreds of other proud owners are making big money with the new priceless DAYDARK POST CARD MACHINE. 3 cards a minute, complete—3 size cards. Experience unnecessary. Write for particulars and FREE TRIAL offer now.

Daydark Specialty Co., Dept. 13 St. Louis, Mo.



10 days FREE TRIAL

30 Days FREE TRIAL

and freight prepaid on the new 1915 "RANGER" bicycle. Write at once and get our big catalog and special offers before buying.

Marvelous improvements. Extraordinary values in our 1915 price offers. You cannot afford to buy without getting our latest propositions. WRITE TODAY.

Boys, be a "Wider Agent" and make big money taking orders for bicycles and supplies. Get our liberal terms on a sample to introduce the new "RANGER."

Tires, equipment, sundries and everything in the bicycle line half usual prices. Auto. and Motorcycle Supplies.

MEAD CYCLE CO., DEPT. F-38 CHICAGO



D DIAMONDS

C CREDITS

World's Lowest Prices

SEND NO MONEY

JUST SEND US YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS, and we will ship to you, on approval, at our risk, all delivery charges prepaid, the famous No. 1166 Loftis "Perfection" \$50 Diamond Ring.

You Pay Nothing Not One Cent

until you see this beautiful Diamond Ring. We want you to examine it right in your own hands. We want you to compare it. We want you to judge the ring after you see it, and we want to give you the same chance to see for yourself that is afforded customers in any of our large city stores. You assume no obligations, for we send you the ring before you pay one penny. IMMEDIATELY ON RECEIPT OF YOUR NAME, we will select a special Diamond for you, mount it in 14 karat solid gold, case it in a handsome velvet ring box, and send to you prepaid. If you find it to be all that we claim—if it meets your expectations in every way, and if you are absolutely satisfied that it is an unusual bargain, pay \$10 and keep the ring, then let a month for eight months, making a total of \$50, and the ring is yours. That's the "Loftis System"—which means a square deal to all.

Write for our Free Catalog containing over 2,000 photographic illustrations of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, Silverware, Novelties, etc. It tells all about our easy credit plan. Write today.

LOFTIS BROS. & CO.
The Old Reliable Diamond and Watch Credit House
Established 1858

Dept. M845 108 N. State St. Chicago, Ill.
Stores in: Chicago - Pittsburg - St. Louis - Omaha

Our Big Leader

My Magazine "Investing for Profit"

FREE for Six Months

Send me your name and address right NOW and I will send you *Investing for Profit* magazine absolutely free for six months. It tells how to get the utmost earnings from your money—how to tell good investments—how to pick the most profitable of sound investments. It reveals how bankers and capitalists make \$1,000 grow to \$22,000—in fact gives you the vital investing information that should enable you to make your money grow proportionately. I have decided this month to give 600 six month subscriptions to *Investing for Profit* FREE! Every copy is

Worth at Least \$10

to every investor—perhaps a fortune. Send your name and address now, mention this paper and get a Free introductory subscription. Conditions may prevent repeating this offer. Better take it now. You'll be willing to pay 10c a copy after you have read it six months.

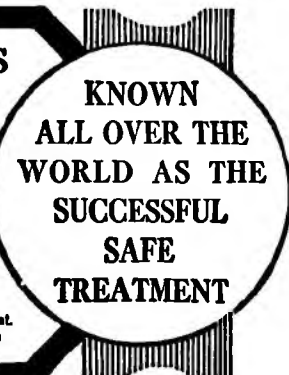
H. L. BARBER, Pub., R418 30 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago

FOR LIQUOR AND DRUG USERS

A scientific treatment by specialists in authorized Keeley Institutes only.

FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO FOLLOWING KEELEY INSTITUTES:

- Hot Springs, Ark.
- Oklahoma City, Okla.
- Jacksonville, Fla.
- Philadelphia, Pa., 812 N. Broad St.
- Dwight, Ill.
- Pittsburg, Pa., 4246 Fifth Ave.
- Marion, Ind.
- Omaha, Neb., Cor. 25th and Cass Sts.
- Mainfield, Ind.
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- Crab Orchard, Ky.
- Seattle, Wash.
- Portland, Maine
- Waukegan, Wis.
- Los Angeles, Cal., Marsh-Strong Bldg.
- Winnipeg, Man.
- San Francisco, Cal., Douglas Bldg.
- Guatemala City, Guat.
- Grand Rapids, Mich., 733-35 Ottawa Ave., N. W.
- Mexico City, Mexico
- Columbus, Ohio
- London, England



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

Good Sound Ale and Stout have for centuries been counted among man's greatest helps to enjoyment, well being and longevity.

"There's a Store of Wealth and More of Health, in Every Drop You Drink."
Evans' Ale and Stout
 "Magic Drops of Malt and Hops to Refresh the Body and Cheer the Heart."

furnish a post graduate course in the art of good living, good eating and good drinking. Mellow, sparkling, fragrant with the hops, delicious and dependable.
 Supplied in Bottles and Splits by all Good Dealers. :: C. H. EVANS & SONS :: Established 1786. :: HUDSON, N. Y.

I will send my 25c Book **Strong Arms** for 10c in stamps or coin. Illustrated with twenty full-page half-tone cuts showing exercises that will quickly develop, beautify and gain great strength in your shoulders, arms and hands, without any apparatus.
PROF. ANTHONY BARKER
 480 Barker Building, 110 West 42nd Street, New York

For **MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN**

WHITE VALLEY GEMS LOOK LIKE DIAMONDS
 Stand acid and fire diamond test. So hard they easily scratch a file and will cut glass. Brilliance guaranteed 25 years. Mounted in 14k solid gold diamond mountings. See them before paying. Will send you any style ring, pin or stud for examination—all charges prepaid. No money in advance. Money refunded if not satisfactory. Write today for free catalog.
WHITE VALLEY GEM CO., 708 Wulsin Bldg., Indianapolis

Wrinkles
 Thousands have successfully used this formula to remove traces of age, illness or worry: 1 oz. of pure **Powdered SAXOLITE**
 (dissolved in ½ pt. witch hazel; use as a face wash. The effect is almost magical. Deepest wrinkles, crow's feet, as well as finest lines, completely and quickly vanish. Face becomes firm, smooth, fresh, and you look years younger. No harm to tenderest skin. Get genuine Saxolite (powdered) at any drug store.

Money in Patents
 I secure your patent or return my fee. Manufacturers want Mills Patents. Write for free booklet, "How to Get Your Patent and Make Your Profits Thereon." I assist in selling your patent. **MANSELL F. MILLS**, Registered U. S. Patent Atty., 249 Com. Nat. Bank Bldg., WASHINGTON, D. C.

\$200 A MONTH
 Operating the NEW MODEL COMBINATION CAMERA. It takes and instantly develops eleven entirely different styles of pictures, including two sizes and four styles PAPER POST CARDS, six styles of Tintype Pictures, and Brooch Pictures. Requires no experience whatever. Everybody wants pictures. Five hundred per cent profit. **THE WORLD'S BIGGEST MONEY-MAKER.** Small investment secures complete outfit, including Camera, Tripod, and material for 150 pictures. Make money the first day no matter where you live or what you are doing. WE TRUST YOU. Write today for free information, including letters from prosperous operators everywhere.
J. B. FERRIS, 627 W. 43d St., Dept. 8 New York

CLASS PINS RINGS & MEDALS
C.K.GROUSE CO. CATALOG FREE
 NORTH ATTLEBORO MASS. BOX A 76

BOUND VOLUMES of POPULAR MAGAZINE now ready. **PRICE \$1.50 per volume.** Address Subscription Department, STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, NEW YORK CITY

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT
 Whether for personal use, or as a gift, nothing can compare with a Diamond, if it be of pure quality.
Lyon Diamonds are absolutely free from flaws or imperfections and of the rich Blue White color. Every honest person is offered our liberal terms of
20% Down and 10% A Month
 With every Diamond we furnish a Guarantee Certificate attesting the quality and value, and providing for exchange at full purchase price. Send for Catalog No. 18, showing splendid line of Watches, Jewelry and Silverware. Goods sent prepaid for inspection, subject to approval. 10% Discount Allowed for Cash.
J. M. LYON & CO., Est'd. 1843 **71-73 NASSAU STREET** NEW YORK CITY, U. S. A.



