

# SECRET SERVICE

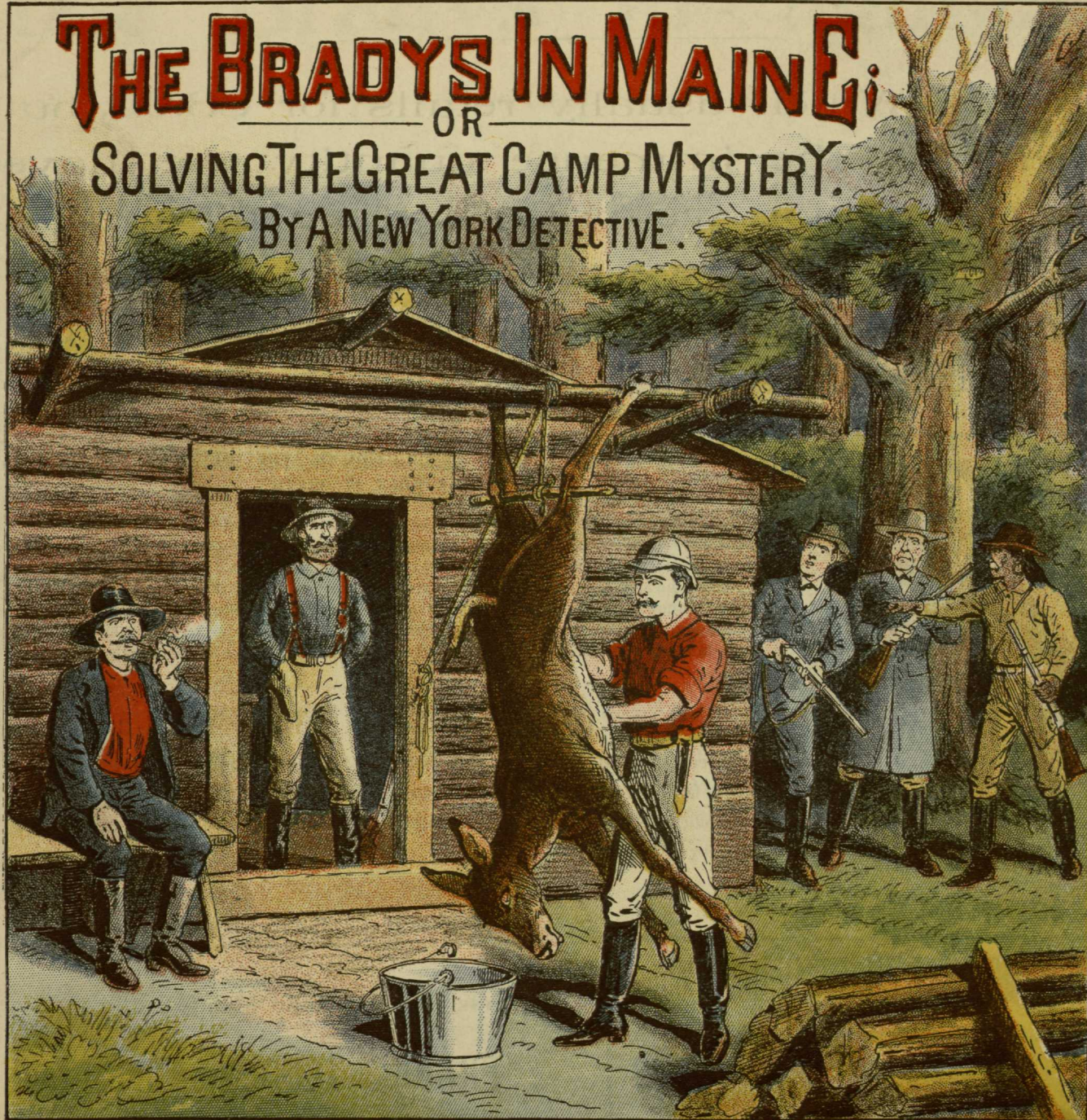
OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

*Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.*

No. 100.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 21, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.



## THE BRADYS IN MAINE; OR

SOLVING THE GREAT CAMP MYSTERY.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

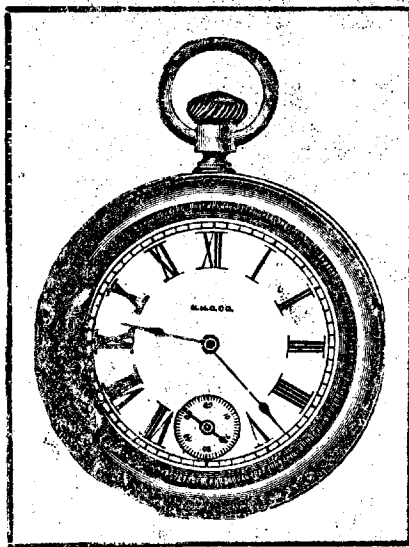
"There's your man," whispered the half-breed guide to the two detectives as they peered around the corner of the cabin. It was a queer sight that met the gaze of Old and Young King Brady.

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24 Union Square, New York.

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# The Bradys in Maine ;

OR,

## Solving the Great Camp Mystery.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### \$5,000 REWARD.

"There's an Indian outside who wants to see you on important business, chief," said the doorkeeper at Secret Service headquarters, in New York.

"An Indian?" echoed the chief, in tones of astonishment, as he glanced up from his desk, at which he was writing. "Are you joking?"

"No indeed, sir," replied the doorkeeper, gazing at the clock. "He has been waiting since ten o'clock, and is getting impatient, as it's nearly noon now."

"What is his name?"

"Moon-Face."

"Do you know what he wants?"

"No, sir. He refused to tell me."

"Send him in."

The doorkeeper departed, and a few moments later a half-breed Indian stalked into the cozy office clad in semi-civilized clothing and carrying a rifle.

His long black hair hung down his back, he wore a pair of boots, into the tops of which his pants were tucked, and there was an eager look on his copper-colored face.

"You the chief?" he asked in heavy bass tones.

"I am," replied the officer, nodding and smiling. "What do you want?"

"A few minutes' talk. I'm here to claim a \$5,000 reward."

"For what?"

The Indian drew a printed circular from the bosom of his shirt.

Laying it down upon the desk, he replied:

"About six months ago you had these printed and posted all over the north country. I've just come from the backwoods of Maine, where I found this some time ago. Do you recognize the paper?"

The chief picked it up, and glanced at it.

The circular was one he had caused to be distributed long ago, and he recognized it at once.

It was worded as follows:

#### \$5,000 REWARD.

*For the capture and conviction of Simon Danford, Defaulting note-teller of the Broadway National Bank.*

#### DESCRIPTION:

About sixty years old, tall, heavily built, gray hair, and gray beard. Gold filling between two front teeth, blue eyes, bushy black eyebrows. Scar across bridge of nose, slight lisp in speech, and lame in right foot. The picture below is accurate. Address all information to

Chief of Secret Service, New York.

At the bottom of the circular was printed a half-tone picture of the absconder taken from his latest photograph.

Having read the circular, the chief asked the Indian:

"Do you know where Simon Danford is?"

"I do," the half-breed replied promptly. "I am a guide, and I found him hidden in the woods, in Maine. I recog-

nized him by the picture on the circular. If you will pay me that reward, I'll show you where he is."

"That's a fair offer, and I'll take you up, Mr. Moon-Face. This man stole over \$500,000 from the Broadway National Bank. Six months ago his defalcation was exposed by the bank examiners. He got wind of the fact that detection was coming, and absconded with the money. Officers of the law scoured the country for him. But he was never caught. He made good his escape, and must have buried himself in the woods you refer to."

"I found him living very comfortably in a log cabin."

"Any one with him?"

"No, sir. Not a soul. He didn't know I recognized him. A party of gentlemen engaged me to guide them on a hunting trip through the woods. I'm to meet them this afternoon at the Gilsey House. I took advantage of my trip to New York to call here and see if I couldn't earn that reward."

"So you shall. The bankers never withdrew their offer."

"Will you send an officer back with me to arrest Danford?"

"I'll send two—the Bradys—my best detectives."

"Very well. You know where they can find me at three o'clock."

"The moment my men arrest that absconder, you'll get the money."

The Indian nodded, and after a few more words, he took his leave.

A pleased smile hovered over the chief's face, and he muttered:

"Criminals always get their deserts, sooner or later. I'd about given up all hope of ever again hearing anything about Simon Danford."

Just then the door leading into an adjoining room opened and a tall old man with white hair entered, accompanied by a fine-looking youth of twenty.

When the chief saw them, he jumped to his feet and cried in satisfied tones:

"By Jove, the Bradys—just the men I wanted to see!"

An inquiring look flashed over Old King Brady's smooth-shaven face, and Young King Brady remarked in low tones:

"Then it's lucky we came in, chief."

"Be seated, gentlemen. I have something interesting to tell you."

"Work?" asked James Brady, the elder, as he drew aside the frock of his tightly-buttoned old blue coat and sat on a chair.

"An important case I want you to look up," said the chief, quickly.

"Give us the details," Old King Brady replied, as he took off his big white felt hat and adjusted the old-fashioned stock around his upturned collar.

Harry Brady, the youth, took a pencil and note-book from his pocket and prepared to jot down what the chief said.

He was a handsome, dashing fellow, clad somewhat in

the fashion of his eccentric old partner, and was as skillful, brave and determined as his tutor.

Before telling them his story the chief glanced admiringly at the pair, for they were the best and most dreaded detectives who had ever worked against the crooks of Gotham.

From the day Old King Brady made Harry's acquaintance, several years before, and had taught his apt pupil the sleuth's profession, the team had never undertaken a case which they did not successfully finish.

"Do you recollect the Broadway National Bank case?" asked the chief.

"Distinctly," replied Old King Brady, as he took a chew of plug tobacco.

"How Simon Danford, the note-teller, defaulted in his accounts to the tune of half a million dollars, skipped, and never was heard of again?"

"We know all the details," the veteran answered with a nod.

"Scores of detectives failed to run down the man."

"We were never asked to find him."

"Very true. But you shall be."

"Is that what you want of us?"

"Yes. Danford's hiding-place is known."

"To you?"

"No. A half-breed Indian guide, named Moon-Face."

And the chief thereupon explained all he had learned.

When he finished, Harry Brady put his note-book away, and said:

"It's queer, but we just came from Danford's house in Fifth avenue."

An expression of amazement swept over the chief's face.

"What were you doing there?" he asked.

"Trying to gain some information from Daisy, the absconder's daughter, about Jack Harris, her lover."

"Does the young girl live in that big house yet?"

"Yes. Her mother owns it, Mrs. Danford has money. It isn't the bank's, either, for her husband took all his ill-gotten gains with him when he fled."

"Why were you after the girl's lover?"

"He and Roland Murdock are trusted clerks in the great dry goods house of Laffin & Co. A member of the firm discovered a shortage in the accounts. Murdock and Harris are respectively bookkeeper and cashier. Fearing they were in collusion to rob the firm, Mr. Laffin had them watched by us. We found that Murdock lived quietly and plainly within his income."

"Well?" said the chief, as Harry paused to think.

"Harris," continued the boy, "was living at a rate far beyond his salary. He put up at an expensive hotel, kept a yacht, a team of fast road-horses, and frequently was seen at the track, betting on the races."

"Suspicious!"

"Very, when you consider that his income was only \$1,500 a year. We reported the result of our observations to Laffin & Co., and the firm determined to send Harris and Murdock away, ostensibly on a vacation, so they could leisurely examine the young men's accounts. We were met

by Mr. Laffin to-day, and were asked to interest ourselves further."

"Did you find out anything else?"

"Only this much. Both Murdock and Harris were in love with Daisy Danford. The girl favors Harris. Murdock hates him for it, but for the sake of peace in business, he has never yet shown his resentment. In fact, to show how well the pair mask their aversion for each other, they have both agreed to go off on a hunting trip to the Maine woods together."

"Their rivalry must be only skin deep, at that rate," laughed the chief.

"As far as Harris is concerned, it is, for he has nothing to resent. But Roland Murdock is apparently going with him merely in a spirit of bravado—as a pretense that he don't care—to show his pride and indifference. He may have a deeper design, though."

"When are they going away?"

"To-day, at three o'clock, from the Gilsey House."

"What!" gasped the chief, in startled tones.

"Yes," said Harry, with a smile, and a significant glance at his partner. "Strange to say, these two young men are going off in the expedition you want us to join so we can capture the father of the very girl with whom they are both in love."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the chief.

"There's a strange fatality about it," replied Harry.

"And it makes me wonder what the outcome of this peculiar case is going to be."

## CHAPTER II.

### IN THE MAINE WOODS.

At two o'clock that afternoon, while the Indian stood at the hotel bar pouring large quantities of whisky down his throat, a man stepped up and tapped him on the arm.

"Ain't you Moon-Face, the guide?" he asked.

The half-breed turned his head, and sized up his questioner.

He beheld a tall, slim fellow of thirty, looking like a minister. He had a narrow, dark-skinned face, deep-set eyes, and a long, thin nose.

"I am the guide," replied the Indian. "Who are you?"

"Roland Murdock—one of your party."

"Oh, I see."

"Can I have a few moments' private conversation with you?"

"Certainly. Step into the dining-room; it's empty."

The Indian led him to a table next to an open window, and they sat down.

A waiter approached, and Murdock ordered drinks for the pair, which were served and paid for. When they were alone, Murdock fixed his keen, dark eyes on the half-breed searchingly, and asked in low tones:

"How would you like to earn a thousand dollars?"

Moon-Face gazed at him in astonishment a moment; then he replied:

"First rate."

"I can put you in the way of doing so."

"How?" eagerly asked the Indian, whose cupidity was aroused.

"By doing a job for me," was the guarded reply.

"Crooked work?"

Murdock sized him up, and hesitated.

"Yes. What would you do for money?"

"Almost anything," guardedly replied the Indian.

"Put a man out of the way?"

"That depends."

"I don't mean outright. For instance, I've got a rival. I don't want him to interfere with the girl I love. If he were accidentally lost in the woods so completely that he could never find his way out, he might starve to death, you know."

"It would be very easy to do that," said Moon-Face, thoughtfully.

"No one could be blamed if he were to perish that way."

"Very true, Mr. Murdock. And if that plan failed, he might happen to fall off a cliff, in the dark, or he might be mistaken for a deer, in the thicket, and get shot by one of his friends. There are various ways of doing it."

"I see you are next to my idea."

"Of course I am."

"And would you do the work for a cool thousand?"

"Certainly I would, if you really mean business."

A sickly smile crossed Murdock's face.

Drawing out his wallet, he extracted a one-hundred-dollar bill.

Handing it to the half-breed, he said:

"Money talks. Take this, to bind the bargain. When you show me evidence that you have fulfilled your part of the contract, I'll give you the balance."

The Indian snatched up the money and put it in his pocket.

There was a sinister look in his beady black eyes as he leaned nearer to Murdock and asked in a hoarse whisper:

"Who is the marked man?"

"Jack Harris—one of our party."

"I've met him. He will never come back alive."

"Good! I see I can trust you, Moon-Face."

"This isn't the first job of that kind I've undertaken," chuckled the treacherous half-breed. "You can depend upon me. I'll take care of your man."

"Act with caution, so nobody will know."

"For my own interest I'd surely do that."

"Have another drink."

"I don't mind if I do."

"Come out to the bar, then."

They arose and left the table at which they had been sitting.

As they vanished the Bradys suddenly arose from behind the wall, outside the window-sill, peered in at them, and strolled away toward the side entrance.

"Did you hear that, Harry?" demanded the old detective.

"Every word. Moon-Face is a villain," the boy answered.

"So is Murdock. He's a deceitful hypocrite. The wretch made us believe he was a model young man. Now we know he isn't. On the contrary, he is a desperate schemer. He has made up his mind to sacrifice Harris so he can gain Daisy Danford. Such a two-faced rascal would easily be guilty of swindling his employers. I think Laffin & Co. will find he is the thief, and not Harris."

