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5 Cents.

SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS IN DEATH SWAMP
OR DOWNING A DESPERATE BAND
AND OTHER STORIES

By A New York Detective



FRANK TOUSEY
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Harry was just about to step into the stream when a rustling in the bushes was heard, and a gigantic negro burst upon them. "Well, what do you want?" demanded Old King Brady. The black seized him by the throat.

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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THE BRADYS IN DEATH SWAMP

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By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF A MISSING ROWBOAT.

On the morning of January 22, 19—, a snowstorm hit the City of New York, which was certainly the worst in years.

In a few short hours the surface cars went out of business, and everything was hopelessly blockaded.

Traffic thrown wholesale upon the subway congested things there and made it disagreeable for everyone.

When the evening uptown rush came it was next to impossible either to get in or out of the cars.

One young man in particular had the time of his life leaving an uptown train at the Fourteenth street station, and when he finally did succeed in reaching the street, the wind took his hat and he had to chase it almost to the railing which surrounds the Washington Monument, where it was picked up for him by a respectable looking colored man, who had been approaching from the opposite direction.

"Here's yo' hat, Mr. Harry," he said. "'Pears like dis am a good day to keep it on yo' head."

"Right you are, Julius, but easier said than done," replied Harry, who was none other than the famous detective. Young King Brady, "but what brings you up here in all the storm?"

"Miss Alice she telephoned me to pack up your dress suitcase and bring it to de office, Mr. Harry. Ole King Brady he done telegraft fo' yo' two to folly him down Souf right away. Wish I was agwine wiv yer. Blest if I lak all dis snow an' ice nokow. Gives me de rheumatics from head to foot. Anyhow I done as she tole me, an' am jest after leavin' yo' tings at de office. While I was out I tought I might as well look in on mah sister, who's a-libbin' over on Second avner now. Dat's what brung me this way."

Julius, be it understood, is the Bradys' man of all work who has served them faithfully for many years.

"Come back to the office, I may have some directions to give you," said Young King Brady. "You will have plenty of time to see your sister after we are gone."

They returned together to the elegantly appointed offices of the Brady Detective Bureau on Union Square.

Here Harry found his partner, Miss Alice Montgomery, the well-known female detective, with her preparations for the journey all completed.

"What is it?" asked Harry. "I thought the governor intended to leave Savannah to-night."

Old King Brady had been South for two weeks working up a Secret Service matter which, as Harry happened to know, he had now successfully completed.

"The telegram don't state," replied Alice. "It simply says, 'You and Harry report at Tanner's Mills, Bradlee Inlet, at the earliest possible moment.' I looked up the route and found that we can get a Washington train at 5.30, which connects with the Seaboard Air Line Express, therefore I ordered Julius to bring your things to the office."

"Right. It is half-past four now. How about money? Is there enough in the office to carry us through?"

"There is. I drew \$200 from the bank as soon as I read the telegram."

"You always think of everything, Alice," said Harry, admiringly. "Well, I'll close up here at once and get ready for a start."

Half-past five found them on board of a Pennsylvania Pullman.

As far as Philadelphia their progress was slow and the train was much delayed, but here they lost the snow and time was made up in the run to Washington, so after all they were able to make the Savannah train, reaching that city but a little behind time.

Question now was how to find transportation to Bradlee Inlet, which lay about fifty miles down the coast in the great pine swamp region between Savannah and Brunswick.

The railroad, which runs at a considerable distance back from the coast was one way, but this involved a long ride through the swamp country, with the means of transportation all uncertain.

The steamer from Savannah to Brunswick had just left, but this made little difference, seeing that it did not call at Bradlee Inlet.

It looked as if it would have to be the train, but before deciding Young King Brady made a visit to the water front, and was fortunate enough to discover a small private trading steamboat of light draught, which made irregular trips down the coast, putting in at all inlets for the purpose of supplying the lumber camps with provisions, a sort of floating grocery store, so to speak.

This craft, the Lucy Quitman, was to start at sunrise the following morning, and although she had no proper accommodations for passengers, and none at all for ladies, Young King Brady managed to induce the captain to take Alice and himself.

Even allowing for the various stops and consequent delay, Captain Curtis assured Harry that they would certainly reach Tanner's Mills, their destination, before dark.

Morning dawned dark and lowering, with every indication of a storm.

As there was no telegraph line which hit Tanner's Mills—Old King Brady had wired from a different point—Harry could not inform his chief of their presence in Savannah, nor of the manner in which they proposed coming down the coast.

"Shall we try it or shall we back out, Alice?" he asked. "It looks very much like a storm."

"Do just as you would if I was not with you," replied Alice, who never likes to have any favor shown on account of her sex.

"Let's get breakfast and go aboard then. We will put it up to the captain. The steamer is rather an old one, but she seems staunch. The cabin is small, but it is comfortably furnished. I see no reason why we should not get along all right even if it does come up to blow."

They therefore made a hurried breakfast and went aboard the Lucy Quitman.

Captain Curtis laughed at their fears.

"I've been running the old Quitman up and down this coast for the last twenty years," he said. "I don't know any earthly reason why she should go to the bottom this trip."

So it was decided to take the risk, and at 7.30 the Quitman sailed.

Captain Curtis was the only white person on board beside themselves. Even the engineer was a colored man.

The deck was so loaded with boxes and barrels that it was next to impossible to get about.

A cold east wind rendered the deck additionally unpleasant, and with these disadvantages, as there was little to see, Harry and Alice confined themselves to the cabin, where Captain Curtis served them with an excellent dinner at noon.

Meanwhile, many stops had been made, and the deck load was considerably lightened.

The way in which it was placed worried Harry not a little, for while the steamer was well enough ballasted at the start, she was now badly listed to port, and the wind had developed into a fierce gale, although as yet there was no rain.

It was now nearly four o'clock, and Harry took the liberty of speaking to Captain Curtis about it.

He did not take it very kindly.

"What the deuce are you afraid of, young man?" he

asked. "All that stuff goes ashore at Goose Inlet, which is our next landing, then she'll right herself. Where's the use in shifting it? I always go so. Never had any trouble from it yet."

"When do we get to Bradlee Inlet?" asked Harry.

"We'll be there by five o'clock," was the reply. "I have to stop at Yulan Island to drop a dozen cases of canned salmon; the next after that is Bradlee Inlet. Don't get nervous. We'll make it all right."

But Harry was nervous, for the wind blew so that on his way back to the cabin it was all he could do to keep his hat on his head.

"It is my opinion that Captain Curtis is more or less of a jackass," he remarked as he entered the cabin. "He almost bit my head off. I shall be glad when we are safe ashore."

"What a desolate country," remarked Alice, who was looking out of the window.

"All pine trees, but do you know I like to look at them."

"Do you? It would give me the horrors if I thought I had to live here. Are there no large towns here?"

"None nearer than Brunswick."

"Is that a large place?"

"No, but it is a stirring town, with large lumber interests. Perhaps we shall take it in before we are through."

The Quitman soon ran into Goose Inlet.

Harry went out to see the landing.

The tide was excessively low, wide mud flats lay exposed on both sides of the narrow channel, those on the Quitman's port side being the widest.

Harry was greatly worried, and even Captain Curtis seemed to have waked up to the situation.

Before he had gone far he stopped and ordered the mate, a colored man of marked intelligence, to take a small boat and make certain soundings.

But still the stubborn fellow would not go to the trouble of shifting his deck load.

The mate made his report in local technical terms which Harry could not understand.

"Wa'al," drawled the captain, "hit may be ez you say, Jim, but Ah reckon Ah'll resk it. We didn't never get stuck in the Gooseneck yet, an' Ah don't believe this here's the day wese gwinter."

"The tide's mighty low, massa. Never seed it so low," replied Jim.

The captain without replying gave the engineer the starting bell.

Exactly six minutes later the Lucy Quitman was hard and fast in the mud.

The captain swore the conventional "blue streak," but that did no good.

Then the load was shifted, but that did no good, either.

Perhaps it would have been all the same, anyway, but be that as it may, here they were, and here they were destined to stay until the tide turned the captain condescended to inform Harry.

"I'm awful sorry, Mr. Brady," he said, "but it really hain't no fault of mine. If you want to I'll lend you my best boat and you can pull to Harris' Inlet. Tanner's Mills is half way down to its mouth. It isn't much more than three miles if you cut through the old Rattlesnake

Channel. It's ten the way we have to go. The channel will take you right to the mouth of the inlet. You ought to make it by dark or very soon after. You see you can't miss your way if you try."

"Are you sure there is water enough?" asked Harry. "Of course this extra low tide must prevail all along the coast."

"It does," replied the captain, "but you'll find all the water you want, take hit from me."

Harry consulted Alice, and it was decided to try it.

Captain Curtis was to pick up the boat at Tanner's Mills. So the boat was lowered and Young King Brady and Alice embarked with their belongings.

"If the rain only holds off," remarked Harry.

"I don't look for the rain before morning," replied the captain. "There you go, and good luck to you. It might be we won't hit Tanner's Mills afore to-morrow morning, and there really hain't no place aboard the Quitman where I can put the lady to sleep. Even my own state-room wouldn't suit her at all."

Having said good-by to the captain, Harry pulled on down the Gooseneck until they came to the mouth of a narrow, tortuous channel, locally known as the "Rattlesnake."

There was no mistaking it, thanks to Captain Curtis' careful description, and, as he said, it contained plenty of water.

Giant pines rose on each side of them, the far-famed Georgia pine of commerce which is known all over the world, but they had not gone far before they came into a desolate region where the trees had all been cut away and young ones were springing up.

The country was absolutely flat. In the distance on the west they could see trees of another growth, from which Spanish moss hung in great festoons.

"Probably cypress," Harry informed Alice, and that this meant a swamp.

There are many swamps in southern Georgia. The great Okefenokee, which looks so small on the map, is really as large as the State of Connecticut.

And into this desolate region Young King Brady pulled boldly, with the shades of night falling, but he and Alice did not turn up at Tanner's Mills.

Old King Brady, who slept at Gen. Robert Tanner's fine house that night, not knowing that they were coming in any such fashion, experienced no anxiety on their account, of course, but when next morning the clumsy old Quitman pulled up at the wharf alongside the big lumber mill, the old detective was hurriedly summoned by General Tanner.

"Why, look here, Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed, "here is Captain Curtis of this little supply steamer telling me a story about your partners that I don't like to hear. It seems that they started with him from Savannah yesterday morning. He got stuck in the Gooseneck, and they started by rowboat through Rattlesnake Channel about quarter past four. At the outside they should have reached here by half-past five. It's only three miles. I greatly fear that something has gone wrong."

So did Old King Brady after he had questioned Captain Curtis.

"Pete, the Portuguese!" he said to General Tanner when he returned to the mill.

"I greatly fear so," replied the general, gloomily. "If it is so it really is too bad."

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL TANNER'S SAD STORY.

As he stood at the head of the wide log-run of General Tanner's sawmill, Old King Brady was dressed in his usual quaint style.

That is, he wore the long, blue coat with brass buttons, the old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and the big broad-brimmed white felt hat which is so widely known in criminal circles.

The old detective had been jumped from one Secret Service case to another by the Government Bureau at Washington.

Not that Old King Brady is a regular employee of that bureau.

Far from it, and yet under the contract he has with the United States Government he does more or less Secret Service work.

His last case ended at Savannah, and he was just about to return to New York when he received orders to report to General R. Tanner, of Tanner's Mills.

Why?

Old King Brady was as ignorant of the reason as were his partners.

General Tanner was not only a very rich man, but one of high standing in Georgia political circles.

Old King Brady had now been for twenty-four hours the guest of General Tanner, who, although a resident of Atlanta, maintained a fine establishment away down here on the shore at the edge of a great tract of marshy land known as Death Swamp.

General Tanner owned the entire tract, which was miles in extent, and which as yet had been but imperfectly explored.

And now again Old King Brady asked himself why he was here.

Upon his arrival General Tanner greeted him with true Southern warmth.

"But you are alone, Mr. Brady," he said. "I had expected that your Miss Alice Montgomery would accompany you."

"She is to join me at once," replied the old detective.

"Also my partner, Young King Brady."

General Tanner had not understood.

He supposed Old King Brady's partners were with him in Savannah.

"And, with your kind permission, Mr. Brady, I will delay explaining this business of mine until Miss Montgomery arrives," he went on to say.

Now General Tanner was manifestly not a man to be argued with, so Old King Brady merely bowed.

Mrs. Tanner was not at the mills with her husband. He was living in the big house, which was the only one of consequence in the little hamlet which had grown up around the mills, alone with a large retinue of colored servants.

Old King Brady knew nothing about the man's private

affairs, so he could only guess at the nature of this secret summons.

The first night at the dinner table General Tanner told the old detective that Death Swamp harbored a desperate band of outlaws, which had managed to maintain themselves there for over two years, and that their leader was an educated Portuguese named Pedro Bratanza, commonly known in the neighborhood as "Pete, the Portugee."

This band held up several trains and had also raided successfully three banks, forcing the cashiers to turn over their funds.

Besides this they had robbed the stores connected with the different sawmills and committed various other depredations.

Many of the gang were negroes, but there were several whites among them.

Three separate armed expeditions had been made into the Death Swamp against this desperate band, but without success.

The first two simply failed to find the outlaws, while the third fared worse, for while in camp in the swamp on the first night the band descended upon them and several were killed while others were seriously wounded, and those left were glad to beat a hasty retreat.

Naturally, Old King Brady surmised that he was wanted to capture the Portuguese by stratagem, but General Tanner did not say so, nor did he even intimate that Old King Brady's summons had anything to do with these people.

Thus the old detective had been kept guessing, but he had heard enough of "Pete the Portugee" and his doings to make him listen to General Tanner's reply with a sinking heart.

"Has this Portuguese ever been known to attack a boat before?" he asked.

"Well, I can't say that he has," replied the general, "but what I fear is that he has been tipped off as to my intentions in bringing you and your people here, Mr. Brady. He is a very shrewd proposition, more so than people are generally aware of. But come into my office, my dear sir. This settles it. I must wait no longer about explaining myself. I will tell you my whole sad story right now. I trust you will respect my confidence. Really, I believe Mrs. Tanner would divorce me if she knew why I have brought you here."

"Your story is as safe with me as it can be with any one, general," replied Old King Brady. "As matters seem to have turned out, it is a pity that you did not confide in me sooner, for in that case I might have warned my partners of their danger."

"I certainly deserve the rebuke," replied the general, "but as it can't be helped, let us say no more about it."

"Mr. Bellows," he said to his bookkeeper, for they were now in the office, "oblige me by looking outside for half an hour or so, I want to have a private talk with Mr. Brady."

The bookkeeper departed, and General Tanner locked the door.

"Mr. Brady," he said, "I must begin by informing you that I am the father of two children. My eldest, a daughter, Minnie by name, is eighteen years old. My other child is a son; Tom is his name. He is fourteen. I am a man who has devoted himself to his children, while as for Mrs.

Tanner, she has simply idolized them and completely spoiled them both. We have been much to blame for the misfortunes which have come upon us. But enough of this. Let me come to the point.

"A little less than a year ago while my family was living here my Tom suddenly disappeared.

"He entered the edge of Death Swamp to shoot reed birds, although I had expressly forbidden him to set foot in it. He was a good boy, but his mother had never exacted obedience from him, and he would not always obey me.

"Of course, our first thought was that he might have shot himself or have been drowned in the swamp, or possibly that he had lost his way. Every effort was made to find him or to learn his fate. As far as was possible the swamp was scoured, but we could find no trace of the boy. His mother went almost insane, and I tell you I had my hands full.

"That was the time the third expedition against Pete the Portugee was sent out. I didn't tell you so before, but I led that expedition in person and came very near losing my life. On the occasion of the fight, one of the white men, all of whom were masked, shouted: 'Tanner, I've got your boy, and if I hear of you making a move against me again I intend to kill him. I am Pete the Portugee!'"

"Indeed, indeed!" exclaimed Old King Brady, "this is sad enough. General, you have my full sympathy."

"Sad!" cried General Tanner bitterly. "Why, Mr. Brady, that was only the beginning. I took Mrs. Tanner to Atlanta. She will never come here again, probably, and at last I succeeded in quieting her. About that time Minnie was introduced to a handsome young Brazilian at a party. His name was Pedro Bratanza——"

"What!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Not Pete the Portugee?"

"Even so," replied General Tanner, sadly.

"But you don't mean to tell me——"

"That my Minnie has married that scoundrel!" broke in the general. "Mr. Brady, it is so, and now you know the whole sad truth. I warned her mother against the fellow, who was reputed to be very rich, but she wouldn't listen. I begged and pleaded with Minnie herself and tried to make her understand that we really knew nothing about the man, but she also simply would not listen. She appeared to be perfectly fascinated with him. The whole affair occupied less than a month, and it ended when one sad morning we awoke, my poor wife and I, to find our darling gone and a letter left behind stating that Bratanza was Pete the Portugee, and that even knowing the manner of man he was, she had eloped with him, and that she had done it because she loved him and for Tom's sake. The letter went on to say that this wretch had promised to restore my boy to me. Needless to say it was not done."

"And your daughter, general?" said Old King Brady in a voice full of sympathy.

