

# 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 Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

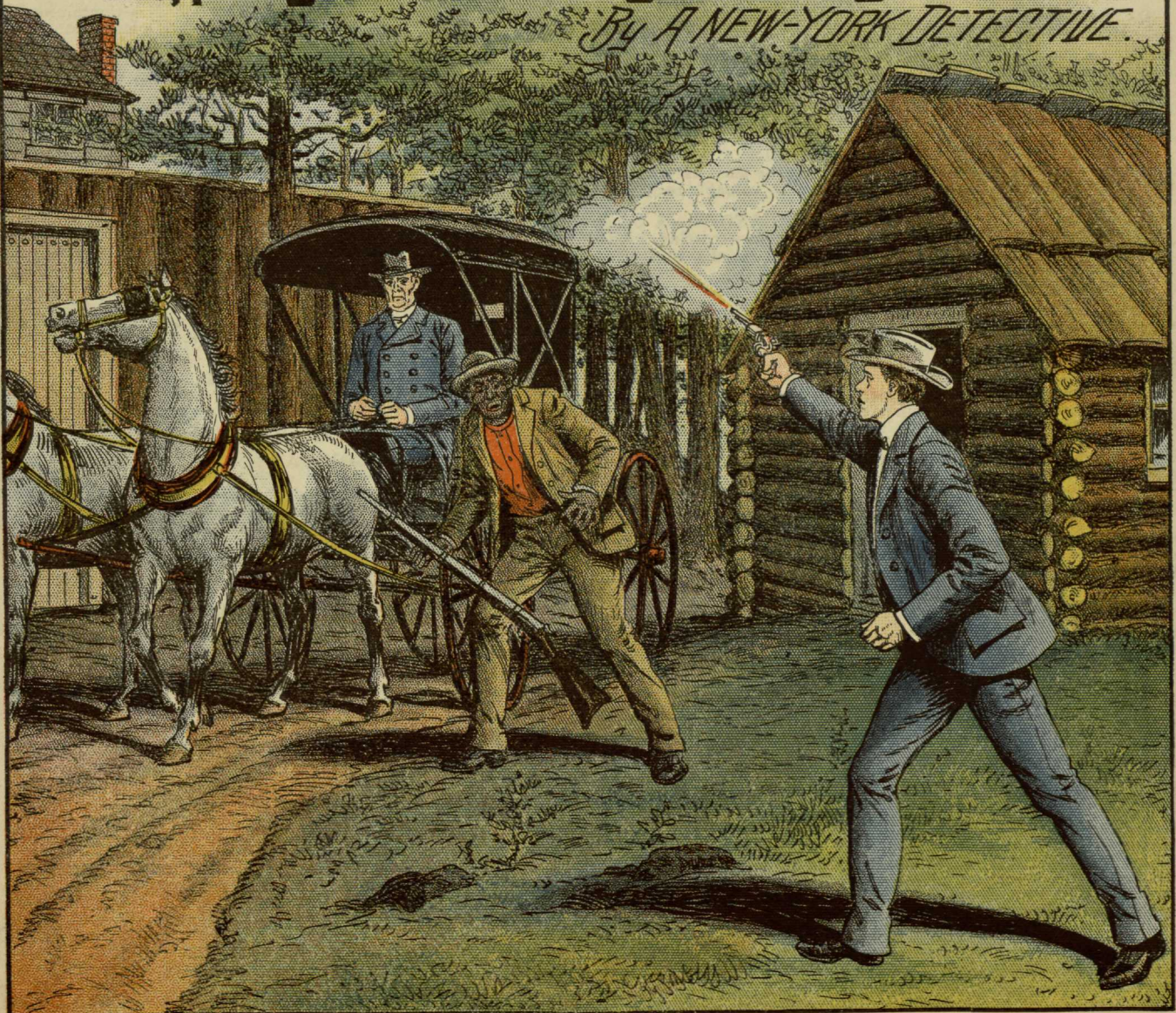
No. 258.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 1, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS AND "JOE JINGER!" OR, THE CLEW IN THE CONVICT CAMP.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



As the old detective drove up, the darky sprang into view with the shotgun. "Hold on, boss!" he shouted at Old King Brady. Harry rushed from his concealment, and sent a shot whizzing past Joe Jinger's head.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 1, 1904.

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# The Bradys and "Joe Jinger"

OR,

## The Clew in the Convict Camp.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### ABOUT THE MAN WHO WROTE JOE JINGER.

On the morning of the 19th of January, at 10:22, two persons entered the office of the Waldorf-Astoria, New York's most famous hotel, who attracted some attention from the hangers about the clerk's desk.

One was a trim, handsome young fellow dressed up-to-date.

His companion, on the contrary, looked years behind the times.

Years, did we say? Half a century, at least.

He was an elderly man, tall and well proportioned, with an eye like a hawk, an aquiline nose and sharp features.

His dress offered many peculiarities, such as a queerly cut blue coat with brass buttons, a high standup collar and old-fashioned stock, big white felt hat with an unusually broad brim, and so on.

"The Bradys, detectives!"

"That's Old King Brady, that old fellow with the big white hat."

"Smartest detective in New York."

"What are you talking about New York! The smartest detective in the United States!"

These and similar remarks could have been heard by anyone moving about the hotel lobby.

All of which goes to argue that the Bradys are well known in New York.

"Good morning, Mr. Brady," said the clerk, who knew the old detective well. "You are prompt, I see."

"We just happened to be in the office when you called us up on the 'phone," replied Old King Brady, "so we came right up."

"I was sorry not to be able to give you a fuller explanation of the business for which you are wanted," said the clerk; "but the fact is, there are strong reasons for the lady keeping her identity secret, and she particularly requested that I should not even give her name; I assured her that if you were in town you would be willing to wait upon her just on my general request."

"Certainly. You were quite right, Mr. Clark," said the old detective. "If the case is an important one too great secrecy can hardly be maintained."

"I don't even know how important it is," replied Clark, "for the lady told me nothing. She is a Miss Clayton, one of the North Carolina Claytons. She has just arrived from the South with her father, Colonel Lionel Clayton, a Confederate veteran, who is a perfect paralytic. He can neither walk nor talk and he has lost the use of his hands. I never saw such a case. We had an awful time getting him up to the third story—the daughter would not consent to a room higher up—but, strange to say, the old fellow seems bright enough, and eats and drinks as much as a well man would, and reads the paper, too, when it is held up to him. But I am detaining you, Mr. Brady. I'll send your card right up."

A few moments later the Bradys were shown into a private parlor on the third floor.

They were received by a polite colored man with snow-white wool.

"Be seated, if yo' please, gem'n," he said; "Miss Kathleen will see yo' in a minute. Old Marse Kun'l jes' done had one of him nervous spells, an' it takes missy to get him quieted down."

In a few minutes Miss Clayton appeared.

She proved to be a middle-aged maiden lady, whose

face and figure showed that she had once been very beautiful.

Greeting the Bradys politely, she drew up a chair and, without wasting any preliminary words, thus began:

"I must apologize for calling on such slight information, gentlemen; but it is best to be cautious and it was my father's wish. Colonel Clayton is a paralytic. He has a way of communicating his wishes to me with his eyes, and I can understand him to a certain extent. He has been this way for ten years. I believe his hearing to be perfect, as I know that it is his desire to be present at this interview. I will ring for him. Kindly make no effort to speak to him. It is quite useless and only worries him. Excuse me for an instant and I will summon him now."

Miss Clayton arose and touched an electric bell.

In a moment a door opened and the old colored servant appeared, pushing the invalid wheel chair.

It was pitiful to see the man.

He was enormously large, weighing probably not less than three hundred pounds, but from the appearance of the handsome rug which covered his lower limbs Old King Brady judged that they had wasted away.

His gray hair was neatly brushed and a fierce moustache and florid cheeks gave him a decidedly military look.

Altogether, Colonel Clayton was a very striking character, and yet the man was to all intents dead except for the eyes.

These were large and as bright as if they had belonged to a man in perfect health.

Not for one instant were they motionless. Now they fixed themselves upon Old King Brady, now on Harry; again they roamed to his daughter's face and then back to Old King Brady again.

It was painful to watch them.

Old King Brady turned his head away.

Miss Clayton approached her father and said:

"These are the detectives."

There was a peculiar movement of the eyes.

"Shall I tell them all?"

The eyes moved differently.

"Do you want to come closer or can you hear as you are?"

Nothing about the movement of the eyes told Old King Brady anything, but Miss Clayton seemed to understand.

"Pomp, move father nearer to Old King Brady," she said, and the chair was moved.

All was ready now and Miss Clayton began her story as follows:

"My father comes from western North Carolina, gentlemen. Our family seat, called Mossbank, lies up among the mountains near the French Broad river; for many generations the Claytons have occupied it, and even after the war my father retained his fortune until about ten years ago.

"At that time and for two or three years previously

we had been residing in New York, where my father was engaged in Wall street speculations. He made money at first, but in the end lost all.

"Just how it happened I don't know, nor could I ever learn.

"My father did all business through a broker named Bartel Biggerman, now the multimillionaire."

"I know him," said Old King Brady.

"I hope he is no friend of yours," replied Miss Clayton; "for I believe him to be a great scoundrel."

"So do others. But go on."

"There is so little that I know that it won't take long to tell it.

"One morning my father went to business as usual. At noon I was called up on the telephone and told that he had fallen in a fit in Mr. Biggerman's office and had been taken to a hospital.

"From that hour he has never spoken. Everything we have except one small plantation, from which we derive our living, was swept away.

"How, I can't understand. I only know that Bartel Biggerman claimed all, and in the end got all. I left the matter with my father's lawyer, now dead, and he assured me that Mr. Biggerman had a rightful claim to all our property but this one plantation.

"Now this man has retired from business and has built a great mansion on the site of our old ancestral home—'Mossbank', he still calls it. The estate covers many miles. He entertains his friends there as though he was a king."

"Everybody knows Mossbank, miss," put in Young King Brady. "The doings of the Biggermans and their guests form a regular topic of society news."

"So I believe," sighed the lady. "That is how the case stands. At first I supposed it was all right; that my father had actually lost his property by speculation. We returned to Mossbank—the old Mossbank now gone forever—and I prepared to move our belongings away to the humble dwelling on the small plantation which had formerly been occupied by our overseer.

"One morning just before we moved from the large house when I went to my father's bedside he suddenly raised his right hand for the first time since the shock and made motions to indicate that he wanted to write.

"I hurried to give him pencil and paper. What he wrote I will now show you."

Miss Clayton produced a sheet of paper, upon which, in characters almost illegible, the following lines had been scrawled:

"I can hear. I can see. Fraud—all fraud! We have been robbed. I hold a——"

Here followed two lines which were absolutely indecipherable, and Miss Clayton explained that she and others had tried in vain to read them, and that without them the entire sense of the document was lost.

What followed this unfortunate break read as follows:

"——it was put in the cabinet, which was robbed by Biggerman's orders. Look in the secret drawer. It may

be that this escaped; press the eye of the skull. If not there look for——"

Here the paper ended.

"That is all there is to it?" asked Old King Brady.

"That is all," replied Miss Clayton. "We opened the secret drawer. This paper refers to an old cabinet which stood in my father's library. The drawer was empty. It had evidently been forced open."

"And your father never was able to finish the writing?"

"Years passed and he never moved his hand again until one day last week, when——"

"One moment. Let us finish with this paper first. What does it mean by pressing the eye of the skull?"

"Oh, that refers to a bit of carving on the cabinet. The skull was carved out of the mahogany of which the cabinet is constructed; but the eye was formed of a piece of ebony set in. It proved to be the secret spring which would have enabled us to open the drawer, no doubt; but when we came to examine it we found that the spring had long been broken and the drawer forced."

"And that is all there is about this paper?"

"That is all; but there is another one. During all these years I have kept paper and pencil by my father's side in the hope that the power to write might suddenly return to him.

"About two weeks ago I found this by his bedside. He must have raised up in bed to write it, but when I found him he was as dumb and helpless as ever. See how eagerly he watches you, Mr. Brady. He hears every word we say and knows exactly what we are talking about. Read this, please."

The writing on the second paper was decidedly more legible than the first, and read as follows:

"Be quick! Get detectives. Bradys, New York! All fraud! If paper still exists I can prove it. Tell them to find——"

"Provoking!" cried Old King Brady. "Here we find ourselves headed off again."

"Yes," replied Miss Clayton. "It is very trying. However, I came here to look you up in the hope that you might be able to suggest something. I don't know how my father knew about you, unless it was from the newspapers. He often reads the papers. Some people seem to think that he has no intelligence. This I know to be false; I believe his mind to be perfectly clear."

"And he has never spoken in all these ten years?" inquired Old King Brady, looking at the paralytic, whose gaze was fixed searchingly upon him.

"Never once. No sound has ever passed his lips except for a low moaning which he used to make at first, but even that we never hear now."

"Then, as a matter of fact, Miss Clayton, you don't know exactly what you want me to do."

"That is true. I do not. I only know that for ten years something has been on my poor father's mind, and now since he asks for the help of the Bradys I am deter-

mined that he shall have it; but it is only right that you should know, Mr. Brady, that I have nothing to pay you with. Our plantation scarcely supports us. Our expenses here are being met by an old friend. I may be able to raise money from this friend to meet your bill, but——

"Never mind about that now, ma'am," broke in Old King Brady in his abrupt way. "What we want to do first is to get at the bottom of this mystery. Now I am going to read this last paper over to your father and see if I cannot in some way get a hint of what he would have added if his strength had held out."

"It will be quite useless, sir."

"Just the same I am going to try it," was the reply.

Whatever put the idea into Old King Brady's head is a question.

Strange notions often seize this remarkable man and he often gets clues which lead to the successful termination of his cases in ways of which people little dream.

Old King Brady now took the paper in hand and, placing himself beside the paralytic, said:

"Colonel Clayton, I assume that you can hear me. I assume that you understand everything that is going on here, and I want your help."

The colonel's eyes fixed themselves upon the old detective.

They seemed to fairly dilate with the desire to do or say something.

"Now," said Old King Brady, taking out a lead pencil and laying it on the broad arm of the wheel chair with the paper alongside of it. "Now, with all your might, with all the strength of your will, try to take up that pencil and finish what you wrote the other night. I will help you; so will my partner. So will Miss Clayton. We will all three fix our minds on this one thing."

Silence followed.

Oh, the eager, longing look in those wonderful eyes.

Suddenly Old King Brady arose and, looking down upon the paper, began slowly to read it out loud.

"Be quick! Get detectives! Bradys, New York. All fraud. If paper still exists I can prove it. Tell them to find——"

As Old King Brady approached these last words he saw the fingers of Colonel Clayton's right hand twitch.

"Finish! Finish! Finish!" the old detective kept saying to himself.

Then all in an instant the hand was raised, the fingers closed up on the pencil and Colonel Clayton wrote

"Joe Jinger!"

## CHAPTER II.

### A VERY HARD CASE TO GET AT.

This singular name had no sooner been written by Colonel Clayton than his hand dropped back into his lap and the pencil fell to the floor.

There he sat just the same, but 'oh! such a look of triumph as came into his flashing eyes.

"There!" exclaimed Old King Brady, quietly. "I knew you could do it if you would only give your mind to it. You need me for your doctor, colonel. I'd soon have you on your feet again.

It was dreadful to watch that unresponsive face.

Not the faintest suspicion of a smile appeared upon it. Not a muscle twitched.

There was nothing to show that he even heard—nothing but the eyes.

Old King Brady thought that they looked brighter and moved more rapidly.