"That remains to be proven."

"It's lucky we saw them at the window, and paused to listen to their talk."

"Had we not done so," replied Harry, "we might have never known that Murdock is such a scoundrel. It gives us an insight to the character of that Indian, too. He may be lying about his knowledge of Danford's whereabouts."

"We shall find that out later."

"To put Jack Harris on his guard, we had better notify him of the plot they are hatching against his life, hadn't we?"

"It isn't necessary to do so quite yet. If we did, there would be an awful row. Harris would fight the pair, and that might lead to Moon-Face leaving without us. Out of spite, he would then refuse to show us where to find Danford."

Harry saw the force of this reasoning.

"We are handicapped," he remarked regretfully.

"Never mind," said the old detective. "We can watch the two villains, and protect Harris until Moon-Face shows us the fugitive's hiding-place. Then we can tell on the rascals, and foil their plans."

They passed into the hotel.

Here they met the Indian, and Old King Brady had a conversation with him about their business, after which he said:

"You must not tell any one in the hunting party what we are going to do or what our profession is, do you understand?"

"Trust to my discretion," replied Moon-Face. "Through you I expect to earn big money. I wouldn't do the least thing to impair my chances of getting that reward."

"I'm glad you fully realize the importance of keeping our business a secret from all hands," Old King Brady exclaimed. "Now, it isn't necessary for us to join your party. We shall travel with you, but we'll keep aloof from you—understand?"

"Yes. That's the best way," eagerly assented the half-breed.

Old King Brady's words relieved him.

He feared the detectives might find out the scheme he and Murdock concocted, and might interfere with his execution of the deed.

If the detectives were not with the hunting party, they were not so likely to find out what he intended to do to Jack Harris.

The Bradys had a long talk with him, and finally left him.

An hour later all hands were aboard the train, speeding northward.

They finally reached Bangor, and went up in the direction of Moose Head Lake, by the Canada Pacific Railroad.

The hunters alighted at Greenville Junction, and the Indian procured a farm wagon and team of horses to carry his party of six into the Great North Woods with their hunting traps and utensils.

He privately instructed the Bradys where they might get a couple of good horses, and the detectives therefore had no difficulty in following the hunters.

By nightfall they were all many miles within the enormous forests of that section of the State, and remote from all civilization.

Up to this time the detectives did not have anything to say to any of the hunting party, as they designed to keep aloof from them as much as possible.

But they were suddenly thrown in with them in an unexpected manner ere they reached the place Moon-Face had selected for their camp.

The wagon broke down, and the mounted detectives came upon it unexpectedly, and were hailed by Jack Harris, who saw them coming.

Harris was a fine, big fellow of twenty-five, with a light mustache.

He wore hunting-boots and cap, a brown canvas suit, a red flannel shirt, and carried a knife in his belt.

"Hello, there, strangers," he shouted cheerily, "which way are you going?"

"Toward Lake Jo Mary, near the Penobscot River," replied Old King Brady, reining in his horse. "We're on a hunting trip."

"We'll never reach it to-night. We're on the same racket. Broke down just now. You'd better stop and take pot-luck with us."

"Thank you; we'd be pleased to."

"Seems to me you came up in the same train with us."

"Yes. We saw you on the cars."

The detectives dismounted, and, tethering their horses, they introduced themselves as James Brady and son, New York merchants, and soon afterward were helping to erect a tent, sling hammocks and prepare the supper.

The weather was clear and cool, and they sat up late that night chatting with the other members of the party, who were well-known business men of New York.

They finally turned in for the night.

On the following morning after breakfast the Bradys saw Moon-Face take Jack aside, and heard the half-breed say in hurried tones:

"I know where there's a fine deer browsing. Say nothing to the rest. Get your rifle, and meet me down the trail where the heap of rocks stand, and you'll get the first game brought down on this trip."

Jack's eyes sparkled at the tempting offer, and he nodded and hurried away, while the treacherous half-breed disappeared in the gloom of the woods.

"He is going to begin operations at once, Harry," whispered Old King Brady.

"Forewarned, we can follow and baffle him," replied the boy, coolly.

"Here comes Jack Harris now."

"Yes, and see the evil look on Murdock's face as he watches his innocent victim rushing off into the trap the Indian is preparing for him."

"Slip away, quick, or we'll lose track of him."

Harry glided in among the trees with his companion, and a few moments later, their absence unnoticed, they were on Jack Harris' trail to save his life.

### CHAPTER III.

#### KILLED FOR MONEY.

"There's your deer, Mr. Harris," said the Indian, half an hour later, as he and Jack reached the margin of an open glen.

Moon-Face pointed at a browsing buck without antlers.

"It's a beauty, too," whispered Jack, as the beast raised its head.

"Easy to bring him down," said the guide. "But shoot it like a sportsman. Don't kill it while it's running away from you, unless you can't help yourself. That's cowardly. Bring him down with a fair shot if you chase it ten miles."

"Of course," replied the young man, his pride touched. "I'm no butcher. I'm out for real sport. And I'll bring that buck back, too."

The Indian smiled secretly.

He expected the deer would lose Jack in the woods.

Moreover he had brought the young hunter on that side of the beast from which the breeze was blowing, so it could scent him.

Jack was so excited that he did not notice this.

He wore his hunting cap and jacket, and carried a Winchester, while in his belt hung a handsomely finished bowie knife, with his name on the hilt.

The Bradys were crouching behind some rocks, watching proceedings.

They saw Jack step from cover, and the deer stared at him as he raised his rifle to his shoulder to fire.

Just then the startled beast took fright and sped away.

Down went Jack's rifle and as the deer dashed in among the trees and shrubbery, the Indian cried:

"After it, quick!"

Off rushed Jack at the top of his speed.

The treacherous guide made a pretense of running along with him, but all the while he kept dropping rapidly behind.

As the frightened deer sped across a clearing Moon-Face yelled:

"There he goes! There he goes!"

Bang! went Jack's rifle, but he missed his mark, and went plunging along swiftly in pursuit of his prey.

The Bradys kept him in view for a while.

Remaining hidden themselves, they saw Moon-Face sud-

denly desert Jack, dart behind a tree, and remain concealed.

When the young man was out of sight the guide ran back in the direction of the camp, and left his companion to go on alone.

Jack was having a hot chase.

He kept the buck in view as much as possible.

At times it disappeared in the shrubbery, and, gaining a good lead, it paused, watching for him, and then raced on when he appeared.

The chase led them to the shore of a small lake, near which Jack saw a log hut, at the door of which sat an old man.

As the deer plunged into the lake and swam across, Jack fired a second shot, and wounded the now frantic animal.

The shot attracted the attention of the hermit at the hut, and he gave one look at the hunter and hastily walked toward his door.

The Bradys had followed Jack, but lost him.

Hearing the shot, they ran in the direction it came from.

"He's been making a sort of circuit," said Harry.

"Cut through this way," Old King Brady replied, as he pointed at a trail running through the trees.

"He's determined to get that animal."

"Yes. Ah! There's a lake."

"See the hut, on the other side."

"Isn't that a man disappearing in the doorway?"

"We will find out later."

When they ran around the lake they caught view of Jack in hot pursuit of his prey, and ran along after him.

But they soon lost him again.

Over an hour was spent looking for him.

But they had to give it up finally, and they headed for the lake again to investigate the man they had seen going into the lonely cabin in the woods.

In the meantime, Jack had met with an accident.

The deer paused on the edge of a small precipice.

The descent was hidden by the shrubbery, and Jack failed to see it.

He drew a bead on the deer, fired at it, and the ball pierced its heart.

It bounded high in the air, and disappeared when it fell dead, at the bottom of the declivity which had brought it to a pause.

Rushing ahead excitedly, Jack reached the edge of the descent, tripped over a trailing vine, and plunged headlong to the bottom.

Stunned and bleeding, he lay near the carcass of his fallen game.

While this was going on, another important incident was transpiring.

Roland Murdock, hatless and coatless, had seen Jack led away by the treacherous guide, and he strolled away into the woods with a dark smile on his evil face.

"The Indian will fix him," he chuckled. "Once he gets that fellow buried in the woods, he may perish, and Daisy Danford will lose her lover. That will make my chances better. But suppose, in the meantime, Laffin & Co. dis-

cover the shortage in my accounts, and have me arrested? I'd be in a pretty fix. I'd lose the girl and everything else. I'm an unlucky dog! I've always been too anxious to make money fast. That's what caused me to use the firm's money for speculating. I'm several thousand dollars behind in my accounts now. Heaven only knows where I'm to get the money to replace what I used. If the shortage ain't made good soon, I'm a ruined man. It makes me desperate to think of it."

His troubled mind was in a whirl.

As he walked on through the woods he kept gloomily thinking of his desperate situation, and devising all sorts of plans to save himself from almost certain ruin when he got back to New York.

In the midst of his reflections he heard a gun shot coming from a high bluff ahead, and saw the deer Jack brought down come plunging over the rocks, and fall a few yards away from where he stood.

A few moments later Jack came falling down.

He was startled, as it occurred to him that perhaps Moon-Face had pushed Jack over the precipice to kill him.

Running over to Jack, he glanced at his pale face and motionless figure, and a thrill of fierce exultation passed through him.

"Dead!" he whispered. "He's killed! My way is clear now!"

He glanced around, and saw no one looking.

Murdock wore no hat or coat.

It was chilly, but his feeling of alarm made him shiver as it occurred to him that it might be found out that he hired Moon-Face to commit this crime.

"No one will know how it happened," he muttered, in an effort to console himself. "I can steer the party this way and get his body. I'll go back and tell them he accidentally fell off that bluff. Yes, that's the plan—make it look like an accident. That will prevent any suspicion of foul play. How cold I am! I must be unnerved. I'll take Jack's hat and jacket. I can tell them at the camp that I found the hat and coat and hunting knife upon the top of the bluff. That will leave open another suspicion. They may think he committed suicide. I can show a reason for self-destruction on his part when I got back to New York, by throwing my shortage on his shoulders. They will think at the store that he was the thief, and, fearing exposure, he killed himself."

He was satisfied that that plan would work for his benefit.

Murdock was shaking as if he had a chill.

He was nervous, and anxious to grasp this opportunity to protect himself.

Going over to Jack, he slipped off his jacket and hat, put them on and took the senseless man's handsome hunting knife.

Then he climbed up on top of the bluff.

From this elevated point he caught view of the hut on the edge of the lake, and with his curiosity aroused, he made his way over to it.

"Looks as if somebody lives there," he muttered, as he

approached a rear window very cautiously. "I wonder who owns the——"

But just then he paused, thrilled with astonishment.

When he peered through that rear window, he saw Simon Danford on his knees upon the floor, in which a wooden box was sunk.

The lid was up, and he was rapidly filling the box with bundles of money.

There were thousands of dollars.

Murdock was startled and amazed.

The defaulter had been counting his money when he saw Jack chasing the deer. Fearing intrusion by the hunter, he was concealing his money.

The sight of that fortune aroused Murdock's cupidity.

"I must have it!" he thought, eagerly. "I can then replace the money I stole from Laffin & Co., and save myself from going to prison. I'll be a rich man. There's no one here with this hermit, and no one will know what I've done. I'll have that money or die!"

He pulled Jack's knife from its sheath.

Creeping around to the door, he noiselessly entered.

Danford's back was turned toward the assassin, and the old man did not suspect his danger.

Up to him crept Murdock as silently as a shadow, and there was a demoniacal glitter of savage determination in his eyes.

Arrived near his victim, he sprang forward.

Up rose the knife, and his left hand clutched Danford's neck.

Like lightning the cruel blade shot downward.

It was buried to the hilt in the old man's back, and with a hoarse yell of agony Danford fell over dead.

Murdock gave one glance around, and peered out of the open door.

He saw the Bradys in the distance coming toward the hut on a run.

Quick as a flash he darted in the hut, closed the lid of the money box, scraped the dirt over it to conceal it, and dashed out of the door.

The Bradys had heard Danford's cry, and now saw Murdock rushing out.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A CLEW IN THE FOOTPRINT.

"See, Harry, there's Jack Harris running out of that hut!" cried Old King Brady, pointing at Murdock, who kept his face averted.

Seeing Jack's hat and coat on the villain led the detectives to mistake Murdock for Harris, as they were some distance away.

As they had seen Jack in that vicinity, and knew nothing of Murdock having gone to the hut from the camp, it was quite natural for them to think it was Harris. Besides,



Murdock's face was not turned toward them and the man only remained in view a minute.

When he plunged among the trees, he vanished from sight.

"Did you hear that cry of agony?" panted Harry.

"Yes, indeed, and it seemed to come from the log cabin," Old King Brady replied.

"We saw a man going into the hut."

"Could he and Jack have had a fight?"

"If the man was old Danford, the fugitive note-teller, and if Jack recognized him, they may have had a row," said Harry.

"Then, as we saw Jack emerge from the hut and run away, Danford must have got the worst of the fight and gave that cry of agony."

"I hope nothing serious has happened."

"Why so?" asked Old King Brady.

"Because we want to arrest the absconder."

"I didn't like the sound of that yell."

"Well, here's the door."

They entered the log cabin.

A cry of dismay escaped them when they saw the scene of the crime.

Rushing forward, Old King Brady exclaimed:

"There lies Simon Danford!"

"Look at the dagger sticking in his back."

"He has just been murdered, Harry."

"Yes, and Jack Harris killed him."

"Let's examine the corpse."

The knife sticking in the dead man's back first attracted their glance, and, pulling it out, Harry saw Jack's name on the hilt.

"Evidence of who killed the man," he exclaimed, holding it up.

"Why did Jack Harris commit this awful crime?"

"The probable result of a quarrel," said Harry. "We know Danford did not want his daughter to marry young Harris, and that it caused a decided coolness to spring up between them in the past."

"That wasn't provocation enough for Jack to kill him."

"It may have led to it," said Young King Brady. "On the other hand, maybe Harris tackled and fought the old man to get the reward for his capture, and stabbed him in the excitement of a struggle."

"There's no sign of a struggle having taken place."

Harry glanced around keenly.

Pointing at the floor where the treasure was concealed, he said:

"See how the ground has been dug up."

"Done by their heels, during the struggle," said Old King Brady.

"Let's go back to camp and inform the rest."

They hastened away.

Murdock was there ahead of them.

When he left the scene of his crime, an idea flashed through his mind.

"By Jove, the Bradys could not have recognized me," he muttered. "They will think I'm Jack, in this hat and

coat, more especially as they'll find his dagger planted in the old man's back. Jack will be blamed for what I did. And that will clear me. I'd better not be seen going back into camp with this rig on. I'll return it to Jack's body."

He carried out this plan, and still thought the senseless man was dead.

Then he strolled leisurely back to camp.

Every one was there but the Bradys.

Not a soul there knew he had been away.

When the detectives came in they called all hands together.

"I've got some startling news for you, gentlemen," said Old King Brady, when they were all gathered around him.

"Well," demanded Murdock, "what is it?"

"There's been a foul murder committed near here."

"By whom?" asked Murdock, nervously.

"Jack Harris."

"Who did he kill?"

"An old man in the woods."

"For what?"

"There's no telling."

"Do you know who the old man was?"

"Yes. Simon Danford. Is Harris here?"

"No," answered one of the others.

"That shows his guilty conscience."

Old King Brady told them all he had discovered.

When he finished every one agreed that the criminal was Jack.

Moon-Face now whispered in tones of alarm:

"Is your finding Danford going to cheat me out of that reward, Brady?"

"By no means," replied the old detective, with a smile.

"Your news brought us to this section of the country. If you hadn't told us where the defaulter was hidden, we would not have thought of looking for him around here. It don't matter that you did not point out his location."

The Indian looked relieved.

"You are square people," said he.

"We'll go over to the hut with you to make sure that the party we found is the same one you meant."

"Very well, and as long as the old fellow is dead, we had better take possession of his hut, as it will make the finest kind of a camp."

Murdock had drawn aside from the rest, and was deeply thinking.

"After all," he muttered, "I'd better not say anything about finding Harris. No one knows I was near the scene of the tragedy. Mr. Brady and his son are sure they saw Harris rush from Danford's hut. They are certain he killed the old defaulter, too. That shifts the blame from me. I am safe. Harris, being dead, can't deny the charge against him. Therefore the real truth will never come to light. If they find Jack's body, they will look no further for the murderer. I can return to the hut any time, dig up the money, and carry it home. It will enrich me, and save me from jail in case Laflin & Co. find out about my shortage."

Everybody in camp was curious about the crime.

They soon started off for the hut.

The Bradys had gone ahead, and made a closer examination of the premises, when Harry made a peculiar discovery.

A footprint was distinctly marked in the soft ground over the spot where the stolen money was buried.

Lying in the hollow was a button to which a piece of cloth was attached by the black thread by which it had been sewn on.

It was a blue steel button of the kind commonly used to hold the suspenders on men's pants, and on the rim was the name:

"Benjamin, New York."

The cloth attached to it was a piece of gray cheviot with a green pin stripe running through it. The piece was scarcely half an inch square, with ragged edges, looking as if it were freshly torn.

"What's that?" asked Old King Brady.

"A clew," replied Harry, picking it up and examining it.

"It looks like a suspender button."

"So it is, but it isn't from the hermit's blue suit."

"The button must have been recently dropped there, to be lodged in that fresh footprint."

"Of course," assented Harry.

"Could Jack have lost it?"

"How could he, when he wore a brown canvas suit?"

"That's queer. You suspect someone else lost it?"

"Exactly. The cloth is of the same material as the pants Murdock wears."

"So it is. How strange! Could he have done this job?"

"We saw Harris, not Murdock, leaving here, didn't we?"

"Yes. Then how did this button get here?"

"I'm puzzled to understand it."

"Get an outline of that footprint on a piece of paper."

Harry complied.

Then he compared it with the hermit's foot.

It did not match at all, and the boy said:

"This imprint wasn't made by Danford."

"His assassin must have left it behind, then."

"Could anyone have been here during our absence, and dropped the button and made that imprint in the ground?"

"That's the most unlikely thing in the world, as there are no people straggling around this desolate region."

Just then the hunters came in.

The detectives hid the button, and made no remarks.

After the party viewed the remains of the murdered man, they carried the corpse outside, and buried it.

As it was then decided to take possession of the hut, they began to move their effects in from the other camp.

The Bradys were worried about Jack's prolonged absence, and taking their rifles, they went off with the Indian to look for him.

While they were so employed, every one at the hut was

surprised to see Jack come back, dragging the carcass of the deer he had shot.

"First game for me!" laughed the young man.

## CHAPTER V.

### ACCUSED OF THE CRIME.

"It's a very easy matter to trail Jack Harris," said Moon-Face to the two detectives, when they were gone from the camp. "The deer he was chasing led him through the bushes, and over soft ground, in which their tracks were left."

"And here's the trail," said Old King Brady just then. He pointed at the crushed bushes, trampled grass and soft ground.

They could easily see the imprints of the deer's cloven hoofs.

Following along the edge of the lake, they soon reached a spot where the human footprint was marked as clear as an engraving in the ground.

"Stop here a moment," said Old King Brady, suddenly.

"What do you want?" demanded Harry, pausing.

"Just see those footprints."

"They were made by Jack Harris."

"Of course. We know that."

"Well, what about them?"

Compare that drawing you made of the footprints in the hut with these marks left by Jack. We can then see if he was the one who was in the hut."

Harry obeyed.

When he looked up, he said:

"Something queer about this."

"In what way?" asked his partner, in tones of deep interest.

"These footprints show pointed-toed boots."

"Yes—that's evident."

"Well, the drawing shows broad-toed shoes."

"Let me see."

Harry laid down the paper, and his partner examined the two.

The boy had made no error about the matter, and Old King Brady finally arose to his feet with a puzzled look on his face.

"You are right," he remarked.

"How do you account for it?" asked the boy.

"I'm completely puzzled."

It was very mysterious to them, and they thought it over for some time, Moon-Face watching them with a curious look on his dark face.

Finally Old King Brady said:

"Well, this tracing of the footprint may not be of much value, after all. We must go by the facts in the case. The principal point is that we saw Jack Harris rush from that hut right after Danford was killed. Harris acted like a guilty man when he thus rushed away. Besides seeing him

in his brown canvas suit, we found his hunting-knife plunged into Danford's body."

"The evidence we've got against him is very strong," replied Harry, seriously. "In fact, it's strong enough to convict him in any court."

They went on, and the trail led them to where Jack shot the deer.

But Harris had recovered and gone.

His trail indicated that he had gone back toward the camp.

While they were examining his footprints Harry suddenly caught view of the marks Murdock had made.

The boy's cry of surprise as he fell on his knees caused Old King Brady to turn toward him, and demand:

"What have you found now?"

"Marks similar to my drawing."

"Then the party who made these marks was in the hut?"

"So it appears. Wait till I trace them."

The boy followed Murdock's distinct trail up on the bluff and over toward the hut. Then he found the return trail, leading to the camp.

When he joined his partner he said:

"The party who made these marks came from the camp to this spot, went to the hut, came back to this spot, and finally returned to the camp."

"I see the footprints show that."

"Now, Jack's trail goes toward the camp from here. Let us follow it."

Moon-Face was a good trailer, and aided them. Besides, the deer Jack dragged left a broad trail, and the half-breed said glumly:

"He must have killed the deer he was after."

"It looks so," assented Old King Brady.

They traced the young man's movements back to the camp site.

Here he evidently found that the camp had been moved, and he then must have followed the trail of the campers to the hut.

At any rate, his trail led the Indian and the detectives back to the scene of the murder, and they finally emerged from among the trees.

"There's your man," whispered the half-breed guide to the two detectives, as they peered around the corner of the cabin.

It was a queer sight that met the gaze of Old and Young King Brady.

Jack Harris had the deer hung from a pole before the door of the hut, with a big tin can under its head.

He was skinning the animal.

One of the men sat smoking a pipe on a bench, and another stood inside the doorway with his hands in his pockets watching the operation.

It was evident to the detectives that no one had yet accused Jack of the crime they imagined he had committed.

In fact, they were waiting for the Bradys to come back to do that.

Ignorant of the dark suspicions against him, Jack was

laughing and telling the rest how he managed to shoot the deer.

Every one, on the other hand, was eyeing his cuts and bruises, and thinking he got them during a struggle with the man they found murdered.

Just then the Bradys and the guide stepped into view.

When Jack saw them, he proudly pointed at the deer, and asked:

"Say, what do you think of that?"

"A fine deer," said Old King Brady, tersely.

"You can just bet it is; and it gave me a high old chase before I finally managed to bring it down."

"See here, Jack Harris."

"Well?"

"Just quit that work a while. I've got something serious to ask you."

As Old King Brady spoke all the rest of the party came out of the hut, and gathered around him, with gloomy looks upon their faces.

Jack looked surprised.

He glanced from one to the other uneasily, and a feeling of alarm began to gradually take possession of him.

"Why," he remarked, "what's up?"

Old King Brady turned to the campers, and asked quietly:

"Haven't you said anything about it to him?"

"Not yet," replied Murdock.

"Why?"

"We left it for you to do."

"Very well. We'll get the particulars now, I hope."

Jack was very much puzzled to hear this mysterious talk.

He kept glancing from one to the other, and finally asked:

"What in thunder is the matter?"

"We suspect you of being a criminal," replied Old King Brady, bluntly.

"A criminal?" echoed the amazed young man. "What did I do?"

"You have committed a foul murder, sir."

For a moment Jack was silent.

His face turned pale, and he looked more astonished and troubled than ever.

When he finally regained his composure, he asked, dubiously:

"Are you joking?"

"By no means," replied the old detective, sternly.

"And who am I accused of killing?"

"Simon Danford."

"What! Are you crazy, or what's the matter with you?"

"Do you admit or deny the charge?"

"I deny it, most emphatically."

"We, of course, expected you would."

"See here, Mr. Brady, what the deuce do you mean by accusing me of such a thing?" demanded Jack, who now began to lose his temper.

"I mean simply this: Simon Danford, the fugitive bank

defaulter, lived in this cabin. When you chased that deer, my son and I chased you. We saw you a while, lost track of you a while, and finally we drew near this hut. A man's shriek of mortal agony came from the hut. A few minutes afterward we saw you rush out of the cabin, and plunge into the woods, where you disappeared from view. We entered the building and found Danford lying upon the floor stabbed in the back. He had just been killed. The knife with which the dastardly deed was done was your hunting-knife, and here it is. Isn't this your knife?"

He held it up.

Jack glared at it with a startled expression.

"Yes," he assented, "that's my knife, sure enough."

"In the face of this evidence, can you deny your guilt?"

"Of course I do!" exclaimed Harris. "I never was in this hut before in my life till I just came here, with the deer."

"Nonsense!"

"It is true, sir. I chased the deer, shot it, and I tripped and fell. I was knocked senseless by my fall. When I came to, I discovered that my knife was missing. The hat and coat I wore lay beside me on the ground. I don't know how they came off while I lay there senseless. Anyway, I dragged the deer to our former camp. Finding it was moved, I traced you all over to this hut. That's all there was to my movements."

"Well, sir," said Old King Brady, showing his badge, "we are detectives, and must arrest you. If you can prove your innocence in court, all well and good. But until you do, you shall certainly have to submit to arrest. Consider yourself my prisoner, sir."

Jack's feelings were not to be described.

He realized that he was in a serious position indeed.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RAIDING THE CAMP.

When Roland Murdock heard Old King Brady declare that he was a detective, a thrill of intense dismay passed through him.

He began to fear exposure of his own perfidy.

And he rapidly thought over everything that occurred to see if there were any tell-tale clews by means of which he might be detected.

It seemed to him he was safe as long as Moon-Face did not betray him.

That idea gave him a feeling of intense relief.

He watched Jack keenly.

The young man was in a fearful state of mind.

It was terrible to be accused of a crime he did not commit, and have no means of proving his innocence.

"If all the detective said is true," he thought, "I don't see how I'm going to vindicate myself. Must I go to prison when I've done nothing wrong?"

The idea was maddening.

It made him revolt.

He began to feel a stubborn fit of resistance creeping over him.

The injustice of the charge made him refuse to accept punishment.

With this thought in his mind, he suddenly said:

"I can't submit to being wronged this way, Mr. Brady."

"Resistance will only make matters worse," replied the detective, warningly.

"Perhaps. But why should I suffer for what I did not do?"

"My dear fellow," answered the old detective, "there's no question at all about your guilt. We have got dead evidence against you."

"Purely circumstantial."

"No, sir—genuine. We saw you leave the hut. Your knife did the job. And the motive is easy to find. You wanted to marry Danford's daughter, and the old defaulter objected to you. Therefore you owed him a grudge. With him out of the way, you would have no obstacles to overcome in your attempt to marry the girl you love."

"Bosh!" said Jack. "I'd marry her anyway. He could not stop me now. It was my poverty he once objected to. I only had a salary of \$1,500 a year. He wanted his daughter to marry a man of means."

"For a fellow with such a small income, you have been a pretty heavy spender," said Old King Brady in dry tones.

"How do you know what I spend?"

"We've been watching you for some time past."

"The deuce! For what?"

"Your employers."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and you've been going it pretty swift, betting on races, owning a yacht, driving fast horses, and gambling at Faro."

Jack's face flushed.

He looked guilty and finally said:

"Well, I used my own money to do it."

"Now see here," said the old detective. "How in thunder could you have five thousand dollars at a clip, on a \$1,500 a year salary, if you were an honest man, and not using your employer's money?"

Jack looked at him with an amused expression.

He realized that his employers suspected him of dishonesty.

But, he thought, it was a fair assumption.

"I'll tell you how I afford to do it," he remarked, finally. "About a year ago I inherited a fortune of a quarter of a million from my father. As I believe in a man working, no matter how rich he is, I kept my job as cashier in the office of Laflin & Co."

It was Old King Brady's turn to feel astonished.

He bent a keen glance upon Jack, and finally saw that the young man was telling him the truth.

"Is that so?" he demanded.

"Certainly. You see, you've been nicely fooled."

"Well, perhaps we were. But if you've told the truth,

I must say you are squandering your money very recklessly by gambling."

"So I was until recently. My girl asked me to quit the game, and as I promised her I would, I'm out of it entirely now."

"You've got yourself into a worse piece of work by murdering the father of your intended wife."

"I've told you I didn't, haven't I?"

"Yes, but we don't believe you."

"Well, I can't help it."

"You will have to go back to New York with us."

"I shall not do anything of the kind."

"Do you mean to resist arrest?"

"I certainly do."

"Rash fellow! It will lead to trouble."

"Oh, I'm prepared to defend myself."

Seeing that it would be necessary to resort to drastic measures to subdue this rebellious young fellow, Old King Brady took a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and said to his partner:

"Harry, cover him with your gun. If he kicks, shoot him."

These words showed Jack that the detectives would brook no trifling, but he was game, and drawing a revolver, he cocked it, and exclaimed, passionately:

"I'm innocent of this crime. If you attempt to put those irons on me, I'll shoot you, as sure as the Lord hears me!"

Old King Brady paused, and the rest moved away.

They had no desire to get killed.

For a moment there was a breathless silence.

How long it might have lasted, it is hard to say, but there now came a sudden and unexpected interruption.

The pounding of horses' hoofs was heard tearing through the woods, and then there sounded a chorus of wild yells, the reports of pistol shots, and a moment later a band of horsemen burst from among the trees, and came tearing toward them.

They were a rough-looking gang of Canadians, Indians and Nova Scotians of the worst stamp on the border.

As soon as Moon-Face saw them, he yelled in tones of alarm:

"Canada Mack's gang of outlaws!"

Every one there had heard of these border suffians.

They were a terror to the settlers of that region, and for years had been defying the authorities by their many acts of rascality.

As they came swooping down upon the campers, every man but Jack made a rush for the hut to escape the bullets flying around them.

The leader of the gang was a burly ruffian in rough clothing, a red beard covering his broad, dark face, and a mop of red hair on his head.

He dashed up to Jack, aimed a pistol at him, and yelled:

"Surrender!"

"I ain't resisting," replied Jack, calmly. "I'm glad you've come."

"Glad are you? Why are you glad?" asked the man, reining in his horse.

"There's two detectives here and they were just going to arrest me. You arrived at an interesting moment and prevented them."

"Oh, ho! What's the charge?"

"Murder."

"I see. Hey, Tom Ash!"

"Yes," answered the nearest outlaw.

"Take charge of this man, will you?"

"Sure," said the bandit, and he seized Jack by the arm, and added: "Get up here."

The next moment Harris was mounted with him, and was carried away into the woods by the big black mare they bestrode.

Led by Canada Mack, the dozen or more bandits now made an attack on the hut, but the inmates poured a volley of rifle shots out the door, wounded several, and drove them back.

The outlaws thought they would carry the camp by surprise.

In this purpose they were disappointed, and the dangerous volley that met them drove them back among the trees.

Old King Brady and his boy partner had been the first to recover their coolness when all were within the hut.

They directed the startled men how to act, and their skill and courage proved to be the salvation of the whole party.

Convinced that there was money to be stolen from the campers, the bandits made several attempts to reach the hut:

On each occasion they were driven back.

Shot after shot was exchanged.

None of the campers were injured, as the hut protected them, but the border thieves were badly peppered, and finally retreated in disorder.

When convinced that they were gone not to return, Harry glanced around at the defenders of the hut, and suddenly asked:

"Where's Harris?"

"Didn't he come in?" asked his partner, in surprise.

"He isn't here now."

"The bandits carried him off," said Moon-Face.

"How do you know?" demanded Harry.

"I saw one of them pull him up on a horse and plunge into the woods."

The Bradys glanced at each other in disgust.

Neither of them suspected the villains of abducting Jack, and now that he had slipped through their fingers, they were furious.

Regrets were useless, and Harry asked the Indian:

"Do you know where their stronghold is?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you guide us to it?"

"If I'm paid I will."

"Oh, we'll pay you."

"Then I'll do it."

"We must recover Jack Harris," said Harry.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ON THE TRAIL.

Nothing could be done that day toward the recovery of Jack Harris, for the campers expected that the bandits might come back at any moment.

A constant guard was maintained all day and all night.

Nothing of importance occurred, however.

On the following morning the hunters decided that there was no probability of the rascals returning to molest them.

After breakfast, a canoe was launched on the lake and the different members of the party went off to hunt and fish.

Only the Bradys and the guide were left behind.

While the half-breed was getting the detectives' horses ready, Harry joined Old King Brady at the door, and exclaimed in excited tones:

"I've made a discovery."

"Well, what have you found now?" asked the old detective, smilingly.

"See this shoe?"

"Yes."

"It belongs to Roland Murdock."

"Does it? What of it?"

"It fits the drawing of the footprint I made."

"Let me see."

Harry handed him the sketch and the shoe.

After a brief comparison, Old King Brady handed them back.

"You have made no error," said he. "There's the same broad toe—the same size—the same shape—and the heel is ground down as you drew it."

"Are you convinced that Murdock made that imprint?"

"Certain of it."

"Now come in the hut a moment, and I'll show you something else.

The boy led him to some pegs on the wall, where some clothes were hanging, and, pointing at a pair of pants, he said:

"They belong to Murdock, too. See the cloth? Now compare it with this button we found in the footprint. The piece of cloth attached to the button is of the same material as these trousers."

"So it is."

"The buttons on the pants bear the name 'Benjamin, New York.' See it?"

"Yes."

"And here—there's a button off, and a piece of the cloth missing."

This piece on the button just fits the tear."

"Well, that shows Murdock was here, don't it?"

"Quite decidedly," said Old King Brady.

"He may know more about this murder than Jack does."

"What interest would he have in killing the old man?"

"Apparently none. And yet, there was a motive for the deed."

"No question about that, Harry."

"We must find out if Murdock had a grudge against the old man."

"If we find the motive for the crime, we can easily locate the criminal."

"Was Murdock unfriendly with old Danford?"

"Never."

"An occasion may have arisen."

"Very true. Do you suspect Murdock, too?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because he and Harris may be in league."

"Such a thing is possible, Harry. Together they may have been robbing their employers. It may be a deep game on their part to pretend they are rivals for the same girl's love."

Just then Moon-Face entered, interrupting them.

"Your horses are ready," he announced.

"Very well. We'll join you right away," replied Harry, briskly.

They took their rifles and left the cabin.

The detectives' horses, saddled and bridled, stood at the door.

Mounting, they rode away after Moon-Face, who had gone on ahead afoot, to guide them to the rendezvous of the bandits.

The detectives were determined to solve the great camp mystery.

As they rode along side by side through the woods, Harry said:

"The only way in which we can hope to expose this mystery is to get Jack Harris on trial. Until we do we will not know very definitely who really killed old Danford, and why he was murdered."

"It's my opinion that we shall have to take Murdock, too," added Old King Brady, thoughtfully. "The clews you found seem to indicate that he had a finger in the pie also."

"Did you note the enmity between the pair?"

"Only Murdock shows it in his looks. He hates Jack furiously. That is very evident. He showed it in the eager way he was watched to see us convict the young cashier. But he tries to conceal it. Harris, on the other hand, don't show that he suspects how his companion dislikes him."

They rode on in silence a while.

The Indian was plodding ahead listening to them.

A half smile was upon his swarthy face as he thought: "If they only knew how deeply Murdock hates Harris!"

With his natural treachery aroused, the guide turned the subject over in his subtle mind, and concluded he could make money out of the matter.

His cupidity was aroused.

After thinking over the matter a while, he said to the detectives:

"You think there's bad blood between those two young men, don't you?"

"We know there is," replied Harry.

"It's all one-sided, gentlemen."

"We are aware of that, too."

"Do you understand why?"

"Yes. It's on account of a girl they both love."

"I see you are well informed. But I could give you some points."

"How do you mean, Moon-Face?"

"I mean that I've got a secret of Murdock's I'll tell you."

"On the make again, are you?"

"I'm out for the stuff every time."

"To what do you allude?"

"Something Murdock paid me to do."

"Oh, we know what you are hinting at."

"You do?" asked the guide, incredulously.

"Certainly. He paid you to get rid of Jack."

Moon-Face was intensely startled to hear this declaration.

He shot a keen glance at Harry, and saw the boy laughing at him.

"Don't you think you are mistaken?" he asked, presently.

"Oh, no. When you were at the Gilsey House, in New York, he offered to pay you a thousand dollars to either lose Jack in these woods, have him shot by mistake for a deer, or——"

"Good Lord!" gasped the startled guide.

He realized now that they knew his secret.

Young King Brady laughed quietly, and said:

"Surprised, ain't you?"

"How did you find out?" asked Moon-Face, uneasily.

"That's our secret. He paid you one hundred dollars on account."

"Did he tell you?" gasped the Indian, more startled than ever.

"No, indeed. He wouldn't be such a fool as to convict himself."

"Then you must have overheard our talk."

"It don't matter much how we learned your plans," said Harry, in dry tones. "Let it suffice that you began operations when you sent Jack off after that deer. We saw you drop him in the woods and let the deer lead him away. It was your intention that the animal would lead him so far into the woods that he would never find his way out again. But your plan failed because he shot the beast before he got too far away, and thus he very easily found his way back to the camp."

"No, no; you are mistaken," said the guide, looking very uncomfortable upon finding that his evil design was exposed.

"Don't try to hide it," said Harry, with a laugh. "We know all about it, my good man. We were watching you, and saw you keep dropping behind him, after you got him well started after the running deer, until at length you hid behind a tree and left him to go on alone."

Moon-Face realized that further denial was useless.

All his visions of making money by betraying Murdock fled.

It made him fear these detectives.

They seemed to be very dangerous men.

"Well," he exclaimed, "you've got your own opinion about it; so I don't believe I can change it. As long as you think I've injured Harris I suppose you will try to injure me now?"

"No," replied Harry, reassuringly, "as long as you actually did no harm, there's no use for us to get back at you. Only I want to warn you to be careful in future how you monkey with us. If we find you trying to play us false, we'll make short work of you. By playing into our hands, you will keep our friendship, and be the gainer in the end. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

They lapsed into silence, and went on.

The trail made by the bandits was very plain.

Following it for many miles through the gloomy woods, it led them toward the Penobscot River, and they finally drew near a rocky gorge, and the guide said in warning tones:

"We've got to proceed carefully now."

"Are we anywhere near the place where the bandits live?" asked Harry, as he glanced at his rifle.

"Yes. It's up this gorge. And it will be as much as your life is worth to approach too near the place."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WHAT BECAME OF THE PRISONER.

"Stop where you are!"

This command was accompanied by the click of a rifle. It brought the Bradys and their guide to a sudden pause. They had been going up in the gorge as quietly as shadows, but the keen-eyed sentry behind a rock detected them at once.

A gleaming rifle-barrel was projected over the rock, and the muzzle was aimed square at the trio, as the sentry spoke.

"We are seen," Harry muttered, in tones of disgust.

"Better retreat," warned the Indian. "He won't hesitate to fire."

"Not an inch," grimly replied Old King Brady. "You can, if you like."

"I shall, then," said Moon-Face, starting off at a rapid gait.

"Halt!" yelled the sentry at him. "Come back here!"

The Indian paused and reluctantly returned.

"Hello, there!" shouted Old King Brady at the sentry.

"Well?"

"I want to see Canada Mack."

"What for?"

"Important business."

"Drop your guns on the ground and advance."

"And leave ourselves helpless? Not much."

"Then you can't see the captain."

"Why not?" growled the old detective.

"Because I'm going to fire on you if you don't disarm at once."

For a moment the three were at a loss.

"Desperate measures are necessary," said Harry in a whisper.

"Then charge on him!" roared Old King Brady. "Down with you!"

They dropped to the ground just as the sentry fired.

Bang! went his gun, and whiz went a bullet over their heads.

Before the rascal had time to get aim again, they were upon their feet, rushing around the rock at him.

The rascal had his rifle at his shoulder when they saw him, but Old King Brady gave him a shot ere he could fire that knocked him over.

He fell to the ground yelling with pain, and Harry seized his weapons.

The Indian pounced on him and bound him hand and foot with their handkerchiefs. He then observed that the man's wound was trifling.

Those shots may bring out the gang," said Moon-Face.

"Where's their hut?" demanded Harry.

"Up the gulch, behind those rocks."

"Conceal yourselves a few moments," suggested Old King Brady.

They got behind the rock the sentry had been using.

From this place of concealment they watched the gulch keenly.

To their surprise no one appeared.

"No one is in the place," commented Moon-Face, at length.

"It would seem so," assented Old King Brady.

"Let's go ahead and find out," said Harry, eagerly.

"Use the prisoner as a breastwork, then," said the guide, cautiously.

They loosened the man's ankles, and Harry said to him: "Now you march ahead. If you attempt to run away, we'll fire at you. Go ahead, now—do you hear?"

"I can't walk," growled the outlaw.

"Let's shoot him, then, as he's of no use to us," said Old King Brady, with a wink at his companions.

"Don't you do it," gasped the prisoner. "I'll walk—I can walk."

"Oh, you've come to your senses, have you? Go ahead, then."

The scowling villain slouched along in advance of them, and led them toward the rocks the Indian mentioned.

As they neared the place, they heard a man yell:

"Run, Tom Ash, run!"

"Look out, they've got me!" replied the prisoner.

"I'll warn the gang."

Harry impetuously rushed ahead, but when he got around the rocks the other man had vanished from view.

A huge log cabin was seen, built under a sheltering rock.

The next moment Harry heard the pounding of horses' hoofs, and saw a man far ahead, riding furiously up the gulch.

He was out of gun range, and was bound to escape.

As the detectives had left their horses outside the gulch, they had no hope of overtaking him afoot, so Old King Brady said:

"Let him go; he can't do us any good, anyway."

"It's evident that the gang ain't here," replied Harry. "They've merely left these two men behind to guard the place."

"I'll search the hut," said the guide. "Wait here."

The avaricious half-breed was in hopes of finding some valuables belonging to the gang, which he could seize.

He entered the big hut.

It bore every evidence of being the residence of the outlaws.

There were plenty of household articles scattered about the place, blankets on which the bandits slept and several rough tables and chairs.

Moon-Face eagerly rummaged around to see what he could find to steal, and became so interested in the hunt that he forgot the rest.

They entered presently, however, and Harry demanded sharply:

"Why didn't you let us know the place was empty?"

"I wanted to make sure of it first," meekly answered the Indian.

"You old miser, you wanted to see what you could steal first."

"Nothing of the kind," retorted the guide, in injured tones.

The Bradys turned from him in disgust.

"See here, you," said the old detective to the prisoner, "what has become of Canada Mack and the gang?"

"They've gone over the border on business," growled the prisoner.

"Did they take the fellow with them whom they abducted from our camp?"

"No. He escaped from us."

"When?" asked the detective, in surprise.

"Shortly after we left your place."

"Are you lying?"

"Why should I?"

Old King Brady had an intent glance fastened on the man, and concluded that unless he were a great hypocrite, he must be telling the truth.

Turning to Harry, the old detective asked:

"What do you think of that?"

"Looks as if we had our journey for nothing."

"Yes. We ain't bandit-hunting. We merely want Harris."

"Best thing we can do, then, is to return to camp," said Moon-Face.

Old King Brady nodded assent.

He questioned the prisoner closely and carefully about the gang, and found that they had accidentally seen the camp, and determined to raid it to secure whatever valuables the hunters had about them.

The raid was a failure, as it is known. They had merely



taken Jack away out of pity, for they sympathized with any crook in the hands of the law, accused of crime.

It seemed that Jack must have had no desire to associate with them, for he hurled the man who held him from the horse, and drove away furiously into the woods, where he disappeared.

"There's every probability now," said Old King Brady to Harry, "that Jack will leave the woods behind him as fast as possible, and get back to New York. If he does, it will be useless for us to stay here any longer, as we can do nothing in this wilderness."

"It's a pity we could not find out what Danford did with the money he stole from the bank," replied Young King Brady. "As he is dead now, it is probable that the secret locked up in his breast will never come to light."

"I don't expect we ever will recover that treasure," replied Old King Brady. "But before we leave the camp, we had better sift the other clues you found, and see what bearing they have upon the case."

Harry understood him to refer to the suspicions of Murdock.

As they knew that Moon-Face was in the bookkeeper's employ, they did not speak openly before him, however.

Young King Brady approved of his partner's plan.

They then prepared to depart.

The prisoner begged them to let him go, but they would not listen to this proposition, as they knew he was a noted criminal.

"We'll take you back with us," said Old King Brady, decisively, "and when we reach the nearest city, we are going to put you in the hands of the authorities. They probably want you very bad, Tom Ash."

They thereupon went down the gulch.

Reaching their horses, they each mounted with a man, Harry carrying the prisoner and Old King Brady taking Moon-Face.

After a long ride they reached the camp, and dismounted.

The first person to meet them was Murdock, and the moment the prisoner's glance fell upon the rascal's face, he gave a subdued cry, started toward him, and gasped:

"Why—you are the one I saw——"

Here he suddenly checked himself, and Murdock demanded in surprise:

"What are you talking about, anyway?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Ash, with a cunning look. "But," he added, in low tones of intense significance, "if you value your life, I want you to grant me a secret interview as soon as possible.

"Why—what in thunder can you have to say to me? I don't know you, and never saw you before in my life."

"Well, I've seen you before," hissed the bandit, "and it was when you were in the act of running your knife in the hermit's back!"

Murdock gave a start of dismay, and glanced at the man like a demon.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CALLING MURDOCK TO ACCOUNT.

Although the Bradys had seen this little byplay between Murdock and the bandit, they did not hear a word they whispered.

The intense feeling shown by each man surprised the detectives, and led them to suppose Tom Ash was acquainted with the bookkeeper.

Murdock stepped up close to the outlaw.

"I'll speak privately with you the first chance I get," he muttered.

"You'd better," significantly answered the prisoner.

There was an evil grin on his face now.

He expected to force Murdock to set him free.

Old King Brady left Harry to care for the horses, and he took the prisoner into the cabin, where all the rest of the party were.

"Didn't secure Harris, I see," said one of the men.

"No," answered the detective. "He escaped from Canada Mack's gang."

"Who is this fellow?"

"One of the outlaws."

"See the rest?"

"They've gone over the border."

"What are you going to do with this one?"

"Take him away and have him locked up."

The detective secured his man at the rear of the room, attended to the bandit's wound, and joined the others at supper.

When the meal was finished the old detective rose, and beckoned to Murdock.

"I want to speak to you," he exclaimed, sharply.

"What about?" demanded the bookkeeper, with a startled look.

"A personal matter."

"Step outside."

"Very well. Harry, bring out those pants, will you?"

"All right," replied the boy.

Old King Brady and Murdock left the hut together, the latter wondering what was coming, and Harry soon joined them.

When they were out of earshot of the rest of the party, the old officer confronted Murdock, and asked him:

"You know we are detectives, of course?"

"So you said," replied the other, nodding.

"We came up here to capture Danford, the defaulter."

"I see," assented Murdock.

"Upon our arrival, we found him murdered."

"Well?"

"To the best of our belief your friend Harris killed him."

"Can't be much doubt about that," Mr. Brady."

"Oh, yes, there can. We may be mistaken in the culprit."

"Impossible! Impossible! See the evidence."

"That's just what I refer to. We have discovered new evidence."

"Indeed? What is it?"

"Before I answer that question, I'll ask you one."

"Fire away."

"Do these pants belong to you? I mean the ones Harry holds?"

"Yes, of course they do."

"And you wore them yesterday, didn't you?"

"I did."

"All day?"

"Of course."

"Now, see here: do you notice that there's a suspender button torn out, taking with it a small piece of the cloth?"

"Yes, but I don't recollect losing that button."

"Isn't this the missing button and piece of cloth?"

Murdock took it from the detective, closely examined it, compared it with the hole rent in the pants, and finally said:

"Yes, there's no doubt that this is the very button and piece of cloth torn from my trousers."

"Where were you yesterday?"

"Nowhere except at the camp, until we moved here."

"Are you positive of that?"

"Certainly. I could swear to it."

"Murdock, I think you are lying."

"Sir!" exclaimed the bookkeeper, assuming an injured air.

"You heard what I said."

"Now, don't get insulting, Brady."

"I can prove you are a liar."

"If you don't, you'll have to apologize to me."

"That's a go. See here, Harry."

"Well?" asked the boy.

"Where did you find this button?"

"In this hut, beside the corpse of Simon Danford."

"At what time?"

"In the morning, when we first discovered the corpse."

"At that time had we notified the campers of our discovery of the crime?"

"No. It was before we went back to camp, told them, and brought them to this hut," replied Young King Brady.

The old detective bent a sarcastic smile upon Murdock, and said:

"You claimed that you were not away from the camp till we moved here. If that ain't a lie, how did this button get here before we found Danford lying slain on the floor? Recollect, now, you had those pants on all day yesterday, so no one else could have worn them."

Murdock felt a cold feeling creeping over him.

He fought away a panic of fear that was taking possession of him, and with a desperate sensation he swiftly turned the matter over in his mind, and finally said:

"Perhaps I lost the button before yesterday. The murderer may have had it, and dropped it here to throw suspicion on me. You know he hated me, as I was in love with the girl he wants to marry."

This reply did not deceive Old King Brady; it merely made him smile again.

"A good excuse," he commented, "but unfortunately it is not backed up by the facts in the case. We have got more evidence that you did leave the camp and come to this hut. Do you want to see it?"

Murdock had his feelings under control now, and nodded.

"Yes," he replied, boldly. "What is it?"

"Give me your drawing, Harry."

"Here it is," said the boy, handing it over.

"Murdock, lift your foot."

"What for?"

"I want to compare it with this sketch."

The man complied.

When the comparison was made, Old King Brady asked him:

"Are you satisfied that this is a fair outline of your shoe?"

"I am. When did you make it?" asked Murdock.

"Yesterday. It was made from some footprints in the ground. We traced them. They led from the camp to the bluff where Harris shot his deer, went up the acclivity to the rear window of this hut, and, leaving an imprint inside, they passed out at the door, into the woods, and returned to the camp."

"Humbug!"

"We'll show you to-morrow when we have daylight."

"Very well, sir. But what does all this signify?"

"Just this," replied Old King Brady, emphatically. "It shows us that you were in this hut either before or after Danford was murdered. And it makes us think that either you or Harris killed that man!"

"Why, you are crazy!"

"My dear fellow, we are quite sane, I assure you. All the talk in the world don't alter the evidence in the case one iota. The strongest proof we've got so far is against Harris. But don't forget that before we finally convict that young man, we intend to thoroughly sift the queer evidence we've got against you—do you understand?"

Murdock laughed in a hollow, heartless way.

"You are a pair of senseless fools," he exclaimed. "Go ahead with your silly evidence. Why should I kill that old man? It's ridiculous."

"Danford was killed for a motive. We don't know what it was yet. But we'll find out. And once we know the motive it will be a mighty easy matter to place the blame where it belongs."

"Oh, I quite agree with you there. And if you don't know the motive that prompted Harris, I can tell you what it was," said Murdock, who was as pale as death, but quite calm and collected. "Old Danford fought him. Said he couldn't marry Daisy. They had a bitter quarrel. Harris often told me he would get even with the old man. And he's done it, with a vengeance. You see the result. I suppose he accidentally stumbled across the old defaulter here, and renewed his quarrel. In a fit of rage he must have driven his dagger into the old man's heart."

"That remains to be proven."

"Of course—when you catch him, if you ever do. The very fact that he ran away from you is pretty good evidence of his guilt. Had he been innocent of that crime, it seems to me he would have submitted gracefully to arrest, faced the charge in court like a man, and vindicated himself. Did he do that? No. He ran away like a coward, and you know as well as I do that you are more convinced than ever of his guilt, no matter what you say about me."

The detectives made no reply.

They knew Murdock's argument was a good one, but it did not shake their belief that he may have had something to do with the foul deed.

They left him, and a few hours later they turned in for the night, little suspecting what was going to happen before the break of day.

## CHAPTER X.

### THROWN OUT OF CAMP.

There was no watch kept at night in the camp, and as all the sportsmen had been having a tiring day, they slept soundly.

Roland Murdock was the only one in the party who could not sleep.

The ordeal he passed through with the detectives had completely unnerved him, made him restless and wakeful, and he lay in his hammock turning over all that had transpired for several hours.

A solitary dim lantern hanging from the rafters shed an uncertain glow through the room, and Murdock finally sat bolt upright.

The regular breathing of the sleepers made him envious of their peace of mind, when he thought of his own guilty fears.

What did Tom Ash know about his villany?

He glanced toward the prisoner.

Ash was awake, and glaring at him with a sinister expression that sent a cold chill through him, but never said a word.

Bound hand and foot and fastened to one of the wall-posts at the rear, the bandit sat in a corner near the window.

Murdock softly got out of his hammock.

Another careful scrutiny convinced him that all his companions were fast asleep, and he stealthily glided toward the prisoner.

"I'll find out all he knows," the villain muttered, "and if I discover that he knows too much and means to betray me, I'll shoot him!"

He quickly reached the bandit.

Bending close to the man, he hissed in low tones:

"You demanded an interview, and I'm here to grant it."

"It's high time," was the ungracious reply.

"What do you want?"

"An understanding with you."

"On what score?"

"The murder of the hermit in this cabin."

"You seem to know something about the matter."

"I know all about it."

"Indeed."

"Yes, I saw the crime committed."

"How did that occur?"

"Canada Mack sent me ahead to size up the camp, and I traced you from there to the senseless man lying near the deer. I saw you put on his hat and coat and take his dagger. I followed you to this hut. I saw you stab the old man in the back as he crouched on the ground. Others were coming, and just as you struck him with the knife I hid. Then I saw you rush out, and I traced you back to the unconscious man. You put back the hat and coat, and sneaked back to your camp. Then I hurried back to our gang."

"You're a liar," said Murdock, coldly. "It wasn't me you saw."

"Oh, yes, it was. You can't fool me, old man. I saw you through the open doorway."

"Well, you've mistaken me for Harris, that's all."

"I suppose that's the gag you gave these sports."

"Never mind about that. I want to know why the man was stabbed?"

"How should I know? For a grudge, I suppose."

Murdock felt easier.

He feared Ash had seen the buried money.

Now he realized that the outlaw did not know anything about it.

In fact, by looking through the door he could not have seen the hole in the floor, as Danford's body intervened between him and the treasure.

The attack made by the outlaws had led him to suppose that they knew the money was there and had come to get it.

His opinion on that point was now changed.

Murdock eyed the man in silence a few moments, and then said:

"Now, presuming the man was killed out of revenge, and you happen to know who did the job, what are you going to do about it?"

"Unless the guilty party sets me free at once, so I can escape from here, I'm going to give him away," replied the outlaw, with an oath.

Murdock revolved the condition in his mind, and thought:

"If I liberate the scoundrel he will fly for his life. There won't be much likelihood of him giving me away here. What he does or says after he gets away will not amount to anything. Nobody would take his word for it that I'm a criminal as long as the charge is hanging over Harris."

Ash was watching him keenly.

"What are you going to do about it?" he demanded, finally.

"Set you free."

"You are wise."

"Outside you'll find two horses tethered."

"I've seen them."

"Mount one and stampede the other to prevent pursuit."

"So I shall. And I want a gun."

"I'll give you mine."

"Very well. Cut these bonds."

Murdock drew out his knife and severed the ropes which now secured him.

The bandit was thrilled with delight.

"Go out the window," advised Murdock.

"I shall. Give me a pistol."

He rose to his feet, and a flitting shadow caught his view.

With a feeling of horror and dismay he now saw Old King Brady had awaked, arisen, and was rushing toward him.

A hoarse cry of alarm escaped him.

He did not wait for the pistol, but made a frantic rush for the window.

But he did not move fast enough; for Old King Brady pounced on him, and yelled in angry tones:

"You don't get away so easy as that, my boy!"

His voice aroused the rest.

Up they jumped and saw what was occurring.

Harry dashed to his partner's aid.

By the time he reached the old detective, he had the bandit on the floor, and a furious struggle was going on between them.

Murdock was pale and trembling.

He feared that his treachery was exposed.

Old King Brady got a grip on the bandit's throat, and pinned him down to the ground, leveled a pistol at him, and roared:

"Stop fighting, now, or, by thunder, I'll fire!"

"Let me up!" groaned the rascal.

"Not an inch! Will you keep still?"

"No!" roared the frantic fellow, struggling furiously again.

"Here—I'll fix him," interposed Harry.

Drawing out a pair of handcuffs, he pulled the rascal's arms behind his back, and snapped the fetters on his wrists.

Old King Brady put another pair on his ankles.

Then the man was rendered utterly helpless.

He raved and swore at them like a maniac.

The Bradys arose.

"Yell, you dog," exclaimed the old detective. "It won't help you any."

"How did he get free from his bonds?" demanded Harry in surprise.

A faint smile crossed Old King Brady's face.

Picking up the ropes so all could see them, he said:

"They've been cut."

"By whom?" asked one of the men, angrily.

Old King Brady pointed to Murdock.

"Him!" he exclaimed.

"It's a lie!" snarled the rascal, starting back.

"I saw you," Old King Brady replied quietly.

"What did you do that for?" asked the hunter.

"I didn't do it at all," insisted Murdock.

"Gentlemen, he's a traitor!" cried Harry, angrily.

An angry murmur rose from every one present, and they looked at the cowering villain with threatening looks.

Murdock saw there was trouble impending.

"I tell you——" he began.

"Silence!" roared Old King Brady, hotly.

"But, I say——"

"Kick him out!" cried one of the men.

"Arrest him, too," added another.

"Knock his head off!" shouted the third.

"Get rid of him," said Harry.

Old King Brady seized the traitor by the neck and rushed him to the door.

At every step he booted the frightened villain, and, reaching the threshold, he gave Murdock a violent fling that sent him reeling.

"Out with you!" the old detective shouted. "Clear out of here, you sneaking cur. You were in league with the bandit, and we caught you setting him free to defy the law. But, by Jove, we are on to your dirty tricks now, and you'll never repeat them in this camp."

Murdock fell.

He scrambled to his feet.

A feeling of intense horror assailed him.

If he were driven away, he feared he would not get the money hidden under the floor ere some one else found it.

"For mercy's sake don't throw me out this way!" he yelled, imploringly. "It's all a mistake. Let me explain——"

"If you don't get away from this instantly, we'll shoot you!" cried Old King Brady, appearing in the doorway with his rifle.

He aimed it at the man.

A yell of horror escaped Murdock.

He waited to hear no more.

Turning, he ran for his life, shouting at every step:

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MOTIVE EXPOSED.

"Well, Harry," said Old King Brady two days afterward, as the boy and the Indian guide rode into camp, "did you get Tom Ash to Bangor safely, and put him in jail, as you set out to do?"

Yes," replied Young King Brady. "He is now so situated that all the Murdocks in the world can't set him free. The authorities are very anxious to get hold of the rest of Canada Mack's gay and festive crowd, too."

"No doubt, as they've terrorized this section of the country."

"Seen anything of Murdock since I've been gone?"

"Yes, indeed. He keeps hanging around here all the time whining and begging to be taken back into the camp. We advised him to go home, but he won't do it, for some

reason. This cabin seems to have some strange fascination for the villain. He can't seem to keep away from it."

"What is he doing?"

"Living in the woods. We gave him all his belongings, and he has the use of the tent, plenty of food, arms, ammunition, and everything necessary for such comfort as a man can get while roughing it. But he's determined to get back to the hut.

"That's queer, after the way he acted."

"Very. I can't account for his persistence."

"You haven't learned anything about Harris yet, have you?"

"Not a thing. He has disappeared completely."

"What's the programme for to-day?"

"The boys want to go off after some caribou. I say, Moon-Face, you ought to know where they can bag a few big horns, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," assented the guide.

"Then make your arrangements to get them."

"Ain't you going?"

"No. Harry and I have some other game in view."

The Indian nodded and went to join the others, who were eagerly discussing a grand hunt they wished to go on.

When the two detectives were left alone, Harry asked his partner:

"What's your game?"

"Murdock."

"You want to watch him?"

"I do, to find out why he's bound to join us again."

"Do you think he has some motive behind it?"

"Most decidedly I do."

"How can you trap him?"

"By sending away the whole party. Murdock will see them go, and will fondly believe the cabin is left alone. He may then reveal his object in being so determined to come back here. You and I can drop the party, and quietly make our way back to watch him."

"Very well."

They joined the others.

Great preparations were being made for the hunting expedition, and when all was ready, the whole party set out, with Moon-Face guiding them.

When they got well into the woods, Old King Brady suddenly caught view of Murdock some distance away watching them.

Pointing at the rascal, who was leaning against a tree, he said:

"There he is now, Harry."

"Counting the party, I suppose."

"Yes, and wondering where we are going, no doubt."

They saw him watching them until they disappeared from view, and when they were beyond his range of vision, Old King Brady clutched Harry's arm and stepped behind a tree.

The rest went on without them.

"Here's where we turn and go back," said the old detective.

"All right," assented the boy, "I am——"

"Hark! What's that?"

He held up his hand, and they listened intently.

A violent crashing in the bushes near by reached their ears, and they heard a low cry of pain in a human voice.

Rushing over to the place from whence the cries came, they parted the bushes, peered through, and witnessed a thrilling scene.

There was a clearing a few yards ahead.

Crossing this space at a dead run was Jack Harris.

He was unarmed, and a huge moose, with enormous antlers, was charging on him, with its mighty head lowered. Just then Harris tripped and fell.

The big buck leaped forward as he was rising, struck him a fearful blow that knocked him over again, and then drew back to gore him.

In a moment more he would have been torn to pieces.

But at this juncture Harry shot at the infuriated beast.

A hoarse cry escaped the animal.

It fell on its knees.

For a moment it struggled to rise.

Then it pitched over—dead.

The Bradys rushed over to Jack and helped him to rise.

"Are you hurt?" asked Harry.

"Oh! The Bradys!" gasped Jack. "Hurt? Yes—a little. He cut me some with his horns. I'll soon get over it, though."

"How did he happen to be chasing you?"

"I put several bullets in his hide, and then cornered him. He turned on me. I dropped my rifle and had no time to recover it."

"Then he charged on you?"

"Exactly. I can't see that I'm much better off than I was, though, as I've fallen into your hands again."

Old King Brady chuckled, and asked:

"Got a guilty conscience?"

"No, indeed."

"Then what did you want to run away for?"

"I couldn't bear the thought of going to jail."

"What have you been doing with yourself?"

"I escaped from the bandits——"

"Yes; we know all about that."

"Since then I've been living in the woods like a wild bear."

"Didn't start for home, then?"

"No, indeed. I came up here for the hunting, and I'm bound to have it," said Jack, grimly. "I expected to get arrested when I got back, so I was having all the fun I could before facing that ordeal."

"You're a queer fellow."

"What's the news in camp since I left?"

Harry told him.

He smiled when he heard of Murdock's fate.

"Served the brute right!" he exclaimed. "He's a treacherous villain. It's mighty queer about those clews you found. He may have been the very one who killed poor old Danford."

"We mean to put the screws on him when we get him home."

"I suppose I can now consider myself under arrest."

"You are."

"Going to fasten me?"

"No. You won't run away, will you?"

"Certainly not, if you'll parole me."

"Very well. Keep your freedom till me need you."

"Thank you, Mr. Brady. I won't abuse your confidence."

"Will you return to camp?"

"Yes. I'm sick of living like a wild animal."

"Let us get back to camp, then, so we can find out what our friend Roland Murdock is doing."

They strode away together, carrying the moose on a pole.

When they arrived near the clearing in which the hut stood, they let down their burden, and Old King Brady muttered:

"I'm going ahead to explore the ground."

He crossed the clearing and quietly approached the rear window of the cabin.

As he peered through, he saw Murdock in the big room on his knees.

He was scraping the dirt away from the lid of the buried box, and, having bared it and raised it, he pulled out some of the money and cried excitedly:

"Mine! All mine!"

Old King Brady was startled and astonished.

Like a flash it now dawned upon his mind why Murdock was so anxious to return to the hut, and he gave a shrewd guess as to whom the money belonged.

"I must hurry and get it away from here before they return," he heard Murdock exclaim, breathlessly. "I'll find another hiding-place for it. No one will be any the wiser. I've worked hard to gain this fortune, and now, by Heavens, I'm going to have it."

Old King Brady beckoned for Harry and Jack to approach.

When they joined him he pointed at the treasure and whispered:

"There's the incentive for that murder. He knew where it was buried. No doubt it's the money Danford stole from the bank. How did Murdock know where the defaulter had it hidden?"

They watched Murdock closely.

He took all the money from the hut and buried it under a distant rock.

When he came back for the last load, the Bradys suddenly stepped into the room, causing him to utter a startled cry.

"Good Heavens, the detectives!" he groaned in anguish.

"Roland Murdock," cried the old detective, pointing at the package of money, "there's the incentive that caused the murder of old Mr. Danford. In the name of the law you are my prisoner."

The man was shocked—stunned—and dumfounded.

"I'm lost!" he muttered, dejectedly.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RETURN OF THE BANDITS.

It was now quite apparent to the Bradys why Murdock had been so persistent in his efforts to remain in the cabin with the hunting party.

Old King Brady's hand fell heavily on his shoulder, and, pointing at the money, the old detective exclaimed:

"This is the fatal money Simon Danford stole from the bank. He carried it away with him in his flight, and hid it under the floor of his hut. You must have seen it. As the cursed stuff led to Danford's undoing, so has it led to yours. To gain this treasure you murdered that man."

"No! No!" protested Murdock, hoarsely.

Just then Harry interposed by saying:

"You did kill Danford. I've got proof of it."

"I defy you to show evidence!" shouted Murdock.

"Listen," said the boy. "Tom Ash confessed."

"Heavens!" gasped Murdock in dismay.

He was fast losing his nerve now, and glared at his accusers like a savage beast brought to bay.

Young King Brady continued rapidly:

"Finding you could do nothing for him, the bandit confessed to me in the Bangor prison that he witnessed the murder of Danford. He swore you left the camp on the morning we found the defaulter murdered. He traced you to where Harris lay senseless. He saw you take Jack's hat, coat and knife. He then tracked you to this hut. He saw you stab Danford, and then run for your life. He witnessed how you left Jack's hat and coat beside his still senseless body, and he traced you back to the camp."

As Harry went on denouncing him, Murdock looked so utterly despairing that the detectives easily read his guilt in his looks.

Old King Brady was surprised to hear all this.

"You've made an important discovery during your absence with the prisoner, I see," he remarked.

"Yes," assented the boy. "I was going to tell you all about it when a favorable opportunity arrived, to surprise you. But Murdock brought the matter to an unexpected focus, by exposing the object in his crime."

"Then it was the fact of this villain wearing Jack's hat and coat, and using his knife to stab Danford, that made us think Harris was the guilty party," commented Old King Brady.

"And that accounts for the mysterious way my hat and coat were taken off me while I was senseless," said Jack.

Murdock was listening, and watching them with lowering glances.

Old King Brady now said to him:

"You're a nice fellow to go about murdering old men, and then throwing the blame on innocent people. But your perfidy is exposed, and you'll have to suffer the penalty of your crime now."

"I deny all these accusations," growled Murdock, sourly.

"Of course you do. We expected you would."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Lock you up, of course."

"On the unsupported evidence of a spiteful bandit?"

"The facts we have gathered support his charge all right."

"Do your worst. I'll fight you in court to the bitter end."

"And lose, as most murderers do. We'll secure you now. Harry, have you got the handcuffs you used on Tom Ash?"

"Yes. And here they are," said the boy.

He was just upon the point of handing them over, when they heard a low, chuckling laugh in the doorway, and glanced up.

To their astonishment they beheld the evil face of Canada Mack peering in at them, and his whole gang behind him.

A bristling array of rifles was shown as the outlaws aimed their weapons at the men in the hut.

"If you don't raise your hands, we'll drop you!" cried the outlaw chief.

Every man in the hut obeyed.

To disobey meant sure death, they well knew.

As the outlaws had approached with extreme silence their presence was not suspected until they had the Bradys' party at their mercy.

"Now file out here, one by one!" exclaimed Canada Mack.

Murdock went first, and several of the gang secured him.

When the whole party was tied up, Canada Mack glared at Jack a moment with an exceedingly ugly look, and exclaimed:

"So—you are with the bunch, eh?"

"Got me again," said Jack, cheerfully.

"Yes, and we'll hang onto you this time. Where are the rest?"

"Away hunting."

"Are you fellows all who remain?"

"Yes," said Jack, with a nod.

"So much the better for us. What have you done with Tom Ash?"

"Don't know, gentlemen."

"Quit your lying, now——"

"He ain't the one who caught Tom," interposed one of the gang just then.

"Which one was it?"

"The old fellow with white hair."

The bandit chief turned abruptly upon Old King Brady. Sizing up the detective, he exclaimed:

"We've heard how you captured one of our men, and we've come back to get him. Do you understand?"

"You'll have to go to Bangor for him, then," quietly replied the old detective. "He isn't here any longer."

"Do you mean to say he's in jail?"

"That's exactly where he is."

"Who put him there?"

"We did, of course."

Canada Mack ripped out an oath, paced up and down excitedly a moment, and, turning to his companions, he exclaimed:

"Boys, we can't get Tom back now, but we can at least get square with the ones who got him in trouble."

A growling murmur of assent from the gang greeted this remark.

"They'll hang Tom sure," proceeded the bandit, "but we can go them one better by killing these four men if they refuse to set him free."

"Hold 'em as hostages for the return of Tom," suggested one of the men.

"Just exactly what I'm going to do. And more."

"What is it?"

"You can all strip this hut of its valuables, and when you have everything worth taking, we'll set fire to the place."

A yell of delight came from the men.

They rushed into the cabin, and the first thing they found was several packages of bank notes, amounting to a thousand dollars.

With a wild yell they pounced on the money.

A free fight followed, as they tried to get the money away from each other, and when Canada Mack saw the greenbacks, he became excited, and rushed in, yelling furiously:

"I want my share of that, too!"

Just then Harry shouted at him.

"Hey, Canada Mack!"

"What do you want?" growled the bandit, pausing and looking around.

"Come here—quick!"

Something in Harry's tones caused the big, red-headed villain to stride out to where the boy was standing, and demand, hurriedly:

"What do you want?"

"Don't let any one hear what I have to say."

"No joshing, now!"

"Lord, no. It's something secret and important to you."

"Come over here, and tell me what you've got to say."

He led the boy aside, and Harry whispered:

"The money your men just found is only a handful to the rest of it."

"What do you mean by that?" growled the astonished outlaw.

"The old man and I know where the rest of the money is hidden."

"Is there much of it?"

"Over half a million dollars."

"Thunder! Whereabouts is it?"

"Ah, that's our secret."

"You've got to tell me."

"So we shall, if you set us all free."

"Very well—I'll do that quick enough."

"Do you want to share it with your gang?"

"No; not by a blamed sight."

"Then send them away without any of us. You can invent some good excuse. When they are gone, you can lib-

erate me, and after I show you where the money is hidden, you can carry it away, and leave me behind to liberate my companions."

This seemed like a fair proposal.

The bandit bit at the bait.

His cupidity was aroused.

Going over to his men, he held a short conversation with them, and they finally divided up the plunder and went away.

Canada Mack was left alone with the four prisoners.

Approaching Harry, he said to the boy:

"Now I'm ready for you. I've spared the cabin. Your pals can remain inside of it until you do as you promised. If I find you are playing me false, I'll lock you all in the building, set fire to it and burn you to death."

"That's a bargain," said Harry, readily.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### SURROUNDED BY FIRE.

Canada Mack drew one of his revolvers, and, casting a suspicious glance at Harry, he turned toward Old King Brady, Roland Murdock and Jack Harris, and said:

"Get into the hut."

They obeyed him, and when the last man disappeared, he said to Harry:

"Where's the money?"

A disdainful smile crossed the boy's face, and he asked:

"Do you think I'm foolish enough to tell you till you liberate me?"

The outlaw approached the boy and took his pistol from him.

"Got any more weapons?" he asked.

"Nothing but my pocket-knife."

"That isn't dangerous."

"Cut the bonds, then."

Canada Mack complied with his request.

Freed, Young King Brady stretched himself, smiled, and said:

"That feels much better."

"Mind you, no tricks, now."

"Surely you don't fear an unarmed boy?"

"I don't trust anybody."

"Follow me so you can keep me covered with your gun, then."

"Proceed," replied the bandit, tersely.

Harry strode over to the hollow rock, pointed at it, and said:

"Move aside those shrubs. It's got a space inside. You'll find pretty near five hundred thousand dollars in the hole."

The sight of the money found in the hut convinced the bandit that the boy must be telling the truth, and he approached the rock.

Falling on his knees, he found the opening, and pulled out several huge bundles of bank notes.

A cry of exultation escaped him, and his eyes gleamed with avarice.

Forgetting all caution in his greed, he bent over, dropped his pistol and began pulling out the bundles of bank notes with both hands.

The more he exposed to view, the greater his excitement became, and when he had a huge heap before him, representing thousands of dollars, he was almost delirious with joy.

Harry was watching him as cat watches a mouse.

The keen young detective was waiting for the man to become completely absorbed in what he was doing, and he was not long kept in suspense.

"A king's ransom!" he heard Canada Mack mutter. "Thousands upon thousands."

This was the chance Harry was waiting for.

He glided forward like a shadow.

The bandit, gloating over the huge treasure, was too absorbed to notice him.

In a moment Harry picked up the rascal's pistol.

And as he pressed the cold muzzle to Canada Mack's head, he roared:

"Hands up—quick!"

"Oh!" yelled the startled wretch.

He nearly fell backward in his sudden fright.

But his hands went up obediently, for he saw a lurking demon in Harry's cold, merciless glance, and his face turned white as chalk.

"I'm trapped!" was all he could groan.

"Yes, badly trapped," replied the boy. "I thought that rich bait would bring you to terms, and now I've nailed you."

For a moment there was a deep silence.

Then Harry shouted:

"Come, Old King Brady! Hurry!"

Out of the hut rushed the old detective.

He saw the bandit on his knees, with Harry standing close by levelling a pistol at his head, and he hastened over to the boy.

"I won't risk removing this gun for an instant—he's too dangerous," said the boy. "Here—stand where I can cut your bonds."

Then he drew the pocket-knife Canada Mack disdained taking, opened a blade with his teeth, and, never for an instant removing his glance from the outlaw, he cut his partner's bonds.

"I'm all right, Harry," said the old detective.

"Fasten him up, then."

"I won't let you!" gasped the terrified outlaw.

He made an attempt to rise, but Harry cried sharply:

"Down with you, or I'll fire!"

A swift movement of the pistol cowed the wretch.

Uttering a deep groan of anguish, he sank to his knees again, for he saw very plainly that the boy would shoot and kill him with no further warning.

The villain realized the importance of his capture.

In a moment more Old King Brady was at him, and had



him bound hand and foot so tightly that he could not budge an inch.

And the old detective used the very ropes Harry had cut from his own arms.

"Now we've got you quite safe!" chuckled the old detective.

Just then Jack Harris in the cabin began to yell excitedly.

"Harry! Harry! Murdock's escaping!"

His words thrilled the detectives.

"Take him and the money into the hut!" panted Harry.

"Where are you going?"

"After Murdock."

And away dashed the boy toward the cabin.

When he got inside and glanced around, he saw Jack lying on the floor struggling to get up, but Murdock was gone.

"Where is the dog?" he asked hurriedly.

"Just knocked me over and ran into the woods."

"Go and help Old King Brady."

He cut Jack's bonds and dashed away.

Off among the trees he saw the dim figure of Murdock fitting away, and he started in pursuit of the fugitive.

An exciting chase followed.

The villain saw the boy coming, and ran faster.

On they raced through the gloomy forest for some distance, and Harry was rapidly gaining on his foe.

Bound as he was, Murdock could not run at top speed.

The boy would have overtaken him, but presently the fugitive overtook Canada Mack's men, and yelled to them to save him.

In a few words he explained the trouble.

Seeing Harry free gave the gang an idea that some of the prisoners were escaping, and Murdock told them Canada Mack was captured.

That was enough for them.

They paused and began firing toward Harry.

Seeing how matters turned in Murdock's favor, the boy retreated.

He fired several shots from his pistol as he went, and they fired back.

A hot fusillade occurred for a few moments.

Harry was protected by a tree trunk.

Seeing he stood no chance to beat so many, the boy broke ground, and, dodging from tree to tree, and firing as he retreated, he headed for the hut.

As he dashed across the clearing, he saw Old King Brady, and cried:

"Get under cover. The bandits are coming!"

"Did Murdock get away?"

"He has joined them."

"We've got the prisoner and the money in the hut."

"Good for you."

They dashed in and barricaded the door and window.

And they were none too soon, for it was just done when the outlaws came rushing forward and made an attempt to break in.

Across the front, under the eaves, there was a wide

crevice, and the three climbed upon the chairs and began firing their revolvers.

Several of the yelling and cursing gang were hit by the flying bullets, and they shot back at the hut.

But the logs of which the cabin was built resisted the bandits.

Unable to stand the hot fire poured out at them by the gallant defenders, the villains retreated to the woods and got behind the trees.

There they remained all day.

Occasionally they fired at the hut, and hurled threats at the trio of brave fellows, but they did no one any harm.

As for Jack and the Bradys, they never let a chance go by to shoot at the villains wherever they exposed themselves.

Murdock had joined the gang, and to show them his interest in their attack he told them about the money, and urged them to set fire to the hut.

"If we do that we'll roast Canada Mack," objected one of the gang, "and as you say you found the money gone from the hollow rock they must have it in the cabin. It would be burned up in the fire."

"Don't you believe it," replied Murdock eagerly. "They'll rush out of the hut when it gets too hot to stand it any longer. And you can bet they'll bury the money in the box in the floor where the fire can't reach it."

The whole gang was wild to get the treasure.

They held a consultation.

In order to hurry them, Murdock said:

"If you delay much longer, Moon-Face will return with the other men and they'll make it pretty hot for us. Once the fire gets started you can pick them off as they emerge, and drop the whole crowd. And I'll guarantee to get the money out safely before the fire can injure it."

They agreed to try it.

Firebrands were lit and wood and dead leaves were heaped around the hut.

Setting fire to the inflammable stuff a furious blaze swept up around the rear and two sides of the dry wooden structure.

Sharpshooters were posted to command with their rifles the doorway, and they waited for their victims to appear like so many wild beasts.

In a few minutes the hut was wrapped in flames.

The feelings of the inmates may be imagined.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

"If we don't leave this hut we'll perish!" exclaimed Old King Brady.

"And if we do leave it those outlaws will shoot us, anyway," Harry added.

The desperation of their situation was appalling.

"When do you expect the hunting party back?" asked Jack.

"There's no telling. They did not say," replied the boy.

"We can't count on any help from them, then?"

"No. We must either face the bandits in a fight, or burn to death here."

"They won't give us a chance to fight," growled Old King Brady. "The moment we poke our noses out the door, they'll shoot us down like dogs."

"Not if I know it," said Young King Brady, quickly.

"Have you a plan to avoid it?"

"I have. If we reach the woods we'll be safe, won't we?"

"As safe as the bandits," replied his partner.

"We can't expect more than that."

"Very true. What do you propose doing?"

"Hold up Canada Mack as a shield."

The bandit chief pulled a long face.

He did not fancy the plan. The risk was too great, and he growled in alarm:

"Don't do that. It ain't fair. They'll kill me."

"It's our only chance for salvation," said Harry.

"But I object."

"Your objection is overruled," said Old King Brady.

"We'll give you a show to save yourself. I'm going to open the door and hold you on the threshold. You can tell your men to clear out. If they fire at us, they're most likely to hit you first. They may obey you by going away."

The room was now full of smoke.

An appalling heat filled the atmosphere, and the roaring and cracking of the fire created a horrible din.

To remain there longer and endure the heat and smoke was almost impossible, so Old King Brady flung open the door.

"Here they come!" he heard Murdock yell. "Get ready, boys."

The old detective pushed Canada Mack into the doorway and exclaimed:

"Call them off now, if you don't want to perish yourself."

The bandit yelled at his men.

Answers were given.

"Quit the game, boys," roared Canada Mack; "if you don't I'll perish."

"Don't forget the money!" Murdock shouted to them.

"We are coming out," continued the bandit. "If you fire you'll hit me."

"Kill him!" Murdock yelled. "He was willing to cheat you out of the money."

"I'll have my hands on you, my fine fellow; setting my men up against me!" cried the bandit. "You'll pay for this."

"We've got to go!" panted Old King Brady, feverishly, for the flames were now bursting through the walls dangerously near. "Fall in boys, and make one rush for the trees off to the——"

"Hark!" exclaimed Harry, interrupting him.

Bang! Bang!

It was the distant reports of rifles in the woods.

"I'm shot!" yelled one of the bandits.

"Look out! It's the hunters coming back," added another.

More shots were heard.

The flaring flames lit up the scene all around.

"Now's our chance to go," cried Old King Brady.

He and Harry held the bandit's arms, and as they had taken him up from the floor, they rushed from the hut holding him before them.

A volley came from the woods.

As the detectives were behind the bandit's body he screened them and got two wounds that wrung yells of agony from his lips.

On they plunged toward the trees.

None of the three were hit yet.

The distance to be covered was very short, and they quickly cleared it.

The moment they reached the shelter of the tree trunks they dropped their burden and screened their bodies.

But the bandits were now paying no heed to them.

Moon-Face and his companions were coming, saw the hut afire, recognized the outlaws, and were engaging them in a fight.

Pistols and rifles were sending forth their sharp reports all over the woods, and the occasional yelling of an excited man arose.

"Charge on them," whispered Old King Brady. "We ain't so badly outnumbered now, and we've got them between two fires."

They made a rush and shouted to their friends.

Finding a deadly fire pouring into them from two sides, the outlaws lost courage, and fled pell-mell, after a slight resistance.

Old King Brady's force joined that of the guide.

They plunged after the bandits, but the latter were soon astride of their horses, and were galloping away at a furious pace, beaten.

Having driven them far away, the campers returned to the glen.

Here they picked up Canada Mack.

The villain had two flesh wounds.

The detectives dressed his injuries.

Pointing at him, Old King Brady said to the rest:

"We've got their chief."

"Didn't we see Murdock aiding them?" queried Moon-Face.

"Yes. He is Simon Danford's murderer."

"How do you know?"

The detective astonished the whole party when he told them his story, and at the end of his recital, he said quite earnestly:

"We've grossly wronged poor Jack Harris. He is an innocent victim of that villain's schemes."

Every one apologized to the young man, but he laughed as he shook hands with them, and said carelessly:

"Oh, never mind. I wasn't injured any by it. But we've got good evidence of Murdock's guilt, and we've got to catch him, and bring him to justice for it."

"We shall do so," replied Harry, emphatically.

"How about Danford's treasure?"

"Quite safe, buried under ground. When the hut is reduced to ashes, we can dig up the box and put the money in a place of safety."

They found the tent uninjured.

Some turned in for the night and posted a guard.

On the following morning the hut was a mere heap of ashes.

As the bandits had stolen all their valuables, and the fire consumed everything necessary for their camping, the party was reduced to the point of giving up the expedition.

"We may as well get back to New York," said one of the gentlemen, in tones of disgust. "Our entire outfit is stolen and burned. We have no food or necessities—in fact, nothing but the clothes we wear and the few weapons we carry."

"You might at least recover your valuables if you could capture the rest of Canada Mack's gang," suggested Harry.

This proposition struck every one favorably.

They all felt angry at the bandits for ruining their sport, and as a spirit of revenge seized them, they assented to the plan.

"If one of you will lead us," said the first speaker to the detectives, "we'll get on the trail of those villains and bring them to justice for their crooked work."

"Very well," said Old King Brady, quickly, "I'll assume command of the party. Deprived of Canada Mack that gang will have no leader. It will demoralize them and make our attack all the more successful. I think we are well enough armed to tackle them. Some are badly wounded. They won't go far from here, now that they know the treasure is at this spot."

"Hadn't we better get the money out of the ruins, and put it where they won't find it?" asked Harry.

"By all means. The ashes must have cooled by this time."

They began to search for the buried box.

It was an easy matter to locate it, and when the money was finally dug up, they found that it was not injured by the fire.

Old King Brady hid it.

No one but he knew where it was placed.

This was done by mutual consent, so that no one in the party would be accused of tampering with the treasure if it were disturbed by others.

A breakfast was made of steaks from the moose Harry had shot, and then Harry and Moon-Face were sent out ahead over the trail of the bandits on horseback to learn what became of them.

They returned in the course of an hour to say that they had seen the outlaws' camp, and had stampeded their horses.

"Now they can't dash away so lively," said the boy.

"We'll attack them at once," said Old King Brady.

He called his men together, gave them his instructions, and they prepared their weapons for action, and set out for the outlaws' camp with the resolve to wipe them out.

In the course of an hour they saw the villains, and opened fire upon them. A fierce fight was soon in progress.

In the midst of it Harry saw Murdock stealing away.

"The villain means to seek safety in flight," thought the boy, "and I'll nab him before he gets too far away."

Murdock saw the boy in pursuit of him, and ran at the top of his speed, until he reached an open glen.

Here he was overjoyed to see one of the stampeded horses.

It only took him a moment to mount the beast, and with a mocking laugh at Harry, he galloped furiously away.

## CHAPTER XV.

### BREAKING CAMP.

It was late in the afternoon when Young King Brady returned to camp.

An interesting scene met his view.

All of the bandits had been captured, and were lying bound upon the ground, while the hunters kept guard over them with drawn weapons.

Not a man escaped injury, for the fight had been fierce.

Fortunately, however, none of the wounds were fatal, and when all hands had been attended to, they were able to walk back to camp.

Old King Brady was elated over their victory.

He had been complimented for the skillful manner in which he had led the attacking party to a successful fight.

When he saw Harry returning, he asked the boy, eagerly:

"What became of Murdock?"

"I tracked him to the railroad. He bought a ticket back to the city. We'll have to go to New York to find him."

"That's unfortunate."

"Couldn't be helped. He had a horse."

"I see. Well, we've got to leave here anyway."

"When do you break camp?"

"To-morrow morning."

"It's just as well for us, Old King Brady, for we've got to put the prisoners where they will be safe. Moreover, the rest of that money ought to be shipped back to the bank from which it was stolen."

"Decidedly."

"We've solved the great camp mystery, recovered the money, vindicated Jack Harris, and know who killed Danford. Nothing now remains to be done except to make restitution and capture Murdock."

"The wagon has been repaired, and we'll take what few things remain and leave this place in the morning."

They had a great deal to do that night, and before they finally turned in, everything was in readiness for departure.

It was a dejected party that left the camp on the following morning under the guidance of the half-breed Indian.

In fact, Moon-Face was the only one who looked pleased.

He was bound to get the reward for finding Simon Danford.

When they finally reached the railroad depot, the money was boxed up and expressed through to New York.

With the receipts in their pockets, the Bradys then joined the rest of the party, and, boarding a train with the prisoners, they proceeded to Bangor.

Here the bandits were locked up.

The authorities were delighted to have the villains in jail, as they had been making themselves a terror to the entire State.

Having attended to this important task, the detectives took leave of the rest, and went their own way.

They returned to New York.

Having called at headquarters, they explained to their chief all that transpired, and the bank officials were notified to call.

They gave an accurate account of their missing funds.

When the box was opened and a comparison made, it was found that the money recovered by the detectives was that stolen by Danford.

It was then restored to the bank.

The Bradys then called on Laffin & Co.

Meeting the senior member of the firm, they explained how Jack Harris came to possess so much money as he had been squandering.

Then they told what Murdock had done.

The merchant was justly astonished, and said:

"Neither of the young men have returned here yet, as their vacation term has not expired. But I'm glad to say our accountant found Jack's accounts perfectly straight. Murdock's, on the other hand, show a shortage. It is very evident that he has been robbing us. Arrest him on sight. We've got evidence enough to convict him."

"And we've got evidence enough to hang him," added Harry in grim tones.

"You say he has come back to this city?"

"So we infer. But I doubt if he will return to this office."

The detectives went away after some further conversation.

As they went uptown, Young King Brady asked his partner:

"Would Murdock risk going to his own home?"

"He might," replied the old detective. "We'd better make inquiries there."

The missing bookkeeper boarded in East Nineteenth street.

As the detectives knew his address they went there at once.

The boarding-house keeper met them at the door.

"Is Mr. Murdock in?" asked Old King Brady, politely.

"No, sir," replied the stout old lady. "He was here this morning, changed his clothes, packed his trunk, paid his bill, and moved."

"Where to?"

"He did not state."

"What express took his baggage?"

"Jones' city express. The office is on Union Square."

"Thank you," said the old detective, and they departed.

Proceeding straight to the express office, they inquired of the clerk as to the address to which Murdock's trunk had been carried.

"Storage house on Forty-second street," was the reply.

The detectives were disgusted.

"He anticipated being followed," exclaimed Harry, when they reached the street, "and he has done that to throw any possible pursuers off the track."

"Of course," Old King Brady assented. "That's apparent. But if he's in the city, we'll dig him out of his hiding-place."

As they walked up Fourth avenue, and passed the street where Roland Murdock lived, Harry caught view of a familiar figure emerging from the boarding-house, and called his partner's attention to the man.

"See there—Moon-Face!" he exclaimed.

"Been to see Murdock, too, eh?"

"He may know where the villain is hidden if he don't find him there."

"We may as well shadow him a while and see."

"Decidedly. I wonder what the Indian is doing in the city?"

"Collecting his bills, no doubt."

"What bills?"

"The reward for Danford and the balance due from Murdock for his attempt to murder Jack Harris," laughed Old King Brady.

They watched the guide.

He went over to Third avenue and boarded a car going downtown.

The detectives followed him on foot until they reached East Fourteenth street, where they met with a cab, hired it, jumped in, and were driven away.

It was now an easy matter to track their man.

He rode down to Houston street and alighted.

Going over on the East Side, he turned into Forsyth street, along which thoroughfare he passed, until he reached a certain saloon.

At the side was a big green door.

Pushing it open, the Indian entered.

Sounds of music from within came through the door as Moon-Face passed in.

The place was evidently a dive of some kind, but neither of the detectives was familiar with the place, and they held a consultation.

"Better follow him in," said Harry.

"Not this way. He'd know us in a minute."

"We can easily alter our appearance."

"Do so in this cab, then."

They had on reversible suits, and when they turned them inside out, adjusted wigs and false whiskers, and changed the shapes of their noses with cosmetics, they looked like a pair of East Side Jews.

Pocketing their hats and putting on old felt caps they carried, they alighted.

The astonished driver did not know them at once, but

they explained their business, and told him to wait for them.

As detectives are profitable passengers for cabmen, this one readily assented, and drove slowly up and down while the detectives headed for the house with the green door, and passed inside.

They found themselves in a narrow, gloomy hall.

At the end was a door.

Opening it, they passed into a concert hall.

The place was dirty and gloomy, there were two Dutch comedians on the stage, and a piano player was playing for them to sing.

Few people were in the auditorium, and they were tough-looking citizens.

There was a small gallery with private boxes.

At a glance the Bradys caught view of the Indian in one of them nearest the stage, half hidden behind a cheap red curtain.

Several more people were in the box with him.

Some were performers, and one, at least, was a man in black.

Judging by the sounds all were drinking, laughing and talking.

"We'd better get as near as possible and listen," muttered Harry.

"Go up the gallery stairs. There's a box next to theirs."

They ascended to the upper gallery.

Here a red-faced waiter grabbed them and asked:

"Want to go in one of the boxes, gents?"

"Yah," assented Old King Brady. "Me und mine bardner wants ter haf a brivate conversations by each udder."

"I see. But the drinks——"

"Ach, ve bay for all vat ve get."

"Enough said. This way, please."

And he conducted them into a box next to the one occupied by the guide.

Here he brought them drinks, for which he charged four times the value, and then retired, leaving them undisturbed to spy on the Indian.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CLEANING OUT THE HALL.

No one paid much attention to the two seemingly poor-looking Jews. But they were taking a keen and lively interest in the conversation going on in the adjoining box, which was only separated from them by a curtain.

The Indian was speaking when the waiter left them, and they heard him say:

"He was a fool if he thought he could hide from me."

"Was you up to his house?" demanded a girl's voice.

"Yes," replied Moon-Face. "Just came from there."

"But can you make him pay you the remaining nine hundred dollars?"

"Of course I can by threatenfing to squeal on him to the police. And if I get it I'll give you half the coin for your information."

"You say he was trying to marry that rich girl Daisy Danford?"

"That was exactly what his game was."

"But he would have been a bigamist if he had married her."

"Of course he would as long as you are his legal wife," assented the guide.

"Well, I hated him before for deserting me, and leaving me to earn my own living on the stage," said the girl, in angry tones, "and now I hate him worse. If you'll prove to me that he was trying to marry that girl, I'll put him at your mercy to get all his money away from him, provided you give me half. Then I'll put him out of my house."

"Very well. Meet me after the show, and I'll take you to Miss Danford's house, and she will tell you herself."

"That will satisfy me. How did you know where to find me?"

"Well," chuckled the Indian, "he once told me you were his divorced wife. Armed with your name, a theatrical agent told me where you were working, and I concluded he was with you. So, when I found he had vanished from his boarding-house I concluded to hunt you up and see if you knew where I could lay my hands on him. That's how I happened to land in this place."

"I see. You are deep. But, say, Mr. Indian, how do you know that Murdock has got so much money about him?"

"Simply because he had a wad of several thousand dollars when I first met him in the Gilsey House. He had no possible chance to spend it since then, so I infer that he's got a lot of it left."

"But he told me he was broke."

"Naturally, if he feared you'd try to get some of his wad."

"What a liar he is, and what a trusting fool I was to believe him. Why, he came to me with tears in his eyes and swore he was in trouble with the police, and begged me to hide him in my house."

"And you took him in?"

"Yes—I forgot my anger in my pity for his misery."

"That's woman-like. But you still hate him, you say?"

"Yes, I do. And more so since I've found out how he has been deceiving me."

The Indian laughed and ordered more drinks.

A significant glance flashed between the Bradys.

They realized that they had a means of finding Murdock's hiding place now, and they meant to take advantage of their knowledge.

"We can shadow them when they leave here," Harry whispered.

"Of course," assented his partner. "That half breed is a deep and cunning rascal. He is playing upon the woman's feelings to make her betray her husband. What wouldn't he do for money?"

"Hark! They are speaking again."

Just then Moon-Face asked:

"What time are you going to leave here?"

"One o'clock to-night."

"That will be too late to call on Daisy Danford."

"Can't I meet you here to-morrow afternoon and go there with you?"

"Of course."

"Then that's the plan."

"I'll be on hand."

"And I get half of the money, mind you?"

"Of course," laughed Moon-Face.

Their conversation now changed to general subjects in which the officers were not interested, and several hours passed by.

Finally the Indian made a definite engagement with the actress and departed, very much under the influence of liquor.

The moment he was gone Harry stepped into the box he left, to get a good look at the performer to whom he had been talking.

He wanted to know her when she left the concert hall.

She was talking to the man and another performer when the young detective entered the box, and Harry sized her up at a glance.

The woman was about thirty-five years of age, clad in all her stage finery, and seemed to be a good-natured person.

But beneath that smiling painted face, Harry detected anything but an amiable disposition.

"Well, what do you think of what that Indian said?" she was saying as Harry stepped into the box.

Instead of replying a broad grin overspread the man's face, and pointing at Young King Brady, he yelled derisively:

"Goose!"

"Oh! I beg your pardon," said the young detective, retreating.

"Goose!" continued the loafer.

"I tought nopody vos in here," continued Harry, paying no heed to the insulting fellow. "I vill go righd oud."

"You'll leave some of that loose chewing behind you, then," chuckled the man, and he sprang from his chair and grabbed Harry's whiskers.

He intended to pull out a handful.

But to his astonishment he pulled the false beard off completely, and a feeling of alarm took possession of him for a moment, as he held up the beard, and gasped in tones of dismay.

"I've pulled the whole face off of him!"

Young King Brady had been taken completely by surprise.

He clapped his hand to his face, sprang at the man, and, tearing the beard from his hand, he gave the rascal a slap in the face that drove him back against the wall swearing roundly.

To conceal his features Harry swiftly readjusted the beard on his face.

No sooner had he done this, however, than Murdock's wife cried:

"Look out, he's a detective!"

"He's a fake, and I'll knock his block off!" roared the loafer.

Rushing at Harry, he aimed a vicious swing at the boy's jaw.

Seeing the blow coming, Young King Brady deftly parried it, and doubling up his fist, he struck the man square between the eyes.

Down went the loafer like a log.

Just then Old King Brady hearing the row, made his appearance.

"Vot's der madder?" he asked.

"Dot man pull my whiskers," replied Harry.

"Bunch him mit der chaw."

Dot's vot I chust doon."

The loafer was furious and scrambled to his feet.

"Cuss yer!" he roared. "I won't let no goose hit me, I won't!"

And raising a chair he aimed a blow at the detectives which might have broken their heads had it landed.

Before he did any damage, however, Old King Brady darted forward and seizing him by the throat, pinned him to the wall.

"Yust trop dot jair," he said in low, stern tones.

"I'll——"

"You do noddings!"

He shook the fellow till he let the chair fall.

Everyone in the house realized by these sounds that a fight was going on in the box, and rose to their feet.

Several waiters dashed in and seized Old King Brady.

"Save me, boys!" hoarsely cried the loafer.

The waiters were friends of his, and were intent upon handling the detectives roughly.

"Leave him alone!" one of them yelled, fiercely.

Old King Brady coolly glanced over his shoulder at them and said:

"Herry, yust pud 'em oud, vill yer."

The boy drew a brace of revolvers and aimed them at the waiters.

"Git!" he exclaimed.

Click—click! went his pistols.

A perfect yell of terror escaped the waiters.

Out of the box they rushed, and Old King Brady picked up the loafer, lifted him over the railing, and let him drop on the open piano.

There came a queer noise as he struck the strings and bounced on the floor.

By this time the place was in an uproar.

"Come," said the old detective.

With Harry at his side, he strolled downstairs.

Every loafer in the place was now armed with a beer glass or a bottle, and all gathered at the foot of the stairs, eager and anxious to beat the detectives to death when they got down.

Harry saw them, and smiled.

"Beck up, dere!" he yelled, aiming his pistol at them.

One order was enough.

The crowd scattered and fled.

"Keep them moving, Harry," said the old detective.

The boy nodded, and began to discharge his pistol over their heads.

Wild and furious yells of alarm escaped the gang, and they made a wild plunge for the doors and windows.

Never waiting to raise the sashes, they went through the window-glasses, and tumbled over each other in the doorway.

It was a rapid exit, but they all feared to get shot.

In a minute more the detectives had the place cleaned out.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### SHOT FROM THE ROOF.

"Lay low, Harry!"

"What's the matter?"

"Here she comes."

The Bradys crouched back in a dark doorway.

Just then the clocks were striking one, and Murdock's wife was coming from the concert hall, clad in her shabby street clothing.

She was now a much different-looking person.

Poor, pale, and haggard, she showed in her pinched features the ravages of want, privation, and the late hours she was obliged to keep.

The detectives had met no opposition when they left the place an hour before, and the woman thought they were gone long ago.

But they had merely changed their appearance in the cab.

They were now disguised to represent a couple of laborers.

When Mrs. Murdock hurried away, the detectives glided from their place of concealment.

"Follow that woman!" they said to the driver.

"Jump in," was his reply.

A moment later they were on Mrs. Murdock's track.

"She will lead us right to the man's hiding-place," Harry commented.

"I hope so. There she goes, around the corner into Houston street."

"She must live near here."

"What a forlorn-looking creature," pityingly said the old detective. "It's no wonder she hates Murdock. He must have cast her off. Her abject poverty must make her feel bitterly toward him, knowing now, as she does, that he has plenty of money."

"It is to be hoped that her anger will get her husband

into jail," replied Young King Brady. "When the Indian comes to find him, he must be in jail. There she goes in that tenement alley."

The cab stopped.

Out they leaped and followed the girl.

The alley led them into a rear court paved with brick.

There was a little two-story frame shanty built on the rear of the lot, and they saw the woman enter the rear door of the front tenement.

She passed up through the gloomy hall to the top floor.

The Bradys, as silent as shadows, were close behind her.

"She must live here," Harry whispered.

"No doubt. It's a wretched place."

"Ha! What's that?"

"Katie!" called a voice over the balustrade above, "is that you?"

"Yes," the woman replied.

Harry recognized the voice, and nudged his partner.

"It's Murdock!" he muttered.

"Yes; I recognize his voice."

"He's nervous about people coming up."

"Evidently."

Just then a door opened on the hall they were traversing.

One of the tenants had heard the woman calling to the man on the floor above.

A flood of light gushed out upon the detectives before they could retreat.

They were seen at once, and the man in the doorway cried in startled tones:

"Hello! Who's that?"

"We're going upstairs," muttered Harry.

"Who to see?"

"The people on the top floor."

"No one lives there but a singer."

"Yes, we know."

The man banged the door shut, and gloom settled down.

But the interruption and his loud talk had done the mischief, as the Bradys afterward discovered.

Both the woman and her husband had heard them, and wondered who could be calling on them after one in the morning.

It aroused their suspicions.

Bending over the banisters, with a lamp in his hand, Murdock saw the two shadowy forms silently stealing up the stairs.

He did not recognize them as the detectives, but the slay way they were ascending and the fact that he knew they had no business there were quite enough to give him a terrible shock of surprise.

As quick as a flash he blew out the light.

"He has seen us!" Harry whispered.

"Make a rush for him," replied Old King Brady.

"Here—I've got my lantern lit."

Young King Brady had been anticipating some such contingency as this, and prepared his dark lantern in advance.

Drawing it from his breast pocket, he flashed its rays up in the hall, but they failed to see any one.

The woman had gone into her apartments.

Upstairs rushed the Bradys.

They did not stand on ceremony, but Harry pushed open the nearest door and confronted Mrs. Murdock.

She stood pale and anxious in the middle of the room.

"Where's your husband?" demanded Harry, sharply.

"I don't know," she replied in guarded tones.

"Then I'll search the place."

"Go ahead," she replied, coolly.

He dashed through the three rooms she occupied, but although he carefully searched every nook and corner, he failed to find the man. When he returned to the woman, she exclaimed:

"Ain't you a detective in disguise?"

"Yes."

"I thought so."

"Where did Murdock hide himself?"

"That's more than I can tell you."

Harry eyed her intently a moment.

Being a good reader of human nature, he saw that she was lying.

Still, it was quite natural for her to protect the worthless man from these officers who were seeking to put him in prison.

Perhaps she feared that she would not get any of her husband's money if he were once confined in jail.

Old King Brady had been busy.

The front apartments were not tenanted.

Discovering this, he carefully searched them, but failed to find his man.

When the detectives met in the hall they were puzzled.

"He isn't in his wife's rooms," said Harry.

"Nor is he in the front apartments," Old King Brady commented.

"Where could he have vanished to so suddenly?"

"What's that in the further corner of the hall?"

"Looks like a closet."

"Examine it."

Harry pulled the door open.

When he flashed his light in, he saw a ladder leading to the roof.

Above the skylight was raised so they could see the stars.

"Here's where he got out," said the boy.

"No doubt. Run up."

They ascended, and met with another mystery.

This house was a story lower than the ones on each side, so he could not have gone over the roofs.

Yet he was not there.

"Mighty peculiar," commented Young King Brady.

His partner walked to the front, and peered over the cornice.

There was no means to reach the street this way.

He then walked to the rear.

Here they saw Murdock's method of escape.

A stout pulley-line extended from the roof to the shanty roof in the rear, and as the old detective caught view of it, he exclaimed:

"Here's how he got away."

"A risky piece of business," said Harry, "for he must have gone over that rope hand over hand to the rear house."

"He was desperate, and would run any risk."

The boy turned his light down into the court below.

Just then the door of the shanty opened and they saw Murdock rush out.

He caught view of the light and hesitated.

Drawing his pistol and pointing it at the man, Harry yelled:

"Halt where you are, Murdock.

"Not on your life!" panted the frightened rascal.

"I'll fire the moment you move!"

"Fire, and be hanged!"

With this defiance he rushed forward.

Bang! Bang! went Harry's pistol.

A yell of pain escaped the man, and he flung up his hands and fell to the ground wounded.

"I've dropped him!" cried Harry, rising to his feet.

"Come downstairs and we'll get the villain."

They passed down through the scuttle, and the woman rushed into the hall, and confronted them with a dangerous look.

"Have you killed him?" she demanded, fiercely.

"No. He's merely wounded."

"And now you'll arrest him, I suppose?"

"That's our intention."

"Well, you won't, if I can prevent it!"

As she said this, she seized Old King Brady, and a struggle ensued.

Slipping past them, Harry rushed downstairs and reached the yard.

But when he got there Murdock was gone.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CONCLUSION.

"He couldn't have been as badly hurt as I imagined," muttered the young detective, "and he has probably gone out to the street."

With this conclusion in his mind he rushed through the alley, and just as he reached the sidewalk he was surprised to see Moon-Face helping Murdock into the carriage which the Bradys had waiting.

"Hold on, there!" cried the boy.

"You stand back!" hissed the guide, drawing a revolver.

"I'm an officer of the law."

"I don't care who you are. This man is my friend, and I'm going to help him to get away," retorted Moon-Face, who had also traced Mrs. Murdock home, unknown to the detectives.

Harry darted forward, just as Murdock tumbled into the cab, slammed the door, and was driven away.



Seeing the boy coming, the Indian fired at him.

The bullet whistled past Harry's head, and the boy closed in on the treacherous guide, and gave him a punch that knocked him down.

His head struck the pavement and stunned him.

Meantime, bribed with a ten-dollar bill, the cabman had driven away with Murdock at such a furious pace that Harry realized how useless it would be to attempt to overtake him.

Just then Old King Brady joined the boy.

"I broke away from the woman," he remarked, "and—hello—who's that?"

"Moon-Face."

"What happened?"

"Shot at me, helping Murdock to escape."

"We'll have to run the brute in when he recovers."

"Glad of it, too. He knew who I was, but didn't hesitate to try to kill me. He was full, but that's no excuse for him."

"It will be a long time before he gets the reward for Danford's discovery," said the old detective. "Such a bad man is better off in jail."

He rang up a police patrol wagon, and the Indian was carried away and locked up to await trial for his perfidy.

The Bradys were worried over their loss of Murdock, and on the following day they began to scour the city in search of him.

By nightfall they met at headquarters.

Neither had any success in capturing the man.

"He seems to be safely hidden," Old King Brady commented in anxious tones. "We may have a long search, Harry."

"I've got a new idea," replied the boy.

"Out with it."

"As he was doubtless wounded, he would be apt to need medical attendance," said the young detective. "Let's try the hospitals."

"By Jove, it's queer we didn't think of that before."

Acting upon the suggestion, Old King Brady went to the telephone and rang up the various hospitals throughout the city.

A reply came from Bellevue that a man answering Murdock's description had been brought in by a cabman the night before.

He had a bad wound in the shoulder, but gave the name of Smith.

With this information the Bradys hurried away.

They soon reached the hospital, and were admitted.

After a conference with the head of the medical staff, they were conducted to one of the dormitories.

The man in question was pointed out to them, lying in a cot.

The patient's glance met theirs, and he turned very pale.

"By Heavens, it's the Bradys!" he groaned.

"Yes, Murdock," replied Harry, as they advanced to his bedside; "and we have you located all right."

"I'm afraid I've reached the end of my rope."

"Of course you have."

"Are you going to put me in jail now?"

"You'll go to the prison ward of the hospital until you recover from your wound. Then you'll have to go to court, to answer for the murder of Simon Danford, up in the Maine woods."

The man turned his face to the wall and said no more.

He now bitterly repented of his horrible crime.

Before the Bradys left him, Harry said:

"I've got more bad news for you, but I don't see that it will do you any more harm than you are going to get for that murder."

"To what do you refer?"

"Your employers, Laffin & Co., have found out about your shortage in your accounts, and know that Jack Harris is innocent."

This was a keen blow to the villain.

He hoped Jack would get in trouble over that matter.

The detectives departed soon afterward.

Murdock was put in the hands of the authorities, and in due time his wound healed, and they transferred him to jail.

When his trial occurred the evidence of the Bradys and Tom Ash convicted him, and he was sentenced and executed.

Moon-Face went to prison for his villainy, and it is safe to say that the authorities of Maine gave Canada Mack and his gang of ruffians long terms in jail.

The Bradys were soon afterward invited to the wedding of Jack Harris and Daisy Danford.

Murdock's wife left New York and never was seen in the metropolis again.

As for the Bradys, they were highly praised by their chief and warmly thanked by the bank directors, whose money they recovered, and by Laffin & Co., for whom they had done such a great service.

Other important work in the Secret Service had risen in the meantime, and they were soon again on the trail on another case.

Our next number will contain an account of their daring exploits.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS ON THE GREAT LAKES; OR, TRACKING THE CANADA GANG," which will be the next number (101) of "Secret Service."

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