"We have never heard directly from her since," replied the general, "but she has been seen in the swamp by a negro in my employ seated in a boat with a dark, foreign looking man whom we suppose to be her husband. The man, if you can believe him, described her as looking miserably sad and greatly wasted, probably from the effects of the dengue or breakbone fever which is very common in the

swamp in summer, although there is no danger whatever at this season."

"And we are wanted to see what we can do in the matter?"

"Exactly. Mr. Brady, I want my children. Doubtless Minnie has had enough of it by this time. Her mother swears that she will never take her back, but I will. If Tom still lives I want him, of course. We have kept Minnie's case a profound secret. Our friends in Atlanta believe that she is traveling abroad. That is why I have made so much mystery about it. My plan in sending for you was this. I have heard much of your doings, and have been particularly attracted by what I have read of Miss Montgomery's wonderful ability."

"She is, indeed, a very able woman," broke in Old King Brady, "but how did you propose to use her?"

"I have never ceased to work over the matter myself," replied the general, "and in so doing I succeeded in getting into the good graces, by the liberal use of money, of course, of an old negro named Caesar Johnson, who lives on the edge of Death Swamp about a mile from here. He is the person who saw Minnie in the boat. I have reason to believe that he deceived me and that he goes to the outlaws' camp right along; at any rate, he assures me that both my children live, and when I finally got him worked up to a point where he agreed to pilot some woman into the camp that she might plead with Minnie to abandon this wild life and come back to us, I used my influence to bring you to my aid, feeling that Miss Montgomery would be just exactly adapted to the work."

"As indeed she is," said Old King Brady. "But, general, why, may I ask, did you not apply to me direct?"

"Because I feared you would refuse to come so far for such a purpose at the request of a stranger. I had it in my power to reach you through the United States Secret Service Bureau, and I exerted that power—that is all."

"I probably should have declined the case," said Old King Brady, frankly, "but now that I am here I shall not rest until I have downed this desperate band."

"And if what we fear is true, you now have a double motive," added the general. "But, Mr. Brady, we must act, and that at once. My raphtha launch is at your service, as are as many of my men as you may need. I suggest that you take it and run up through the Rattlesnake as a starter. Something may have happened to simply strand your partners. They would find it exceedingly difficult, in fact almost impossible, to get here on foot."

"The suggestion is a good one and shall be promptly acted upon," replied the old detective. "Whom would you suggest as a companion?"

"There is Ed Bellows, my bookkeeper. Ed's a good fellow and as brave as they make 'em. He's a dead shot, too, and a man in every way to be relied upon. Besides, he understands how to handle the launch."

"Which is more than I do," said Old King Brady. "I am no mechanic. Bellows let it be, and the sooner we start the better, I say."

"But not a word to him about my unfortunate daughter," continued the general. "You may talk freely about Tom, for he knows all about his case."

"Rely on me," said Old King Brady, and then General Tanner summoned Bellows.

"Mr. Bellows," he said, "Mr. Brady's two partners, whom we were expecting, started from Savannah on the Quitman, it seems. Captain Curtis managed to run her aground in the Gooseneck, and young Mr. Brady, anxious to get ahead, started through the Rattlesnake by small boat. They were due here not later than six last evening. I am greatly afraid that they have fallen into the clutches of Pete the Portugee."

"That don't sound very nice," replied Bellows, who was a handsome, athletic-looking young man of perhaps twenty-eight."

"But," he added, "I don't know that I ever heard of Pete showing himself along the Rattlesnake."

"To tell you the truth, Ed," continued the general, "I brought Mr. Brady down here for no other purpose than to make an attempt to recover Tom and down that band."

"I supposed so," replied Ed. "He better take the launch and run through the Rattlesnake. Perhaps he may find that it isn't so."

"Exactly what I have suggested, and I want you to go with him," replied the general. "I'll stay here and make memoranda of everything, so you can write up your book later."

"All right, sir," said Ed. "I'll get the launch ready right away."

He was as good as his word, and within half an hour, with Bookkeeper Bellows as guide, Old King Brady started up the Rattlesnake.

CHAPTER III.

STRANDED ON THE EDGE OF DEATH SWAMP.

The Rattlesnake, as we have said, was a very narrow channel, and it probably derived its name from the fact that it wound in and out like the coils of a snake.

The low tide obtained here that windy afternoon as well as elsewhere, and to this is to be attributed the beginning of the trouble into which Harry and Alice fell, for the Rattlesnake was full of slabs and debris from the sawmills on Bradlee Inlet, of which General Tanner's was only one.

This material was constantly being thrown into the inlet, which should not have been allowed.

Much of it floated off out to sea, some was sucked into the Rattlesnake at ebb tide. Undoubtedly much of it passed through to the Gooseneck, and finally found its way to the ocean by that channel, but a great deal of it floated back and forth, until finally becoming water-logged, it sank.

Thus the bottom of the Rattlesnake was freely strewn with that sort of stuff.

Three times the boat grazed some sunken log, and at last came a time when Harry's right-hand oar struck a hidden snag with such force that it broke short off, and this happened when they were about half way through.

"Botheration!" growled Young King Brady. "What in the world are we going to do now?"

"You'll have to scull, I suppose," replied Alice. Harry looked at the remaining oar dubiously.

"This one seems none too strong," he said. "These oars were nothing but junk, anyway. I am almost afraid to try to scull with a thing so frail."

"Meanwhile, it will soon be dark, Harry. It's Hobson's choice."

Harry began sculling then, but his fears proved to be well founded, for he had been at it but a few minutes when the same thing happened to the other oar.

"There!" cried Harry. "So much for listening to the suggestion of a man I knew to be a fool. We ought never to have left the steamer. Now we are up against it the worst kind of way."

"I suppose we can walk," said Alice. "We have come quite a way. It can't be so very far now."

"That's what we shall have to do," replied Harry, "but the question is how to get ashore."

The channel was down in a hole from which a sloping stretch of mud ascended to the bank on either side.

Unfortunately the tide was taking them back by the way they had come, thus every moment increased the distance they would have to walk.

Young King Brady did not hesitate.

Taking off his shoes and stockings, he rolled his trousers up to his knees and stepped overboard.

He went ankle deep in the mud, but he had expected this and was glad to find it no worse.

Toiling up the slope, dragging the heavy boat with Alice's weight added, was no light undertaking, but he managed to accomplish it and at last Alice was able to go ashore dry shod.

Harry then dragged the boat far up on the grass and sat down to clean his feet as best he could, and get on his shoes and stockings.

All this had taken time, and it was now almost dark, so they lost not a moment in pressing forward.

They had not proceeded far, however, before they came to an arm of Death Swamp which here extended right down to the Rattlesnake.

Soft mud lay before them for a space of several yards, but even if they could have surmounted that difficulty it would have done them little good, for beyond the mud was a broad stream emptying into the Rattlesnake.

Young King Brady surveyed the situation in silent dismay.

"Alice, this is terrible!" he exclaimed. "We can't go any further. It is simply impossible. I don't know what in the world we shall ever do."

"You can swim the stream, Harry, press on to Tanner's mills, and come back after me in another boat."

"But can I get to the stream? I doubt it."

He looked about and, finding a long stick, tested the mud at various points.

"Nothing doing!" he declared. "I shall go head under if I try it. The only thing we can do is to follow the stream up and see if we can't find some chance to cross."

They pressed on, but conditions grew worse instead of better. The stretch of mud seemed to widen with every step they took, and there was more of it on the other side of the stream.

"Alice," said Harry at last, "we are in for it. We shall have to stay here all night."

"Well, even so, don't worry about it," replied Alice, cheerfully. "I'm not afraid to be wherever you are, Harry. It won't be the first time we have slept in the open."

"But this wind?"

"It is dying down, and I see the stars peeping out. I don't believe it is going to rain after all."

"If there was even a tree to shelter us; this wretched place seems to have been entirely cut over."

"There are trees on ahead there, Harry. Let us get to them before it is quite dark."

Alice is certainly a good one to travel with. Circumstances never interfere with her cheerfulness and good judgment.

She and Harry are lovers and are practically engaged. Her confidence in him is absolute, and his affection for her intense.

They pushed on towards the fringe of trees, and as they did so Harry spied a light among them.

"A house, perhaps," he said, "but I fancy it can't be much of an establishment. Probably just some woodcutter's hut."

And this is what it proved to be.

There were several of the huts, but in one alone a light burned.

Young King Brady peered in through the window and saw that the light proceeded from a roaring fire, which had been built in the open hearth.

He could see nobody inside, so he opened the door of the hut and stepped in.

The interior was rudely furnished with table, chairs, and so on.

Upon the table lay a pair of saddle-bags and a fine revolver.

It looked as if the person who built the fire must have ridden to the place.

There was a loft above reached by a ladder, up which Harry called, asking if there was any one there, but there was no reply.

"We are butting in on somebody, that's sure," remarked Harry. "He can't be far away. We will wait for what comes."

He had scarcely spoken when footsteps were heard outside, and a man of perhaps thirty years entered the hut.

He was rather a small person and of wiry build.

His eyes and hair were coal black, he looked like a foreigner, but not exactly like an Italian, nor yet a Spaniard.

Harry did not just know how to place him, and not even when he spoke did it help matters any, as his English was perfect.

"Who are you?" he demanded sharply. "Where on earth did you drop from?"

"We are accidents," replied Harry, on his guard for not knowing why he had been summoned to this dismal region; there was no telling whether or no it would be safe to give his true name.

"My name is Henry Skinner," he added. "This lady is my wife. We were heading for General Tanner's place, and came down the coast on the Lucy Quitman. She went aground in a channel they call the Gooseneck, and as she seemed likely to stay there, we started for Tanner's mills by rowboat."

"Through the Rattlesnake?"

"Yes."

"And what happened to send you here?"

"Both oars broke. We could not go ahead with the tide against us. We did not dare drift back for fear we should go out to sea in the dark."

"As you undoubtedly would have done. You tried to walk it, I suppose, and found yourself up against Death Swamp."

"We found ourselves up against a swamp. Undoubtedly it would have spelled death to us if we had attempted to cross it."

"It surely would. Then you saw my light and came here."

"That's it. I hope we are not intruding."

"Of course you are intruding, but I can readily believe your story. It can't be helped."

"If you could guide us——"

"To General Tanner's? I can't. Simply out of the question. You would have to go back five miles along this ridge before you could safely cross the swamp. I see nothing for it but to keep you here all night, very much to my own discomfort."

"I deeply regret the necessity of forcing myself upon your hospitality. Could we not sleep in one of the other huts?"

"That's what you will have to do. I can't keep you here. Presently others will join me. They are but a rough lot, and I would not be answerable for your safety. It is very provoking. You are strangers to me, and consequently I have nothing against you. I should really like to help you. Trouble is I don't see my way clear to do it."

Moreover, the man showed no disposition to tell his name.

Harry liked the situation less and less as the moments advanced.

"It seems to me that one of the other huts is the solution of the problem," he said. "We are people who know how to mind our own business. We don't mind remaining in the dark. If you don't tell your friends we are there, there is no real reason why they should know."

"I guess that's about the size of it," replied the man, "but I have no possible means of making you comfortable. What is more, you will just have to remain in the dark or I cannot be answerable for your lives."

"Is it so serious as that?"

"Just as serious as that. Follow me."

He took a lantern down from a hook on the wall and, lighting it, led the way to the most distant hut of the group.

"I believe there are some old sticks of furniture in this hut," he said, "but I don't know just what. You want to look out for rattlesnakes, too. This region is noted for them. Ha! There's one on the job now!"

A loud buzzing was heard as he stepped into the hut.

He stepped out again in a hurry, and, looking about, found a stout stick.

"This will do the business, I fancy," he said, and he boldly entered the hut. There was some jumping about, and the sound of blows struck against the floor.

"You can come in now," the man called, and when

Harry and Alice passed inside there lay a huge rattler dead on the floor.

"His mate is surely here somewhere," said the man as he raised the snake on the end of the stick and threw it out through the open door, "so be on your guard. Let's see what there is upstairs."

They ascended the ladder and found in the loft four wire spring cots with mattresses, but no bedding.

"Better than I expected," said the man. "Now listen! You can spend the night here. I have no refreshments to offer you. I can do nothing whatever for you. Some time in the early morning these men will go away. On no account venture out until they have departed. Then follow this ridge in a straight line, due west, that is until you come to a well defined path, which you will follow to the left. This will bring you to a bridge crossing the stream which blocked your way. The path continues on the other side. Follow it for three miles, and you will come out on the road which leads to Tanner's mills. They lie to the eastward a mile and a half. Do you follow me, Mr. Skinner?"

"Perfectly," replied Harry. "I shall do precisely as you say. Do you happen to know General Tanner?"

"Know him!" cried the man with a peculiar smile. "Well, I am inclined to think I do. But I'm not asking you your business, young fellow, so don't question me as to mine, or it may prove the worse for you. Now, good-night. I trust that it may not be necessary for us to meet again. I also trust that the lady rests as well as can be expected under the circumstances."

Thus saying, the man raised the broad-brimmed hat which he wore and withdrew.

"What a peculiar adventure," observed Alice as soon as he was out of hearing. "Harry, what in the world can it all mean?"

"It means crooked business, of course," replied Harry. "For a guess it means that there is a band of outlaws which holds out in this swamp. That man is expecting them. Perhaps he is their leader, but at all events he has no confidence in his ability to restrain them. Upon my word, Alice, I could wish we were anywhere else."

"Now don't begin fretting over the situation, Harry. Let's take it easy and hope for the best. Of course, you will follow his orders implicitly."

"I don't know whether I will or not. Do you know, Alice, it very forcibly comes to me that it is to down these very fellows that we have been summoned to Tanner's Mills."

"It might be so. So much the more reason for us being on our guard."

"Aren't you afraid of the snakes?"

"Horribly afraid. But what can we do?"

"One thing I shall not do, and that is to close my eyes to-night, so you may sleep in peace. Rattlesnakes don't climb ladders. You are safe enough upstairs."

"You must remain there too, Harry."

"No; I stay down here. I'll sit in that chair all night. We are certainly in the greatest danger and can't be too careful. Ha! Did you hear that?"

In the distance, in the direction of the Rattlesnake, a shot rang out.

"Revolver!" said Harry.

"I fancy so," replied Alice. "There he comes."

They could see the man emerge from the other hut by the light of the lantern he carried.

He drew a revolver and fired into the air.

"A signal, and that was the answer!" cried Harry.

"He! He is waving the lantern," he added. "Visitors via the Rattlesnake. I wonder if these can be the people he expected?"

"He is waving the lantern?"

"Yes; as a further signal. Stand back a little. He may see us."

They stood watching for about ten minutes.

Meanwhile the man advanced in the direction of the Rattlesnake and passed out of sight, although they could still follow the moving light.

It was just at this time when a clatter of hoofs was heard, and ten men rode into the camp.

The four foremost ones were masked and carried lanterns suspended from their saddles, those who followed were all negroes, and a desperate looking lot they were.

All dismounted at the hut in which the fire burned, and two went inside.

They immediately came out again, and Harry and Alice heard one say:

"Why, Pete hain't there. He's evidently been there, though."

"Perhaps they have come," suggested one of the others. "I see a light away down there by the Rattlesnake. He may have gone to meet them."

"That must be it," said the first speaker. "Let's put up the horses, boys. We may as well make ourselves at home."

They started to lead their horses then, and to Harry's horror moved directly towards the hut in which he and Alice were concealed.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD KING BRADY GETS BUSY ON THE TRAIL.

Ed Bellows certainly understood the management of a naphtha launch.

He was a big, broad-shouldered fellow with yellow hair and a small mustache of the same unusual color, with big, round, blue eyes and very prominent teeth.

He proved a very talkative person, too, and he began at Old King Brady at once.

"Really, Mr. Brady, with all due respect I don't see what you can do against this gang more than has been done already," he said. "I, personally, have hunted the Death Swamp over, but you can't get near to Pete the Portugee's bunch, and to do it would mean sure death."

"Sometimes a stranger can do what another can't," replied the old detective. "I have had much experience with these outlaw bands."

"Then again, I have no sort of idea that Tom Tanner still lives," continued Ed. "I suppose the general has told you the whole story."

"I think he has, but there is one point on which I neglected to question him. Perhaps you may be able to supply the desired information."

"What is that?"

"Whether blackmail has ever been demanded of him for the return of his son."

"Never, and that is what makes me feel so sure that Tom is dead."

"But as I understand it he has the statement of Pete himself to the contrary."

"What does that amount to? I was with him that time. The man was marked. You can't tell whether it was anything more than bluff or not, and I for one don't believe it was, otherwise why don't he ask for a ransom? Pete the Portugee isn't the sort to bother with the boy for nothing."

"Did you ever see him?"

"Not unless I saw him that time, and as I couldn't see the fellow's face, that goes for nothing. Sometimes I think he never had the boy."

"It is hard to understand his motive in that case."

"Oh, I don't know. General Tanner made himself very busy against Pete before ever the boy disappeared. His motive may be just to keep the general on the ragged edge, so to speak."

"What is the man's history, do you know?"

"They say he was originally a smuggler in New Orleans."

"The general tells me he is an educated man."

"That's what they say, but I don't think any one really knows it. Would an educated man bury himself in a miserable swamp along with a bunch of niggers? It don't stand to reason. I hope he hasn't captured your people, though."