It might only have been imagination; he could not tell.

"That is enough excitement for one day," he said. "Better let Pomp take him away now."

"He doesn't want to go," replied Miss Clayton.

"How can you tell that?"

"By his eyes. I can understand much more of his meaning than you would imagine."

"Very well. Let him stay then. Now, miss, have you any idea what your father means by this peculiar name which he has written on this paper?"

"Not the least."

"But try and think. Who can this Joe Jinger be?"

"Oh, I know that, Mr. Brady. He was one of our niggers on the old plantation. He used to be a slave before the war."

"Where is he now?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"You must try and help me. If your father really has his full intelligence, as you think, and I am inclined to believe that you are right, then there is some meaning to this. How long since you saw this Joe Jinger?"

"Oh, it is years; I cannot remember."

"Before your father's trouble?"

"Yes; long before."

"You note the peculiar way in which he spells the name. Why does he do that, do you suppose?"

"I can't imagine. I don't know anything at all about it. You must take my age into consideration, Mr. Brady. I have only heard of Joe Jinger as a tradition; nothing more."

"Can you think of anyone who would be liable to give any further information on the subject?"

"Nobody, unless——"

"Well, you pause."

"Unless it was my granduncle, Dr. Clayton Clayton, I was about to say."

"You have such a relative living, then?"

"Oh, yes. He is my grandfather's brother. He is nearly ninety years old. You would find it very hard to get at him, and I doubt very much if he would be willing to tell you anything even if you should succeed."

"Where does he reside?"

"In an old mansion up among Smoky Mountains in western North Carolina. He lives entirely by himself.

Our family has been on bad terms with him for many years."

"Is he rich?"

"Not particularly. He has enough for his wants. He is devoted to chemistry, and has a laboratory, I believe. I really know very little about him. He may even be dead."

"You think he knows all about the old slaves on your father's plantation?"

"About the slaves of my grandfather's time. He lived there then."

"What was this quarrel about?"

"I don't know. My father never told me."

"How intently your father is listening now!" mused Old King Brady. "Oh, if he could only speak!"

The living eyes in that dead body seemed to fairly blaze as the old detective made this remark.

What was this!

Surely it was an attempt at articulation, although the lips did not move.

"Look! Watch him!" breathed Harry. "I know that he is trying to talk!"

"Upon my word I believe he is," breathed Old King Brady. "At the same time I think it is altogether unsafe to urge the man too far."

"Pomp, you had better take him away," said Miss Clayton, nervously.

"Wait a minute," said Old King Brady. "Perhaps Pomp knows something of Joe Jinger."

"No, massa," replied the old colored man. "I'se not one of de Clayton niggers. No sah! I'se borrn and riz down in Alabam!"

"Pomp knows nothing of our early life," sighed Miss Clayton. "I think——"

She paused.

A fearful change had come over the paralytic.

The blood rushed to his puffy red cheeks, which seemed now to be fairly bursting.

All at once a strange rumbling sound was heard.

It came from between the set lips of Colonel Lionel Clayton. It was the first which had passed them in years.

All at once a voice sounded as though speaking from a distance.

"Joe Jinger!"

Mighty must have been the effort.

It was all the man could do, and, having done it, the eyes closed and his head fell back against the chair.

"Oh, my father! He is dead!" screamed Miss Clayton.

The painful scene which followed has no direct bearing in our story.

Colonel Clayton was not dead, but he had come very near to death.

A doctor hastily summoned thought that the end had come.

Days passed and the man remained in much the same condition.

Repeatedly Old King Brady called at the Waldorf-Astoria to inquire for him.

At last one Sunday night about two weeks later Miss Clayton summoned him on the telephone.

Old King Brady only waited for Harry to come in and then both started for the Waldorf.

As they turned out of the square into Thirty-fourth street a big white automobile came tearing down Broadway at a most reckless speed, putting everybody on the run for their lives.

The chauffeur, utterly indifferent to the call of a policeman to slow down, ran the machine past the Bradys, who had stopped to look.

On the rear seat sat a large, foreign-looking man with coarse, red features and a cold, hard eye.

He wore an astrachan coat, trimmed with costly fur, and was the very personification of vulgar wealth as he sat there puffing his cigar.

"By jove, that fellow would rather kill a dozen people than not!" Harry exclaimed.

"Mark him well," said Old King Brady. "We may have occasion to deal with him later on."

"Indeed! Who is he?"

"Bartel Biggerman, the Wall street broker."

"Hello! Is that the fellow who robbed our paralyzed friend?"

"No one else. He is an utterly unscrupulous man. He has left a trail of wreck and ruin behind him in everything he has ever undertaken. I've been looking him up of late."

"Then heaven help him if you have been looking up his record, Governor. What have you learned?"

"Much which serves to condemn him. Nothing in his favor. That man ought to have been in Sing Sing years ago. Of course his wealth protects him."

"He is not an American?"

"No, no. I have not been able to find out of what nationality he is. Some claim that he is a Belgian, others that he is an Austrian. One broker on Wall street swears that he came from Bulgaria. It is hard to tell. Of course, the name he goes by is assumed.

"Biggerman, indeed!" chuckled Harry. "It ought to be 'Biggest-man.' That's what he thinks he is."

The white auto was out of sight long before this conversation ended, and the Bradys went on to the Waldorf.

They were at once shown into the presence of Miss Clayton.

"Oh, Mr. Brady! I am so glad you have come!" the lady exclaimed. "A great change has come to my poor father. That he may now recover the doctors think possible, providing he can be taken abroad for treatment. He is now able to speak a little and the paralysis has left his lower limbs, but his arms he still cannot move."

"When did this change take place?" demanded Old King Brady.

"This morning at about eleven. At first we thought it was only temporary, but now I begin to have hope."

Has he told anything relating to this business of ours, miss?"

"No; he has kept asking for you. I telephoned twice, but you were not in."

"Yes, miss. I was away on business. I came as soon as I got word."

"Come right in and see him," said Miss Clayton. "He is waiting most anxiously."

She threw open a door and introduced the Bradys into a chamber where Lionel Clayton lay in bed.

A remarkable change had come over his face.

It was much thinner, and the former motionless muscles now twitched horribly.

His speech was very broken and lacked connecting words.

There was a queer rumble in his voice, which made it almost impossible to understand him.

"Brady!" was the first.

"Glad to see you better, colonel!" said Old King Brady, in his hearty way. "I told you that I was the doctor you wanted."

"Bless you!"

"Yes, yes! You are on the mend. Now try and say what you wished to say, for I am going to take right hold of this business of yours and see if I can't recover your fortune for you. Do you think it will be possible to get back what you have lost?"

The answer came slowly and painfully.

From that answer Old King Brady built up the remarkable case which we are now about to relate.

We shall therefore give it in full just as we got it from Harry's notebook.

The dashes between the words denote the breaks in the speech of the paralytic:

"Never lost—dollar—all fraud—loaned deed—big speculation—equal partners—put in all—half a million—market right—paper—he gave—paper—paper! Cabinet. Mossbank. Gone! Gone! Ruined!"

Slowly and painfully the paralytic got thus far.

Then came a long pause.

Once more he braced himself up to the painful task and this followed:

"Joe Jinger! He alone knew. Must have taken—paper. Revenge! Find—find—find—Joe Jinger. Big—"

This was the end.

The long unused vocal chords seemed to give out then. Colonel Clayton found himself absolutely powerless for further speech.

Day after day the Bradys waited on the man.

Little by little they drew out of him and from others on Wall street material which they worked out into a proposition which Harry's notebook puts as follows:

It was the hardest case to get at the Bradys ever had. Colonel Clayton had been induced by Biggerman to enter into a stock speculation which failed.

Biggerman was generally supposed to have been ruined by the transaction, and it was known that Colonel Clayton must have dropped several hundred thousand dollars that day.

Next morning the speculative Southerner appeared on the Street as chipper as ever, and to the surprise of everyone, Biggerman, before the close of the board, had met every obligation of the day before.

The day following the stock market took an upward turn.

The stocks in which Biggerman and Colonel Clayton were interested were the ones to meet with the biggest boom.

For a week they continued to rise and then the Biggerman-Clayton crowd closed out, causing a sharp drop in prices.

It was generally admitted that Biggerman and Clayton must have made millions.

Next Colonel Clayton, after a private interview, fell paralyzed in Biggerman's office.

When his daughter inquired of his lawyer as to his property she was told that all had been swept away.

According to Biggerman's books, the broker was not indebted to Colonel Clayton one dollar; but, on the contrary, the colonel owed the broker several hundred thousand to secure which he had transferred to him the entire Mossbank plantation, with many square miles of wild mountain land attached.

The lawyer, who also acted for Biggerman, assured Miss Clayton that it was all right.

Not satisfied, the unfortunate woman employed another lawyer, but he could find no trace of fraud.

So the matter rested.

Biggerman seized Mossbank and turned his paralyzed partner out upon the world.

He even began suit against Miss Clayton to recover the value of a few articles of furniture—old family relics which she had ventured to remove from the mansion at Mossbank.

Since that time Bartel Biggerman had made many millions.

Mossbank had been turned into a vast estate, with a palace where the old Clayton mansion had stood.

And had it all been obtained through fraud?

Could the Bradys possibly hope to prove this at so late a day?

Such was the case the detectives had undertaken.

We shall now see how they went to work to do it and what success they met with in their difficult task.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE BRADYS LOCATE THE CONVICT CAMP.

"My friend, I want to ask you a few questions for which I am perfectly willing to pay," remarked Old King Brady, looking the landlord of the Grand Southern Hotel at Jarrets, N. C., full in the face as he leaned against the dirty bar.

The Grand Southern at Jarrets was not quite as large a house as its name would imply, and Landlord Tinker was certainly not a large man, but he gave Old King Brady a look which seemed to mean war.

"Dunno whether I kin answer yer questions or not, stranger," he drawled. "It's ag'in my principles to let any Yankee drummer draw me out, that's so."

"So you have put us down for a pair of Yankee drummers, have you?" laughed Old King Brady. "My dear sir, you are entirely mistaken. We are nothing of the sort."

"Why, you signed the register New York. Everybody in New York's a drummer," Tinker drawled.

"Not quite. Suppose I was to tell you I was a lawyer?"

"Dunno as I should believe yer."

"Suppose I told you I'd give this five dollar note for as many minutes' talk with you because I am here on law business?"

"Then I should have to believe you, by gaul."

"Take the money."

Tinker took it.

He was not the sort to throw a five over his shoulder.

"What do you want to know first of all?" he asked.

"If you have any good whisky in the shop."

"Surely! It has paid full tax, too. If you be detectives after moonshiners you don't get nothing out of me."

"We are not in that line of business. Trot out your whisky. Have some yourself. Call in your friends."

"Is that all you want to know?" cried the landlord.

"All except the way to Mossbank."

"That's up the road which passes this house a considerable piece. Be you friends of Mr. Biggerman?"

"No; we merely wanted to take in the place on our way about here. They say it is well worth seeing."

"You bet it are, suh! Thare ain't no sich fine house in the hull world."

"So I have been told. It is not reached from this station, though?"

"No; from Charleston."

"Yes, yes. Well, we must take it in some day."

And here Old King Brady stopped his questions.

They had been of no importance whatever.

Besides the five dollar bill, Landlord Tinker took in five more over his bar, for everyone in sight was summoned to have a drink.

The Bradys then engaged the best room in the house and announced their intention of staying around Jarrets for a week, if the country pleased them.

After that they engaged a team at the livery stable and were driven up among the mountains.

Away up on one particularly high place over which the road passed the man who drove them reined in and pointed down upon a large mansion which stood upon a ridge at some distance below.

This, it appeared, was "the new Mossbank, the finest house in the world, suh!"

"I suppose," remarked Old King Brady, "that Mr.



Biggerman coming to Mossbank has been a great help to you people."

"Dunno," replied the driver. "It hain't never helped me none."

"But he must spend a good bit of money."

"Just as little as he kin, down hyar. Almost everything they use comes from York."

"And in Colonel Clayton's time it was different, I suppose."

"Colonel Clayton was a gentleman, suh."

"Was—is, you mean?"

"They say he's dead, suh. That's what I hear."

"Indeed! A man on the train was telling me about him. Sad case."

"Very."

"Do you know the family well?"

"My father did. I don't."

"I heard that one of the family still lived in these mountains at a very advanced age."

"You refer to Dr. Clayton Clayton, suh. Yes; he is nearly a hundred years old, but still he don't die. Very learned man, suh."

"So I have been told."

"Thar hain't a man in all the world, suh, what knows as much as Clayton Clayton."

"So I have heard. Where does he live?"

"Show you in a minute," replied the driver, as they went jogging on.

Soon a turn in the road brought them in sight of a strangely-shaped, isolated peak which rose abruptly on their left.

"Thar!" exclaimed the driver. "That thar is Eagle's Nest. Thar's whar Dr. Clayton lives."

A queer, round pile of graystone rose from the top of the peak, which was surrounded by a granite dome, forming an excellent foundation for the tower; this remarkable building can be called nothing else.

"How on earth does anyone get up there?" demanded Harry.

"Oh, thar's a road," said the driver.

"And this old man lives there all alone?"

"All alone with his niggers. He keeps two or three."

"Does he never come down to town?"

"You mean Jarrets?"

"Or Charleston."

"Haven't heard of his being in either place in twenty years."

"Oh, by the way!" asked Old King Brady, suddenly, "where is the convict camp now?"

"Up thar beyond!" said the driver, waving his hand indefinitely toward the Smoky Mountains, which extended in one vast range of hazy peaks for miles and miles in both directions.

That was as near as the detective could get to it.

Down around the Smokys they live in mortal terror lest some Northern reporter may swoop down upon them and write up the convict camp system.

Ever since the Bradys had landed off the Atlantic express they had been trying to pick up this piece of information, but had so far failed.

And they failed now.

Their cracker driver shut up like a clam.

"Thar wuz a camp. It was up in ther Smokys. No one warn't never allowed thar, 'specially strangers."

It was no use. It had been just the same with Landlord Tinker.

This was the information really sought, and the question had been put, sandwiched in with a lot of others.

This ruse did not work, however.

Again with the driver Old King Brady had worked up to it gradually.

Again he had failed.

"I guess we had better be getting back," he said, at last. "It looks as though it might come on to rain."

The Bradys returned to the hotel and put in the night.

That evening very few of the barroom loungers went home sober.

Old King Brady, tipping Tinker another five, had directed him to "give the boys whatever they want."

But even in spite of this liberality Old King Brady could get no information about the convict camp.

For a full week the Bradys hung around Jarrets.

Every day they rode out and were absent for hours.

For the first four days the cracker drove them.

Each day Harry grew more enthusiastic about driving until with the cracker it became at last a case of looking on while Harry handled the reins. Finally there came a day when the wily detectives ventured to cut the cracker out.

They appeared at the stable at an unusually early hour and took out one rig of which Landlord Tinker could boast.

"Don't you want Jack? I'll send for him," said Tinker, who happened to be standing on the steps as they rode up.

"Oh, I think not," replied Old King Brady. "We shall only be gone an hour or so."

And because he had been liberally paid for everything, Landlord Tinker allowed them to go, while he was strongly tempted to refuse.

"At last!" exclaimed Harry, when they came to a walk at the foot of the mountain road. "I began to think they never would let us get away alone."

"It was just as we were warned," replied Old King Brady. "Biggerman learned of our regular attendance at the Waldorf-Astoria. We were told that he had sent Pinkerton men down here to watch out and see what we were up to in case we came. At first I could hardly credit it, but I am strongly inclined to believe it now."

"I haven't seen anyone I suspected," Harry remarked.

"My dear boy, hasn't there been one man right at our heels ever since we jumped to Jarrets?"

"Well, that's right, Jack James. He's just a common cracker, though. He lives around here."

"Who was telling you?"

"But, Governor!"

"Pshaw, Harry, how can you be so new? That man is a Pinkerton in disguise. I tumbled to it at the very first."

"But he knows the whole region around here."

"He knows next to nothing, but he has been here before, probably on business for Biggerman, for whom he is working now."

Young King Brady was amazed.

Nor was he altogether willing to credit these bold assertions on the part of his chief, and he said as much.

"Wait and see," said Old King Brady. "Detective or no detective, we have given the fellow the slip all right, and now we want to make the most of our chance."

"To reach the convict camp?"

"If it can be done, yes. We at last succeeded in getting it out of Colonel Clayton that he believed this man Joe Jinger to be in the convict camp."

"It was all so blooming indefinite, Governor."

"I know! I know! Never mind, though. We'll get there in the end. First thing is to locate the camp."

Of course, with his influence Old King Brady could easily have located this convict camp before leaving New York.

Not only that, but it would have been no trick at all for him to have obtained an order for his admission, even jealously guarded as these Southern convict camps are.

The old detective preferred to work entirely on the quiet, however.

Hence the peculiar methods chosen.

"We will go to Eagle's Nest first," he said to Harry. "I have reason to believe we shall find the camp not far away."

Although he did not say so, Old King Brady had another motive for this.

He felt that now would be his chance to prove that, as detectives, they were being watched by detectives.

Therefore he chose this day to visit the Eagle's Nest, because it would take them by a different road.

"There he goes!" he said to Harry, when they came suddenly out of the woods at a place where they could get a view of many miles. "Look!"

A man driving an aged light wagon could be seen ascending the hill.

"Jack!" exclaimed Harry.

"Our friend, the cracker, surest thing. Now do you doubt?"

"It is hard work to doubt, having seen him."

"He is following our yesterday's trail, determined to catch up with us if he can."

"Hadn't we better hurry, now we have the chance?"

"Perhaps we had."

"They put the whip to the horses and sent them on flying.

The trail taken led them through an utterly desolate region.

With each mile they ascended higher and higher, until having gained an elevation of over four thousand feet,

they came out at last upon a wide ridge which extended directly to the abrupt peak they had seen on the first day, and which was known as the Eagle's Nest.

"Hold on!" cried Harry, suddenly. "We have located it at last."

"Where? What?" demanded Old King Brady.

"There! That!" said Harry, pointing down into the notch between the ridge they were on and the one next beyond.

"Ah!" said Old King Brady. "So it is! The convict camp at last!"

"But where is our friend, the Pinkerton man?" he added. "Take the glass, Harry, and see if you can't spy him out."

For the best part of half an hour the Bradys remained seated in the wagon taking in the wonderful scene.

No words can paint the beauties of these western North Carolina mountain views. No artist living has ever done them justice. They are far too broad and extended for the camera.

Thus it is useless to attempt to describe the view which so interested Harry's artistic eye.

As for Old King Brady, he wasted neither words nor thought upon the beauties of the scene.

Leaving Harry to look for the supposed detective, Old King Brady, through his powerful glass, gave all his attention to the one bit of scenery within range which was not grandly beautiful.

The wily old sleuth was silently studying the convict camp.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE BRADYS FIND JOE JINGER.

To describe the peculiar convict system which prevails in most sections of the south is no part of our purpose, nor have we any criticisms to make upon it.

Our story deals solely with this particular convict camp and those connected with it.

Away down in the notch occupying the center of a clearing of a few acres space a high palisade of pine logs had been erected.

Within this palisade dwelt such convicts as were not then being worked by the contractor who had farmed out the convict labor.

The remainder of the gang might be anywhere, for all the detectives could tell.

Inside the palisade were a few buildings of some size.

These were the residences of the superintendent and the keepers, the messhouse, and other buildings used for general purposes.

Beyond these, erected in the middle of the enclosure, was a double line of rude log shacks in which the convicts dwelt.

Built on the outside of the palisade at short intervals were log towers occupied by the armed sentinels who kept watch night and day.

To approach to within a certain number of yards of this fence from the outside to the inside was supposed to bring its warning.

If that warning was not heeded it meant death.

The shacks on one side were occupied by white male convicts, on the other side by the negroes.

A few female convicts were used about the messroom and offices, but this was only a matter of convenience.

The female convicts belonging to this section of the state, as a body, were kept elsewhere.

"Well," remarked Harry at last, "I can't see anything of that fellow. He may be right behind us, or he may have gone off the trail altogether. I give it up."

"Thought you would have to," replied Old King Brady. "Never mind. If he comes up with us we must be ready for him, that's all."

"What do you make of the convict camp?"

"Take the glass and have a look, Harry."

"It's a hard looking spot."

"That's right."

"There are darkies enough moving about town there. I've counted forty. I'm wondering if one of them can be Joe Jinger with the J."

"Impossible to tell. Col. Clayton stuck to that so persistently that I cannot doubt that he knew what he was talking about, and yet he could never tell what crime the man had been convicted for or what camp he was in."

"You are right. 'Look convict camp! Look convict camp' was about as near as he could ever get to it. Now, you don't suppose for an instant that we are going to be allowed to look in behind that fence and question striped darkies at our own sweet will?"

"No, Harry. I look for nothing of the sort. I have altogether a different plan."

"May I ask what it is?"

"Oh, it is such an old plan, my dear boy!"

"Old or new, kindly give it a name."

"I propose to employ a powerful lever."

"To pry up that fence and tumble those fellows with the guns off their perches?"

"Be serious now. This is cold business."

"It is likely to prove rather hot business if we start in to take the camp by assault."

"The lever I allude to is gold."

"Gold! Bright, yellow gold! Ah, what more powerful lever exists? But in your case I am afraid it is going to prove a goldbrick."

"You will not be serious. I simply intend to buy my way to an interview with Joe Jinger, if the man is still there."

"Col. Clayton admitted that it was fifteen years since he heard of the fellow, and that if still alive he must be an older man than himself."

"You have thought this a doubtful errand from the first, and I will own that I am inclined to agree with you. Nevertheless, if Joe Jinger still lives I am determined to find him out! I——"

"Look! Look!" broke in Harry. "Gee! But that fellow is getting it good and plenty. See the whole bunch run! If they would only turn on the man with the whip they could down him blamed sudden."

"Harry, you are talking wild this a. m. What would the riflemen in the towers be doing all the time?"

"You're right. All over now."

What the Bradys saw took place near the negro quarters.

What caused the trouble the Bradys could not tell, but a keeper suddenly sprang upon a husky black and began laying a long lashed whip over his head and shoulders.

The distance was far too great for the Bradys to hear the cries of the wretched man, who threw up his hand to protect his face and backed away.

The convicts near him, instead of making any move to help their companion, scattered in all directions.

Still the whip continued to work.

The convict had stopped now.

His hands were still in front of his face. Still the blows of the fearful lash were rained down upon him.

"What's the matter with the man? Why don't he run, the idiot?" cried Harry.

"Look at the tower behind him," said Old King Brady. "You will get your answer there."

"I see. The guard has him covered with his rifle."

"He knows he will be instantly shot if he makes a move, and yet—ah! The worm will turn!"

Down went the hands.

Suddenly the convict had wrenched the whip away and seized the keeper by the throat.

At the same instant a puff of smoke was seen at the tower window.

The darky fell and the man with the whip went down with him.

Neither rose again.

The Bradys saw other keepers come crowding around.

They saw the vapor of a steam whistle arising and knew that the alarm must have been given.

After a long wait they heard the rifle report, and following it the toot of the alarm whistle.

Just about that time hazy smoke, which overhangs these mountains, crept into the notch and cut off the convict camp from view.

"Well, I declare!" cried Harry. "Both of those fellows must have been killed by one shot."

"More likely the darky choked the keeper to death."

"That ought to make trouble for one side or the other, Governor."

"What I am afraid it will do is to make it all the harder for us to get at Joe Jinger," replied Old King Brady. "But let us be on the move."

"Do you still intend to go on to the Eagle's Nest before we have visited the convict camp?" Harry inquired.

"I do."

"Then we had better lose no time. We are not sure of the road. We have a long job before us."

The detectives pushed on.

Several times before they had tried to reach the Eagle's Nest.

This was while the "cracker," whom they now believed to be a Pinkerton detective, was driving them around.

Something always seemed to happen to prevent, and now that they had at last been able to give that individual the slip there could be no better time to again make the attempt.

After making several breaks which took them off on old wood roads, they at last came suddenly upon a log hut which stood at the foot of a steep rise, where a strong palisade fence stretching from one rough ledge of rocks to the other cut off further advance.

There was a big gate in the palisade, and above it, painted upon a rude sign, were the words:

"Eagle's Nest. No Admittance."

"Here we are at last!" exclaimed Harry. "Question is, how are we going to get over that fence?"

"The place is a perfect fortress," remarked Old King Brady. "It would be impossible to scale those rocks, and equally so to climb the fence. Let us study into this a bit before we make any definite move."

Not a sound was to be heard, and Old King Brady therefore assumed that there was no one in the hut.

After a moment's thought he ordered Harry out of the wagon, and then led the team into the piney woods at the foot of the rocks and there securely tied the horse.

Retreating to the road the detectives kicked the pine needles about so as to obliterate all traces of the wheels, and once more they presented themselves at the gate.

There was an old fashioned bell pull at the side of the gate.

Old King Brady caught hold of the knob and gave it a yank.

The bell came "out by the roots," as Harry expressed it.

"Nothing doing there," returned Old King Brady, sticking the bell handle in place again. "Now for the hut."

They found every evidence that the hut was occupied by one or more colored persons, but they could discover no one now.

They had just finished their investigations when a dull rumbling on the road attracted their attention.

"What in thunder is that?" exclaimed Harry.

"Auto," replied Old King Brady.

"Impossible up here in these mountains!"

"I tell you it's an auto."

"I'll be blest if it don't sound like one. What shall we do?"

"Luckiest thing in the world we put our team out of sight. Slide in here."

They slipped inside the hut and waited.

In a moment a big expensive automobile hove in sight, coming up the mountain road.

There were two persons in it, the chaffeur and a large pompous looking foreigner, who sat on the rear seat.

"Bartel Biggerman!" breathed Old King Brady, who was peering out of the window of the hut. "Back out of the way, Harry! Quick!"

The auto rumbled up to the gate and Mr. Biggerman stepped out.

Paying no attention to the wireless bell, the Bradys saw him press what appeared to be an electric button in one of the palings.

Faintly in the distance they heard a bell sound.

A long wait followed.

At last the big gate swung back.

Mr. Biggerman sprang into the auto, which passed through the gate, and was speedily shut out from view.

"There you are!" exclaimed Harry. "The master of Mossbank is on visiting terms with Dr. Clayton Clayton, it seems."

"I wonder!" replied Old King Brady.

"Wonder what?"

"I was going to say, I wonder what we had better do."

"You were not thinking of ringing that bell and trying to get in there?"

"But I was."

"And meeting Biggerman?"

"Why not, since he knows we are here."

"I wouldn't to-day. Wait until we have seen Joe Jinger."

"Perhaps you are right. But remember that we don't even know that such a person as Joe Jinger exists."

"Hark! There comes somebody riding up the road."

"This time it is a horse. It may be our Pinkerton cracker."

But it wasn't.

A young darky probably about twenty-five years of age soon came in sight.

He was mounted upon a rawboned horse, with an old pad for a saddle and a piece of rope for a bridle.

"Come out, Harry!" said Old King Brady. "Unless I greatly mistake, the master of the house has come."

The Bradys stepped out of the hut.

"Lawdy massy! Who be you?" cried the sable rider, throwing up his hands.

"Don't be scared, Sam," said Old King Brady. "We have just lost our way on the mountain. Do you live in this house?"

"Deed I dose, massa. Everybody knows dat ar!"

"Yes, but we are strangers here. What might your name be?"

"Mah name, massa. Why, mah name's de same what me fader's was befo' me. 'Specs mah name is Joe Jinger, and 'specs you spell it with a 'J,' same's mah fader did. Yah! Yah! Yah!"

"At last!" muttered Harry, as the darky slipped off the horse.

At last the Bradys had found Joe Jinger.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BRADYS LOCATE THE CONVICT CAMP.

Yes; the Bradys had found Joe Jinger, but could it be the right Joe—the original Joe Jinger?

One glance at the young Afro-American showed Old King Brady that such could not possibly be the case.

When Col. Clayton was stricken with his paralytic stroke this Joe Jinger could scarcely have been more than a boy of fourteen.

Still, the allusion to his father proved that somewhere and at some time there had been another Joe Jinger. It looked as though the detectives were on the right track.

The colored boy eyed them curiously as, giving the horse a slap over the haunches, he sent him trotting around to the dilapidated barn in the rear of the hut.

"We are strangers here, Joe, as I told you," said Old King Brady. "We drove up from Jarrets to call on Dr. Clayton. That's how we happen to be here."

"Drove up, boss! Don' see no team."

"We heard an automobile coming, so we hurried the team into the woods for fear the horses would be scared."

"A-r-h!"

The drawly exclamation was significant enough.

The Bradys saw that Joe Jinger knew all about the automobile.

"You have charge of the gate for Dr. Clayton, I suppose?" continued the old detective.

"I live on de outside of de gate. Noder feller takes charge of de inside."

"Exactly. Can you open the gate and let us in?"

"No, boss."

"But we want to call on Dr. Clayton."

"De doctah don' nebber let nobody in."

"But Mr. Biggerman went in with his automobile."

"Dat's different."

"Why different?"

"Massa Biggerman berry rich man, sah. Him got slathers of money. Hes kind do whateber dey blame please."

"Perhaps I could find a few dollars, too, if I tried."

"Yah! Yah! I 'specs yo' could, boss. Yo' Yanks mostly all have money, seem to me."

"Then why not let us in?"

"Kean't, boss. Massa Biggerman he great frien' Dr. Clayton. Orders is not to let no one in but him."

"But I come from Dr. Clayton's nephew. I have important business with the old man."

"Yo' mean Mars Kun'l Clayton?"

"Yes."

"How's dat ar? Mars Kun'l all broke up."

"I suppose you know he went to New York lately?"

"Along wid Miss Kathleen. Yes; so I heerd."

"The doctors have been curing him, Joe. He can talk now."

"What?"

Joe Jinger's eyes seemed to stand out of his head, and he showed his excitement in other ways.

"Is that ar' a fac'?" he exclaimed.

"It is."

"Den nebber he make music fo' somebody. Yah! Yah!"

"What do you mean?"

"Doan mean nuffin', boss. Dat am nuffin' partickeler. Mars Kun'l used to be mighty rambunctious, gem'in, I've heerd say."

"Is there no way of getting at Dr. Clayton? I'm willing to pay. See! I will give you five dollars if you will let us drive through the gate."

"Dassen't do it, boss."

"And why?"

"It would make lots of trouble fo' dis chile if I done it."

"Does Dr. Clayton never see any one?"

"Nebber, only Mars Biggerman."

"Does he never come out?"

"Nebber. Hain't been out in ten years."

"How does he live in there? Who carries in food?"

"Waal, sah, dere's people in dere what do tends to dat; den dars Massa Coles."

"Who is that?"

"Massa Coles, yo' mean?"