ELGIN
WATCHES
ON —
CREDIT

17
Jewel

Now, during this
Special 30-day Sale, is the
time to buy this elegant 17-Jewel Elgin. Factory
tested and fitted in a 25-year Gold-Filled Case.

NO MONEY DOWN—\$2 A MONTH

Because we want to prove to you
that the great volume of our busi-
ness enables us to save you nearly
half on this \$20.00 Elgin. **Special \$12⁷⁵**

3 Fine Books FREE! Mr. Harris wants to send
you his three latest books
free—one the story of "The Diamond," its discovery, where
and how mined, cut and marketed; the other, "Facts vs
Bunc," or all about the Watch Business, both at home and
abroad, also our Big Free Watch and Diamond Book.

*You do not pay a cent until we have placed the Watch
or Diamond in your own hands for approval—no se-
curity—no interest—no red tape. Big Catalog Free.*

HARRIS-GOAR CO. Dept. 1543
KANSAS CITY, MO.

Rupture Freedom!

FREE TRIAL



Do Away with Steel and Rubber Bands that Chafe and Pinch

A feeling of comfort and contentment as soon as Stuart's Plapao-Pad is applied. Then the Plapao-Medication in the pad is absorbed by the pores of the skin, creating a wonderful feeling of relief and at the same time tending to strengthen the weakened muscles.

The strengthening action is, therefore, both **mechanical and chemical**. This process of recovery is in harmony with nature. Old and young have testified under oath that the Plapao-Pads cured their rupture—some of them most aggravated cases.

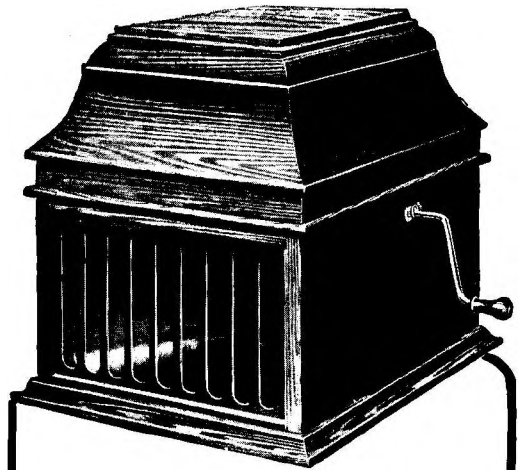
Inner surface is self-adhesive, so pad cannot slip, shift out of place or press against bone and chafe the skin. Most comfortable to wear as there are no straps, springs or buckles attached.

SOFT AS VELVET
Easy to Apply—Inexpensive

The Plapao-Pads are continuous in their action—no delay from work. Over 250,000 now in use prove their wonderful efficiency—without question the most scientific, logical and **successful** treatment for rupture the world has ever known. Awarded Gold Medal at Rome—Grand Prix at Paris.

We will prove that Plapao will wonderfully benefit you by sending you a trial **ABSOLUTELY FREE**. Send no money—just your name and address. Write today.

PLAPAO LABORATORIES, Block 256, St. Louis, Mo.



The NEW Edison

Mr. Edison's Latest Invention

Write today for our new Edison Catalog—that tells about the superb new model Edison with Mr. Edison's new diamond stylus reproducer and our **NEW Edison** offer. Now read:

The Offer: We will send you the new model Edison and your choice of all the brand new records on an **absolutely free loan**. Entertain your family and your friends. Then, when you are through with the outfit you may send it back at our expense.