"Look!" said Old King Brady, pointing ahead. "There is a large rowboat lying on the shore. Can that be the one they used?"

"We can soon tell," said Ed. "Captain Curtis said that it had the name of his steamer painted on the stern."

The tide was now high and they were consequently able to pull directly up to where the boat lay.

Sure enough, on the stern was the name "Lucy Quitman."

"Unquestionably the boat they were in," declared Ed.

"I see no oars," replied Old King Brady, "but stay! Here's the handle of a broken one lying in the bottom of the boat. This explains what happened. They must have lost one oar and broken the other while trying to scull."

The truth was that Harry in his vexation threw away the handle of the first oar he broke, leaving that of the second in the boat.

They made the launch fast to a young pine and went ashore.

"Now I don't want to discourage you, Mr. Brady," said Ed. "but it seems to me the chances are they started to walk after the accident. If so——"

"Well, why do you pause? Let's have your thoughts, young man."

"Come and see for yourself," said Ed, and he led Old King Brady to the place where Harry and Alice were turned back by the arm of Death Swamp.

The old detective gazed upon the slimy ooze in silence.

"You mean that they probably got mired there," he said.

"Don't it look like it?"

"It's a bad spot, certainly."

"It would be sure death to try to cross it, Mr. Brady."

"And it was worse last night than it is now on account of the low tide."

"Much worse."

"Nevertheless, that don't scare me, Ed. My partners are both people of ordinary common sense. Why should they undertake so foolhardy a proceeding? Take it from me, they never did."

"It's the only way they could get to Bradlee Inlet on foot without going five miles back into the swamp, and as they didn't know the way and night was coming on, of course it is not to be supposed that they did anything of the sort."

"All the same I propose to start on that self-same trail if you will act as my guide, Ed."

"That's what I'm here for," replied Ed, "so if you are ready to go, then I am."

"We will go now, then," said Old King Brady. "Lead on."

As they walked along Ed explained to the old detective that all this land belonged to General Tanner, and that right ahead of them was a deserted lumber camp.

"We finished cutting this tract over three years ago," he said. "It's about five miles long and two wide. About the best piece of timber the general had left. Some of our stuff is here yet. I've been meaning to get it away, but somehow I never seem to get around to it. There are the huts in the distance. Wish we had 'em over at our new camp. We've got to begin building six new ones next week."

They advanced to the huts.

The first one they came to was the one which Harry and Alice first struck the night before.

Of course, it is not to be supposed that Old King Brady's sharp eyes failed to instantly detect signs of recent occupancy.

The coals on the blackened hearth, the cigar stumps and heels of pipes which littered the floor as well as other things, told the story.

"There has been a bunch of men here no later than last night," he declared.

"By Jove! and they have left some of their wealth behind them, too!" exclaimed Ed.

Stooping down he reached in under the table and picked up a new \$5 bill.

"Could hardly have been Pete's gang. They wouldn't have been throwing their money around," he said.

"Let me see that bill," demanded Old King Brady.

He took it from the bookkeeper and examined it closely.

"How long has Pete's gang been organized?" he asked.

"About two years," replied Ed.

"Indeed! It is just a year ago since this well executed counterfeit first appeared. I told the Government at the time that I believed it originated in the South from certain facts which came into my possession, but they wouldn't listen, and since then the Secret Service men have been scouring the country to find the counterfeiters. Here we have the proof that I was right."

"Do you mean to say that's a counterfeit?" demanded Ed.

"It is nothing else."

"I suppose you are a judge, Mr. Brady. It would fool me every time."

"I ought to be a judge; I have had experience enough with such matters. Yes, this is surely a counterfeit. This is important. It gives us a motive for Pete the Portugee, as you call him, hiding as he does. The outlaw business is just done to keep his gang of retainers quiet, and this is his real business."

"Pretty good for a theory, but how came the bill here? This deserted camp certainly can't be their hold-out."

"I have no idea that it is," replied Old King Brady.

"With your permission I'll give you a good bill for your find, and keep it."

Ed accepted the five, somewhat to Old King Brady's surprise.

They visited the loft.

There were no beds here and no trace of occupancy.

Going outside, Old King Brady proceeded to examine the footprints which he had observed when they first approached the hut.

As the soil of this slightly elevated ridge was composed of red sand, with scarcely any grass, they were clear and distinct.

The old detective studied them for what appeared to Ed an unnecessarily long time.

"They tell the story," he said at last after going all over the ground, and in some places examining the footprints through a magnifying glass. "My partners were certainly here."

"How can you possibly tell?" demanded Ed.

"See there, young man. What do you make of that?" asked Old King Brady, pointing.

"Why, it's a woman's footprint."

"Certainly. And as I have made a study of such things, it is not at all strange that I should be able to identify it as Miss Montgomery's. This man's footprint alongside of it is Young King Brady's. They were not the first ones to approach this place since the last rain, however. Here, if you follow me, we have a line of footprints. They were made by a man of moderate height who came on horseback. Afterwards ten men came on horseback. The man first referred to went towards the Rattlesnake, carrying a lantern later, and returned with two men who carried empty dress suit-cases."

"Really, Mr. Brady, that is going a shade too far!" cried Ed, incredulously.

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "Just let me show you how easy it all is."

"But the lantern?"

"Was over full. See where the drops of oil fell from the bottom of it?"

"Well, that's so. It does look like oil."

"It is oil. Were it water it would have dried up long ago. See, here is where he went, and here is where he returned, and two others with him. Here is where they set down their dress suit-cases as they approached the door of this hut. The impressions are faint, therefore the suit-cases must have been empty."

Ed was bound to admit the impressions of the dress suit-cases in the sand, for they were plain, though faint.

"Now to follow up my partner's tracks after they left the

hut," Old King Brady said. "Here we have them, and the short man went with them. Look over there. You will see where he returned alone with his lantern, which was shedding its surplus oil more freely, then showing that he attended to their case before he went towards the Rattlesnake to meet those two men with the suit-cases."

"It is really wonderful!" cried Ed.

"It is simply a study," replied Old King Brady. "You understand the lumber business, I the detective business. That is all. There is nothing wonderful about it. To me it is all as plain as print. Ha! They went to this hut, and, by Jove, they found a rattler in it, for one of them has killed it."

"There are lots of them around here," said Ed. "He's a big fellow all right, though."

"And now for proof that my partners were here," said Old King Brady as they entered the hut. "It is a custom of ours in a case like this to leave some little proof of our presence behind us in case the other follows up the trail. An X with four o's in the angles done in white chalk will be about what I am looking for. See anything of the sort, Ed?"

"I do!" cried Ed. "As sure as you live, there it is!"

He pointed to a place on the wall, and there, sure enough, on a log was the sign.

"That settles it," declared Old King Brady. "Harry was here, and if Alice had not been with him one O would be missing."

"Anything more?" asked Ed.

"Don't know," replied Old King Brady. "Depends upon how and when they left here. There may be a note. Let us see."

They hunted the room over, but found nothing.

"Wait," said Old King Brady. "Let us look under the door-step. It is a place we often use. Yes, sure enough. Here we have it."

It was a folded scrap of paper which, when opened, revealed to Ed's eyes only a lot of unmeaning letters.

It was, however, a simple cipher which the Bradys often use, and from it the old detective was able to deduce what he now gave out.

"They have started on foot westward. Left just at day-break. Counterfeiters have been here, as I said," he remarked.

"Well!" cried Ed, "you certainly are a queer bunch."

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "We are simply a business-like bunch. As I said before, the lumber business has its mysteries, and so has our business, all equally plain to experts in both lines, but now what about this westerly trail? Where will it lead them to?"

"To Tanner's Mills, if it is rightly followed," replied Ed.

"Then that's the trail for me," said Old King Brady. "Do you come with me or are you afraid to risk your launch?"

"I suppose I ought to go with you," replied Ed, "but I am afraid of the launch, to tell the honest truth. But I tell you what it is, Mr. Brady, we can make time by doing it differently. Let's return by the launch. We may find your partners at the mills. If so, it's all you want; if not, we'll saddle horses and go over that same trail from the

other end. It will be better than a nine and a half mile walk, and that is what it means."

"I'll do it," said Old King Brady.

"It will be a saving of time, I assure you," declared Ed, and they accordingly started back to the Rattlesnake.

CHAPTER V.

THE START FOR DEATH SWAMP.

The scare which came to Harry and Alice when they saw the men leading their horses in the direction of the hut proved groundless, for they quickly turned aside and went to another and larger log hut.

Probably this was a barn, for they came out without their horses and returned to the hut where the fire was.

Harry and Alice continued to watch, and soon they saw their man, whom it will be remembered had been alluded to as Pete, returning in company with two others.

The strangers were dressed in city style and, as Old King Brady had said, each carried a dress suit-case, which they set down near the door of the hut, where they were introduced to, and shook hands with the other white men, who now removed their masks.

Meanwhile the negroes had gone off to another and more distant hut, where they were engaged in building a fire, as the light shining through the window showed.

The strangers were now taken into the first hut.

Harry's curiosity knew no bounds.

"If I could only catch on to what they were doing in there," he said.

"For heaven's sake, don't think of it," cried Alice. "That man seemed friendly disposed towards us. Remember the warning he gave, and let us mind our own business."

"But, Alice, this may be our business. It may be to get busy after this very gang that we were sent for."

"I know, but be reasonable. Look at the odds against us. Can you doubt for an instant after what was said that they would kill us if we attempted to interfere with their affairs?"

"I suppose I must be good," replied Harry, and he said no more on the matter, but secretly he resolved to try it if he got the chance.

The evening wore on.

Several things, none of which are scarcely worthy of note, occurred.

In the first place one of the white men revisited the barn, and presently returned carrying a large stone jug.

After the passing of said jug through the door of the hut it was not long before the voices grew so loud and boisterous that Harry and Alice could hear them, still they could not make out the words.

It was safe to conclude that the jug contained whiskey, and probably swamp distilled at that.

Meanwhile a savory smell of cooking had arisen from the hut where the darkies were, and after awhile sundry pans of food were carried over to the other hut.

Then there was quiet for awhile, but later the racket grew worse and worse, until at last it died away and the fire went out, although the lantern still shone through the window.

Nor was it a bit better in the hut where the blacks were, worse if anything, but even they quieted down at last.

It was now nearly midnight.

Harry begged Alice to go upstairs and lie down, saying that everybody was probably drunk by this time, and it would be safe enough so long as he was on the watch.

It was now apparent that Pete had not exaggerated their danger a bit.

But the name conveyed no meaning to Young King Brady, for he had never heard of Pete the Portugee and his gang.

Harry had by no means forgotten his desire to gain information about these people.

As soon as he was satisfied that Alice was actually asleep he set out to gratify his curiosity.

Stealing out of the hut he crouched low, and in that position made his way across the open space to the other hut, where he ventured to peer in through the window from which the lantern shone.

It was as he supposed.

All hands were drunk and asleep on the floor.

The two strangers, who were evidently Italians, were as sound as the rest. Their dress suit-cases stood in a corner.

One of the men clutched in his hand a package of new bills. On the table, soiled by slops of the whiskey glasses, was a bill which looked so tempting to Young King Brady that he went in on tip-toes and secured it.

Nobody stirred, and Harry was able to gain the other hut undiscovered.

Here by the aid of his flashlight he carefully examined the bill.

It was a ten, on a local Georgia bank.

Harry had not the least difficulty in determining that it was a counterfeit, as he had suspected.

He now felt that the mystery was explained.

Here was a gang of counterfeiters whose hang-out was in the swamp. They had come out with their negro guards for no other purpose than to meet these two Italians, who were, of course, shovers of the "queer."

"This is our call," he thought. "I must keep a sharp eye out. This is what we are wanted for, surest thing."

Had he known anything of the way, Harry would surely have taken two of the horses and pulled out while he had so good a chance.

But the risk seemed all too great, so he continued to watch, when just before daybreak Pete came out of the hut.

He put a whistle to his lips and blew several long, shrill blasts.

In answer one of the negroes came staggering out of the other hut.

"Ready, captng?" he called.

"All ready," was the reply. "Saddle up."

"Very good, captng. Hit shall be did right away."

Pete returned inside the hut, and presently came out again with the two Italians, who carried their suit-cases.

All three walked off in the direction of the Rattlesnake.

Harry now resolved to go upstairs and lie down on one of the cots, pretending to be asleep in case Pete came to the hut to investigate upon his return.

And it was well that he so decided, for Pete did come about twenty minutes later.

Harry heard him on the ladder and saw him out of the corner of his eye.

The man said nothing, but seeing him and Alice apparently sound asleep, immediately retreated.

A little later Harry heard the band go galloping away.

He hurried downstairs and found that day was just dawning.

Having made his chalk mark on the wall and scrawled that cipher line for Old King Brady's benefit on a leaf torn from his memorandum book, Young King Brady aroused Alice, and they started away without even venturing to visit the other hut lest Pete should be watching them.

Not until they were well away from the deserted camp did Harry tell Alice what he had discovered.

"And, after all, you did it!" she exclaimed. "How could you be so rash?"

"I was bound to find out what it was all about, Alice, and so I did."

"I might have known you would. Well, after all, I'm glad you made the discovery. We must keep a sharp eye out for the trail."

"That's what we must. I have no doubt that these are the people we are after down here."

The five miles were covered at last, and the cross-path discovered.

The trail kept straight on among the pine stumps.

Turning now to the left, they quickly came to the stream across which a rude log bridge had been thrown. Beyond lay the great swamp, and they had it with them for fully three miles, the trail leading over a narrow strip of sandy soil which rose slightly above the level.

On they went, coming at last to the high road, and they had not followed this far before horses were heard approaching, and up rode Bookkeeper Bellows and Old King Brady.

"At last!" cried the old detective. "Well, you are nice ones to give me such a scare. Why on earth didn't you come by train?"

Harry explained their reasons.

Ed was introduced, and then he offered Alice his horse, and the offer was accepted.

Harry said next to nothing of their adventures, being so ordered by a secret sign received from his chief.

Of these secret signs the Bradys have a regular code.

"Get on and ride," Old King Brady said to him. "I'll walk beside you. It is only a little way."

"Not at all," replied Harry. "You keep your seat; I'll walk alongside. I have a whole lot to tell you. Are we down here after a bunch of queer makers?"

"We are not."

"Is that so? I made sure that we were. I ran into a bunch all the same."

"I know it."

"You?"

"Yes."

"But how?"

"We were at that deserted lumber camp this morning. There I found your note and the proper sign indicating your presence."

"Good! I though like enough you would follow us up."

"I also found a queer five under the table."

"Did you then? I found a queer ten on the table during the night."

"Tell me all about it, Harry. While brother Bellows is entertaining Alice is your chance, and I have also a story to tell."

A perfect comparison of notes followed.

"Well," said Harry at last, "I have certainly been the guest of Pete the Portugee, and, considering everything, I am bound to admit that he did the best he could for us. In fact, I rather took a liking for the man."

"Which is not to be considered."

"Certainly not."

"We are here for no other purpose than to down that desperate band."

"I understand that. But under the circumstances I consider it remarkable that we escaped as easily as we did."

They rode on to the sawmills, and Harry and Alice were introduced to General Tanner.

"You have had a very narrow escape," declared the general. "From what I know of this scoundrel I fail to understand how he came to let you off so easily."

The general was particularly interested in Alice, but doubtful as to how this peculiar turn of affairs was likely to affect his plans.

He took them up to his house and ordered meals prepared at once, as Harry and Alice had not tasted food since noon the day before, and it was now after eleven.

"My plan was," said the general, "for you to get lost in the swamp, Miss Montgomery, with the Bradys close behind you, of course, and a big posse of my men behind them, in the hope that Pete might find you. If an intelligent person like you could only get next to my daughter something might be done. I thought if you dared to venture alone into this man's camp——"

"Not to be thought of," broke in Harry.

"Hold on," said Alice, "I don't know about that. Pete seemed fairly well disposed last night, but those negroes are certainly a terrible bunch."

"They say he rules them with a rod of iron," declared the general. "Did he ask you why you were coming to my house?"

"Not a word was said except that he knew you."

"Indeed he does. If we could only form some plan."

They talked it over during dinner, which was ready shortly after twelve.

Old King Brady, however, was entirely opposed to Alice assuming any such risk as the general suggested.

He was also opposed to entering the swamp at the head of a large band.

"No good could possibly come of it," he declared. "There is only one way, and that is an old way. We three will go into Death Swamp together and alone. We will stick together, and we shall try to bring out your children if they still live, General Tanner. Of course, if we can trap this counterfeiter, that is also our game."

"But what will you do for a guide?" questioned the general. "You can never find your way about Death Swamp."

"Who can we get as a guide? Any white man whom you can trust?"

"I know of none. The old white hunters who knew the swamp are all dead. I can mention two or three negroes, though."

"How reliable are they?"

General Tanner shrugged his shoulders.

"The trouble is," he said, "all the negroes around here are related to each other. Nearly all have relations in Pete, the Portugee's band."

"It won't do. We have our compasses and we have the trail to go by."

"You can go by boat if you choose. The waterways cut the swamp everywhere."

"Too dangerous. We will take horses. If these men Harry saw can ride about in the swamp, then so can we. It will be the best way."