"Yes."

"Him's de doctah's 'sistant."

"Can we see him?"

"Kain't see nobuddy—dat's flat."

"Oh, very well, then. I shall have to write to Col. Clayton Clayton and tell him I could not deliver my message. Too bad! Well, it can't be helped, I suppose. The colonel thought a lot of Joe Jinger, too."

"Not me."

"Your father, I suppose. He said Joe Jinger was brought up on the Mossbank plantation with him."

"Dat was my fader."

"I mean the one who was sent to the convict camp."

"Dat's my fader."

"What was your father sent to the convict camp for, Joe?"

"Stealin', boss."

"Then you hardly remember him?"

"Much as eber. 'Specs I doan remember him. Only t'ink so."

"I'm sorry," said Old King Brady, "because I have orders from Col. Clayton to see him and give him money, or to give money to the keepers to make things easy for him and to get him set free if I can."

"Dat so?"

"Yes."

"An' Mars Kun'l done repent den?"

"I guess he has."

"It was him what sent fader to de camp."

"So I am told."

"Fo' stealing a hoss—twenty years."

"Your father had done other things besides that."

"One hoss! Twenty years! How much money yo' got fo' my fader?"

"Oh, we don't carry it about with us, Joe."

"Specs not. Be yo' gwine ter de camp to-day?"

"Right now, if we can't call on Dr. Clayton."

"Well, you kean't."

"Perhaps you will tell us the way to the camp, then?"

"I kin."

"Well?"

"Yo' will pay me?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"How much is it worth?"

"Dat five dollah note."

"All right. Here it is."

"T'ank yo', boss. T'ank yo'. Go right down de moun-ting and take de fust turn to de left. Dat's de road to de camp."

"Will they let us come up to the camp?"

"Huh! I dunno! I nebber went dar, yo' bet. Dey say nobuddy kin get dar les' dey do somethin' 'gainst de law, an' den dey nebber kean't get out."

"Very well. We will start now. Will you tell Dr. Clayton we were here?"

"Lorzee, massa! I nebber see Dr. Clayton. I hain't seen de ole massa dese five years. Mebbe you doan know he's near hundred years ole?"

"I've heard so. Then there is no way of getting our message to him?"

"I might tell Mars Coles' fust time he comes out. I hain't nebber 'lowed to go in."

"Do so. Come, Harry! We'll get the team and make a start."

Joe Jinger made no effort to get the team for them, but just stood staring as they entered the woods.

"Watch that man," said Old King Brady. "I'll get the team."

"You didn't give him any name, Governor."

"No; he didn't ask. I saw no need in giving a false name unless he did."

"He has been warned to be on the lookout for us."

"Surest thing. Watch now. I'll be out with the horses in a moment."

Harry took his station behind a big pine tree.

Joe Jinger remained motionless until the sound of Old King Brady's footsteps ceased to be heard.

Then, seeming to feel that he was not being observed, he made a dart for the gate.

Three times he pressed the electric button, and each time the distant bell was heard to ring.

"A signal! We will be in the soup in a minute! I must warn the Governor!" thought Harry.

He did not leave his post, however.

Producing a little brass tube, Harry pressed it to his lips and blew.

It gave out one musical note.

This meant danger, and the need of haste.

Young King Brady saw Joe Jinger prick up his ears at the sound.

For a moment he stood listening.

Suddenly another sound made itself heard.

It was nothing less than a voice calling through a megaphone from a considerable distance.

"Hold 'em!" were the words.

Joe Jinger sprang away from the gate then.

He made straight for the hut, entered, and in a minute Harry saw him come out with a shotgun.

"Ha, that's the way the cat jumps, is it?" chuckled Young King Brady. "Well, I think I can head off your game, my man."

Gliding from behind the tree, Harry worked his way behind the hut without being seen.

Here he crouched with a revolver cocked and ready.

He had left Joe Jinger standing in the doorway, and could not see him now.

The sound of wheels was heard.

Old King Brady was coming at last.

As the old detective drove up in front of the hut the darky sprang into view with the shotgun. "Hold on, boss!" he shouted at Old King Brady.

Harry rushed from his concealment and sent a shot whizzing past Joe Jinger's head.

The effect was electrical.

Joe Jinger dropped the gun, darted into the hut, and disappeared.

"Shall I get him, Governor?" demanded Harry, running up.

"No! In with you!" cried Old King Brady.

Harry tossed the gun into the wagon and sprang after it.

"Get up!" cried Old King Brady, and off went the horses down the mountain at a breakneck pace.

It was not until they had gained a level stretch further along the ridge that the Bradys ventured to talk.

"There's mystery for you!" cried Harry. "We have had a narrow escape."

"From one darky! Pshaw!"

"Hold on! You don't know the whole story, Governor. Didn't you hear the megaphone?"

"No."

"Then the pine branches must have drowned the sound. That fellow rang the electric bell at the gate three times.

In a minute somebody called through a megaphone: 'Hold 'em!'"

"Can it be possible?"

"I tell you I heard it."

"Then that accounts for the attack."

"Certainly. We are up against a house of mystery."

"It looks that way. Hark!"

"The automobile!"

"Just as true as you live."

"What on earth shall we do? They will overhaul us before we have time to turn around."

"Give me two minutes to think!" replied Old King Brady, urging the horses on.

The case began to look serious.

Although Old King Brady had made up his mind to boldly present himself to Bartel Biggerman if it was necessary to do so in order to get an interview with Dr. Clayton, he did not feel at all ambitious to meet the wily Wall Street shark on this lonely mountain road after the attempted assault by Joe Jinger.

It looked as though Biggerman in some mysterious manner had made himself as much master at the Eagle's Nest as he was at Mossbank.

Behind them they could hear the auto rolling on; yet still Old King Brady did not speak.

"Governor, haven't you decided yet?" demanded Harry, anxiously.

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "There is but one thing to be done. We must abandon the team."

"So I say."

Old King Brady reined in and both sprang out of the wagon.

A cut with the whip sent the horses flying on down the mountain, while the detectives slipped in behind a big rock.

There had been no other possible plan.

On one side of the mountain the road sloped abruptly down into the notch in which the convict camp lay.

On the other side rough ledges towered to a height of a hundred feet or more.

Behind the rock which had fallen from one of these ledges the Bradys now took their station and watched the automobile fly past.

Bartel Biggerman was not in it.

Seated in it was one white man and two negroes, besides the chauffeur who had originally been seen driving the big machine.

All but the latter were armed with rifles.

"It is certainly the quickest way to shoot them both and tumble them down the mountain if——"

So much the Bradys heard the white man say, and then the machine went out of sight around a bend in the road.

"Ah!" breathed Harry, with a sigh of relief.

"You see," said Old King Brady, "we had no other earthly chance."

"I guess that is so."

"There's more to it than you think for, Harry."

"What now?"

"That man."

"Well?"

"You don't know him."

"Is that a statement or a question?"

"A statement."

"Then it is correct. I never saw him before."

"That's right. I have, though, and you have heard of him."

"Well?"

"18,323."

"Not Rogues' Gallery?"

"Yes."

"The deuce! You'll have to tell me, Governor. Your memory for faces is only equalled by the way you remember those names and numbers in the Rogues' Gallery. Who is 18,323?"

"Dutch Dave, the counterfeiter. One of the most expert banknote engravers in the United States, long in the employ of the American Banknote company, and——"

"And sent up for twenty years before I came into the business?"

"Exactly."

"So I could not expect to know him."

"Right. I do, though."

"You are sure he is Dutch Dave?"

"Ought to be. I arrested him."

"Well, it beats the band. Did you know he was out?"

"Oh, yes. His time, with allowance for good behavior, expired a year or so ago. I've been wondering why he didn't turn up in New York."

"The wonder of it is that he should turn up here in this lonely mountain region, riding in Bartel Biggerman's automobile."

"And it's up to us to explain that mystery. But come on. We must make the best of our chance. They will be taking the back track in a few minutes when they discover that they have been fooled."

The Bradys hurried on.

Soon they came to the turn of which Joe Jinger had spoken.

"We will go so," said Old King Brady. "I should judge that this must lead to the convict camp."

Secure in being able to hear the noise of the automobile behind them, the Bradys walked on for the best part of an hour.

The auto was not heard.

This puzzled the old detective.

He made certain that Joe Jinger had betrayed them.

Why, then, when their pursuers, who must have long ago come up with the wagon and found they were not in it, did they not take the road to the convict camp?

That they did not seemed to imply that Joe Jinger had not told them all.

"We are safe for the time being, I guess," remarked Old King Brady at last; "and unless I am all wrong in my calculations, we can't be a great way from the convict camp."

The word had scarcely been spoken when they came suddenly in sight of a gate built across the road.

Alongside the gate was a rude loghouse bearing the sign:

"State property. Keep off!"

"Here we are!" exclaimed Harry. "Heavens! What a dismal spot to spend one's life in! I'd about as soon be a convict as to live here."

"No, you wouldn't," replied Old King Brady. "You had better by far be condemned to the electric chair at once than to one of these convict camps. They are easy to get into, but once in death is far preferable. These poor wretches are sent up practically for life, for once a man gets inside and has no friends to plead for him the day of his dismissal never comes. But hark! The automobile at last!"

They could hear it coming in the distance.

Dodging into the forest, the Bradys anxiously waited.

On came the great machine, tearing along the road.

It was not Dutch Dave and the darkies this time.

Behind the chauffeur sat Bartel Biggerman.

His fat, florid face wore a look of anxious care as he went dashing up to the gate of the convict camp.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ARREST OF THE BRADYS.

At the approach of the automobile a tall, lank individual wearing a queer, butternut colored uniform emerged from the log hut, carrying a rifle in his hand.

Old King Brady saw him salute Mr. Biggerman with great respect.

The conversation which passed between them was brief. Unfortunately the distance was too great for the Bradys to hear a word.

In a few moments the auto was turned, and the magnet of Mossbank went flying back by the way he had come.

"Tipping him off?" questioned Harry.

"What else?"

"A case of look out for two spies on foot. An old one with a big white hat and a young one with a high collar and four-in-hand tie?"

"Right, dear boy. Your penetration is only equal to your sagacity."

"And my tie lays over them both."

"Will they lock us up, think?"

"I'd like to see them try it. I have not come unprepared."

"I thought as much. And what shape have your preparations taken, may I ask?"

"It might have taken the shape of a letter from the president of these United States; but as it is I feel satisfied with a letter from the chief of the New York police addressed to the manager of this prison pen."

"Correct. I guess we are safe enough. Biggerman don't own the earth."

"Indeed he does not; and in spite of his wealth I doubt much if he is popular down here. But come! Let us hurry on and see what we are up against. I only see this one guard, and there is nothing so very formidable about him."

A moment later and the Bradys were on the road again, advancing toward the gate.

All along the road Old King Brady had looked for telegraph poles, but had seen none.

Inside the gate wires were strung, however.

The detectives rightly assumed that this must be a telephone line up to the camp.

The lanky man in the butternut suit promptly appeared as the detectives approached.

He stood in the doorway eyeing them curiously.

Just before they reached the gate he turned inside and disappeared.

Behind the gate on either side of the road was a high fence of barbed wire closely set.

There was no chance to advance further except through the gate.

"We will apply at the office," said Old King Brady, and he walked boldly in.

The butternut man stood waiting just inside the door.

"Good-day, sir," said Old King Brady. "Is this the state convict camp?"

"It is," replied the man, more civilly than the old detective had expected him to answer; "but no one is allowed in here without a permit from the proper authorities at Raleigh. You have that, I presume?"

"We have not; nor do we particularly desire to enter the camp. We are after information, that is all."

"Information is an article we don't deal in here," replied the man. "It is against the rules."

"I suppose you make a difference as to the kind of information asked? Who is the superintendent here?"

"I'm the guard. Col. Tolliver is the superintendent. He lives at the camp, three miles inside the gate."

"Will it be possible for me to see the colonel?"

"It will not. The rules are very strict. I am allowed to open this gate for no one but those having authority to enter."

"I see you have a telephone."

"Yes."

"Any objection to me talking with Col. Tolliver over the phone?"

"Waal, I don't know what to say. What's your name?"

The reception given the detectives was so much more civil than they had expected that Old King Brady allowed himself to fancy that after all the visit of the Wall Street broker might not have referred to him.

He accordingly decided to introduce himself and Harry.

The guard had never heard of him, so he asserted.

He had heard of New York, however, and having ex-



amined Old King Brady's detective shield and listened to the reading of the letter from the chief of police, he finally consented to call up Col. Tolliver on the phone.

Instead of inviting the Bradys to come into the hut he shut the door on them, and as they waited they heard the telephone bell ring.

"What do you think?" asked Harry. "Is it all straight?"

"It is very hard to say. The man seems to be mild enough."

"Don't he! Too mild by half."

"Considering that Bartel Biggerman has just left him."

"So it strikes me. I don't trust him."

"Well, we can only wait and see."

After a few moments the guard opened the door and beckoned the detectives inside the hut.

"Col. Tolliver is at the phone now, sir," he said. "He seems to have heard of you. You can talk with him if you wish."

He pointed to the door of an adjoining room, and Old King Brady, passing in, found the telephone near the door and some one answering to the name of Col. Tolliver at the other end of the line.

The following conversation then took place:

"Is this Col. Tolliver?" called Old King Brady.

"It is, suh!" a voice answered. "Have I the honah of addressing Old King Brady, the detective, suh?"

"I am the man. I am acting for Col. Lionel Clayton, late of Mossbank, who has engaged my services in a certain matter."

"Col. Clayton is well known to me, suh. Am I to understand that he has recovered his speech?"

"He has, in part."

"I am thankful to hear it. What is the nature of your business with me?"

"It concerns a convict named Joe Jinger."

"Ah!"

"There is such a man in the camp?"

"There is a Joe Clayton, commonly called Joe Jinger. A red-headed niggah, suh—hence the name."

"I see. Man of about sixty years of age?"

"Yes, suh."

"Formally a slave on the Clayton plantation?"

"Yes, suh."

"That is the man."

"Col. Clayton wishes me to let you see him?"

"He does. It is his belief that Joe Jinger holds certain information of value to him. He desires that I should question him. There is nothing more to it than that, colonel."

"It is entirely against the rules, Mr. Brady, to let any one in without a permit. How does it happen that you did not get one from the authorities at Raleigh before coming here?"

"It was inconvenient to go to Raleigh. I felt that I might get along without it by the use of Col. Clayton's name."

"The name of Clayton is one which goes a long way

with me. I—er—I—. Well, I will permit you to come in."

"Thank you, colonel."

"You have a partner with you, I believe?"

"Yes; a young man who always assists me in my work."

"Just so. Well, you may both come in. Ask the guard to come to the phone."

Triumphant at his success, Old King Brady hung up the receiver.

"So Biggerman didn't do me much harm after all," he said to himself. "Nevertheless——"

Again a feeling of doubt came into the mind of the old detective.

Still he felt that there was nothing for it but to push ahead.

Meanwhile Harry had been trying his hand with the guard.

"I noticed a gentleman in an automobile pass us on the road," he said. "Some official of the camp, I suppose?"

"No; we don't ride around in them things," said the guard, contemptuously. "That was Mr. Biggerman. Most likely you have heard tell of him."

"Oh, yes; the rich New Yorker who owns the Mossbank estate."

"That's the man. Ever know him up to New York?"

"No; he's very rich, I believe."

"Rolling in money."

"Very popular around here?"

"Not none. Don't never say I said so; but it's just the other way."

"How is that?"

"Oh, it's a long story. I can't tell it all. For one thing he hain't our kind; for another, he's as mean as mud with all his wealth."

"It's queer," said Harry, "but this is the second time we have met him to-day."

"Yes? You walked up from Charleston?"

"Jarrets."

"Yes. A long walk."

"We are both fond of walking. We took the wrong road and walked up to a place which they call the Eagle's Nest."

"Dr. Clayton's. Well?"

"This Mr. Biggerman came up there and ran his automobile in through the gate."

"He did?"

"Yes."

"Kinder strange. Doc Clayton never admits no strangers. Hain't these twenty years. Waal, it only goes to show what money will do. If it was you or me we wouldn't get into the Eagle's Nest, you bet."

"We asked permission to go in and see the place, but were refused."

"That don't surprise me a bit. I should have been surprised if they had let you in, though."

"What kind of a man is this Dr. Clayton?"

"Crazy. A hundred years old, or blamed near it. He is——"

Here the conversation was interrupted by the return of Old King Brady.

"You are wanted at the telephone," he said to the guard.

Two minutes later the Bradys were passed through the hut and found themselves inside the convict camp.

Their instructions were to follow the road which led through the piney woods beyond the gate for about three miles, and that this would take them direct to the big pen which they had seen from the top of the mountain.

The guard gave them a blue ticket which they were told to present to another guard whom they would meet about half way up to the pen.

This was done, and the detectives found themselves approaching the palisade at last.

The largest of the buildings seen from the mountain was so constructed that its front faced the road and formed a part of the enclosure.

An armed man wearing the same butternut uniform was pacing up and down.

He motioned the detectives to a door and told them to walk directly in.

The Bradys did so, and found themselves in a large room fitted up as an office.

Two young men were writing on books at a high desk, and a military looking individual with long hunting boots and a hat as big and broad as Old King Brady's was pacing up and down.

"Is this Col. Tolliver?" asked the old detective.

"Such is my name," was the reply. "You are the two men who called yourselves the Brady detectives, I suppose."

"I am Old King Brady, colonel. I judge you question my identity from your tone. I am prepared——"

Turning his back on the Bradys, Col. Tolliver touched a bell.

Now a door was flung open, and four men armed with rifles trooped into the office.

"Those are the fellows! Arrest them!" cried the keeper of the convict pen, pointing at the astonished Bradys, while the clerks at the desks broke out with broad grins.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PRISONERS.

Harry fell back in astonishment.

Old King Brady, however, had not been unprepared, for the total change in Col. Tolliver's manner was warning enough.

But there was nothing so very meek about Old King Brady. He was not submitting without a big protest.

"What is the meaning of this outrage, Col. Tolliver?"

he demanded. "With one breath you give me admission to your office, with another you order my arrest. Some one shall be held accountable for this."

"Better come off your perch, my good friend," drawled Col. Tolliver. "Evidently you are not aware who you are talking to. I alone am master here."

Only too well Old King Brady was aware of it. He said no more, feeling that it would be unsafe, but motioned to Harry to yield.

And this was one of the things which had to be.

If the Bradys had refused to accept the situation, instead of being taken into a private room for examination, as they were, there is little doubt that they would have been dragged at once out into the prison pen.

The room in which they were now locked was bare and desolate.

A rough wooden bench ran along one side, facing a dirty desk with one leg tied up with old rope.

Behind the desk was a chair with the bottom all burst out.

Hung against the wall behind was a card of rules and regulations printed in such fine type that nobody could read it without a magnifying glass.

This was the examination room, and here the Bradys remained bolted in for an hour or more without seeing a soul.

Harry grew very nervous.

"What do you think will be the end of all this, Governor?" he asked for perhaps the twentieth time, as he turned away from the barred window which overlooked the interior of the convict pen.

"We are in trouble, Harry, but we shall work out of it. Don't let us worry."

"Do you think Biggerman put up a job on us to get us locked in here for life?"

"I don't know about the life part of it; but I guess it's a put up job, all right."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Wait and see which way the cat jumps."

"Of course we can buy our way out of here."

"When you start in bidding against a man of Bartel Biggerman's millions it's a tough proposition; but we shall have to cut this confab short. I hear some one coming now."

The someone proved to be no less a person than Col. Tolliver himself.

As the door was opened to admit him the Bradys caught sight of two men armed with rifles pacing up and down outside.

They had been listening to the regular tread of their footsteps right along.

There was another outside of the grated window.

The situation had become serious enough.

The door closed upon Col. Tolliver and he seated himself at the rickety desk.

One of the young clerks followed him, carrying a big book.

The clerk rested the edge of the book upon the desk, and, taking a pen from behind his ear, prepared to write.

"Sit down on that bench, you two men," ordered Col. Tolliver, gruffly.

"Thank you, I prefer to stand," replied the old detective, anxious to draw the man out just to see how far he would go.

"Obey!" roared the colonel. "Those who refuse to obey orders here get the gun."

"We had better be seated, Harry," said Old King Brady, quietly. "This man seems to be set in his way."

"Hold your tongue!" shouted the colonel, banging upon the desk.

"All right, sir. Anything to oblige."

"Stand up! You—old man, I mean."

"You just told me to sit down."

Col. Tolliver sprang from the desk in a fury.

"I'll blame soon learn you who I am!" he shouted.

"That will do," said Old King Brady, getting up and starting toward the desk. "Hold your horses, colonel; I am going to obey you now."

"You had better. Halt! Stand where you are!"

"Oh, you needn't be afraid. Your men thoroughly disarmed us when we were searched before being brought in here."

"Man, if you say another word except in direct answer to my questions I'll order you instantly shot!" thundered Col. Tolliver.

The game of bluff had been carried as far as it was safe to carry it.

Old King Brady, putting his hands behind him, subsided.

Col. Tolliver then got down to work.

"What is your name?" he demanded.

"James Brady."

The reply was written down by the clerk.

"Where do you reside?"

"New York City."

"What is your business?"

"I am an independent detective connected with the secret service bureau on special arrangement."

"That is enough. I shall proceed no further with this examination."

"I am glad you are so easily satisfied."

"But I am not satisfied. You persist in this lie. It is useless to follow up the questioning. Now, let me tell you who you and that young man really are."

"I am listening."

"Two New York reporters here in the interest of a sensational newspaper. You have forced your way in here; you intend to write up a pack of lies about our convict system."

"This is all a mistake, Colonel Tolliver, and you will live to find it out."

"It is all true, and you know it."

"I am willing to admit that you believe it to be all

true, just as told the guard by Bartel Biggerman. That is where all this business originated, of course."

"Hold your jaw! Have you forgotten already what I told you? I tell you, man, you don't know my power in this place. I have only to give the word and you and your pal will be instantly dragged out and shot."

"I believe you have that power. Still, it is up to me to defend myself."

"You have no defense to offer."

"I have defense which should be proof."

"You refer to the detective shield which was taken from you by my men. That was brought along for the purpose, of course."

"I refer to nothing of the sort. I have letters and papers to prove my identity if you will allow me to present them."

"I will look at them. They will cut very little figure with me, I dare say."

Old King Brady was much of the same mind.

Still, the effort had to be made.

He now produced the letter of the chief of the New York police, also a copy of the commission of the Bradys to act for the secret service bureau, and one or two other papers of similar import.

Colonel Tolliver put on a pair of eyeglasses and hastily examined them.

"These refer to Old King Brady, the famous detective."

"They do."

"You are not the man."

"I am."

"I don't believe it."

"I can't help that. I am the man. This is Young King Brady, my partner."

"I say I don't believe it."

"That is because you have been deceived by Bartel Biggerman."

"Enough of that. You still persist in asserting that you and this young man are the Bradys?"

"I do."

"It is enough. We need go no further. I will, however, for your own satisfaction tell you that your coming here was known weeks ago. We are ready for you. It is against the law of this state for newspaper reporters to come into our convict camps. You have broken the law. My orders are to hold you. I have a warrant authorizing all I have done."

"Indeed. Taken out in advance at the suggestion of Bartel Biggerman, I dare say. I demand to be brought before the sheriff of this county. A telegram North will immediately bring proof that I am what I claim to be."

"Oh, I dare say. Well, you shall be brought before the sheriff when I get good and ready; not before."

"When may that be?"

"The day after never," chuckled Colonel Tolliver, rising. "Meanwhile you and your companion will stay here in the convict camp."

"That sounds like a life sentence, Colonel Tolliver."

"You may find it so before you get through," was the cold response. "Sit down!"

Old King Brady obeyed.

Harry was then called up and asked a few brief questions.

The answers of both the detectives were carefully noted down by the clerk.

Harry's examination finished, the door was flung open and five armed guards entered.

They seized the Bradys and dragged them away.

What immediately followed may be briefly told.

The Bradys were treated precisely as though they had been convicts regularly committed to the camp.

They were stripped of all their belongings and put through the barber's chair.

With cropped heads and wearing convict suits, they were turned into the prison pen.

Protest was useless.

All demands for a further interview with Colonel Toliver were refused.

A week's dreary existence in the convict camp followed.

It would be easy to write chapters on the happenings of those dismal days, but as they have no bearing upon our story, we propose to cut out all that sort of thing.

Enough to say that Old King Brady's claim to his partner that they had better be dead than to remain permanently in the convict camp was fully justified.

Some of the scenes which the detectives witnessed were too dreadful to be described.

And during all this time even the one thing which Old King Brady had most desired was denied him.

He was no nearer to his interview with Joe Jinger, seemingly, than he had been before he left New York.

The white and black convicts were kept entirely separate.

Although the Bradys had not observed it when they looked down upon the camp from the top of the mountain, there was a fence between the two divisions of the camp.

Hence the impossibility of seeing Joe Jinger.

Old King Brady could not even be sure that the man existed.

There was but little work done by the convicts that week, and all of it was in and around the camp.

It appeared that the gang then in the pen was but a very small part of the convicts belonging there.

Some were away cutting wood; another party had been farmed out to a mining company and were then at work far up in the mountains.

Still another gang, which numbered several hundred, mostly negroes, had been farmed out to a railroad contractor and were then grading a new road in a distant part of the state.

When spring opened it was understood that nearly all now in camp were to be made up into a party to work in the turpentine forests.

Meanwhile the biggest part of the day was spent in idleness.

If the Bradys had been allowed to remain together it would not have been so bad, but they were not.

Separated at the start, they scarcely found a chance to speak to each other as the days dragged on.

Bitterly Old King Brady regretted that he had not taken more pains to secure himself against the misfortune which had befallen him before undertaking Colonel Clayton's case.

And so stood matters, when upon one rainy night Harry found himself stretched upon a dirty blanket in the wretched shack which he occupied in common with two half-naked cracker boys, Dan Duff and Pete Smith by name.

The wind was howling dismally among the tall pines which surrounded the prison pen on all sides, and the rain beating down through the cracks between the rotting shingles was rapidly forming a lake inside the shack.

Sleep was not to be thought of.

Giving it up at last, Harry arose and walked to the door.

He had no intention of going out, however.

That week of convict camp discipline had taught him better than that.

For a man to appear outside of the "quarters," as they were called, after the retiring whistle sounded meant a bullet from the nearest tower.

The first shot was supposed to be a warning; the second to be aimed to kill. The only safe way was to remain inside.

"Say, Yorker, you'd better lie down, unless you want to be shot," called Dan Duff. "You don't want to go outside of that door nights, least of all, this hyar night. Now mind what I say."

"What's the matter with to-night above any other night?" asked Harry, moving away from the door.

"That's all right," said Pete Smith. "We hain't a-talking none."

"When you say you are not talking you don't put it straight, for you two and others have been whispering together all day," replied Harry, turning away from the door and throwing himself upon the damp ground near the two boys. "There's something up, and you know what it is. Why don't you tell me?"

"'Coz you're a Yank and can't be trusted," replied Dan Duff.

"What nonsense that is! I'm in the same boat with the rest of you. What concerns one fellow in a place like this concerns all."

"You had better tell him, Dan," said Pete Smith. "He has got to know sooner or later. It's a heap sight better for him to be prepared, I say."

"What would you do if there came a row here?" demanded Dan. "Just s'posin', now?"

"Fight for my life along with the rest of you fellows, of course," replied Harry. "What else would there be for any sensible man to do?"

"Told you so," put in Pete. "Even if Harry is a Yank he is no fool."

"You don't know much about the Yankees, I fancy?" said Young King Brady, hoping to draw the boys out.

"Blamed little."

"You were never North?"

"Never out of the state of North Caliny. I belong over to Raleigh, I do."

"You can't go back to Raleigh in case you escape; that's what you have in mind, I suppose, although how you are ever going to manage it I don't see."

"That's right. I couldn't go back."

"What did you expect to do?"

"I didn't say thar was going to be no try made to escape."

"I know it; but just suppose a case. Suppose, now, you fellows were to all rise up in a body and make your escape, where would you strike for first?"

"Strike for some place where I could turn the blood-hounds off the scent first of all," replied Pete, with a grin.

"And then?" persisted Harry, following up his questions.

"Over the mountains into Tennessee."

"Would you be safe there?"

"If I could only strike my uncle's camp, yes."

"Your uncle is a moonshiner, perhaps?"

"Perhaps it hain't none of your blamed business!"

"Perhaps if you would tie to me I could help you to get out of this country altogether. Bright fellows like you ought to do well up North."

"Thar!" cried Pete. "I tole you so. Harry's all right. He'll have to know sooner or later, Dan. Why not tell him now."

"It is as Pete says," breathed Dan. "You will have to know sooner or later, but go to sleep now and when you get a prod from me be up and ready for business, for then it will be every man for himself and death to the feller who falls behind."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE UPRISING IN THE CONVICT CAMP.

While Harry was getting these hints Old King Brady lay thinking in his shack.

He also had observed the whisperings and signs of discontent, but he had been a little more successful in getting next to what was in the wind.

Not that he actually knew all.

No one had confided in him.

Hints had been made in his presence, however, and Old King Brady knew that in one instance, at least, they had been made with the full intention that he should hear.

"I wonder if it is safe to try it?" thought Old King Brady. "I guess I had better wait a little longer first."

He crept to the door and listened.

Suddenly a shot was fired from one of the towers.

This did not alarm the old detective as much as one might suppose.

This shot was instantly followed by another from the next tower.

Another and another followed, each shot coming from a different tower.

Suddenly two shots rang out in quick succession.

It was simply the signal of the hour.

Old King Brady knew that it was now midnight.

The double report meant that it had got around to the first tower again.

This was regular hourly business.

Still, at the firing of the first shot, who could tell but what some poor wretch venturing from his shack had been put out of life?

"I had better wait a minute. The guard will pass presently," thought Old King Brady. "I can't be too careful. This thing may be sprung upon us to-night."

Presently a measured tread was heard.

A moment later a man with a rifle carried on the right shoulder shift looked in at the door.

"Why aren't you asleep?" he asked, seeing Old King Brady sitting up.

"It's all water there, sir."

"What of it?"

"I'm an old man; I'm afraid of the rheumatism."

"Huh!" growled the guard. "You think yourself better than the rest of us, I suppose. You had better let me find you asleep when I come around again, unless you want trouble. Now mind."

The guard had hardly gone, when Old King Brady was at the door again.

The shacks were all detached. The fact that the old detective had been allowed to occupy one by himself was merely because one happened to be vacant. In most cases they were supposed to hold two or three persons.

Next to Old King Brady, as he happened to know, was a shack occupied by a single individual.

It was the detective's purpose to pay a visit to this neighbor.

He must do it at the risk of his life. Still, he proposed to go.

He got upon his hands and knees and cautiously crawled out of the shack.

The wind struck him fair, sweeping the rain in his face with fearful force.

Almost of a mind to turn back, Old King Brady lowered his head and crept on.

Suddenly he came up against something there in the darkness.

Such a bump on the head he never received.

It was head against head, for another man was doing the crawling act, too, coming from the opposite direction.

It was all Old King Brady could do to keep his mouth

shut; the man who had bumped against him uttered a smothered cry.

"Is it you, Pat?" breathed Old King Brady, backing away.

"A-r-rah, sure it's me frind Brady," whispered the bumped one.

"Back to your own hut, or else into mine," the detective said.

"It's into yours. Be quick! We are dead men if we are cotched at this kind of biz."

They had gained the shelter of Old King Brady's shack an instant later.

Crouching in a corner as much out of sight as possible in case of the unexpected passing of the guard, they began to talk.

It is a cold day when Old King Brady cannot strike a countryman of his, no matter where he travels.

Pat Downey was certainly one. They had found an opportunity to speak together on this point before.

All day long there had been something hanging heavy on Pat's mind, and Old King Brady knew it.

Now the time had come when he was likely to find out what that something was.

"Well," whispered Old King Brady. "What's up?"

"Ye'll have to know," answered Pat, "and although they told me not to tell yer, av coorse I couldn't never go back on yer. There's going to be bloody ructions to-night, see?"

"Ah! I thought as much. What's it all about?"

"Sure, it's them naygurs. Bad as we are treated, they are treated a blame sight worse. One of 'em was shot the other day and he choked the keeper to death as he was dying himself. Since then they have all had the whip laid on lively. They'll not stand it, and who can blame them? Not I, sure."

"Do you know any of the details of the plot, Pat?"

"I do not. They didn't tell me. Sure they don't trust me, because, like yourself, I come from the North."

"I see. But what do you know?"

"Only this much; that some time between twelve and one o'clock the whole naygur bunch will rush out together. They mean to break down the fence, and we are to rise up then. There will be a rush fer ther guards to get their rifles. If they succeed the same will be turned upon the guards in the towers. If they are put on the run the offices and Colonel Tolliver's house will be nixt attacked. Well, man, they mean to spare no one. It's to be a grand stampede entirely, and it's mesilf what don't know where it is to end."

"Somebody is bound to be killed before they can succeed," said Old King Brady. "Pat, I think we want to go very slow in this."

"An' there ye are. Thim what goes slow will be killed, anyway. I'm thinking, Brady, that the only thing for us to do is to jump right in and cut out right and left."

For a few minutes Old King Brady made no answer.

He saw but little reason to hope for the success of this wild scheme.

And in case of failure a general massacre of the convicts was as sure to follow as a killing of the guards and officers of the camp was in case the convicts should succeed.

Pat was evidently of the same notion.

"Tell me, Brady," he said, presently, "if it should so happen that I escaped and you did not, is there annything I can do for you in case I get back to the only place in America worth livin' in, and that same is New York?"

"Pat," said the old detective, "there are so many things that you might do in a case like that I hardly know where to begin to tell you about them; but I'll tell you one. Go to the inspector of the police——"

"Man, I will not! You must be crazy!"

"Wait. And tell him that you saw Old King Brady killed, if I am killed, or whatever happens to me tell him that in case you know."

"Old King Brady!" gasped Pat. "Not Old King Brady, the detective? Sure, you are not that man."

"I am no one else."

"Well, well! Look at that now! And what ever brought you here?"

"It's a long story. Never mind about it now. Tell me, while there is a chance, if there is anything I can do for you in case you are killed and I get back to New York."

"Nothing, except to see my sister and tell her I'm dead."

"I'll do it. What is your sister's name? Where does she live?"

"Her name is Cassidy. She lives in Brooklyn. Her husband wurruks for Mr. Barlow, the builder, whose shop is on Schenk street, near Myrtle avenue. I dunno where she lives, but it's somewheres down by the navy yard, so it is."

"I'll look her up and I shall surely find her. How came you here, Pat?"

"A-r-rah, man, all troo me own folly for leaving New York. I answered an advertisement for a gardener's job, and I run up ag'in' a Wall street broker named Biggerman, who offered me big wages to come down to this country and wurruk for him. Bad luck to him! I found out something, an' when I did, sure he had me arrested for stealing money what I niver saw. Sure, it's a long story and I don't think there's time to tell it to-night, unless—arrah! They are at it now!"

Suddenly a wild shout rang out.

Shout! No! It was no shout! It was more like a fiendish yell!

Instantly following it came shots from the towers.

Following closely upon the shots came crash after crash.

The colored convicts had risen; the fence had been beaten down; the battle for life in the storm had begun.

For weeks this plot had been brewing.

The full details of it the Bradys never knew.

Forced to join with the convicts or be killed by them, they found themselves in the thick of it all in an instant.

Old King Brady and Pat rushed out of the hut together.

As it happened, the guard who had spoken to the old detective at that instant came running by.

The two men sprang upon him, and before he could offer the least resistance Old King Brady had wrenched his rifle away.

"Into the shack as you value your life, man!" shouted the old detective, as he dashed away.

One great arc electric light which hung from a pole near the office illuminated the camp on ordinary occasions.

This light, however, had not been in business for several nights, as the dynamo was out of order.

Thus darkness reigned in the convict camp that night, and the storm made it all the worse.

With yells and shouts sounding all around him, while shots came flying from the towers, Old King Brady scarcely knew what to do for the first moment.

Pat had vanished.

The negroes from the other side were swarming everywhere.

In some way they must have been able to secrete a few rifles in advance.

Old King Brady saw several thus armed.

All were firing at the towers and the detective fired, too.

"Kill! Kill! Kill" one big black with white hair was yelling.

He was one of those armed.

Again and again he fired at the tower.

Suddenly dashing in front of the mob, he shouted:

"We have won! De tower's all empty. Now for old Tolliver, boys! Now for the man who has starved us, and beat us, and burned us! Now to kill! Kill! Kill!"

"Hooray!" shouted the convicts, white and colored alike. "Hooray! Hooray for Joe Jinger! Kill! Kill Kill!"

"Joe Jinger!" thought Old King Brady. "I have struck the original Joe at last!"

On they rushed toward the house of the superintendent.

Old King Brady found himself swept along with the crowd.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BRADYS FIND THE CLEW IN THE CONVICT CAMP.

Pete Smith and Dan Duff never woke Harry up when the uprising began for the good reason that they fell asleep themselves, and when they did awake Harry was not with them in the shack.

Young King Brady had left it just a few minutes before.

Feeling that he ought to tell his chief what he had been told, Harry watched his chance, and as soon as he was

sure Pete and Dan were asleep, which was not until after midnight, he crept outside, heedless of the risk he ran of meeting the guard.

He had not gone ten feet in the direction of the shack in which Old King Brady slept when he saw the guard coming.

Harry darted in between two shacks, and, crouching down by the fence, waited.

And here he was when the outbreak began.

It came like a thunderclap.

The first thing Harry knew the fence was broken away and a dozen darkies in convict suits came swarming in upon him shouting and yelling.

Harry, of course, joined in the cry and rushed on with the crowd.

The inside guards were killed to a man, with the exception of the one Old King Brady ordered into his shack.

The guards on the towers—these towers, by the way, were mere log frames built up against the palisade on the outside—put up a brave fight for a few moments.

There were six of them altogether.

Three were shot dead and the others dropped out of their stations and lost no time in making their escape.

Harry was in the assault on the manager's house.

He was right behind Joe Jinger, for the crowd of darkies who came swarming through the fence had pushed him to the front.

And such a murderous mob!

Such threats!

Such language!

The scheme seemed to be to capture Colonel Tolliver alive, tie him to a tree and set him on fire.

Harry judged from what he had overheard that the colonel had led several lynching parties in the past and had served more than one unfortunate negro in the same fashion.

Before this Young King Brady had heard dark hints about convicts who had been killed and never accounted for at the camp.

Altogether he judged that whatever might be Col. Tolliver's fate it would not be altogether undeserved.

There was supposed to be a force of twenty men in and about the camp exclusive of the guards.

Afterward the Bradys learned that ten of them had gone to Charleston that day on a leave of absence.

It had been expected that they would be relieved by others, who for some unexplained reason did not come.

Thus there were ten only to guard the colonel and his two clerks and other employes.

These proved themselves brave fellows, for there they were stationed at the open windows when the convicts came swarming up against the rear of the line of buildings of which Col. Tolliver's house formed a part.

The colonel himself was certainly the bravest of them all, for barefooted and bareheaded, just as he had escaped from his bed and pulled on his trousers, he now appeared at the open door unarmed.

"Hold, men!" he shouted. "This will avail you nothing! You can't pass the outer fence without finding the dogs swarming after you. Back to your quarters and I will agree to pass this affair over. Tell me what it is you want."

It was the greatest wonder in the world that the man was not instantly shot dead.

The negroes, outnumbering the whites three to one, were in the lead, and their desire was to capture the colonel and put him to torture.

"Hole on! Hole on! Doan' shoot!" shouted Joe Jinger. "Let's hear what Mars Kun'l have to say."

This would have been Col. Tolliver's time to make terms, and no doubt he could have made them if he had followed up the momentary advantage thus gained.

He did nothing of the sort.

It was not in the man's make-up to keep faith with these people.

The instant Joe Jinger called the halt Col. Tolliver darted back inside, slammed the door, and through the windows ten rifles started work.

For a moment it looked like a massacre. Convicts, black and white, dropped on all sides.

Then with a fiendish yell old Joe Jinger threw himself against the door, and with the help of those behind him burst it from its hinges.

A massacre there was then, but it was all on the other side.

As to what followed Harry never had any very clear recollection.

It was just one big horror, and in detail we don't propose to describe it here.

The convicts swarmed through the house into the office, cleaned out storerooms and pantries and flocked into the open beyond the gate.

Those who attempted to resist them met their fate.

Harry saw five of the guards killed here.

One clerk was shot, the engineer was stabbed, and as for the others, they escaped into the woods, all but Col. Tolliver, who led the charge against the convicts after they had broke in.

Joe Jinger flung himself upon the man and got the colonel's knife just above his heart, but in spite of that he felled the manager to the floor, and others coming in to help, succeeded in overcoming him.

"Burn him! Burn him!" they yelled. "Shooting is too good for him! Burn him and the whole place with him! That's the way!"

Young King Brady did not stop to hear more.

He had seen nothing of his chief yet, and he wanted to find him.

Working his way back into the yard he stood for a moment looking around, when suddenly he saw Joe Jinger come staggering out.

The man was evidently dying. He would have fallen if Harry had not caught him in his arms.

Instantly he braced up, though.

"Boy!" he gasped, "help me back! Help de po' ole nigger. I give you great times."

What was this?

Harry could not tell; but at all events, it was Joe Jinger, the man he had endured so much to find.

"What do you want me to do?" he demanded, supporting him the best he could.

"Get me back! Get me back!"

"Back where? Where is it you want to go?"

"Mah house! Say, doan lose any time ef you wanten die a mighty rich man in case you done get away out ob dis."

Harry said no more, but bracing up the convict the best he could, hurried him back into the darkness.

The detective's time had come at last.

After weeks of hard work and anxious worry he found himself next to Joe Jinger, who had for more than twenty years been an inmate of this prison pen.

Originally sent to the pen for horsestealing, the old darky had been serving a life sentence which, to all appearances, was now nearly completed.

How then could he have stolen a paper from Col. Clayton not more than ten years before?

Joe Jinger led the way to the shacks on the colored side of the prison pen.

All were deserted now, and in spite of the darkness Harry could still see that squalid as had seemed the white side of the pen this was a great deal worse.

Entering one of the shacks far down toward the end of the row, Joe Jinger sank to the ground.

"I cahnt do it! No, I cahnt!" he groaned. "'Spec' ole nigger's time has come."

Harry talked soothingly and encouragingly to him.

It seemed too much to come up against this man and have him voluntarily talk about the possession of a valuable secret and then not be able to get at it after all.

A few moments followed during which Harry was in despair, for he thought Joe Jinger was dead.

Looking up toward the front of the pen he could see flames shooting out of the windows of Col. Tolliver's house.

They had already fired it then. There was no telling but what the colonel was tied up inside.

"Where on earth has the Governor kept himself all this time?" thought Harry. "Everything is coming to a head now. Why is he not here?"

Once more his attention was called to Joe Jinger, who seemed to be reviving.

"Boy," he whispered faintly. "Boy, can you hear ole nigger speak?"

"I hear you, Joe."

"I'm a-dying, boy."

"I expect you are; but cheer up. Death comes to us all."

"Dat's what it does, young mars, an' when I done make a finish of de job an' am dead I doan t'ink I can fotch up at no worse place dan dis yere, nohow."

"Joe!"



"Yes, young mars."

"You brought me here to tell me a secret which would make me rich."

"Yes, yes! I mos' clean forget. Now listen, for I 'spec's I'll not be lingerin' in dis yere wole ob tears wery long. I'se gwine ter tell yer a lil' story. It am all like dis. Raise me up! Raise me up high so I can get mah bref!"

Harry lifted the head of the dying darky, and resting it upon his knee, listened to the following tale, brokenly told.

"Mah name's Joe Clayton. I'm one ob de Clayton niggers an' wuz born on de Mossbank plantation bery so many years ago.

"Ole Mars Clayton he good man. He call me Joe Jinger coz I done gwine hab red hair like some white folks, leastwise, it wasn't red, but yeller, and dat ar's how I come to get my name, which Mars Clayton allus tole me I must be sure to spell with a J, if I ever learned to write. Dar was some joke about dat ar; but just what it wuz I neber could make out. Didn't matter, dough. Couldn't neber understand' white folks' jokes. Dey's most allus too deep fo' me.

"What about dat secret, you ax? Well, dar's need of hurry, caze, I'se most gawn. After de wah, when young Mars Lionel come back from de army, an all de niggers was runnin' away I stopped by de ole plantation caze him an' me had been like brudders in de ole time.

"We got along fo' some years all right; but at last Mars Kun'l, as we got to call him den, got might cranky, an' we had many a quarrel. At last one day he knock me down an' kick me fo' nuffin, an' I swore I'd be revenged on him an' so I wuz; but not den, for a few days after dat I got in a quarrel wid a colored feller down to Charleston, an' done stick a knife into him. I'd a carved him up only dey pulled me offin him, an' den I was 'rested an' sent hyar fo' life, an' hyar I'se been ever since, 'cept when I've been working out for de contractors, one place an' anoder. And all dis time I wuz t'inkin' how I could get revenge on Mars Kun'l, fo' he might hab sabed me ef he would a-jes' spoke one word, but dat ar' word was neber spoke.

"Well, young mars, my time came. One day we wuz bein' worked in a road down near Mossbank an' when it came night I managed ter get loose. Maybe you wonder why I didn't run away, but yo' wouldn't if yo' knowed de country an' de people. 'Twouldn't hab been no use. Dis yere ruction won't be no use in de long run.

"I got away from de camp, an' I sneaked into de ole house at Mossbank. I made up mah mind ter rob Mars Kun'l an' to kill him as he lie in bed.

"In de ole settin' room dar wuz a secret panel by de chimney. I helped Mars Lionel build it, an' we wuz de only ones what know'd of its 'xistence. He used to keep his money an' his jewels into it, an' I thought I'd fin' dem dere den, but I didn't fin' any'tin' but a paper in a big 'nvelope an' I take dat away.

"Didn't kill Mars Kun'l dat night—didn't get de chance for I wuz scared off, an' am glad ob it now. I've

heard dat Mars Lionel lose eberythin' he had in de world an' done go broke, an' a Yankee come an' pull down de ole house an' change eberyting all around. Him name Big'man; an' now Mars Kun'l he very little man an' half dead, too, so dey say. People t'ink Big'man cheat him out ob eberyting. I know it. De paper I took tell it. I got a man to read it once, an' he sez to me, 'Joe, if eber you could get free dar's a fortune in dis yere, for Big'man would pay a lot ob money to get it an' 'stroy it.' Dat ar' feller was a lawyer what got into de pen. He was gwine to get me out ob dish yere, but he neber come around again, so I spec's he must hab took sick an' died; an' I've kept dat ar' paper eber since, an' I've had a hull lot of trouble a-doin' it, too. It's right hyar under dat ar' stone over in de corner, an'—Lorzee! Whose dat? Dat de Kun'l comin' to kill me? Keep off! Keep off! I—"

A shadow appeared in the doorway, and a man sprang into the shack.

The excitement was too much for Joe Jinger.

Half raising himself as he called out he suddenly fell back again on Harry's knee and rolled over to the floor, where he lay motionless.

"Governor! You at last!" gasped Harry, for the man who had so suddenly appeared before them was Old King Brady and no one else.

"At last, Harry! And I wish now I had waited a minute longer, for I have scared that man to death!"

It was so!

All efforts to revive Joe Jinger proved useless.

"He is dead!" breathed Old King Brady. "But his secret is ours! Watch while I raise the stone."

Stepping to the back of the shack Old King Brady knelt down and raised a big flat stone.

"There is something here," he whispered. "Heaven grant that it is the clew we seek."

He pulled out a piece of oilcloth, which when unwrapped was found to contain a dirty legal envelope.

Inside was a paper, and Old King Brady drew it out and held it up to the light.

"This agreement made this blank day of blank between Lionel Clayton, party of the first part, and Bartel Biggerman——" he read.

Then glancing hastily down the sheet he exclaimed:

"This is it, Harry! We are coming to the wind-up. We have found the clew to the Clayton case here in the convict camp."

## CHAPTER X.

### UNDER THE EAGLE'S NEST.

"How long were you standing there? How much have you heard?" asked Harry of Old King Brady.

"I heard about all, I fancy. I followed you when you brought that fellow here."

"Where were you during the attack?"

"On the outside of the mob. Bad as that fellow Tol-

liver certainly was, I would have saved his life if it had been possible, but there wasn't a ghost of a show."

"He is dead, then?"

"They tied him up and left him in that house. You can judge for yourself."

"And the rest?"

"We all turned loose, I think. Come, we must be going. We are not out of our troubles yet. The convicts have scattered far and wide, but I don't know if they can get over that barbed wire fence. The guards at the gates will surely go for help, and if we are caught it is all day with us."

"You will take charge of the paper, I suppose?"

"I was thinking that you had better, for, being younger than I am, you are more likely to pull out of this. Open a little hole in the lining of your cap and work the paper in. That's the best way. Then we will see what can be done toward getting out of this pen."

There was less trouble in putting the convict pen behind them than the Bradys had imagined might be the case.

The palisade was already burning in several places, and of the crowd of convicts who had made the attack on the house not one now remained in sight.

The house and all the buildings adjoining had fallen and there remained only a mass of smouldering ruins as the Bradys, pushing through a break in the paling, plunged into the forest.

Before doing this Old King Brady had taken their bearings in a general way.

Assuming that the main body of the convict gang would make for the gate and try to force their way out of the enclosure at that point, Old King Brady struck up the side of the mountain.

"It is more essential than anything else that we should keep away from those fellows," said the old detective.

"You think that in the long run they can never hope to escape?"

"I don't see how they can. Of course they are a densely ignorant bunch and know no other country than this."

"I don't see that we are much better off, hampered by the convict suits."

"That's the worst of it. Still, I don't despair. We may strike some settler who will help us get other clothes if we talk it at him right."

"Which you can do to the queen's taste. Alas, for the old blue coat! Often as I have made fun of it, I could wear even that now."

"That's the way of the world. The things we laugh at are the things we need worst some day or another."

"As Richard three times said about the horse, so I say! A coat! A coat! My kingdom for a coat!"

"But what about the indispensables?"

"Oh, or to trousers—heavens! Hold on! I heard some one moving among the trees on ahead there!"

The words were scarcely spoken when a man in convict dress stepped out from among the trees.

The storm had now passed, and the smoke having risen over the gloomy pine forest, there was light enough to enable them to see something of the man's face.

"Pat Downey, by all that's good!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "And how is my Irish friend, and is he alone? Well, well, well! This is a pleasant meeting! Pat, how came you here?"

"Faith, an' I might ax you the same question, Mr. Brady," replied the gardener, shaking hands warmly. "It's not mesilf who would be after running wid dot mob. I pulled away just as quick as I could. Is this the bye? Sure, I often seen him in the camp; but I didn't know he was your son."

"Not son, Pat—partner and pupil. Young King Brady is the name he goes by."

"I know! I know! I've often read of his doings. Well, an' here we are so! What's to be done to get out of this?"

"It's a tough proposition, Pat; but you know more about this place than I do. What have you to suggest?"

"Nothing, Mr. Brady. Sure, I don't know nothing. As I told you, I've only been here a little while."

"You have no idea how far we are from the wire fence which surrounds the prison pen?"

"None at all, sir."

"Well, we must push on, then. Which way did the rest of the crowd go?"

"They headed for the gate, some of them, and some pulled away altogether; but we are better off without them, Mr. Brady. Sure, it's every man for himself in a case like this, and that's why I struck out on me own hook. Would I be runnin' with black naygurs? I'm not that kind."

"Black or white, they are all on the strike for freedom now, and with us it is the same. I think—heavens! This is unexpected! Here we are at the fence!"

They had come upon it most unexpectedly right there in the forest.

The barbed wire had been stretched from tree to tree, and as the trunks of the trees had been cleared of the lower limbs and the wire passed directly over them the trees offered no assistance to escape.

And yet the proposition was an easy one.

In the distance the deep baying of bloodhounds was now heard, and the sounds seemed to be coming their way.

"We can burrow under the wire. This ground is soft," said Old King Brady.

"Burrow, is it?" said Pat. "I can do it. Give me a show. It's me own ten fingers what's used to working in the dirt."

The Bradys offered their help, but Pat wanted none.

At it he went for all he was worth, and in a very short time he had made a hole deep enough to permit them to crawl under the lowest wire of the fence.

Free from the pen now, the Bradys and Pat Downey struck directly up the mountainside.

The baying of the bloodhounds could still be heard, but the sounds had grown fainter, and it seemed certain that the dogs were following some other trail.

As they climbed on the way grew steeper and steeper, and they suddenly came out upon a narrow path, which appeared to wind around a giant ledge, with a ravine a thousand feet or more in depth yawning on the other side.

The instant he saw the place Pat gave a sharp exclamation and stopped short.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Sure, I know this place!" cried Pat. "I've been here before. This is where I got into trouble, so it is."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. Did ye ever hear tell of a castle around here called the Eagle's Nest?"

"Oh, yes."

"It is on top of this rock."

"Can it be possible? Dr. Clayton's residence, you mean?"

"I know nothing about Dr. Clayton. Sure, it's that son of a seacock Bartel Biggerman what I'm talking about. It was him who brought me here and wanted me to do stone mason's wurruk, when gardening is me right trade."

"I begin to understand," said Old King Brady. "And it is here that you made the discovery that was the cause of your going to the prison pen."

"Now you're saying it; that was me discovery—that he lived up here sometimes. Come on and I'll show you the place. Ah, it's a good job that I have Old King Brady the detective with me. Now perhaps it's arrest that fat bloke we'll be after doing. Ah, bad luck to him! An' wouldn't I like to see him in the prison pen?"

Pat led the way along the ledge. His first discovery had faded away to nothing after all.

It turned around the edge of the cliff, affording just footing enough to safely drive a team of horses.

It would be all right if the team kept close in against the cliff, but the slightest swerving outward would be sure to send the horses whirling into the ravine below.

Old King Brady studied all this curiously.

He saw that the trail had been recently used.

The winding trail passed in between this cliff and another. The niche was a deep one. Passing around a perfect horseshoe, it came to an abrupt end against a projecting wall of rough stone which extended out from the cliff to the ravine.

"Explain, Pat," said Old King Brady. "What is it you see that puzzles you so?"

"Sure, there was no wall there when Biggerman fetched me to this place. The trail went right on into a yard like, with the old castle they call the Eagle's Nest right off at the top of the steps. That's all I know."

The Bradys looked up at the top of the cliff.

Day was just breaking, and there was light enough, but they could see no trace of the Eagle's Nest.

"There is something wrong," whispered Harry. "Surely that is a natural wall of rock."

"So it fools you, does it?" chuckled Old King Brady. "It's well built, and I do not blame you; just the same it is no natural wall, but just a lot of rough stones fitted into some sort of frame to serve as a gate which might well fool anyone——"

"Holy murther! What's that?"

It was a wonder that Pat Downey did not tumble into the ravine then, as a fearful voice rang out overhead.

"Joe Jinger!" it shouted. "Joe Jinger! Come, Joe Jinger! We want you!"

"Sure, it's the divil calling his own!" gasped Pat. "It's the dead he wants! I, myself, saw Joe Jinger killed."

Again that fearful voice rang out:

"Joe Jinger! Joe Jinger!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BRADYS CAPTURE JOE JINGER, JR.

"Brace up, Pat!" said Harry. "It is nothing to scared at. Only a man calling through a megaphone."

"An' phwat's that?" queried Pat.

Leaving Harry to explain the mysteries of the megaphone, Old King Brady proceeded to examine the secret door.

Secret doors, hidden panels, underground passages and all that sort of thing are a specialty with Old King Brady.

If there was any man living who could open the door without help he was the man.

But the more Old King Brady studied the situation the more perplexed he became, for there was not the least trace of a secret opening.

"Biggerman never ran his automobile around this trail, did he?" the old detective suddenly asked.

"No he did not." replied Pat. "Sure, he left it on the road."

"As I thought. This trail is just intended for a little cart, I—oh, I thought so! It would have been no easy matter to fasten this thing with a fastening; it would be much more liable to attract attention."

Old King Brady had just pushed hard on the gate.

The thing was not fastened at all, but swung easily inward on well oiled hinges.

Old King Brady and Harry slipped through, but Pat held back.

"Why do we go in there?" he whispered. "Do you want to come up against Biggerman himself?"

"I'd ask for nothing better," replied Old King Brady.

"Come on, Pat. I'm right in business now. Some good luck is going to come of this. You'll see."

They drew Pat inside and allowed the gate to swing back into place.

It was certainly a cleverly constructed affair.

The back had been dressed with stone just the same as the front.

"Stand in the shadow of the gate and let me study up the situation a minute," said Old King Brady.

He pushed along the trail, which here took another turn.

In a minute he came to another deep indentation in the cliff, and there perched high on the rocks was the Eagle's Nest.

It was a queer old structure.

Built in colonial times and carefully constructed out of huge blocks of a greenish stone, it looked like some old medieval castle.

There were two towers with a long, lower building between them.

On the side towards the cliff the building was simply inaccessible.

Old King Brady saw no way of reaching it, but, of course, the strange gate had not been constructed for nothing, so the old detective pressed on to the base of the cliff.

"Another bluff!" he muttered. "No secrets here!"

An iron door set in the rock now met his view.

He tried the door. Like the bluff gate, it opened without the slightest resistance.

A vault-like passage lay disclosed behind. Beyond were stone steps leading up.

Holding the door, Old King Brady carefully examined it.

It had no lock or latch on the inside.

"This is a trick door, all right," thought Old King Brady. "It can only be opened from the outside, unless one understands the secret. That's intended to force a fellow to ascend the stairs whether he wants to or not. Well, we'll go up, but not with the door shut."

A large stone lay near, and Old King Brady kicked it into position and braced the door open so.

A low whistle gave Harry the signal to come on.

"The way lies open up into the Eagle's Nest," said the old detective, scarcely raising his voice above a whisper. "What is to be done? Do we go on or not?"

"Too blamed open, I should say," remarked Harry.

"Sure, it's the road back to the pen, and nothing else," Pat declared.

"It may lead us into trouble," said Old King Brady, "but all the same I'm determined to try."

The stairs proved long, and at the end was another iron door.

This also was unfastened.

As the Bradys threw it back they were startled to see seated in a chair before them a man with long snow-white hair and wrinkled features, evidently a person of great age.

"Dr. Clayton!" thought Old King Brady, "but what a strange place to strike him in."

The figure did not move. With fixed, glassy eyes it sat there staring at the Bradys and Pat.

"Have I the honor of addressing Dr. Clayton?" Old King Brady asked.

Still there was no movement, no sound.

"Sure, the ould cock has croaked, so he has!" Pat hoarsely whispered.

Old King Brady was just coming to the same conclusion.

He leaned forward and touched the figure, drawing back with a chuckle.

"Well?" whispered Harry.

"Wax!" breathed Old King Brady.

"May I ax what you mean by wax?" put in Pat.

"Pat, it's a wax figure, and if I don't greatly mistake it is intended to represent Dr. Clayton Clayton. A dummy to fool the servants into believing that the old doctor is still alive, perhaps."

"It must be so, and yet—" began Harry, when Old King Brady interrupted him by saying in a low voice:

"No. 18,323."

"Well!"

"Record in rogues' gallery says: 'Trade, maker of saints and images in wood and wax; said to be one of the most skillful in the business.'"

"Heavens! Then that fully explains it. Finding Dr. Clayton a necessity for his business he has duplicated him in wax."

"I'd like the ould wax guy's clothes thin, all right," said Pat. "If I thought there would be time it's meself that would undress him so quick that it would make his head swim."

"Don't think of it," said Old King Brady. "We must—hark! Someone coming now."

Footsteps were heard coming along the corridor.

Behind the wheel chair containing the wax figure was a door, and the old detective sprang to open it.

It proved to connect with another corridor which led off at right angles from the first.

They had barely time to get behind the door, when the man known as Clark Coles, assistant to old Dr. Clayton Clayton, came hastily along the corridor, followed by Joe Jinger, Jr.

Coles spoke first.

"Come, Joe!" he exclaimed. "You want to get a hustle on. Ole Doc must be wheeled to the windows so that the people can see him, in case Mr. Biggerman brings that party up in his automobile."

"Yes, sah! All right, sah!"

At the same instant Old King Brady gave Harry an almost inaudible signal.

The Bradys have a regular code of signals which they use between themselves, and it is hardly necessary to say that each one is quick to understand the other.

This signal meant "we are to attack these men."

Harry whispered the order to Pat.

"Hold on a minute, Joe," said Coles, suddenly. "Surely someone has passed through that door."

Old King Brady thought of the door behind which he was standing.

Then he remembered that he had left the iron door partially open.

For the moment he felt that he had made a mistake.

He knew better later on.

"I see no one, and I can hear nothing," were Cole's next words. "I'll just slip down into the yard and see what is to be found there."

As his footsteps died away on the stairs Old King Brady suddenly threw open his door.

Out rushed the Bradys and Pat in their convicts' dress.

Joe Jinger gave a dismal yell and started to run, but in a twinkling Old King Brady had him by the throat and pinioned against the wall.

"Quick! His revolver if he has got one!" breathed the old detective.

But Joe was unarmed, and Young King Brady and Pat turned to see Clark Coles bounce through the other door with a cocked revolver in his hand.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

Young King Brady, wrenching the revolver away, had Coles foul before he could fire, and Pat, spoiling for a fight, sailed in and punched the man in great style until Harry called a halt.

Success, so long deferred, was moving over to the Bradys' side of the way.

A bunch of old rope was discovered in the other corridor, where the Bradys had hidden, and the detectives, with the help of Pat, lost no time in tying up their prisoners.

The darky was tied hand and foot and tumbled on the floor, but with Coles only the hands were tied.

Harry had searched the man thoroughly, but could find only the one revolver.

The silence had now become almost painful.

Coles stood there staring at Old King Brady the picture of despair.

"Well, Dave, what have you to say for yourself?" demanded Old King Brady. "You know me?"

"Does anyone ever forget you?"

"You would hardly be likely to do it. What brings you here?"

"I don't know you!" exclaimed the fellow, suddenly changing front. "You had better beware. I am master of this house. Evidently you mistake me for someone else. Your triumph will be short lived."

"Stop! I know you well enough, Dutch Dave, and you know me. This attempt at bluff will do you no good."

"I don't parley with convicts," said the man, sullenly.

"Enough of this. Let us come to an understanding," said Old King Brady, calmly. "I see you don't care to talk before Joe Jinger. Step this way. Harry, follow

us, please. Pat, you stay there and watch the other prisoner. We shall get straightened out here in a minute. This gentleman is going to show us where we can get some other clothes."

"Not on your life!" growled Coles, as the old detective gave him a push ahead.

They passed along the corridor for a distance of twenty feet or so and paused.

"Now, then, we can talk," said Old King Brady. "What have you got to say for yourself, my man?"

"Nothing."

"Dutch Dave, it won't do."

"Why do you call me by that name? I am Clark Coles, assistant to Dr. Clayton Clayton, the master of this house."

"Why do you keep up that farce with that dummy in wax in plain sight of us. A moment ago you were more sensible. Own up that you are Dutch Dave, the counterfeiter, rogues' gallery, No. 18,323."

For a moment he seemed to undergo a fearful struggle. Then his whole manner changed. Common sense had gained the upperhand at last.

"It's no use to hold out, I suppose," he growled. "You are the everlasting Old King Brady. Until I heard of you being here the other day I was in hopes you were dead."

"Not yet awhile, Dave, but I might as well have been dead if your new pal had been given his way."

"Who do you mean by my new pal, may I ask?"

"You know very well that I refer to Bartel Biggerman."

"The master of Mossbank? I do not even know the man. You cannot prove that I do."

"Oh, I think I shall be able to get around to that. Give me time, Dave. Give me time."

"How came you here?"

"Walked."

"There has been a revolt in the convict camp?"

"Oh, yes. More than a revolt; the camp has been destroyed; that cruel tyrant, Tolliver, has met his fate; the convicts are scattered far and wide."

"And you steered straight for this place. How did you know I was here?"

"I never explain my methods to the enemy. That is hardly my style. Now, Dave, you are my prisoner. Better come off your lofty perch and make terms while there is time."

"What terms do you want to make?"

"First, other cloths for myself and friends."

"I don't run a clothing store."

"Oh, you will find them somewhere. Next, a peep at your 'queer' making plant."

"Indeed!"

"And last, a conveyance to take us to Charleston, where I propose to have a little talk with the sheriff of this county. That is all."

"Modest in your demands, I see. And suppose I consent to all this. Where do I come in?"

"Say, rather, where do you come out. I'll tell you. Play fair and you are out altogether. You shall go with us to Charleston and I will agree to make no move against your partner, Biggerman, until you have taken the train north, south, east or west, in whatever direction you wish to go.

Dutch Dave stood for a few minutes chewing the ends of his moustache in silence.

"Well, I yield," said the counterfeiter, suddenly; "but let me ask you a question. Who is backing you this trip?"

"Our bargain provides for no answers to questions on my part, but you must answer on yours."

"Rather a one-sided arrangement, isn't it?"

"No matter. I begin now. Has Biggerman been in this business long?"

"For years, off and on. Not directly since he became a millionaire."

"What's the lay? What are you making now?"

"Not much of anything. I have just altered a few bonds. I'm making a new bond now for the Great Southern railroad."

"I see. You mean that Biggerman, through his slaves, intends to spring an issue of counterfeit bonds on the market for the purpose of bearing the stock."

"Something like that."

"It is enough. Give me proofs to that effect and I'll stick to my end of the bargain. Are you ready now?"

"I'm ready."

"Come along, Pat," called Old King Brady; "this gentleman is going to make us a present of a suit of clothes all around. You can leave your prisoner where he is. I fancy he is safe enough."

Dutch Dave led the way through the long corridor up a flight of stairs and into a room which one might say was located on the ground floor of the tower, as the building was built partly on the side and partly on top of the peak.

"You will find all the clothes I own in that closet," said Dave. "Don't be bashful about it. Just help yourselves."

The clothes chosen fitted Old King Brady and Pat well enough for their purpose, but all were too large for Harry, and he cut rather a strange figure after the change was made.

"Now for the workshop," said Old King Brady. "Keep the ball rolling, Dave."

The counterfeiter threw open a door and the Bradys passed into a long room fitted up as a chemical laboratory and supplied with all sorts of queer apparatus.

"This was formerly Dr. Clayton's workshop, I suppose?" the old detective remarked.

"It was," replied Dave. "You see everything just as the doctor left it."

"How long has he been dead?"

"Two years."

"You actually were engaged as his assistant?"

"Yes; I was with him one year before he died."

"And then made the image to fool people, by Biggerman's direction?"

"It was his idea, not mine."

"Do the people in the house know?"

"There are only two besides Joe Jinger—an old colored woman who cooks and her husband, who works about the place. They both know. Once in awhile a tourist or a tradesman finds his way up here. We place the image at the window or on the balcony, where it can be easily seen. It has done its work pretty well. Everyone believes the old doctor to be still alive."

"That's your safety, and show yourself as seldom as possible, keep Joe Jinger, Jr., on the outside to watch and communicate your orders to him through the megaphone. Is that it?"

"About the size of it. You see, I am concealing nothing from you. There is my bench. That's where I do my work. Take it all in now while you have the chance."

Old King Brady stepped up to the bench, Harry following him.

On the bench was a counterfeit plate of a railroad bond partly finished, with the usual tools of the craft lying scattered about.

He took up the bond and was examining it when Pat gave a startled cry.

"Look out! Sure, he's up to mischief, boss!"

Facing about at Pat's warning cry, they saw that Dave was fumbling for some secret for some secret spring in the wall.

Instantly the detectives darted for the door, knowing what they might expect.

Probably Dutch Dave would have stopped the operation if he could, but his hands being tied together made him act clumsily.

Then all in the same instant a large section of the floor, including that part directly in front of the workbench, dropped, revealing a yawning abyss.

"Ah! You would, would you?" cried Old King Brady, throwing up his revolver.

Dave ducked and made a dart for a door on the other side of the opening. His foot slipped, he fell heavily to the floor, and, with a despairing yell, rolled through the trap and disappeared like a shot.

"Dave! Dave!" shouted Old King Brady down the trap.

There was no answer.

"From the wind that comes up here I judge that is a pretty deep cave," he said. "Joe Jinger must explain. Anyhow, I've got that counterfeit plate. I slipped it in my pocket as I jumped. Come, Harry, we will get back now."

They returned to Joe Jinger, finding the fellow tied up as they had left him.

"Now then, Joe, we will deal with you," said Old King Brady. "First, we met your father in the convict camp. He is dead."

"That's nothing to me," the darky growled.

"He knows nothing of Colonel Clayton's affairs,"

thought Old King Brady, "and he proceeded to tell what had occurred in the laboratory.

"He's dead, then!" Joe Jinger exclaimed.

"Does that trap open into a cave?"

"Yes."

"Is there any other way of getting into it?"

"There may be, but I don't know where it is. Once I let a lead line down there for ole Massa Doctor. It was tree hundred feet. He was a bad one. More dan one nigger go down dar."

"How would you like to go North and have me give you a hundred dollars when you land in New York?"

"Golly, sah! I'd like dat fust rate."

"Come with us, then. Tell what you know about Mr. Biggerman and the hundred will be yours and all expenses paid."

It is needless to say that Joe Jinger, Jr., accepted these terms on the spot.

Then the Bradys released him and all started out of the Eagle's Nest by the lower way.

Down the mountain they hurried, reaching the large town of Charleston, near which the Mossbank estate was located, a little before noon.

They found the place in a fever of excitement over the affair at the convict pen.

Stopping only to ascertain that Bartel Biggerman was not at Mossbank, the Bradys, accompanied by Joe Jinger, took the first train north.

The old detective made himself known to the mayor of the town and a despatch to New York brought a prompt answer confirming his claim to be the original Old King Brady and directing the mayor to advance him whatever money he needed.

The Bradys reached New York in the early morning.

At ten o'clock precisely the Bradys walked into the Wall street office of Bartel Biggerman, accompanied by a policeman.

"I wish to see Mr. Biggerman at once on important business," the old detective said.

From his private office in the rear of the suite Bartel Biggerman saw them and came forward.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" he demanded, his face as pale as death.

Vouchsafing no answer, the detectives went through the railing gate and snapped the handcuffs upon him.

"Take him, officer," said Old King Brady. "Biggerman, this is only the beginning. Wait till you see the end."

"Really, sir, I fail to understand your meaning," he said. "I presume you have a warrant for my arrest. Probably when you get ready you will tell me on what charge. Of course this is an outrage, and somebody is going to pay for it. I——"

"That's enough!" broke in Old King Brady. "The warrant calls for the arrest of Bartel Biggerman, swindler, counterfeiter, thief. I have that all right, and if you wish, you can see it. I also have this!"

Thrusting his hand into his pocket, Old King Brady held up the clew found in the convict pen.

"That's your signature, I believe, Mr. Biggerman!" he said. "Perhaps it is just as well for you to understand that I am acting for Colonel Clayton in this business. This paper contains evidence that you robbed and swindled Clayton out of his fortune. It will compel you to return the booty."

"In heaven's name where did you get that?" gasped the broker.

And Old King Brady said:

"Joe Jinger!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Sensations are common enough on Wall street, but it was decidedly an uncommon one that the Bradys sprang on the street that day.

And while the town was ringing with the news of Millionaire Biggerman's arrest, the Bradys were seated in a room of the Waldorf-Astoria with Miss Kathleen Clayton and the old colonel, who was now so far recovered that he could walk a few steps.

"Mr. Brady, how can I ever thank you enough?" said Colonel Clayton, gratefully. "This is the partnership paper. It gives me back the Mossbank property and my share of the profits in my stock deal with Biggerman. You have saved me fully a million, and perhaps more. It is but right that I should divide with you."

"Indeed you will do nothing of the sort, sir," replied Old King Brady. "Later on I will send in my bill."

And this was Old King Brady all over.

Later he accepted a ten thousand dollar fee from Colonel Clayton, who not only quite recovered his health, but all he had lost.

Bartel Biggerman went to Sing Sing on a fifteen years' sentence for counterfeiting. Colonel Clayton's charges, under the circumstances, were not pressed.

To-day the colonel's home is in his native state and Miss Kathleen presides at Mossbank.

Joe Jinger, Jr., was paid one hundred dollars and was sent home again.

Pat Downey is now running a florist's business over in Jersey, into which he was helped by the old detective.

Nothing would induce him to travel South again, for Pat has not forgotten the old life in the convict pen and his adventure with the Bradys and Joe Jinger.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AT MADMAN'S ROOST; OR, A CLEW FROM THE GOLDEN GATE," which will be the next number (259) of "Secret Service."

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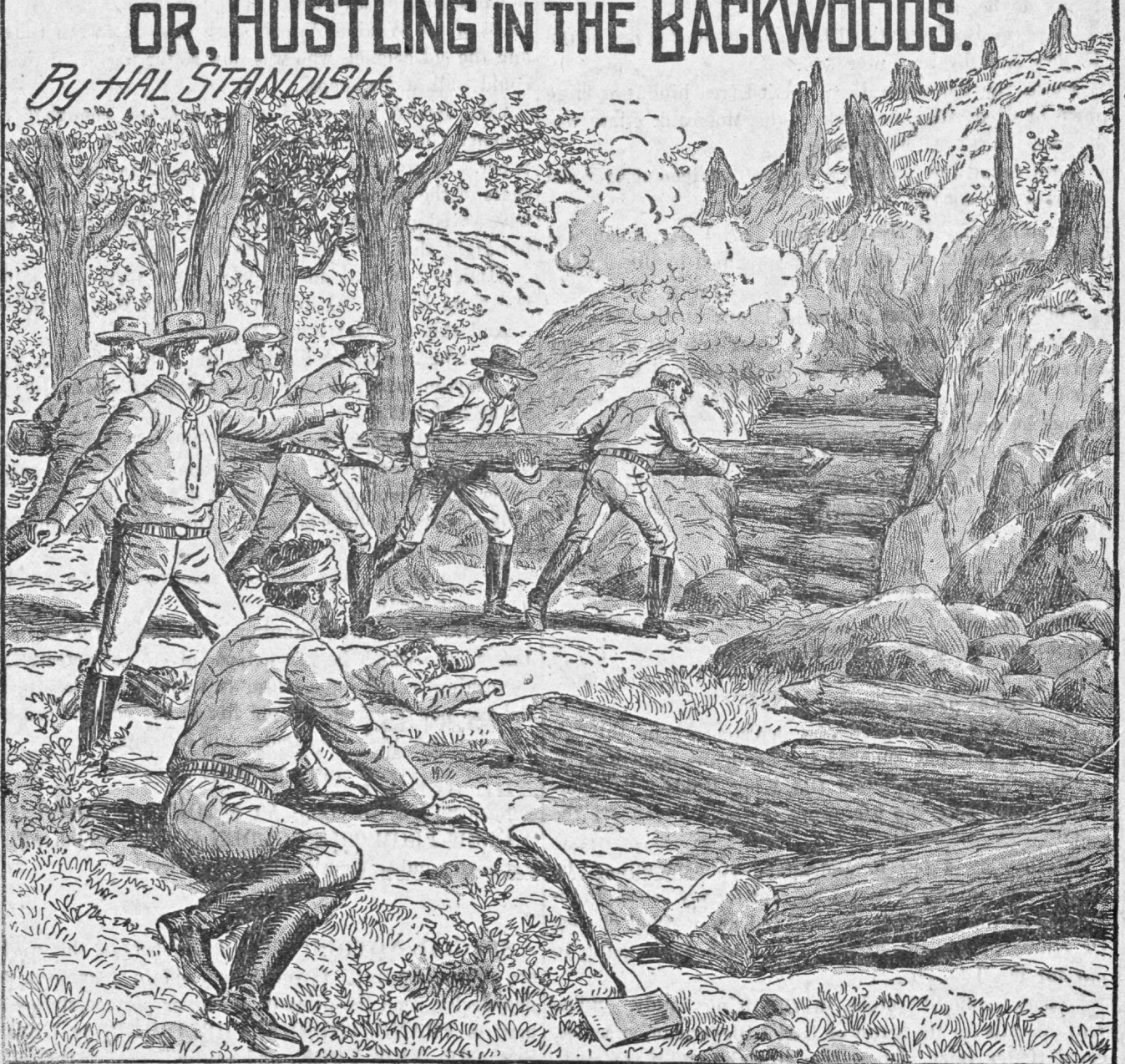
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