The Reason: We are tremendously proud of this magnificent new instrument. When you get it in your town we know everybody will say that nothing like it has ever been heard before, so we are sure that someone will want to buy one of these new style Edison's, especially as they are being offered now at the most astounding rock-bottom price and on easy terms as low as a few dollars a month.

REMEMBER, not a penny down—no deposit—no guarantee—no C.O.D. to us—no obligation to buy—A FULL FREE TRIAL in your own home—DIRECT from us—DIRECT to you. Returnable at our expense or payable (if you want to keep it) at the actual rock-bottom price direct from us.

Our NEW Edison Catalog Sent FREE!

Your name and address on a postal or in a letter, (or just the coupon) is enough. No obligations in asking for the catalog. Get this offer—while this offer lasts. Fill out the coupon today.

F. K. BABSON
Edison Phonograph Distributors
1144 Edison Bldg., CHICAGO, ILL.

Canadian Office
255 Portage Ave. WINNIPEG, MAN.

To F. K. Babson
Edison Phonograph Distributors
Dept. 1144
Edison Bldg.
CHICAGO, ILL.

GENTLEMEN:—Please send me your New Edison Catalog and full particulars of your free trial offer on the new model Edison Phonograph.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
.....



Enjoy the Pure Flavor of Your Tobacco

by rolling your cigarettes with Riz La Croix papers—the universal choice of smokers of experience, because of supreme quality, convenience and satisfaction.

RIZ LA

(Pronounced: REE-LAH-KROY)

FAMOUS CIGARETTE PAPERS

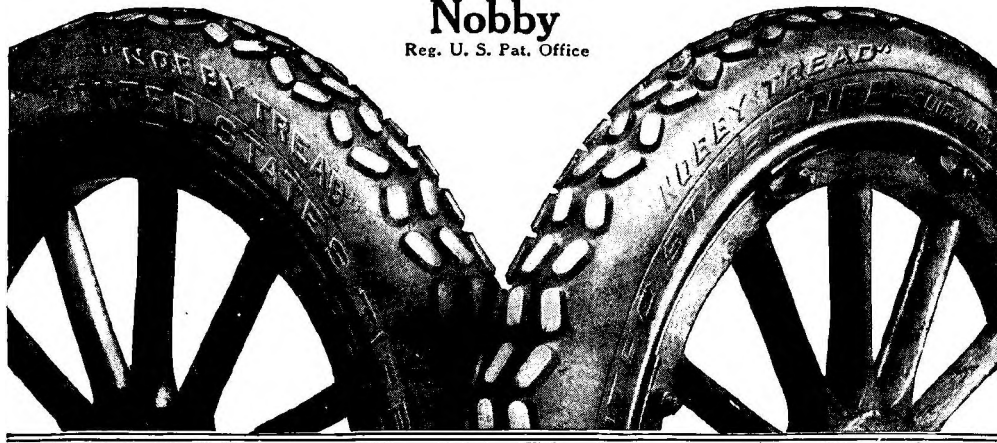
Their texture is so pure, light and thin —their combustion so perfect—that there is not the least trace of paper-taste in the cigarette smoke.

They never burst in rolling and hold perfect shape, because of tensile strength and natural adhesiveness. Made of the best flax-linen—a pure, vegetable product—they are entirely pure and healthful.



FREE
Two interesting, illustrated Booklets—one about RIZ LA CROIX Cigarette Papers, the other showing how to "Roll Your Own" cigarettes—sent anywhere in U.S. on request. Address The American Tobacco Co., Room 1183, 111 Fifth Avenue, N. Y.

Nobby
Reg. U. S. Pat. Office



“Stand Up” and “Deliver”

An automobile tire must “stand up” and “deliver” mileage enough to justify its first cost, or its first cost at any price is a joke.

“First cost” saving is an “ostrich way” of figuring tire economy—the only true way is to figure on the ultimate cost of your tire service.