It was so decided and the start was made shortly after dinner.

General Tanner had prepared a light camping outfit in anticipation of the Bradys' coming.

At the last moment Ed Bellows wanted to go.

"I've crossed the swamp in two directions," he said, "so I am not the worst guide you could have. I'm sure I can make myself useful."

"Come on," said the old detective. "I would have asked it. I gratefully accept your offer, since it is your choice."

The horses were quickly saddled, and half an hour later the Bradys, with Alice and Ed Bellows, rode away from General Tanner's, taking the road to Death Swamp.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEMON OF DEATH SWAMP.

Ed Bellows had no more idea in what part of the swamp the outlaws' camp was located than the Bradys had, therefore it was decided to follow the path back to the point where Harry and Alice left the trail of the retreating band.

This gained, they turned in upon it and rode slowly forward.

They had now entered the cypress country, and gloomy enough it was.

The trees grew so thick and were so heavily hung with Spanish moss that the detectives were able to see but a short distance ahead of them.

The ridge continued, but it was no longer sandy. The soil was black muck, but drained of its water and covered with grass, which made it difficult to follow the trail.

"This is the way we went the time we got laid out so beautifully by Pete's gang," declared Ed. "About two miles ahead of here is the place where we were attacked. This ridge is very narrow there, and there is a stream on each side of it. How those fellows ever got in on us I can't understand, but in they came, full force, and we weren't one, two, three against them."

"It's the road to their camp all right," declared Old King Brady. "They may keep a portable bridge hidden, which they are able to throw across the stream. We must keep a sharp look-out. It is quite possible that they have been tipped off as to our coming by some darkey. There were enough of them around when we started. It would have been much better if we could have got away secretly."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Ed. "I often think that probably Pete knows everything that goes on at Tanner's Mills."

As they drew near the place referred to, Harry suddenly raised his hand and reined in.

"Hark!" he said. "Don't you hear some one running? Seems to me I do."

They listened in silence for several minutes.

"Yes," said Old King Brady, "there is some one running on ahead of us."

"I hear," added Alice. "Now he has stopped."

"Yes," replied Harry; "that's right."

"Our presence is known," declared the old detective. "It is as I suspected. There! He is giving the signal!"

A peculiar and exceedingly mournful cry was heard, which was several times repeated.

"That's only an owl," declared Ed.

"Owls don't hoot daytimes, young man," said Old King Brady. "Listen sharp and you'll hear the answering cry."

And, sure enough, they did hear it far in the distance within a very few minutes.

"We mustn't go a step further in this direction," Old King Brady declared. "Let us see, that answering cry came from the left. What we want to do is to cut in behind the gang when they come out to take this trail."

"If we get off this ridge we are dead ones," declared Ed. "We shall surely get stuck in the swamp."

"Nevertheless we must try it," said Old King Brady, very decidedly, and he turned his horse to the left, pushing on among the thick growth of cypress.

It was single file now. Harry followed his chief. Alice came next while Ed trailed behind leading the spare horse which carried the camping outfit and provisions.

Old King Brady had not gone far before softer ground was encountered, and his horse began to sink in the mud.

"It looks as if we should have to give it up," he remarked, "still we will persevere a little further. It seems lighter ahead. I think we are coming to the stream."

They kept on advancing very slowly, and presently came out upon the stream.

It was not very wide and the bottom seemed firm, as they could see gravel below the muddy water.

Old King Brady urged his horse into it and crossed in safety.

Here the bank was slightly elevated and firm, but immediately beyond it was swamp country for fair—hopelessly impassable.

Old King Brady turned west, and before they had ridden half a mile the owl hooted again.

This time the cry was on their side of the stream.

It was immediately answered from the other. The sounds appeared to be close at hand.

The detectives reined in and remained listening.

"Dat yo', Jim?" a voice right ahead of them suddenly called.

"Sho'," came the reply. "Tuk yo' a blamed long time to get hyar, 'pears to me."

"I was far back. What am de word?"

"Tell de captin' dat deyse folks come into de swamp a-gunnin' fo' him, sent by Mass' Tanner."

"Wha' folks?"

"An ole 'tective. Ole King Brady dey calls him. Den deys anoder. He am called Young King Brady. Den deyse a lady; didn't get her name, an' Ed Bellows."

"Dat all?"

"Dat's all."

"Sho! What kin dey do? Wha' dey expect?"

"Dunno. I got de word frum anoder, no matter who 'tis. I started ri' off to get in ahead of dem an' pass it along."

"Whar's dey now?"

"Jes' a lilly way behind me. Why fo' yo' hole back? Better pass de word."

"All right."

"How's de captin'?"

"Fine."

"An' Miss Minnie?"

"She hain't so good. Frettin' all de time."

"How's young Mass' Tom?"

"Hain't seen him dese two weeks."

"Well, so-long, I'se off. Specs Ah'll have ter keep in de swamp till I pass 'em. Doan wanter get ketched."

This ended it. Every word had been distinctly heard.

"What in the world did he mean by Miss Minnie?" whispered Ed. "If it was Minnie Tanner he was talking about, why, she's in Europe."

"I know nothing about it," said Old King Brady, "but I do know I'm going after that messenger. Come, Harry. Ed, look out for Miss Alice."

And the old detective urged his horse on.

He felt sure there was a cross trail right ahead of him, and so it proved.

They reached it within two minutes.

It was very narrow, and on either side the swamp was as bad as it well could be.

"Full gallop!" said Old King Brady. "I don't believe that fellow can leave this trail. We must intercept him at any cost."

On they dashed.

In a moment they caught sight of a colored man running ahead of them.

He looked back, saw Old King Brady, and then quickening his pace, vanished around a bend in the trail.

Old King Brady was much the best mounted of the two. Indeed, Harry's horse was somewhat balky, and seemed afraid of the swamp.

Thus when Old King Brady passed around the bend, Harry lost sight of him.

Suddenly he heard a shout, then two shots were fired.

Harry's horse took fright at the firing. It reared and plunged, and then balked for fair, for it positively refused to budge.

Harry wasted a moment trying to urge the contrary beast forward, and then dropping from the saddle, was about to press forward on foot, when around the bend he heard a horse dashing madly in his direction.

He stopped and drew his revolver.

At the same instant Ed and Alice hove in sight.

"What is it?" the former cried.

"Where's Mr. Brady?" echoed Alice.

"Coming, I think," replied Harry. "Did you hear the shots?"

"Yes. Who fired?"

"Don't know. We saw the man. Old King Brady spurred after him around the bend, then came the shots. Ha! It is only his horse! This looks bad enough."

The horse was riderless.

It stopped short when it reached Harry's horse, and they began rubbing noses.

Harry quickly mounted Old King Brady's horse, and leaving Ed to look after the other, pressed on around the bend.

Here the firmer ground widened and there were pine trees right and left.

There was little underbrush; the pine trees made it dark, however, and they could see but a short distance in either direction.

Somewhere in the distance on the left a dog barked furiously. This sign, however, quickly ceased.

Nothing of Old King Brady nor any one else could be seen.

"This must be the place where it happened," said Harry, looking around.

"Yes, but what did happen?" questioned Alice.

"That horse got a bad scare, whatever it was," remarked Ed. "He is all in a lather and is trembling still."

"It is certainly so," said Harry. "I can't pretend to understand it. Gets away with me."

He dismounted and examined the ground.

"Here's the old trail," he said. "Those fellows came this way this morning. What time is it?"

He consulted his watch and found that it was nearly four o'clock.

"I don't think we better go any further to-night," he said. "It will be dark in a little over an hour. What do you say, Alice? Don't it seem to you that we ought to keep somewhere near the scene of this unfortunate occurrence until we know more about it?"

"It does, decidedly," replied Alice. "I say let us stay here by all means."

"Then we will make our camp for the night. We will go in among the pines on the right here since we heard the dog bark on the left. We will push on till we are out of sight of the trail, although I don't doubt in the least that every movement we are making and will make is being watched."

"It is a bad beginning," murmured Ed.

Harry thought so, too, but he could not but remember that out of many of these seeming troubles and mistakes some of their greatest successes had come.

They pushed on among the pines, hobbled their horses and pitched their tents, a small one for Alice and a larger one which had been intended to serve the three men.

This done, Ed started out to look for water, Harry cautioning him not to stray far from the camp.

The sun was now low, and there among the gloomy pines it had grown quite dark.

Ed soon returned with a pail of water from a spring which he had discovered nearby.

A fire they dared not light, but it was cold.

At six o'clock they sat down to a cold supper, and after that put in the early evening hours as best they could.

Harry found a long log, which he rolled in front of

Alice's tent for a seat for himself and Ed, and here the young men sat smoking for some time.

More than once the hoot of an owl was heard, and the cry was sometimes answered, but whether these sounds came from the real birds or mere signals they could not determine.

Needless to say they served to intensify the feeling of insecurity which had taken full possession of both.

"Brady," said Ed, suddenly, after several pipes had been smoked out and every topic of conversation exhausted, "look here. I know General Tanner has been telling your partner things that he never told me. I don't want to pry into the private affairs of my boss, but there is one thing I do want to know, and that is what that nigger meant by his allusion to Minnie. Was it Minnie Tanner he referred to?"

"How should I know? I understand that Miss Tanner is in Europe," replied Harry, guardedly.

"I wish I knew where she is," sighed Ed. "I've had my doubts about this European business for some time. The general never gets any letters from Europe, and Minnie is devoted to him. What does it mean? She is the dearest girl ever. Not that I ever had the courage to tell her I thought so, and I don't know that she would have listened to me if I had."

"Oh, that's the idea, is it?" said Harry. "You are in love with the girl?"

"I own it, and it's the first time I ever mentioned it to any one. Tell me honestly, Brady, is there anything wrong with Minnie?"

"I have nothing to tell," replied Harry, feeling that he had no right to violate the confidence which had been reposed in him.

Ed sighed and said no more. It was shortly after this that they were both thrown on the alert by the sudden neighing of one of the horses.

They sprang up and drew their revolvers.

"Some one coming!" breathed Harry.

"Surest thing," replied Ed. "Hark!"

They were in the dark, of course, for Harry had not dared to have it otherwise.

Suddenly an electric flashlight was turned upon them, and at the same instant a shot rang out, the ball whizzing close to Harry's ear.

Instantly he fired in the direction of the light, which was immediately shut off.

A low cry and the sound of a fall followed.

"You'll pay for that, you blame spy!" a fierce voice shouted, and several shots followed.

Harry and Ed both fired into the darkness.

"For pity sake, boys, get under cover!" called Alice from the door of her tent.

"Keep back!" cried Harry. "We are doing the best we can. Be ready to defend yourself in case they close in on us."

The words were no more than spoken when a rush of feet was heard.

"Get 'em, boys! Get 'em at any cost! Whoever they are, we want 'em!" the same voice shouted.

At that instant a bright light suddenly appeared on Harry's right.

It was a blazing pine torch held in the hand of a most remarkable apparition.

"Great heavens! the swamp demon!" the voice yelled, and the advancing footsteps were heard hastily retreating.

Not so the apparition, however.

On it came with a rush.

A gigantic figure fully seven feet high went flying past the boys, turning in the direction of the retreating footsteps.

All they could make out were the shadowy outlines of a huge human skeleton with the blazing torch clutched in its bony hand.

Then all in a moment the light was extinguished, and save for the hurrying footfalls, which quickly died away in the distance, all was still.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE CLUTCHES OF KING DEATH.

All this was sufficiently startling as a commencement, but it does not explain the vanishing of Old King Brady, which must now be looked into.

As the old detective turned the bend of the trail and entered upon the piney tract, he saw the negro running ahead of him and spurred on in pursuit.

Just what he hoped to gain by capturing the man does not appear in the old detective's note-book.

But evidently the black had no intention of allowing himself to be captured.

He stopped running suddenly, turned and fired two shots, aiming at the horse.

Both were misses.

The old detective hesitated as to returning fire, and as he did so a giant form suddenly darted from behind an enormous pine and stepped in front of the horse.

It was the Demon of Death Swamp!

The same singular apparition which Harry and Ed Belows were destined to see later on.

The black gave one dismal yell and, taking to his heels, again ran for all he was worth.

What Old King Brady saw was a man over seven feet high, and apparently stout in proportion, clothed in black garments, which fitted tight to his form, and on which were painted in white the representations of the bones of a skeleton.

This singular garment seemed all of one piece. Even the hands and head were covered; the head covering being painted to represent a skull.

The only apparent openings were at the mouth, where a double row of gleaming white teeth were displayed, and within the apparently eyeless sockets where the real eyes could be seen.

Do not for a moment imagine that Old King Brady stopped to reason on all this at the time or to examine it in detail.

He was given no chance, for the horse reared at the sight of the ghostly masquerader, and Old King Brady slid to the ground, striking his head with such force that for the moment—it was only a moment—consciousness left him.

When the old detective came to himself he was in a most unpleasant situation.

The Demon of Death Swamp had picked him up bodily and thrown him over one shoulder as if he had been a sack of meal.

The old detective's head hung down, and his captor's arms were locked about his legs.

The strength of the creature seemed enormous.

Old King Brady is no lightweight, but this man carried him as easily as a woman would carry a half grown child.

Realizing his position, and feeling that he undoubtedly had a lunatic to deal with, Old King Brady tried to pull himself together as best he could.

"Friend," he said mildly, "kindly set me down. It is very good of you to carry me, but I am better now and quite able to walk. The blood is all going to my head. I am afraid of the results at my age."

No answer.

He could hear the creature's heavy breathing as he advanced with giant strides.

Again the old detective tried it, but with no result.

They had now passed through the piney strip and were coming to the swamp.

Suddenly the demon halted and stood Old King Brady on his feet.

"Old man," he said with a strong foreign accent which we shall not undertake to imitate, "I have brought you here for a purpose. I have taken away your revolver and your knife so you cannot defend yourself. The stars foretold your coming to Death Swamp, of which gloomy realm I am the king. The stars and my magic also tell me that your fate is intertwined with mine. Follow me to my palace, and we will confer together. I know your errand here. Perhaps I can help you; perhaps you can help me, but I give you fair warning, I shall certainly shoot you if you attempt to leave me before I am ready to have you go and say the word."

"It is a bargain, your Majesty," replied Old King Brady, only too glad to get on his feet again upon any terms.

"It is well," replied the king, as we shall here call this strange creature. "Keep close to me and remember that had I allowed you to pursue your own fool way, that miserable scoundrel, Pete the Portugee, as ignorant people in this vicinity like to call him, would unquestionably have wiped you off the earth before many hours have passed."

He strode on along the edge of the swamp by a path so narrow that one false step would have surely plunged either of them into the mud.

Perhaps three-quarters of a mile were covered after this fashion, and then they came to a place where the bushes on the swamp side were especially thick.

Suddenly the king paused and, leaning far out over the mud, thrust his hand in among the bushes and pulled on a rope, which was revealed as he drew his hand out again.

As he did so a stout plank fell down over the mud, its end resting on solid ground.

"Cross," said the king. "Wait for me after you have advanced a few steps."

Old King Brady obeyed, parting the bushes from among which the plank protruded.

Here he found solid ground and a well defined, though narrow path, leading off into the depths of the swamp.

The king pulled up the plank, made the rope fast, and joined Old King Brady as he stood waiting.

"Walk on," he said. "It is not far to my palace. Once there we will confer, as I have said."

"And I trust your Majesty that you will let our conference be as brief as possible, for I have left friends behind me who will be anxious over my absence," the old detective said.

"Oh, I know," replied the king. "I know all. Our conference must be given full time. Let them wait. It will do them no harm."

Old King Brady hurried on, but not fast enough to suit the king, who kept urging him to greater speed, until at length they passed over upon a small island in the swamp.

Here in the midst of a clearing stood a rude hut made of many upright poles set close together, with a high, conical roof of thatch above.

A huge dog flew out barking furiously, but he quickly quieted when the king took Old King Brady's hand.

They entered the hut then, and the old detective saw at a glance that he had come upon the house of a Voodoo worshiper.

Suspended from the rafters of the roof hung a huge stuffed alligator with jaws distended.

There was a mattress and bedding on the floor over in one corner, a table, a chair and a few bits of crockery and cooking utensils, some of which were hung against the wall.

In the middle of the earth floor was a wooden image, rudely carved, representing a gigantic skull.

It stood directly under the alligator, and in front of the mouth upon a low table were what appeared to be offerings to this singular idol.

Among them was a dead rattlesnake, a huge toad, a bat, and so on.

The dog flung himself down before the open hearth, which was strewn with dead coals, and resting his snout on his paws, stared at Old King Brady curiously, as much as to say: "Now who in the world are you?"

"Take the chair," ordered the king, and he himself sat down cross-legged upon the ground.

"Your name?" he asked. "Tell me your name, and tell me true."

"My name is James Brady," replied the old detective.

"James Brady! Very good. I am told that you are a detective. Is it so?"

"Yes, your Majesty, such is my profession."

"Profession! Huh! You came into Death Swamp seeking the children of that old tyrant Tanner. Is it so?"

"It is so, your Majesty. I see you know all about it. Naturally, General Tanner desires to recover his children."

"And I am now disposed to aid him, badly as he has used me, for I have nothing against these two, much as I despise their parent. Moreover, I am, in a way, responsible for it all."

"How is that, may I ask?"

"Easily explained. The boy lost his way in the swamp. I found him and brought him here. That was the beginning of it. I shall not tell you the rest except to add that it was the glowing accounts the boy gave of his sister's beauty that induced Pete the Portugee to go to Atlanta,

where he formed the acquaintance of the poor, silly creature and induced her to marry him."

"Does he treat her well?"

"Quite the contrary. He has treated her shamefully. The girl is but the shadow of her former self."

"Would she be willing to leave him?"

"Indeed she would if she could, but he watches her closely. However, don't despair, Mr. Brady. I now propose to consult my Master and see if it is his will that I shall aid you, for you must understand that our meeting was accidental. I have had no opportunity to do that yet. Remain where you are through the ceremony, and do not speak!"

"One question before you begin, your Majesty. You speak of your Master. To whom do you refer?"

"To the King of Terrors, old man, Grim Death, whom we must all bow down before in the end."

"Who can this man be?" Old King Brady asked himself. "Is he black or white? He speaks like an educated person, yet his English is spoken with a decided French accent. I fancy he is some mulatto from Haiti or San Domingo."

He remained silent now, finding food enough for thought in what was going forward.

The king removed the little table from before the huge wooden skull, and taking down from a nail the half of a big calabash, a species of gourd common in the West Indies, over which some sort of skin had been stretched, he provided himself with two small drumsticks and dropped cross-legged where the table had been, facing the idol with this singular drum resting on his knees, upon which he began a monotonous beating.

It was just tap—tap—tap without any attempt to vary the sound.

It made Old King Brady sleepy to listen to it.

He assumed that the king was trying to throw himself into some sort of trance.

Indeed, the old detective began to feel that if the drumming did not speedily cease he would go off into a trance himself.

At last it suddenly stopped, the drumsticks falling from the king's hands.

His head dropped forward upon his breast. It looked as if the trance had come.

Presently he began to speak in a loud, distinct tone, but in a foreign language.

Old King Brady thought it was French.

And now a very singular thing occurred, which can only be explained by assuming that the man was a skilful ventriloquist, and that he was simply humbugging Old King Brady.

Incidentally there is the possibility that he may have been humbugging himself.

But be this as it may, what he said seemed to be in the form of questions, and as Old King Brady has written it in his note-book, the answers appeared to proceed from the mouth of the big wooden skull!

The delusion was so complete that Old King Brady found himself puzzled enough.

But, alas! It was all in French, both questions and answers.

The old detective was unable to understand what it was all about.

For nearly half an hour this continued.

Then the king suddenly raised his head and got on his feet.

"Death has spoken, Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed. "His orders are that I shall aid you in your mission. He tells me that the end of Pete the Portugee is in sight, and he is to be downed by your hand."

"Does his Majesty explain how it is to be done?" asked the old detective.

"He does, but it is not for you to know," was the reply. "Leave all details to me. Now to clear this hut."

"Clear it of what?"

"Never mind. Don't move nor speak, as you value your life."

He went over to one side of the hut and, picking up a round, brass dish, he poured into it a liquid which smelled like ordinary alcohol.

The dish was placed before the idol and its contents fired.

As the flame shot up the king crushed some dried herbs in his hands and threw them into the dish.

Immediately the hut was filled with a dense smoke which had no stifling effect, but on the contrary carried with it a delightful perfume.

It made Old King Brady drowsy, too.

For some moments the old detective braced up against it, but it was no use.

Before he knew it Old King Brady was fast asleep.

How long he slept Old King Brady could not guess, when he suddenly awoke to find himself stretched out at full length upon the floor.

He was alone in the hut.

The big dog lay stretched across the threshold as if on guard.

It was now entirely dark.

Old King Brady sat up and called out to know if the king was there, but the only answer was a low growl from the dog.

He struck a match and looked at his watch.

It was quarter past eleven, so he knew that he had been asleep for hours.

He got up and, lighting another match, looked for a lantern which he had observed hanging from a nail, found and lighted it.

"What should he do?" he asked himself; "wait for the return of the king or try to make his escape?"

The latter did not seem likely to prove so easy, for when he approached the door the dog growled and showed his teeth.

"He has been ordered to watch me," thought Old King Brady. "That's all there is about it. Leave here I cannot without running the risk of being torn to pieces."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DESERTION OF ED BELLOWS.

As the strange figure vanished, Alice looked out of the tent.

"For pity sake! Did you see that?" she exclaimed.

"Why of course we saw it," replied Harry. "Ed, what do you know about that? Did you hear that man who spoke call it the Demon of the Swamp?"

"Yes, that's what they call it around here," replied Ed, with a shudder, "and its appearance bodes no good for any of us, I'm afraid."

"What nonsense!" cried Harry. "Surely, Bellows, you don't believe we have seen a ghost?"

"I don't know," replied Ed. "I never saw it before, and I'm very sure I never want to see it again."

"Pshaw! It is only some extra tall man masquerading."

"If it was a ghost I am sure it must have been a friendly one," put in Alice. "Certainly its appearance saved your lives. Those men meant to kill you."

"That's what," added Harry. "But tell us what you know about it, Ed."

"Well," said Ed, "all I know is that the colored folks have been reporting seeing such a figure in Death Swamp ever since I came to live down this way. Some call him King Death, the Demon of the Swamp, same as that fellow did. That they all believe as you seem to think I do is shown from the fact that they lost no time in hustling out of the way."

"Didn't they beat it in a hurry, though!" laughed Harry. "I really thought we were going to have serious trouble. I am sure I am very much obliged to his Majesty for putting in an appearance. But go back to sleep, Alice; superstition is the best of guardians. I think you may rest in peace now."

Alice thought so, too; she lay down again and was soon asleep.

Meanwhile, Harry continued to question Ed about the Swamp Demon.

"Does General Tanner believe in it?" he asked.

"No, he don't," replied Ed. "He believes that the Swamp Demon is just a half crazy Haitian mulatto who used to work for him some years ago by the name of Alois Fournier."

"The figure we saw was at least seven feet tall," observed Harry. "Was Fournier like that?"

"I believe he was."

"What became of him?"

"I don't know. He disappeared one day and was never seen afterward."

"And about that time the Swamp Demon began to be talked about?"

"That's what General Tanner claims."

"It's plain enough then. We have seen the missing Haitian now more insane than ever. Leave such superstition to the niggers, Ed. Wonder if he can have had anything to do with the disappearance of Old King Brady?"

"I was wondering the same thing myself," replied Ed. "Heaven help the old man if it is so."

The night dragged on wearily.

The young men slept by turns. There was no further appearance of the demon nor any other alarm.

Morning dawned clear and cool.

Harry hustled about and built a fire. Alice soon came out of her tent and began to prepare breakfast.

They had scarcely finished eating it when they heard

the barking of a dog, and soon they perceived a roughly dressed white man with a gun over his shoulder and a small dog at his heels approaching their camp.

"Howdy, miss," he exclaimed, pulling off his slouch hat. "Howdy, gents. I s'pose now you couldn't spare a bite to eat?"

"Surely," replied Harry. "Sit down and you shall have something."

The man seated himself on the grass where the cloth had been spread, and Harry served him with coffee and canned salmon.

"Mought I ask what brung ye into Death Swamp?" he presently said.

Harry was more than suspicious that he was entertaining one of his assailants of the night before, and one of Pete the Portugee's band.

But it behooved him to be civil, and he replied that they were botanists making a collection of plants, feeling that such an explanation would serve as well as another.

"Sho! You don't say!" answered the man. "Where do you hail from?"

"New York," Harry replied.

"Sho! They tell me hit's a right smart town; almost as big as Savannah."

"Yes, it's growing; it will catch up with Savannah some day. What's your business?"

"Me? Oh, I'm a lumberjack. I'm a-headin' for General Tanner's Mills a-lookin' for a job. Thought I'd strike acrost dis yere swamp. I seem to have managed to lose my way, and last night I fell into bad company on account of it."

"Indeed! How was that?"

"Run right into Pete the Portugee's camp. Hit's a wonder I ever got away from them fellers alive."

"He's a spy sent out after us, surest thing," thought Harry.

"Who is this Pete the Portugee?" he carelessly asked.

"What! Hain't yer never heard tell of him?" said the man. "He's a outlaw, train robber, bank robber, an' the like."

"Is that so? And he lives in this swamp?"

"Hangs out hyar, yes. Mighty dangerous place to bring a lady into, young feller, but then I s'pose yer well armed."

"We are not unarmed," replied Harry, "and we know how to shoot straight, too. But tell me, didn't these people use you well?"

"Oh, well enough, but you see they was kind of riled up 'cause they've heard detectives was out after them."

"Detectives! Naturally that would stir them up. Do you think we are in any danger?"

"Wa'al, I think yer be. If I was any way interested in yer lady friend I should be for getting her out of this just as quick as ever I could."

While this conversation was going on Ed sat silent and glum.

There seemed to be something weighing on the young man's mind. Harry could think of nothing except that he was vexed at the opposition and ridicule shown toward his ghost theory.

Tired of it all, he arose and, making a sign for Alice to

follow him, he walked back of the tents over towards the place where the hobbled horses were grazing.

"Did you see?" whispered Alice as soon as they were out of hearing.

"See what?" asked Harry.

"That fellow slip Mr. Bellows a letter."

"No, indeed! Did he do that?"

"He did, just as quick as ever your back was turned."

Harry peered out from behind the tent.

"Well!" he murmured. "He's reading the letter now."

"What can it mean?"

"Don't ask me, Alice. I find it hard to believe that Bellows is standing in with Pete, and yet this looks mighty suspicious."

He looked again.

"Why, bless my soul, he is sneaking off with him!" he exclaimed.

"This is too much!" cried Alice. "They ought to be shadowed. Leave me, Harry, and go."

"Never!"

"I beg you will, Harry. I'm not one bit afraid to stay here alone."

"I'm afraid for you then."

"She will not be alone," said a familiar voice behind them, and both turning they saw Old King Brady calmly approaching.

"Go, Harry, it is best," the old detective said, "but observe all caution. We are fighting a desperate band."

"I'm going; but tell me where on earth did you drop from, governor?"

"Ask for no explanation now," replied Old King Brady, hastily. "Go!"

"Oh, I'm going," repeated Harry, "but tell me, is everything all right?"

"Everything is all right so far as I can see, yes. Will you go?"

Harry waited only to catch up a rifle which he had brought with him from Tanner's Mills, and started.

It was difficult shadowing.

Two or three times Ed and the stranger looked back, and he narrowly missed being discovered.

When they gazed the trail they paused and looked back at the camp steadily for a full minute.

Luckily Harry was safely sheltered then.

At length, apparently satisfied that they were not being shadowed, they started south along the trail.

It was now easier work for Harry, for all he had to do was to keep just inside the tree line to be out of sight.

The path was just about wide enough for a mounted man to pass.

They had covered about a mile thus, and Young King Brady had been able to keep his men in sight when he suddenly saw them halt.

The stranger stooped down and laid his ear to the ground.

Instantly he arose and, saying something to Ed, they slipped in among the trees on the other side of the trail.

Harry pressed forward, and presently got where he could see them.

They were standing together behind a large pine engaged in earnest conversation.

"He thinks the band is coming," thought Young King Brady, "and they are trying to keep out of the way. That don't look as if he was standing in with them. But what a singular thing to do to walk off and leave us like that. As far as Bellows is concerned, I can only size it up one way."

Young King Brady was well aware that with many Southerners women stand first in everything.

The letter secretly delivered, he argued, must have been from Minnie appealing to Ed to help her and ordering that he come to her alone.

Under those circumstances it seemed almost certain that the bookkeeper would act just as he did, and under those circumstances, also, he would be anxious to avoid the gang.

And it seemed to bear out his theory that in a few minutes he heard horses approaching.

"They are coming," he thought. "They are heading directly for our camp, too. It is to be hoped that Old King Brady gets on the move. But if they leave there, how shall I ever find them again in the jungle?"

It was a burning question, and one which Young King Brady found himself wholly unable to answer.

Presently mounted men hove in sight.

None were masked this time.

In the lead rode the Pete of the deserted lumber camp.

There were four white men with him, the rest were colored, and a desperate looking bunch they were.

The whites were armed with rifles, but the blacks had none.

They advanced at a moderate pace along the trail and soon vanished.

Not until they were out of sight did Ed and his companion venture forth.

Taking the trail again, they pressed on at a rapid walk.

About a mile was covered and then the piney tract came to an end.

Here there was a narrow stream, and beyond lay a cypress swamp, seemingly impenetrable and apparently extending for miles.

Ed's guide turned abruptly to the left and pressed on, skirting the edge of the morass.

Harry followed as best he could, but keeping at a good distance behind.

At last he saw them pause, and heard a low, prolonged whistle.

Young King Brady got out his glass and turned it on them.

Now he perceived that a log spanned the stream.

Beyond were thick bushes which they appeared to be watching.

A few moments elapsed and then Young King Brady through his glass saw a small man of youthful appearance in the act of crossing the log.

Ed rushed forward and, extending his hand, guided the young man over.

All three stepped in among the pines and vanished.

Thinking that they would surely come back to the trail, Harry waited but they did not appear.

"Confound it!" he muttered. "Can they have gone in the opposite direction? I must get on the move or I shall lose them, surest thing."

He had lost them already, had he only known it.

He pushed on cautiously, coming at length to the log, but the three were nowhere visible.

Harry was disgusted.

He felt that he had altogether failed to do his work as he should.

He looked about for a trail, but there was no grass here and no sand. The pine trees grew close and the ground was densely strewn with their dead needles, which left no imprint of feet, of course.

Young King Brady now found himself at the end of his rope so far as the shadowing business was concerned.

His first impulse was to make his way back to the camp, but upon second thought it seemed to him that here was an opportunity which ought to be improved.

Of course, he had no knowledge of the size of the Portuguese's gang, but it was not generally considered to be a very large one.

Fifteen men had gone out of this part of Death Swamp, and a sixteenth had now followed them. Harry doubted if many had been left behind.

"That log is surely one road into Pete's camp," he said to himself. "I've a great good mind to sneak in and have a look. For us to think of downing these people by force is nonsense. We can only take advantage of circumstances and work by stratagem. Here is an open door, and I believe I will enter it and see to what it leads."

His mind made up, he quickly crossed the plank and, finding a narrow path leading over sodden earth beyond, he pressed forward on this new trail.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESCUE OF MASTER MONKEY.

We left Old King Brady before his sudden appearance in camp in the hut of the King of Death Swamp, imprisoned by his Majesty's dog.

As we said, the old detective could think of no better plan than to wait for something to turn up, and what finally did turn up was the king himself.

It was at about half-past one when he suddenly walked into the hut, still clothed in his singular costume.

"Ha! So you are awake!" he exclaimed. "It is time to act. Arise and follow me."

"Where to, your Majesty?" asked the old detective, not in any hurry to trust himself to this singular man.

"Listen!" replied the king, "do you or do you not want to down Pete the Portugee and rescue General Tanner's children?"

"I most certainly do want those very things."

"Then follow me without further question if you would gain those ends."

Feeling that in a way he was at the mercy of the man, Old King Brady resolved to comply.

"Lead on; I'll follow," he said.

"It is well," answered the king. "So we go."

He passed out of the hut with Old King Brady at his heels, the dog moving to let them pass.

The king had taken the lantern and he led the way unerringly through the pines, following no path that Old King Brady could discover until they came to the same spot to which Harry was to trail Ed Bellows the next day.

"Yonder lies the heart of Death Swamp," he said, waving his hand across the stream, "and in there is the camp of these outlaws who have annoyed me so long. I am here to live the life I have chosen and not to be annoyed by their comings and goings and their constant brawls. Now, Mr. Brady, for you to suppose that you can down this man with the slender force you brought with you into the swamp is the merest nonsense. Don't you see it so? Already your presence is known to Pete. Only to-night while you slept I saved your partners from death, and the lady, who never should have come here, from capture."

"For which I thank your Majesty," replied the old detective. "But listen. I have learned during my long life the great lesson that where there is a will there is a way. Armed bands have failed against these people. I came here hoping to find the way because I already had the will. Perhaps I did find it when fate threw me in with you."

"There is a lot in what you say," replied the king; "but now listen. Are you game to penetrate to this camp if I will furnish a guide?"

"For what purpose?"

"To spy out the band. Then to return to Tanner, muster a force sufficient to capture these people, and come back and take advantage of what you have learned. Perhaps more may grow out of it, too."

Old King Brady hesitated only for one brief moment.

The man seemed sincere; there appeared to be method in his madness. The old detective resolved to take the risk.

"I am ready," he said. "Your Majesty, I have come to believe that you are my opportunity. Show me your guide and I will follow him."

Instead of answering, the king thrust his hand into a deep pocket in one side of his singular garment and drew out a huge rattlesnake.

Old King Brady shuddered as the reptile glided along the arm of this strange creature, and twisted itself around his neck, where it raised its head, displayed its forked tongue and seemed to eye the old detective curiously.

"That's dangerous work, your Majesty, unless the snake's fangs have been removed," he said.

"Nothing has been removed," replied the king. "This rattler is as God made him. But have no fears for me. I am the representative of King Death on earth. No living creature possesses the power to harm me. Take the lantern and follow him that I would summon. So far as he is concerned you are perfectly safe. What may come to you through others I cannot say."

As Old King Brady took the lantern the king gave a low, prolonged whistle.

"This is only one way into Pete's camp," he whispered. "The main road lies by way of the trail you undertook to follow where they keep a hidden drawbridge which they throw across this stream when they want to get in and out. Hush! He is here."

There was a rustling among the bushes on the opposite side of the stream, and at the other end of the log a colored man now appeared.

He threw out his hands and bowed his head low three times, but did not utter a word until the king spoke to him in French, when he answered.

But little was said.

"Go," said the king, and Old King Brady crossed the log.

"Boss, yo's ter folly me," whispered the black. "Doan yo' speak one word now. Doan yo' mak no noise or wese dead ones."

"Lead on," replied Old King Brady. "I'm prepared to do just as you say."

They hurried on along the narrow path with the swamp on both sides of them.

Owls hooted—real ones—frogs croaked dismally.

Once the darkey suddenly sprang back and motioned Old King Brady to keep back, too.

A huge snake glided across the path and vanished in the bushes on the other side.

As it did not rattle, Old King Brady took it to be a copperhead, the most deadly of all the snakes of the Southern swamps, but in that uncertain light it was impossible to tell.

Presently the darkey took the lantern from Old King Brady and blew it out, placing it on the ground.

They now had only the stars to guide them, but the distance remaining was not great.

In a moment they entered a wide clearing where there was higher ground.

Here stood five log huts of the rudest construction.

The camp was entirely dark, and not a sound could be heard.

Old King Brady would have gone further, but his guide barred the way.

"Boss," he whispered, "dis yere am all Ah kin show yer, but Ah am gwimeter try ter do suffin else what de Demon ob dis yere swamp done ordered done. Yo' stan' ri' hyar. Ef dey come a hollerin' or a shootin', scoot for yer life. Ef not, den wait an' mebbe yo'll have company back wiv yer. Ah kean't tell."

He glided off across the clearing.

"Is it the son or the daughter?" Old King Brady asked himself.

He felt satisfied that it must be one or the other—perhaps both.

The moments seemed very long.

Suddenly came an alarm.

A white man half dressed stepped out of the door of one of the huts.

Old King Brady dropped to the ground and lay flat—there had been no time to beat a retreat.

The man, who was just in shirt and trousers, went to a bench on which a pail stood, and taking down a gourd from a nail, had his drink of water and returned inside the hut.

"Taken dry, that's all," thought Old King Brady, and he crawled back along the path which he had not had time to gain before.

But from this safe concealment he continued to watch, and presently he caught sight of two forms crawling away from one of the other huts.

One was his guide, the other a white boy, and Old King Brady's spirits rose.

"I had hoped for the girl, too," he muttered, "but I was a fool. It is no such easy matter to get a wife away from a husband and, perhaps, she loves him after all."

They came upon the path and stood up, the black putting his finger to his lips for silence.

The boy looked at Old King Brady curiously.

He was fearfully emaciated, and wore only an old undershirt and a pair of trousers so ragged that they barely concealed his nakedness.

The black now hurried forward to where they had left the lantern, and lighted it.

"Now go, yo' two," he said, "an' ef yo' see dat 'ar spirit of def, tell him dat Sam done him best. Couldn't get de gal nohow. She am wiv her husband. 'Tain't for me to go betwixt man and wife."

Old King Brady, thanking him, produced money, but Sam waved it away.

"None ob dat!" he said. "Least, not now. Him say no, an' me mus' obey, but yo' kin say to General Tanner ef ebber he see a tramp nigger hanging round who says 'Boss, yo' owe me one,' he can gib out what him likes, which won't be till after I quit dis gang for good, an' dat won't be very long in my way ob t'inkin', since de Demon of Death Swamp has got down on 'em."

"As you will, Sam," said Old King Brady. "At all events, I thank you just the same."

"All right, boss. Now g'by; g'by, Mass' Tom. Doan yo' come back hyar no mo'."

The boy said nothing.

He seemed quite dazed.

Old King Brady was much concerned by his looks and peculiar appearance.

Evidently it was not Sam's intention to accompany them further.

They hurried on to the log, which they crossed.

Old King Brady did not attempt to speak to his companion until they were safely on the other side.

Here he looked around for the king, but he was nowhere to be seen.

This was certainly to be regretted, for Old King Brady had not the faintest idea where to go.

He resolved to wait a little to see if his singular protector did not turn up, and he proceeded to address himself to the boy who stood silently by regarding him with the same peculiar stare.

"You are Tom Tanner?" he asked.

"No," was the dull response. "That's not my name. I never heard of Tom Tanner. Who's he?"

"Bother!" thought the detective. "All this trouble, and now the wrong boy!"

"What is your name?" he asked.

"My name?"

"Yes."

"I forget. I forget everything in these days. The men who make the money call me Monkey, that's the only name I have now."

"Have you been with these men long?"

"Who, I?"

"Yes. I am talking about you."

"Oh! Why, yes. I've been with them ever and ever so long. As much as a hundred years, I should think."

The case was plain.

Tom Tanner he might be, or any one else, but reason had flown.

The same moody silence followed.

Tired of waiting at last, Old King Brady said something about making a start.

This seemed to rouse Master Monkey, who certainly seemed to be about the right age for Tom Tanner. He clutched Old King Brady's arm.

"Say," he whispered in awe-stricken tones, "do I have to see him again?"

"See who again?"

"That awful creature—you know."

"Do you mean the Swamp Demon?"

"Yes, yes!"

"I don't know. Are you afraid of him?"

"Afraid of him! Oh, don't let him show himself! It is he who made me what I am. He kept me for weeks in that awful house of his. You don't know what I suffered. Oh, don't take me to him whatever else you do."

"This boy has been drugged out of his senses by the lunatic," thought Old King Brady. "That's what's the matter with him. I guess he is Tom Tanner fast enough."

He soothed him as best he could, promising that he should not see the Demon if he could help it.

They were still talking when an alarm came.

Suddenly a voice yelled out back in the swamp:

"Sam, you black villain! Where's Monkey?"

The answer was not heard.

"You die if you had a hand in his escape!" the voice roared out.

Master Monkey clutched Old King Brady's arm.

"Oh, let's go!" he whispered. "It's Pete! He'll kill me! Let's go now!"

"Right!" replied the old detective, and he hurried off among the pines.

"Monkey, attend to me," he said. "Have they got dogs in there?"

"Yes, two."

"Bloodhounds?"

"Yes. They will tear us to pieces if they set 'em on to us."

"Perhaps they won't. Tell me about your sister?"

"She's Pete's wife. Say, she's awful good to me."

"Is Pete good to her?"

"Good to her! I guess he isn't! He beats her something awful. She used to cry all the time when she first came. Now she's like a dead one. She hardly speaks at all, only to me."

"Would she escape if she got the chance?"

"Of course she would. Why not? Why should she want to stay there? But you can't get her: locked in most all the time."

"You say they make money in there, Monkey?"

"Yes, sir; lots of it. They are making it all the time."

"Does Pete make it himself?"

"No, sir; it's another man. Some of the others help, but never Pete. I help, too."

"What's the name of this man?"

"Pete calls him George, and so do the rest of us. Sometimes Pete calls him Brandy."

"George Brandeth, surest thing," thought Old King Brady. "I told them in Washington over a year ago that those fives were his work."

The name was that of a discharged employee of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, one of the most skillful banknote engravers in America.

The man had been reported dead.

The Secret Service detectives had seen and talked with those who claimed to have attended his funeral.

That he actually was dead Old King Brady had never believed.

And now came a scare which threw the old detective fully on the alert.

Suddenly the deep baying of bloodhounds was heard, and a man's voice in the distance shouted:

"Come on, boys! It's all right now. The dogs have got the scent. He went this way. I tell you there can be no doubt about it. This is some of Old King Brady's work."

CHAPTER X.

IN THE OUTLAW'S CAMP.

Old King Brady heard the mention of his name with some disgust.

Still he was by no means surprised now that he knew that George Brandeth was with the gang, for he felt quite certain that the counterfeiter had been tipped off to the fact that he, the old detective, had pronounced him the maker of the bad fives with which the country had been flooded during the last year.

But the main question now was how to dodge the dogs, and that did not seem so easy.

Still the old detective knew well enough that the sagacity of the bloodhound, and its ability to follow a scent against all obstacles, has been greatly overestimated.

"If we could only put water between us," he thought.

"Keep close to me, Monkey," he said. "We may escape them yet."

They ran for all they were worth.

Old King Brady dodged to the left, hoping to strike the stream which separated the piney tract from the swamp proper, and perhaps be able to cross it.

But all went differently from what he anticipated, for before they had gone far the king suddenly stepped out from behind a tree. The snake had vanished now.

"Follow me, Mr. Brady," he said, quietly. "In a moment I will have you safe."

But Master Monkey did not take it quietly.

For a few seconds he just stared at the king, and then throwing back his head he let out one dismal yell and ran like a deer.

In vain Old King Brady called to him to come back. In vain the king shouted that he would not harm him. The boy ran on and vanished among the pines.

To chase him would have been hopeless. Indeed, Old King Brady was about winded as it was.

"Poor fool!" said the king. "He is frightened at what? Does he not know that I simply represent what we have all got to come to? Bah! I hate a fool!"

It would have been as useless to argue with him as to have attempted to chase Master Monkey.

"Is he General Tanner's son?" asked the old detective. "Certainly."

"What ails him? Is he crazy?"

"Of course."

"You did not mention it."

"Why should I mention it?"

"He says he lived with you for weeks."

"That's right."

"And you used him in your peculiar work, and that's what drove him mad?"

"None of your business," snapped the king. "Don't bother me or I'll cut you out. He's mad, all right. So am I—so are you. So's everybody. All the world is mad. Ha! ha! ha! Show me one sane man and I'll show you—but there! What's the use talking? Let the dogs get him and make a meal of him. I only got the boy out of there to oblige you. I don't owe old Tanner any good will, you bet. If you want to save your own hide, follow me."

It was a bitter pill for the old detective to swallow, but there was seemingly no help for it.

The baying of the bloodhounds was growing more distinct, and if he wished to save his own neck it was time to make a move.

They hurried on among the pines, coming presently to a large pool.

"Listen," said the king. "Here we will fool 'em. I am going to carry you across this pool, which is not deep, as I carried you last night. No fool business now!"

He grabbed Old King Brady around the waist even as he spoke, catching him before he fairly realized that the king was going to so seize him, and throwing him over his shoulder, walked right into the pool.

At the deepest part the water came about up to his waist.

They were on the opposite side in two minutes, and much to his relief the king stood the old detective on his feet.

"There you are," he said, "the hounds will not take my scent. Walk straight on for about a hundred yards. There you will find a deserted log hut. Stay there till daylight, then press forward in a direct line and you will come to the main trail. Your partners are camped on the left just about where I captured you last night."

"You are leaving me then?" questioned Old King Brady.

"Yes; but you will see me again. I will deliver Pete the Portugee into your hands."

"And the boy?"

"Don't talk of him to me nor of the girl, either. I have no love for General Tanner, nor will I have anything more to do with his children."

With these words upon his lips, spoken in the surliest possible tone, the king strode off among the pines.

And this is Old King Brady's story as far as there is anything to tell.

He found the hut, in which he remained until daylight, neither seeing nor hearing anything more of the dogs.

Starting out then, he found the camp after some search, and came upon Harry and Alice as has been told.

He came up behind the tents and was near enough to them while they talked to hear what they were saying.

"Well, Mr. Brady, I'm glad enough to see you back again!" exclaimed Alice after Harry had departed. "Where in the world have you been?"

"A long story," replied the old detective, "and one which

will keep a bit, for it seems to me you are terribly exposed here."

"We are out of sight of the trail, but we were attacked last night."

"Yes, I know."

"You?"

"Surely. Wait until you hear what I have to tell; but no time must be lost. If you were attacked last night, then you will surely be attacked again this morning just as soon as the gang get on the move. To work, Alice! You strike the tents, I'll saddle the horses. We mustn't lose an instant in shifting our position. You will be far safer on the other side of the trail."

They were quickly on the move.

They had not gone far before they heard the gang coming.

The old detective halted lest the footfalls of the horses might betray them.

Peering out between the pines they saw the gang turn in on the other side of the trail and make directly for their deserted camp.

"There they go!" exclaimed Old King Brady, "and now we go. They will find their birds flown. I wonder where this game of hide and seek is to end."

He started then and began telling Alice his story as they rode along.

Meanwhile, Harry, having crossed the stream, was advancing on the swamp trail.

He had not gone far before he saw a man lying in the path.

It was the unfortunate Sam, who had paid the penalty for the assistance he had rendered Old King Brady and Tom Tanner.

Harry, bending over him, found that he had been stabbed through the heart.

He walked on.

The face of the stranger who had lured Ed away haunted him—it had been with him ever since he started out.

At first sight there had not been anything familiar about the man's face, but Harry had thought that it displayed more intelligence than his speech indicated; now when he came to think more about it he felt certain that he had seen the face before.

Memory refused to serve Harry until all in an instant it flashed across him.

"George Brandeth, the counterfeiter!" he muttered. "The original of the photograph Old King Brady got in Washington!"

Harry was sure that he was making no mistake.

"It means the breaking up of the gang," he said to himself. "That letter was surely from Minnie. Ed Bellows' presence with us must have been made known to the unfortunate girl. It was an appeal to him for help; all the same he ought not to have gone off in the way he did."

He pressed on and soon came to the clearing.

There stood the huts, there was not a soul in sight.

Two huge bloodhounds chained to their kennels were barking furiously. The sound had almost weakened Harry's nerve, but as he heard no one speak he pressed on.

He waited for a few moments, and still no one came in response to the barking of the dogs.

Drawing his revolver, Harry pressed boldly forward toward the largest of the huts, the door of which stood wide open.

The dogs still barked, but no one appeared, and Harry stepped inside.

On the table lay a sheet of white paper, on which the following was written in a large, bold hand:

"PETE: I have quit for good. I have sent your wife back to her father. Your injustice to me and your barbarous treatment of that poor girl and her unfortunate brother has been on my nerves this long time. My opportunity has come, and I propose to make the most of it. Visit the workshop and see what I have done. With Old King Brady on my trail I may not escape, but should I, and should we ever meet again, I give you fair warning I shall shoot you at sight. Therefore be warned and give me a wide berth. Your sworn enemy forever,

"G. B."

"I was right," thought Harry. "George Brandeth it was!"

He went from hut to hut.

All were deserted.

He found one which served as a stable, but there were no horses in it.

But one hut now remained to be examined, and that stood at some little distance from the rest.

The door was wide open, and Harry walked in.

This was the workshop.

A glance revealed strange doings.

An expensive engraver's press lay in fragments, broken doubtless with the heavy sledge-hammer which lay on the floor.

Also on the floor were several counterfeit plates for printing bad bills.

They had been so hammered and broken that they were now quite worthless.

Nor was this all.

Near the engraver's press stood a Sheridan paper cutter, and the floor all around it was littered with fragments of counterfeit bills which had been cut to pieces on this powerful machine.

The queer-making plant was a wreck, its stock in trade destroyed, and the master of the outfit had flown!

"Strange," muttered Harry. "It is just as Old King Brady said. We haven't done so much, and yet indirectly we have gained one of our ends, while if we had come in with a big posse we might have had a fight and lost it. The mere fact that the Bradys were in Death Swamp threw a scare into Brandeth which caused him to act as he did. It is to be hoped that Ed got the boy as well as the girl."

And with these thoughts running through his mind Harry started to return.

Alice was on his mind, and Old King Brady, too. He felt that his place was at the camp.

He did not go there, however, for as he crossed the stream a strange figure suddenly loomed up before him.

It was the Demon of the Death Swamp.

Seen by daylight the king did not look quite so formidable.

Still Harry had no difficulty in recognizing the vision of the night before.

"You are young Brady," said the king, glaring at Harry through his hooded mask.

"That's who I am," replied Harry, boldly, "and who are you, may I ask?"

"I am King Death," replied the lunatic in a sepulchral voice. "Come no nearer. If you want to find your father, follow me, for he is no longer where you left him."

Thus saying, the giant moved off among the pines with strides befitting his great height.

Harry did not hesitate, although somewhat doubtful in his mind as to whether he ought to listen to the strange creature or not.

It was no easy task to keep up with the king. Sometimes Harry had to run to recover lost ground.

After a walk of perhaps half an hour the king suddenly halted and, pointing to the right, shouted:

"Go that way! Go straight on and you will find them."

Then he himself turned abruptly to the left and soon vanished.

CHAPTER XI.

IN SERIOUS TROUBLE.

Harry pushed on in the direction indicated, and soon came out upon a tract which had been burned over.

A stream ran through the middle of it, and he saw their horses grazing.

Giving his own peculiar whistle, he saw Alice rise from under a tree, and hurried to her side.

"Thank goodness you are back, Harry," she exclaimed. "We were so afraid Pete had captured you."

"Same with me, for I saw the whole band on the move. Did you meet them?"

"No, indeed; we dodged them and came here. Just in time, too."

"Where's the governor?"

"Gone to look for you. He has been gone some time, too. How did you find us out?"

"Why, Alice, the Demon of the Swamp was my guide. I was heading for our camp when he suddenly appeared and told me to follow him. Who can he be, I wonder? By daylight he don't look so terrifying. He is evidently insane."

"That's what he is. Old King Brady was with him all night," replied Alice, and she went on to tell the old detective's story, which she had scarcely finished when he appeared.

"Ha, Harry! Back again!" he exclaimed. "I have just come from the entrance to Pete's camp. He has returned there with his whole band."

"Has he then!" cried Harry. "Well, he'll see things which won't please him. Did you meet your friend the Demon?"

"I call him the king. No, I did not meet him. But tell me, what happened to you, my dear boy?"

Harry told his story.

"Well, well!" said Old King Brady, "of course you are right. That man is undoubtedly George Brandeth. I should have liked to have captured him and to have had the honor of smashing his plant and delivering those plates up at Washington, but it seems it is not to be. As for

General Tanner's children, fate seems to be against us. I had the boy and lost him, and you missed your chance with the girl."

"Hark!" exclaimed Alice. "The gang must have got on the move again! Don't you hear?"

A great tramping of horses' feet could be heard, but the sounds were distant and soon died away.

"They have learned of Brandeth's work and are after him," said Old King Brady. "We are safest here. Really, I don't see what we can do. I feel that this expedition has been a flat failure so far as we are concerned."

It was not so.

The tipping off of Pete that the Bradys had entered Death Swamp had brought matters to a head in the outlaws' discordant camp, and was the direct cause of all that had occurred and was about to occur.

The noise of the retreating band had scarcely died away when Harry suddenly exclaimed: "Why look there!" and pointed up the stream beside which all three were now standing.

Its course through the swamp was pretty straight at this point, and they could see for quite a distance.

A human form tied to a log was slowly floating down.

"A man!" cried Alice.

"A boy! Tom Tanner, I fear," echoed Old King Brady, and he whipped out his glass.

"Yes, it's Tom," he said. "This is more of Pete's dastardly work. Not content with killing the poor fellow, he must torture him. This creek unquestionably empties into the Rattlesnake. It is his intention to have the unfortunate boy float out to sea."

"I can prevent that," cried Harry, and he hastily began undressing.

He stripped to his underclothes and, rolling up his drawers, was ready for business just as the log came abreast of where they stood.

"Go for him, Harry!" cried the old detective.

A few bold strokes brought Harry to the slow moving log, and he quickly towed it ashore, where the boy was released from his uncomfortable situation by Old King Brady.

Tom seemed more dazed than ever.

At first they could get nothing out of him, but they were more successful when Alice took hold and talked soothingly to him.

"Did Pete capture you?"

"Yes, he did. He took me back. He's awful mad. George has smashed everything and chopped up all the money. He has run off with my sister, too. Pete has gone after them. He will kill them both. Oh, I wish I knew what to do."

"Keep quiet and stay with us," said Alice, "we will take you home."

Tom remained dull and silent. As soon as they had eaten dinner he lay down and went to sleep.

For two hours and over the Bradys sat smoking and talking.

At last Harry proposed that they go out to the trail, which was at no great distance, to see if they could hear anything of the outlaw band.

"We won't be away ten minutes, Alice," Old King Brady said as they started.

The Bradys had scarcely reached the trail when they heard Alice's scream behind them.

"Great Scott!" cried Harry. "Alice is in trouble!"

They ran for all they were worth, but it was only to find themselves too late.

Whatever happened Alice had vanished, but Tom Tanner lay sleeping as peacefully as when they left.

Needless to say the Bradys were in despair.

Reluctantly they decided that their only course was to return to Tanner's Millis, and there raise a force sufficient to fight the outlaw band.

Tom was awakened and they got on the move, a doleful enough pair to suit their worst enemy.

Tom's condition puzzled the old detective not a little.

The boy never uttered a word unless directly addressed, and then acted like one suddenly awakened from a dream, though, in a way, his talk was sensible enough.

They gained the trail and reached the bridge in safety, seeing nothing of the outlaws.

Taking the main trail then, they had advanced but a short distance when they heard many horses galloping towards them.

"We are up against it!" cried Harry. "What shall we do?"

What could they do with the swamp on both sides of them?

They placed their horses across the trail, and Harry with his rifle and Old King Brady with his revolver waited for what was to come.

CHAPTER XUL.

CONCLUSION.

The man who had seized Alice in his arms and ran was a giant black, and he stifled her cries with one heavy hand.

Her struggles were useless, for the man's strength was enormous. His long, ape-like arms held her as tightly as if she had been in a vise.

The black took a diagonal course to the trail, and when he reached it he placed Alice on her feet immediately, drawing a revolver, which he cocked and covered her.

"Gimme de gun!" he said. "Quick now! De gun!"

Alice gave up her revolver.

"Now den, missy," he said, "yo' listen to me. We go on to de hos-es. Yo' behave yo'self den well an' good; ole Jehosaphat no lurt a hair of yo' head, but so yo' try to scap, orders am to shoot yo' dead—see?"

"'E'll be good, Jehosaphat," said Alice. "Lead on."

They walked along the trail, the black still keeping his revolver in evidence.

At length they came to two saddled horses, which they mounted. A long ride followed, and at its end Alice found herself in the deserted lumber camp.

Pete came out of the principal hut at their approach.

"Good for you, Fatty!" he cried. "So you got her, did you? My dear Miss Montgomery, I beg you will not be in the least alarmed. Let me aid you to alight."

He assisted her from the saddle and led her into the hut, where sat a young man, as Alice at first glance supposed, but instantly she recognized the fact that it was a young woman masquerading in male attire.

"Mrs. Bratanza, Miss Montgomery," said Pete. "my wife. She ran away with another fellow, an old lover of hers, dressed as you see her now. Fortunately I succeeded in capturing her and in shooting my rival. She feels rather sulky over the affair and won't speak to me, Miss Montgomery, you are a woman of course. I am clearing out of here to-night for good. My wife needs female companionship, so I decided to capture you and take you with us to our new camp. Do as I ask you and I give you my word that no harm shall come to you. Now I am going to leave you two together. Get acquainted. Cheer Minnie up, Miss Montgomery. Tell her from me that hereafter I propose to treat her more kindly, for I still love her, and she is my wife."

He left the hut and closed the door.

No sooner had he done so than Minnie threw herself into Alice's arms and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"Oh, Miss Montgomery, save me!" she cried. "He tells me that you are a detective! Do something! Think of some way to get me back to my father. That was all I started to do. Save me from that fearful man!"

"Hope for the best, my dear," Alice said. "The Bradys are out after you. To be sure, the prospect looks black enough just now for both of us, but they have a habit of succeeding in their undertakings, so let us hope that this case will be no exception to the rule. Meanwhile, take it from me that the very best thing you can do is to let your husband suppose that I have influenced you in his favor."

Minnie promised to do so, and when Pete came in soon after she received him quite cheerfully.

He seemed immensely pleased.

It was getting on towards dark now, and they were still talking, Alice making herself as agreeable as possible, when one of the white men rushed into the hut.

"Pete!" he cried. "I've just seen George. He's down by the swamp, where it runs into the Rattlesnake."

Without uttering a word Pete sprang up and rushed out of the hut.

* * * * *

We left the Bradys drawn up across the narrow trail waiting for trouble.

It did not come!

To their immense relief the first man who put in an appearance was General Tanner himself, mounted on a coal black horse.

He gave one wild ejaculation of joy at the sight of his son and sprang from the saddle.

For a moment the boy stared in his dazed way, and then suddenly crying out: "Oh, father! father!" he slipped from the saddle and sprang to his father's outstretched arms.

Meanwhile, the rest of the band came up.

There were twenty-five of them.

All the white employees of the mill were there—ten in number, the rest were blacks.

All, did we say? No, Ed Bellows was missing.

Presently General Tanner was ready to explain.

Ed had been deserted by George Brandeth before they had gone far, it appeared, and he and Minnie went on alone. They ran directly into Pete's band. Ed was shot

and left for dead, Minnie being carried off by her husband as we have seen.

"But the brave boy was only slightly wounded," the general went on to say. "He made his way to the mills, told his story, and here we are. Mr. Brady, how can I ever thank you enough? It is all your doings, and I want to say right here that Ed was in the wrong to leave you as he did, but this fellow Brandeth, who is a counterfeiter, brought him a letter from Minnie begging him to come to her, and to come alone. Brandeth refused to act as his guide if he told this to you."

"Enough," said Old King Brady. "Listen to my end of the story now and then let us decide upon a course of action."

"That fellow is a crazy Haitian nigger who was once employed by me," declared the general when Old King Brady came to tell about the "king." "He has the whole neighborhood pumped full of Voodooism. He ought to be promptly suppressed."

"You owe your son's rescue to him, General Tanner," the old detective said.

"I owe it to your partner's courage and to your skill and perseverance," declared the general. "But now about Minnie. Where is Pete?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," replied Old King Brady, and he had no more than said it when there was a stir among the riders, and somebody announced that a young colored man had come up the trail on foot who wanted to see Old King Brady, and when he came forward he said:

"Why, Mr. Brady, I am sent to you with a message from de Demon ob Def Swamp. Yo' know who I mean?"

"Surely," replied the old detective. "What's the message, boy?"

"Go to de ole lumber camp by de Rattlesnake. Yo'll find Pete de Portugee dar."

"There you are, general!" cried the old detective.

* * * * *

Alice quieted Minnie as best she could, and then went to the door of the hut.

The gang were all running down among the stumps in the direction of the arm of Death Swamp, Pete being in the lead.

"Oh, let us go! I want to see the end of it all!" cried Minnie.

They hurried on, coming to a place from which they could overlook the point where the gang had assembled.

"George! George Brandeth, you dirty traitor!" shouted Pete, "if you are in there, show yourself. You will not be shot. I am ready to meet you in a fair fight, and it shall be knives or revolvers, just as you say."

Then a shout went up from those assembled, and the blacks to a man fled back towards the camp.

"It is the one they call the Demon of Death Swamp!" cried Minnie. "There he stands on that little island. Don't you see?"

It was the Demon, sure enough.

"Pete Bratanza!" he shouted. "Are you blind? Your enemy is hiding within three feet of you; crouching behind that cypress on your right. He will never come out at your call. Coward that he is, he will never meet you in a fair fight!"

Now do not for a moment imagine that Pete waited for this long sentence to be completed.

Pete made a dart behind the cypress, going in mud up to his knees, and the next Alice and Minnie saw he had dragged the wretched counterfeiter into view.

At the same instant shots and shouts were heard at the camp above.

"There comes Old King Brady's gang, and General Tanner is with them!" one cried.

"I don't care who's coming!" yelled Pete, struggling with George. "This skunk shall fight me fair or I'll roast him alive. Go fer 'em, boys, and leave me to attend to my own affairs."

But the white men had left their rifles at the camp.

They stood irresolute.

The struggle continued.

The king was jumping up and down now on his island, barking like a dog, crowing like a rooster and yelling wildly between times; a rattlesnake went bobbing up and down on his neck.

"Let us go!" urged Alice.

"No," said Minnie, "I stay and see it through."

She had scarcely spoken when George slipped and went down in the mud, dragging Pete after him. At the same instant the king gave a horrible yell and sank to the ground.

And this was the time the Bradys came swooping down upon them.

The poor white men fled before them, but all were captured.

And Pete? And George?

Neither ever rose out of that mud again!

And the king?

He was dying when they reached him, which was not until they could fetch a plank from the camp.

He had been bitten by the rattler, angered, doubtless, by the abrupt movements he made.

Harry shot the snake, and the king stripped of his disguise after he was dead proved to be Alois Fournier, the West Indian mulatto, as General Tanner had always supposed.

Needless to say Minnie went all to pieces at the sight of her father.

But she lived to pull herself together again and to marry Ed Bellows.

This, however, was not until long after the Bradys and Alice had returned to New York, liberally rewarded by General Tanner.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BRADYS AND THE BUNDLE BOY; OR, THE FATE OF EDDIE MORAN."

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CHATEAUBRIAND'S ESCAPE.

By D. W. Stevens

Among all the captains who fought for Church and King in the bloody struggle in La Vendee, none had won brighter laurels than Victor Chateaubriand, or the "Black Captain," as he was generally called, on account of the sable suit that he always wore.

A commonplace history had the young and handsome soldier. The only direct descendant of a long and noble line of ancestors, at the breaking out of the French Revolution he was living quietly on his ancestral acres; but when he heard that the streets of Paris were running red with noble blood, and that his king was in danger, young Victor at once buckled on his sword and hurried away to the scene of conflict.

He arrived too late to be of much service, for the fate of the unhappy Louis was already sealed.

But the young soldier distinguished himself by joining company with the band headed by the well-known Chevalier de Maison Rouge, and nearly effecting the escape of the kingly prisoner by a well-contrived scheme.

By a mere accident the plot failed, the conspirators were discovered, and urged to fly.

In company with two or three more Breton gentlemen, Victor returned to his native province, and there raised the snow-white banner which bore the lily flowers of royalty.

The story of the war in La Vendee is written in the pages of history. Never since the world began was witnessed greater heroism than that displayed by the deeds of the half-armed peasants, who for a time so soundly thrashed the veteran soldiers of the Republic.

Right in the head of the victory, before the sad reverse came that trampled under foot the golden lilies and raised triumphant the blood-stained banner of the Age of Reason, Chateaubriand was captured in a skirmish, and forwarded at once to Paris to be executed.

When Chateaubriand reached Paris, a hundred heads a day were falling beneath the edge of the sharp knife.

France was to be purified and regenerated by cutting off the head of everybody that had the slightest claim to be called respectable.

With fifty others, Chateaubriand was thrust into a narrow room, and in dreadful anxiety the prisoners waited for the announcement of their fate.

There was very little doubt as to what it would be, for in the times of the Reign of Terror to be accused was to be condemned; few people entered a prison that did not leave it for the scaffold; the only uncertainty was how long it would be before the final hour would come.

Cool and careless by nature as were the greater part of the royalists, Chateaubriand chafed but little in the narrow confines of the prison, and as day after day passed by, and his name was not called forth as an announcement that the fatal cart waited for him, at last the young soldier began to believe that his case had been overlooked, and that there might be a possibility of his escaping the close embrace of Mother Guillotine, as the bloodthirsty Parisians

were wont to term the horrible engine of death that had already destroyed so many valuable lives.

But above the door of the Parisian prisons at that date might be inscribed the line of the Italian poet:

"Let he who enters here leave hope behind."

Few accused ones escaped the merciless butchers who at that time ruled the destinies of France.

And so, one gloomy noon, when the sky above was like lead, and the very air seemed murky and oppressive, Chateaubriand's name was called.

"At last!" the soldier said, lightly, as he turned away from the barred window from whence he had been gazing at the death cart standing in the courtyard half-filled with its human victims.

Then he bade his companions in misfortune "good-by," and followed his jailer.

"We've got to make room for a fresh batch of aristocrats," the jailer said, as he bound the prisoner's hands behind him—"Madame Guillotine will squeeze fifty or a hundred dainty necks before nightfall."

The fellow spoke as carelessly as though he talked of sheep instead of men and women.

The tumbrel, the death cart used to convey prisoners from the jail to the place of execution, was crowded with victims.

All of them bare-headed, and with their hands fastened securely behind them.

The usual crowd was in waiting at the prison gate to escort the wagons to the Place de Greve, where the executions took place.

Days of slaughter had not yet sated the appetite of the rabble.

No show to them so dear as the dying moments of the aristocrats.

The dog had broken his chain now, and was feeding upon the carcass of his master; no sweeter meat, to his taste, in all the world.

With a yell and jeer the crowd escorted the carts—for there were five in all—filled with bareheaded and pinioned prisoners.

With pale faces, but with curling lips, the doomed men listened to the taunts of the rabble.

The Place de Greve was reached at last, and "Mother Guillotine" began her horrid work.

Head after head was severed from its trunk, and still the crowd pressed nearer and nearer to the platform, their appetites only whetted by what they had seen.

Fifty heads had fallen, and the last cart, in which was young Victor, discharged its load upon the platform.

A tall, pale priest, clad in the black robes of his office, was the first to step forward, and coolly place his neck under the edge of the fatal knife. Again Mother Guillotine clutched her victim, and another martyr's crown was won.

Then it was suddenly discovered that the instrument of death had become disarranged.

The crowd grumbled and swore at the delay, and pressed nearer and nearer to the platform. They could not bear to be deprived of their sport, even for a few moments.

Chateaubriand, who was standing on the extreme end of the platform, nearest of all the prisoners to the crowd, shuddered at first with aversion, as some greasy and tat-

tered fellows climbed upon the platform and peered over his shoulder, impatient to see what was the matter with the Parisians' idol; but then a sudden thought came into his mind, and he kept his place.

More of the rabble followed the first men upon the platform.

Never noticing the bareheaded prisoner, they pressed beyond him in their eagerness to see.

The guard did not notice the intrusion, and soon Chateaubriand found himself standing in the second line of the crowd, and then that line pushed by him.

The Royalist now saw that the time for action had come.

Moving quickly backward, he descended from the scaffold and was lost in the throng. Twining his hands together so as to half conceal the fact that they were tied, the soldier reached the square, turned off in a cross street, then turning again, and meeting an honest, simple-looking citizen, appealed to him.

"Oh, citizen," he said, "some rascally wags have tied my hands behind me, and stolen my hat; if you would only have the kindness to release me!"

The citizen, never suspecting, was only too happy to comply with the reasonable request.

And Chateaubriand, the moment he was free, thanked the worthy man and hurried away. Luckily, he had a good store of bank notes secreted in the lining of his vest, and so was easily enabled to escape to England.

Probably not one of the strange incidents of the French Revolution was more noteworthy than this miraculous escape.

A FAMOUS GOOSE.

An interesting relic is preserved in a glass case in the Coldstream Guards' orderly-room at Whitehall. It consists of the head and neck of a goose, around which is a golden collar with the inscription: "Jacob—2d Battalion Coldstream Guards." Beneath it are the words: "Died on Duty."

In 1838 a rebellion broke out in Canada, and two battalions of the Guards were sent thither to assist in quelling it, the battalion already mentioned being one of them. Both corps occupied the Citadel of Quebec, and in their turn supplied the guards which were ordered to be mounted in different parts of the town and neighborhood.

Near one of these guards was a farmyard which had suffered much from the ravages of foxes—animals that were at that period a great pest to the colonists; and as the farm in question had been suspected of being the meeting-place of the rebels, a chain of sentries was placed around it.

One day the sentry, whose duty it was to watch the entrance to the farm, had his attention attracted by an unusual noise, and on looking toward the spot whence it proceeded, he beheld a fine goose fleeing toward him, closely pursued by a fox. His first impulse was to have a shot at the latter; but this would have alarmed the guard, and brought condign punishment on himself for giving a false alarm. He was compelled, therefore, to remain a silent spectator of the scene, while every step brought the Reynard nearer to his prey. In the height of its despair, the poor bird ran its head and neck between the legs of the soldier, in its frantic endeavor to reach the refuge which the sentry-

box could afford; and at the same moment the wily fox made a desperate grab at the goose; but too late, for ere he could get a feather between his teeth, the ready bayonet of the sentinel had passed through his body. The poor goose, by way of showing its gratitude to its preserver, rubbed its head against his legs, and made other equally curious demonstrations of joy; nor could it ever be prevailed upon to quit the post, but walked up and down day after day with each successive sentry that was placed there until the battalion left Canada, when the goose was brought away with it as a regimental pet, to England.

The most remarkable thing in connection with the story is that the goose in turn actually saved its preserver's life.

Whether the former knew that the sentry was the same man or not, must of course forever remain a problem; but it so happened that he was on that particular post about two months afterward, when a desperate attempt was made to surprise and kill the unwary sentinel. It was winter time, and although it was a bright moonlight night, the moon was hidden ever and anon by the scudding clouds which seemed to presage an approaching storm. In these moments of darkness a sharp observer might have noticed the shadows of several men who, unobserved by the somewhat drowsy sentinel, were endeavoring stealthily to approach the post where he stood. Suddenly he heard, or thought he heard, a strange rustling sound, and bringing his musket to his shoulder, he shouted loudly: "Who goes there?" Not a sound, save the echo of his own voice in the distance, and the sighing of the winter wind among the branches of the trees which stood in the desert farmyard responded to the challenge.

Several minutes elapsed, during which the soldier marched up and down his lonely beat, followed by the devoted goose, until, deeming his alarm unwarranted, he again "stood at ease" before the sentry-box. This was the enemy's opportunity, and the rebels were not long in endeavoring to profit by it. Closer and closer they stole up towards the post, the thick snow which lay on the ground completely deadening the sound of their footsteps. But just as two of their number, one on each side of the sentry-box, were preparing with uplifted knife to spring upon the unsuspecting man, the bird made a grand effort, arose suddenly on its wings, and swept around the sentry-box with tremendous force, flapping its wings right in the faces of the would-be assassins. They were astounded, and rushed blindly forward; but the sentry, fully aroused to his danger, bayoneted one and shot at the other as he was running away. Meanwhile the other conspirators approached to the assistance of their colleagues, but the bird repeated its tactics, and enabled the sentry to keep them at bay until the guard, whom the firing of his musket had alarmed, came upon the scene, and made them flee for their lives.

When this incident became known, poor old Jacob was the hero of the garrison, and the officers subscribed for and purchased the golden collar which the bird afterward wore until the day of his death.

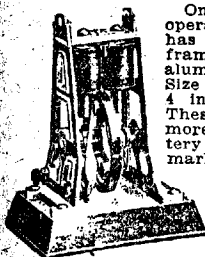
For many years Jacob seemed to bear a charmed life; but he was at length run over by a car. Every effort which kindness and skill could suggest was made to save this extraordinary bird, but it was of no avail, and he died like a true English-soldier, at the post of duty, after a "sentry-go" of no less than twelve years.

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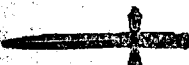
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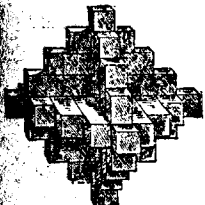
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We cannot see, for the life of us, why you should hesitate to send for a sample can containing 26 solidified alcohol cubes with a stove for burning it, the formula, how simple it can be made at home and sold in stores with good profits, the Farmers' Circular, No. 9, and the Wood Waste News for one year. All this will be mailed to any address, postpaid, \$2.00 on receipt of.....
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Holster made of good leather, neatly stitched with metal gun inserted, ready to be pulled.

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REMINGTON-UMC .22 REPEATING RIFLE

You can easily rid the barnyard of prowling pests if you own a **Remington-UMC .22 REPEATER**. Its accuracy has proved it the world's best small game and target rifle. Prove this for yourself. Go to any **Remington-UMC** dealer. Examine this man's rifle built to your size. Note its racy beauty of line, its perfect balance, its few and strong and simple parts, its easy take-down. See how readily it cleans from the breech.

Shoots .22 short, .22 long, .22 long rifle cartridges with year after adjustment. Solid breech, hammerless, safe!

Write for set of free targets.
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CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.

The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

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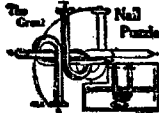
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Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickelled brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

L. SENARENS, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



NAIL PUZZLE. Made of 2 metal nails linked together. Keeps folks guessing; easy to take them apart when you know how. Directions with every one.

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THE MAGIC NAIL.



A common nail is given for examination, and then instantly shown pierced through the finger; and yet, when taken out, the finger is found to be perfectly uninjured, and the nail is again given Nicely finished.

Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid.

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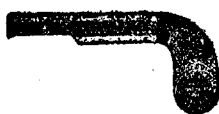
GOOD LUCK PUZZLE.



It consists of three horseshoes fastened together. Only a very clever person can take off the closed horseshoe from the two linked horseshoes. But it can be done in a moment when the secret is known. Price, by mail, 10c. each.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/2 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

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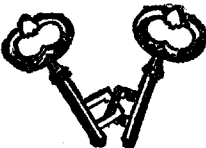
IMITATION GIANT DIAMONDS.



Diamond rings or studs of half-inch and one inch in diameter are heard of in stories only. We have them imitated by prodigious sparkling stones which will deceive the glance of any spectator. Price by mail, postpaid, small size, 25c. each; large size, 35c. each.

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MAGIC PUZZLE KEYS.



Two keys interlocked in such a manner it seems impossible to separate them, but when learned it is easily done.

Price, 6c., postpaid.

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THE JUMPING FROG.



This little novelty creates a world of laughter. Its chief attractiveness is that it takes a few seconds before leaping high in the air, so that when set, very innocently along side of an unsuspecting person, he is suddenly startled by the wonderful activity of this frog. Price, 15c. each by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ALUMINUM DRINKING CUPS.



These handsome little cups are very handy in size, do not leak, and are Satin finished. When compressed, can be carried in the vest pocket. They hold a good quantity of liquid, and are very strong, light, yet durable. Price, 14c. each, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

COMICAL FUNNY FACES.



This genuine laugh producer is made of nicely colored cardboard. A sharp, bent hook is at the back to attach it to the lapel of your coat. Hide one hand under the lapel and twitch the small, black thread. It will cause a red tongue to dart in and out of the mouth in the most comical manner imaginable at the word of command. It is very mystifying, and never fails to produce a hearty laugh.

Price, 6c. each by mail.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE MAGIC CIGAR CASE.



A beautiful and perfect cigar case, made of imitation alligator and sealskin leather; worth a quarter as a cigar case alone. It can be shown full of cigars and instantly handed to a person, who, upon opening it, finds only an empty case. The box has a secret spring and a double case, and can be operated only by one in the secret. Full printed instructions sent with each case. Every smoker should have one. Price, 20c.; 2 for 35c. by mail, postpaid; one dozen by express \$1.50.

J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

NORWEGIAN MOUSE.



A very large gray mouse, measuring 8 inches from tip of nose to end of tail. The body of mouse is hollow. Place your first finger in his body, and then by moving your finger up and down, the mouse appears to be running up your sleeve. Enter a room where there are ladies, with the mouse running up your sleeve, and you will see a rapid scattering of the fair sex. Many practical jokes can be perpetrated with this small rodent.

Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

A NEW SQUIRT BADGE.



Great fun for the million! Wear it in your buttonhole and then press the bulb and watch the other fellow run.

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J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.



Just out, and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal.

Price, 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MARBLE VASE.



A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined. Effect: A marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase.

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A handsome metal, highly magnetized toy. A horseshoe and a spiral wire furnished with each top. When spun next to the wires, they make the most surprising movements. You can make wires of different shapes and get the most peculiar effects. Price, 5c., postpaid.

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THE JUMPING BEAN.



The funniest thing out! You place them in a plate, and they suddenly hop up into the air with the most astonishing agility. These queer little fellows are guaranteed to mystify the smartest professor by their mysterious actions. Nobody can account for their funny movements. More fun than a circus! Get a few and watch their strange jumps. Price, 5c. each, or 6 for 25c. by mail.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

THE CROWN STYLO.



Made of aluminum, satin finish, guaranteed not to leak. This stylographic ink pen-rod and will outlast and outclass any similar pencil on the market. It is a splendid writer, and is easily kept in order. Each one packed with a filler, and a clip to hold it in your vest pocket.

Price, 25c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

LINK THE LINK PUZZLE.



The sensation of the day. Pronounced by all, the most baffling and scientific novelty out. Thousands have worked at it for hours without mastering it, still it can be done in two seconds by giving the links the proper twist, but unless you know how, the harder you twist them the tighter they grow. Price, 6c.; 3 for 15c.; one dozen, 50c., by mail, postpaid.

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WINDOW SMASHERS.



The greatest sensation, just from Paris. A most wonderful effect of a smashing, breaking, falling pane or glass. It will electrify everybody. When you come home, slam the door shut and at the same time throw the discs to the floor. Every pane of glass in the house will at once seem to have been shattered. Price, by mail, postpaid, 35c., a set of six plates.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE FIGHTING ROOSTERS.



A full blooded pair of fighting game cocks. These illiputian fighters have real feathers, yellow legs and fiery red combs their movements when fighting are perfectly natural and lifelike and the secret of their movements is known only to the operator, who can cause them to battle with each other as often and as long as desired. Independent of their fighting proclivities they make very pretty mantel ornaments. Price for the pair in a strong box, 10c.; 3 pairs for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE PEG JUMPER.



A very effective pocket trick, easily to be performed by any one. A miniature paddle is shown. Central holes are drilled through it. A wooden peg is inside of the upper hole. Showing now both sides of the paddle, the performer causes, by simply breathing upon it, the peg to leave the upper hole, and appear in the middle one. Then it jumps to the lower hole, back to the middle one, and lastly to the upper hole. Both sides of the paddle are repeatedly shown.

Price by mail, 15c.

J. KENNEDY, 303 West 127th St., N. Y.

DEAD SHOT SQUIRT PISTOL.



If you shoot a man with this "gun" he will be too mad to accept the ancient excuse—"I didn't know it was loaded." It loads easily with a full charge of water, and taking aim, press the rubber bulb at the butt of the Pistol, when a small stream of water is squirted into his face. The best thing to do then is to pocket your gun and run. There are "loads of fun" in this wicked little joker, which looks like a real revolver, trigger, cock, chambers, barrel and all. Price only 7c.; 4 for 25c.; one dozen 60c. by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE HIDEOUS SPIDER.



Fun for every body with one of these handsome brutes. His body is 3 inches long, beautifully enamelled green with white ridges, yellow speckles, bulging eyes, and a big red mouth. He is armed with six legs and two upright feelers, made of flexible spiral springs. A dark, invisible thread attached to his body lets you shake him in the air before your friends' eyes, when the legs wiggle in a most natural, lifelike manner. Guaranteed to make any lady howl and to scare the bravest hero on earth out of his boots.

Price by mail, 18c. each.

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MINIATURE COMPASS CHARM.



A beautiful charm, to be worn on the watch chain. It consists of a true and perfect compass, to which is attached, by a pivot, a powerful magnifying glass. When not in use the magnifying glass fits closely inside the compass and is not seen. The compass is protected by a glass crystal, and is handsomely silver-nickel plated and burnished, presenting a very attractive appearance. Here you have a reliable compass, a powerful magnifying glass, and a handsome charm, all in one. It is a Parisian novelty, entirely new.

Price, 25c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

"Secret Service"

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 9, 1912.

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ITEMS WORTH READING

Medical statistics prove that amputations are four times as dangerous after the age of fifty as before.

Siam buys more sewing machines from America than from Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, and France combined.

A man with the statistical mania has figured that \$25,000,000 is spent on cabs in London each year. He further figures that over \$7,000,000 of this amount is for tips and overcharges.

Modern exploration of the ocean bottom has shown that the sea has its mountains as well as the land. Ships sail over these mountains of the sea as eagles pass over the Alps, but, owing to the darkness that reigns in the ocean depths, we cannot look down and see their peaks, slopes, and ranges lying far beneath the keels of our vessels. But we can discover them by feeling, as it were; that is to say, by means of soundings that reveal their outlines. One of the remarkable chains of submarine mountains discovered in this manner lies about one hundred miles east of the coast of Australia. It was found in surveying a track for a cable to Norfolk Island. The sea above the tops of its highest summits is about fifteen hundred feet deep, but around them the plummet sinks to a depth of two or three miles.

The names of the months were thus derived: January was named after Janus, the god of gates and doors of all beginnings, according to the Romans. February was so named because on the fifteenth of that month the Romans held their great feast of purification (februare, to purify). The third month was dedicated to the god of war, Mars. April comes from the Latin Aprilis, but its meaning is not definitely known. May probably was derived from Mais, daughter of Jupiter. Junius was the founder of a Roman family, and June was named after him. July was the month in which Julius Caesar was born and Augustus Caesar had August named in his honor. September was the seventh month of the Roman year, which began in March, October the eighth, November the ninth, and December the tenth.

Every foreign office of Europe acts on the theory that an army of spies is constantly on the alert to steal its secrets, and infinite precautions are taken to baffle their efforts. Very shortly after the first use of blotting paper it was discovered that it was quite possible to cause a blotting pad to give up jealously guarded secrets by simply holding it in front of a mirror. Long after all the commercial world had forgotten the existence of such a thing, the British Foreign Office used a sand shaker to dry its important written documents. Then specially manufactured black blotting paper was used, but this was not found to be absolutely spy proof, and a return to the sand shaker was contemplated, when some one suggested the simple expedient of a small absorbent roller. These rollers have since been used for drying diplomatic documents. When such a roller has been run up and down across a document once or twice, the cleverest spy in the world is at liberty to try his hand at deciphering the impressions.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS

"And your husband gave \$50,000 for that old book?" "Yes," replied Mrs. Cumrox. "To show how much you care for literature, I suppose?" "No. To show how little we care for \$50,000."

Magistrate—What is the charge against this old man? Policeman—Stealing a lot of brimstone, Your Honor. He was caught in the act. Magistrate (to prisoner)—My aged friend, couldn't you have waited a few years longer?

A minister was horrified one Sunday to see a boy in the gallery of the church pelting the hearers in the pews below with horse-chestnuts. As the good man looked up, the boy cried out: "You tend to your preaching, Mister. I'll keep 'em awake."

Tapeur (always hard up, to his old friend Pingre)—Oh, I say, old man, could you lend me five francs? Pingre—(affecting to be very deaf)—What say? I'm very hard of hearing. Tapeur—I said, "Could you lend me ten francs?" Pingre—Ten francs! Why, sapristi, my dear chap, just now you only wanted five!

An old negro preacher did the honors, and the candidate for baptism was a coal-black negro woman. The preacher led his victim far out in the stream where she could be thoroughly immersed, and at the auspicious moment he cried, in a loud voice: "Be stiddy, sistah, be stiddy, an' you'll come up whitah dan snow." "Oh, parson," she exclaimed, "dat's askin' too much; a cream color'll do!"

The men were arguing as to who was the greatest inventor. One said Stephenson, who invented the locomotive. Another declared it was the man who invented the compass. Another contended for Edison. Still another for the Wrights. Finally one of them turned to a little Hebrew who had remained silent. "Who do you think?" "Vell," he said, with a hopeful smile, "the man who invented interest was no slouch."

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