Automobile owners learn this in time—the quicker they learn it, the quicker will they learn to buy

Business Basis Tires

That a tremendous majority of automobile owners have learned how to buy automobile tires is proved by the fact that today “Nobby Tread” Tires are the largest selling anti-skid tires in the world.

“Nobby Tread” Tires do two things—they give more mileage and they prevent skidding.

And remember this—investigations prove that with “Nobby Tread” Tires punctures are 90% less than with the average tire.

Based upon their remarkable mileage records

“Nobby Tread” Tires

are now sold under our regular warranty—perfect workmanship and material—BUT any adjustments are on a basis of

5,000 Miles

Thousands upon thousands of veteran motorists now use “Nobby Tread” Tires on their front and rear wheels through all seasons, because they give real anti-skid protection and the lowest cost per mile.

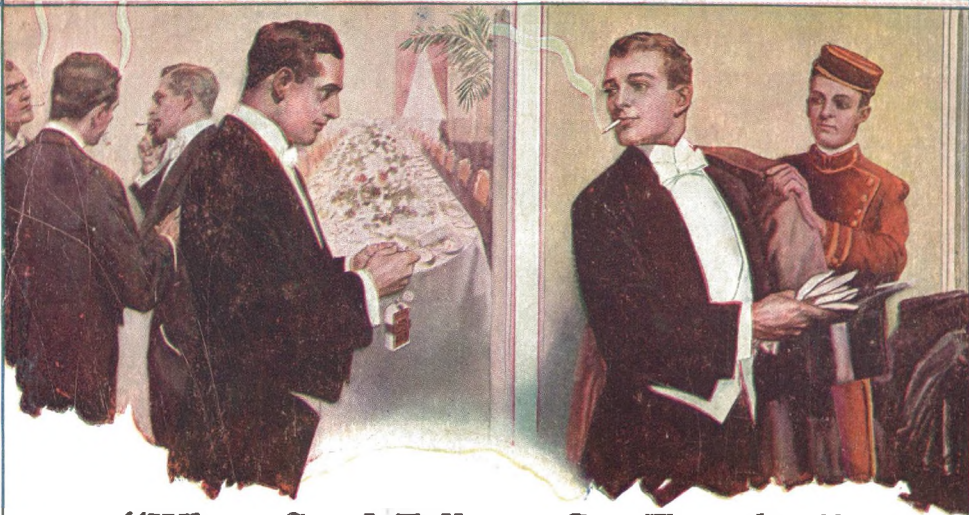
United States Tire Company

DO NOT BE TALKED INTO A SUBSTITUTE

Your own dealer or any reliable dealer can supply you with “Nobby Tread” Tires. If he has no stock on hand, insist that he get them for you at once—or go to another dealer.

NOTE THIS—Dealers who sell UNITED STATES TIRES sell the best of everything.





“When Good Fellows Get Together”

You will find fresh-rolled cigarettes of deliciously mellow “Bull” Durham in evidence at banquets, club smokers and other social gatherings of men of wealth, prominence and experienced tastes. In the fragrant smoke of this mild, delightful tobacco formality gives way to congenial good-fellowship. If you would be fashionable, expert in the company of connoisseurs, you “roll your own”—and your tobacco is “Bull” Durham.

GENUINE “BULL” DURHAM SMOKING TOBACCO

To millions of experienced smokers there is no other tobacco fragrance comparable to the wonderful, unique, mellow-sweet flavor of “Bull” Durham—no other cigarettes so fresh, tasty and satisfying as those they roll for themselves with this golden-brown, bright Virginia-North Carolina tobacco.

Ask for **FREE**
package of “papers”
with each 5c sack

Roll a “Bull” Durham cigarette today—you will experience a distinctive form of tobacco enjoyment.

FREE An Illustrated Booklet, showing correct way to “Roll Your Own” Cigarettes, and a package of cigarette papers, will both be mailed, free, to any address in United States on request. Address “Bull” Durham, Durham, N. C., Room 1118.

THE AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY

