

No 700

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5 Cents.

# SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS' OR THE MYSTERY  
SINGULAR SEARCH OF THE  
AND OTHER STORIES MISSISSIPPI  
STEAMER

By A New York Detective



FRANK TOUSEY  
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Old King Brady fell backward into the river, while the infuriated black raised the oar to strike a second blow. Harry, seizing a life preserver, leaped from the deck, determined to save his chief.







# SECRET SERVICE

## OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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# THE BRADYS' SINGULAR SEARCH

OR,

## THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI STEAMER

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE WOMAN WHO LOOKED THROUGH THE WINDOW.

"Queer things left with pursers! Well, I should say so!" cried Will Worthington, the boy purser of the Mississippi steamer Natchez. "The purser of one of these river steamers is supposed to take charge of and be responsible for any old thing, as I have learned even in my short term of service. Money and diamonds form a very small part of his responsibility, I want you to understand."

This was said in an answer to a remark made by Will's friend, Al Reader, who looked in on him after supper on the night of June 15, 19—.

"Why," continued Will, "I've had dogs, cats, poll-parrots and even a baby given me to look out for. You'd think in cases like that they'd put it up to the steward, but the fact is he's not so easy to get at. They don't like to trust the waiters with their pets, so it's 'Oh, please, Mr. Purser, darling Fido is more to me than a child would be to some,' and so on. Tipped for it? Well, no, Al. It has been offered, but I'm not that kind. I do like to be obliging, though, and that's where I fall down."

Will was the youngest purser on the line, being only eighteen, although he was tall and mature looking for a boy of his age.

His appointment came about by accident.

A year before the June evening on which our story opens Will had accepted the offer of a position as clerk in the purser's office on board the Natchez, which was one of a line of steamers plying between St. Louis and New Orleans.

He proved himself to be unusually efficient, and the result was that when Mr. Brooks, the purser, was taken sick and died that fall, his position at a reduced salary was offered to Will, who assured the agent of the company that he could do Mr. Brooks' work and his own, too.

He made good, and in the spring got a raise of salary, although even yet he was not receiving full pay, which

made him a little hot at times, although, sensible fellow that he was, he had never said anything about it.

The Natchez was two hours out of St. Louis, the night was clear and the moon shone down upon the great river, which was now running low after a spring flood of unusual proportions.

"Where's our next stop?" asked Al, lighting a fresh cigar.

"Grey's Landing," replied Will.

"That's in Missouri?"

"Yes."

"Never happened to hear of it before. Much of a place?"

"No place at all. It happens to be the terminus of the Central Railroad of Missouri. We don't always stop there, but to-night we are stopping on special orders. The wife of Marcus Lambert, our general manager, is aboard, and her husband is supposed to join her at Grey's."

"Lambert! Say, Will, isn't that the woman who tried to commit suicide by throwing herself out of a window at the Planters Hotel at St. Louis some months ago? Dress caught on a fire-escape, which saved her, if I remember right."

"That's right. She was crazy at the time, but I understand she is all right now. By Jove, there's that woman looking in at me again! What on earth can she see in me to stare at so, I wonder?"

A young woman passing the window of the purser's office had stopped and stared at Will fixedly for an instant and then passed on.

She was a most peculiar looking person.

Expensively dressed and wearing diamonds, she bore the general appearance of a woman of means.

Her head was exceedingly small, however, and her face chalky white. Her hair, which was cut short exactly like a man's, was prematurely gray, and to make her appearance more marked, she wore a man's derby hat without even a feather or a ribbon.

Staring at Will for that single instant, in the next she was gone.

"Stuck on you, I suppose," remarked Al Reader. "She might make a worse choice."

"Nonsense! Stuck on my red hair and freckled face. How absurd!"

Certainly, Will was no beauty, while as for his hair, a redder red-head it would have been hard to find.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Al, banteringly. "There's no accounting for tastes. Some women are partial to red hair."

"But I must be going," he added. "I've got a lot of prices to figure before I turn in."

Al was "on the road" for a St. Louis hardware concern. He was somewhat older than the boy purser. They had known each other at school.

Will had work to do, also, and he was glad to get at it. As he worked, his thoughts several times reverted to the woman with the man's hat, for three times now had she peered in through the window and stared at him.

On one of these occasions he seemed to feel as if she was looking in at him again.

His back was toward the window, and so strong was the impression that he turned suddenly and, sure enough, there she was, while with her was a small, elderly man, much below the average height, who wore a very shiny plug hat.

Both were peering in at the boy purser in a most peculiar way.

"Did you want anything, sir?" demanded Will in a tone which must have showed that he felt somewhat vexed.

"No, not yet," replied the man, and the couple moved away.

"Not yet?" reflected the puzzled purser. "What on earth can he mean? Is he going to want something of me by and by?"

They were, and what they were going to want of him was destined to alter the whole character of the boy purser's life.

Will finished up his work and, locking his door, went forward to see the steward about a matter of some importance.

He found him on the main deck just forward of the gangway. In order to reach this part of the steamer, Will had to pass through a door marked "No Admittance," for passengers were not allowed beyond it.

As he opened this door there stood the little man with the plug hat talking to the first officer, who quickly thrust his left hand into his pocket at sight of Will and appeared to be somewhat confused.

Will was sure that he saw a bill in the mate's hand, and that it was a yellow-back.

He wondered what it meant, but he did not ask, of course. In the first place, it was none of his business; moreover, Mr. Overton, the first mate, was the one officer on board the steamer with whom the boy purser found it difficult to get on.

Now, when Will left his office he left his little window open, as he thought no one could get through it.

He quickly returned to make the discovery that some one had passed through it just the same!

Will slept in his office. His desk was on the right, his bunk on the left, as one went through the door, while between the two against the partition stood the big safe.

Unlocking the door, Will went in and turned on the electric light.

To his surprise he saw lying on the coverlid of the berth what he first took to be a bundle. A second look showed him that the bundle was actually a baby wrapped in a white cloak. The child appeared to be about a year old and was in a profound sleep.

Finding the door locked as he had left it, and from the position in which the baby lay, Will could only judge that it had been thrown in through the window, and by good luck had landed on the berth instead of on the floor.

"What a nerve!" he muttered. "Whoever did that must be either drunk or crazy. It beats the band what tricks these women will play on the purser."

He lifted the child further upon the berth and placed a pillow under its head.

"Wonder if it's a boy or girl?" he asked himself. "Blest if I can tell. It's a homely little proposition, anyhow."

Homely was hardly the word. The face was all pinched up, with scarcely a trace of forehead. The nose was merely a lump.

"I'll give it to the stewardess, that's what I'll do," thought Will. Just then he turned and saw the woman with the man's hat staring in at him again.

This time she spoke, but what she said must be reserved for another chapter.

Upstairs on the promenade deck just then all was excitement.

The cause was a woman. She had just flung herself into the Mississippi, and the swift current had swept her away in an instant.

A clear case of suicide was this.

Those who saw it declared that the woman never even rose to the surface, but as the sky had now clouded over, the night had turned dark—too dark to see.

Nevertheless, the Natchez stopped, and some effort was made to sight the woman.

Some of the passengers declared that no boat was launched, and criticized the captain on that account. Others claimed to have seen a boat pulling away astern with several persons in it.

Be this as it may, the Natchez quickly started up again and went her way, in due time—that is, about eleven o'clock—reaching Grey's Landing, where she stopped, and Mr. Marcus Lambert, general manager of the line, came aboard, followed by three persons, two men and a particularly handsome young woman.

One of the men was a stylish looking young fellow. His companion was tall and elderly and peculiarly dressed.

He wore a long blue coat with brass buttons and old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white felt hat with an unusually broad brim.

The captain of the Natchez stood at the gangway with a grave face and shook hands with his superior.

"Mr. Lambert," he said, "I want you to come to my state-room, I have something important to tell you."

"What!" cried the manager. "Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"I am afraid there is."

"Mrs. Lambert——"

"Please come with me, Mr. Lambert."

They walked away together, the manager looking much concerned.

"That man is going up against trouble, I'm afraid, Harry," remarked the old gentleman with the big hat.

"It certainly had that appearance," replied the younger man.

"A pleasant, civil person," remarked the young lady. "I'm sorry for him, I'm sure."

They had met on the wharf at Grey's Landing while waiting for the steamer, which was somewhat late.

Manager Lambert had recognized the elder man as the world-famous detective, Old King Brady, by his peculiar dress, and had introduced himself, feeling a natural curiosity to know the man.

Old King Brady then introduced his companions as his partners, Young King Brady and Alice Montgomery. The result was a long and friendly talk while waiting for the Natchez to arrive.

The Bradys had been working up a case in South Missouri, which was now complete.

They were returning to New York via Memphis, where the old detective had a matter of business of slight importance to attend to.

To run down the river on the Natchez seemed the pleasantest way.

"I must see about getting you a state-room, Alice," said Harry, and he went to the purser's office.

It was closed. Even Will's little window was shut now.

As Harry returned to join Old King Brady and Alice, he saw that a colored waiter was in the act of speaking to them.

The man turned away, and as he did so Old King Brady made a sign for Harry to hurry up.

"What's the matter?" Harry asked as he joined them.

"Nothing with us; something serious with Mr. Lambert, I am afraid," was the reply.

"How is that?"

"He has sent word for us to join him in the captain's state-room."

"I was afraid it was serious," remarked Alice. "Shall we go now?"

"Oh, I suppose so," replied Old King Brady, "but I did hope we were going to have a few hours rest from business. If he wants me to take up a case I shall probably refuse."

"Better find out what the matter is before you decide that," said Harry. And the Bradys and Alice bent their steps toward the captain's state-room.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE STEAMER NATCHEZ.

Upon entering Captain Cutter's state-room, the Bradys and Alice found Marcus Lambert seated in a Morris chair, bent forward with his face buried in his hands.

He raised his head as he heard them come in, and they perceived at once that the man was deeply moved.

"Mr. Brady, I little dreamed that I should so soon personally require your advice and help," he exclaimed. "My dear sir, I am in the deepest trouble. My wife has just committed suicide by drowning herself in the Mississippi. I could stand that, perhaps, knowing that she certainly has been quite insane since the birth of her first child, a little over a year ago—this is the third attempt she has made to kill herself—but on top of it comes the loss of my baby."

Old King Brady spoke such words of consolation as the case seemed to call for, and asked for further particulars.

"Tell them, Cutter," groaned Mr. Lambert, "I can scarcely control myself to speak."

"It is this way, Mr. Brady," said the captain. "Mrs. Lambert as she sprang into the river cried out: 'I have given my baby to the purser.' Therefore at the purser's office we sought the child, but could neither find it nor the purser either. The entire steamer has been searched, but not a trace of the young man can be discovered."

"This seems very mysterious. Is there no explanation suggested?" replied the old detective.

"None."

"Is the purser a steady person?"

"Unusually so. He is a young man, to be sure. About eighteen, but he has been employed on the Natchez for a year, and we have always found him perfectly reliable. The only explanation suggested is a statement by two or three people that they saw a boat drop astern just after we started up in which were several people. Others deny that there was any boat seen. Claim to have been where they could not have failed to see it if there was one. My first officer denies that there was one, and he is in a position to know."

"Is any boat missing?" asked Harry.

"None," replied the captain.

"Is there any proof that the baby actually was given to the purser?" inquired Alice.

"None that I can learn," was the answer.

"Most mysterious," said Old King Brady; "but let us adjourn this session to the purser's office and see what we can find out there."

"I will leave it in your hands, gentlemen," said Mr. Lambert. "I prefer to remain secluded for the present."

He was left to himself, and on the way to the purser's office Old King Brady asked how Mrs. Lambert came to be on board the Natchez.

"She was on her way to Memphis to be treated by a nerve specialist of some note," replied the captain.

"Was the woman violently insane?"

"Not at all. Her trouble was of the melancholy sort."

"Was the child a boy or a girl?" asked Alice.

"Boy," replied the captain. "In confidence, I'll tell you something else. The baby was a hunchback of the worst kind. Terribly deformed. It was brooding over that which drove Mrs. Lambert crazy. A while ago she jumped out of a high window at the Planters Hotel, St. Louis, and was only saved by her dress catching on a fire-escape."

"And the other attempt at suicide?" asked the old detective.

"As to that I know nothing," was the reply. "I was surprised to learn that there had been another."

They entered Will's little office then.

"The baby was here," exclaimed Alice.

"How do you know?" asked Captain Cutter.

"I can tell by the way that pillow has been placed. I can see the impression of a baby's head on it."

"You have sharper eyes than I have, then," said the captain.

"A more trained eye, perhaps," added Old King Brady.

"But she is right, captain. The baby has certainly been here."

"Has there been a general questioning of passengers?" he asked.

"Not of passengers," replied the captain. "The employees have been questioned."

"And no one has seen the purser?"

"Not that we can learn."

"I notice the safe is open. Was he accustomed to leave it so when he left the office?"

"Yes, when he locked his door."

"Was the door locked on this occasion?"

"Yes."

"Who came here to look for the baby?"

"I did, after the man I sent reported the door locked."

"Who was the man?"

"One of the crew."

"Colored or white?"

"White. A perfectly reliable fellow. I hurried here at once and opened the door with a pass-key I carry, finding things just as you see them now."

Old King Brady made a hasty examination of the room, but could see nothing to throw any light on the mystery.

"We will make inquiries among the passengers," he said.

"As for searching the steamer, it seems to me, captain, that your people are more competent to do that than we possibly can be."

"It has been done already," declared the captain.

"Every hole and corner has been searched. I don't know what else I can do."

"Leave it in our hands for the present; meanwhile, you will assign us state-rooms, please."

This was done.

About half an hour later Old King Brady knocked on Captain Cutter's door.

He was alone, and so was Mr. Lambert when he entered.

"Have you learned anything, Mr. Brady?" he eagerly asked.

"Why, yes," replied Old King Brady. "I have made several discoveries, but nothing to relieve your anxiety in any way, I fear."

"Out with them then, for heaven's sake."

In the first place, I have talked with three passengers who saw young Worthington with the child in his arms go aft along the main deck."

"So? How long after my wife jumped overboard?"

"Just about the same time, as nearly as I can make out. With him was a peculiar looking woman who wore a man's derby hat. Then I have questioned the passengers who claim to have seen the boat the captain referred to. One, a woman, is positive she saw it, and she declares that there were at least four persons in it, and that one was this woman with the derby, the others being men."

"And who is this woman? Have you learned?"

"Not definitely. Everybody appears to have noticed her on account of her peculiar appearance. With her was a small, elderly man with very sharp features who wore a tall hat. These two people cannot now be found on the Natchez. They were assigned to state-rooms 64 and 65. The man's name is down on the purser's list as John Smith, the woman as Mrs. R. Brown. I should say there can be scarcely a doubt that these are assumed names. In each state-room we found a suit-case. I took it upon myself to open both and found them empty except for a few old newspapers. Evidently these suit-cases were carried as a blind. I should say, Mr. Lambert, that there can be next to no doubt that the purser left with these people while the Natchez was at rest directly after Mrs. Lambert's suicide."

Captain Cutter came bouncing in just then.

"There has been crooked business here, Mr. Lambert!" he exclaimed. "Has Mr. Brady told you about the disappearance of two passengers?"

"Yes."

"There can be no doubt that a boat really was seen leaving the steamer. It must have put off from the shore."

"Who was in the pilot house at the time Mrs. Lambert jumped overboard?" asked Old King Brady.

"My first officer, Mr. Overton. He had but just relieved me," replied the captain.

"A reliable man?"

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

Mr. Lambert looked troubled.

"Out with it, captain," he said. "Explain to Mr. Brady."

"Why, the fact is we don't hitch," said the captain. "If I had my way, Overton would not be where he is to-day."

"And how does it happen that you haven't had your way?" Old King Brady asked.

"The man is a nephew of the president of the line."

"Ah! Why do you dislike him?"

"He is brutal to the men under him and is a liar."

"Does he know the river?"

"Oh, yes. He knows the river all right. If he could keep sober I suppose I should have been bounced and he put in command of the Natchez long ago."

"Not quite so bad as that, captain," put in Mr. Lambert, "but I admit that Overton should be discharged."

"Did he stop at Natchez on his own account or did you order it?" asked the old detective.

"On his own account, just as I was about to order it," was the reply.

Old King Brady said no more.

"Can nothing further be done?" asked Lambert.

"Not unless we make a regular case of it," replied the old detective.

"Will you make a regular case of it then? Anything to recover my child. The expense need cut no figure."

Old King Brady hesitated.

He thought he did not care to undertake it. But Mr. Lambert begged so hard and seemed to be so distressed that it ended in Old King Brady yielding to his entreaties and promising to undertake the case.

"Now what shall we do?" demanded Mr. Lambert. "I leave it all to you, Mr. Brady."

"The proper thing to do is to return to the place where Mrs. Lambert destroyed herself," said the old detective. "Of course, we can't put back in the Natchez."

"You will want to go by water, I suppose?"

"Yes, if possible."

"There is a steamer of our line at Memphis which has just been undergoing repairs. The work must be about finished. I was intending to order her up to St. Louis. We can take her."

"Is there no quicker way of getting on the ground?"

"I can't think of any."

"Then let it rest so. What is this steamer's name?"

"The City of Joplin."

"Very well. We will start up in the City of Joplin, then. In the meantime I'll pursue my inquiries on board here."

And this Old King Brady and his able associates did, but nothing came of it.

Particularly attentive was he to Mr. Overton, the first officer.

He might as well have butted into a stone wall for all the information he got out of him.

Old King Brady instinctively distrusted the man.

As he told his partners, he strongly suspected that Mr. Overton would have stopped the Natchez, anyway, or at least slowed down long enough to put the missing people in the boat even if Mrs. Lambert's suicide had not furnished him with so good an excuse.

But for all that there was nothing which the man said on which he could put his finger and say that it aroused suspicion.

Captain Cutter, aware of his feelings, tried it on himself, but could learn nothing.

But the fact remained that some one on board the Natchez must have engineered the departure of these people, yet try as he would, Old King Brady could not learn who that some one was.

Such was the mystery of the Mississippi steamer.

Old King Brady had started on a singular search; its objects being a hunchbacked baby and a boy purser, to say nothing of a woman who wore a man's hat and a little old man who every one agreed looked as if he ought to have been dressed like a woman.

### CHAPTER III.

#### WHAT HAPPENED TO WILL.

What had become of Will Worthington, the boy purser?

This must now be seen, for while the Bradys are working away at the mystery of the Mississippi steamer, we propose to sweep away some part of said mystery by telling what happened to Will.

The woman with the man's hat spoke.

What she said was:

"Purser, that baby's mother has just jumped overboard. They have rescued her. She is insane, poor thing. Captain Cutter wishes you to bring her the child."

"Is that what it is?" replied Will.

He was so worked up over the finding of the baby that for the time being the recollection of "Mrs. Brown's" peculiar conduct had slipped out of his head.

If she had asked him to give her the baby, no doubt Will's suspicions would have returned and he would have refused to do so, but when it came in the form of an order from Captain Cutter for him to take the child to its mother, it seemed to him all right.

"Very well," he said, and, unlocking his door, he picked up the baby and came out.

"Little Mr. Smith" stood outside. Will had not seen him before.

"Where is the mother?" he asked.

"Aft," replied Mrs. Brown. "They got her out just in time. Follow me."

Then Will remembered that Mrs. Lambert was on board.

"Could this be another of her attempts at suicide?" he asked himself, and then he asked Mrs. Brown.

"I don't know what her name is," replied the woman.

"I have only done as Captain Cutter asked me to do."

They hurried aft.

Now, near the extreme stern end of the Natchez there was a doorway leading out upon a narrow strip of deck.

Here there was a small gangway which was sometimes used when making difficult landings.

Ordinarily it was closed, but now as Mrs. Brown opened the door Will saw that it was open and that one of the deck hands stood there holding a revolver.

Instantly the man darted forward and planted it at Will's head.

"Get into the boat that's here or I fire!" he hissed.

"Get into the boat or we fire!" hissed a second voice behind him.

Thoroughly frightened, Will turned and saw little Mr. Smith similarly armed.

"No talk! No delay!" he said. "Obey or you die!"

There was no one else in evidence but Mrs. Brown, who stood there with a peculiar smile on her pasty face.

"But what—what does it mean?" gasped Will.

"Another spoken word, another instant of delay and we fire," hissed little Mr. Smith.

Under such circumstances what was there for Will to do but to obey?

Clearly nothing.

He advanced to the opening with the baby still in his arms and looked down.

The Natchez had now stopped.

He could hear people talking excitedly on deck.

Below lay a good-sized rowboat, in which sat a coal-black negro.

"Throw down the child and jump down yourself," ordered Smith.

Will dropped the baby and, the negro catching it, deposited it astern and resumed his oars.

When he got the boat into position again, which he quickly did, Will dropped into it. Smith promptly followed. The deck hand then lowered Mrs. Brown, Smith keeping Will covered all the while.

The moment the woman was on board the negro pulled away into the darkness, his oars making little noise.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Brown had taken the baby and was caring for it. The child remained in the same deep sleep.

"It is as you say, George," said the woman. "This baby is terribly deformed."

"Of course," replied the man. "I saw it in the mother's arms when she came aboard. The woman was surely crazy. She ordered the nurse who came down the levee with her to go back in the fiercest sort of fashion. The nurse evidently expected to accompany her. She was very loath to leave. No one but an insane person would ever have gone on in such a fashion as she did."

"Did you say her name was Lambert?" demanded Mrs. Brown of Will.

"I don't know," replied Will. "I only know that Mrs. Lambert was on board with her child."

"What Mrs. Lambert is she?" asked Smith.

"Wife of the general manager of the steamboat company."

"Ha! Marcus Lambert! The woman who tried to kill herself not long ago by jumping out of the window at the Planters Hotel?"

"Yes."

"Can't you say yes, sir? Have you no manners?" flashed the little man with a menacing flourish of his revolver.

"I'll try to improve my manners to oblige you, sir."

"That's better. Ella, this is a bad business. I'm sorry now we bothered with the child."

"Why so?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Because Marcus Lambert is a man of wealth and influence. He will spare no expense to recover the child."

"So would any father. I told you that you were a fool to mix one matter up with another, but you would have your way."

"You know my motive, Ella—you know my motive."

"Your motive did not warrant a double kidnaping. One was enough."

"We will drop the subject. Having kidnaped the child, as you choose to call it, we shall have to keep it. We can't take it back."

"I should say not."

They were now rapidly nearing the west bank of the Mississippi.

Here there were many islands, and the negro pulled in among them.

Needless to say Will was thoroughly alarmed.

Who were these people? What possible object could they have in kidnaping him?

It was a puzzle to Will, for the boy considered himself as being next to nobody.

In other words, Will Worthington was not only an orphan, but a foundling at that. He had absolutely no knowledge who his parents were, and there was no one in the world belonging to him.

He resolved to find out something if he could.

"Don't you think, sir," he asked, "that I have a right to know something about all this?"

"Yes," replied Smith. "You certainly have that right."

"Will you kindly inform me then?"

"No."

"But——"

"My no is final. It is quite useless for you to press the request. Nothing will come of it."

Will was silent.

Then after a moment Smith began to question him.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"William Worthington."

"Where do you live?"

"I belong in St. Louis. My only home has been on board the Natchez for the past year."

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen my last birthday."

"The age exactly fits," put in Mrs. Brown. "How fortunate."

"Ella, don't butt in," retorted Smith. "Are your parents living, young man?"

"No, sir."

"Brothers or sisters?"

"I have neither."

"How fortunate!" murmured Ella again.

"Will you keep quiet while I am talking?" flashed little Smith.

"Certainly, doctor, certainly," she said.

He pulled out a big silk handkerchief with a flourish and blew his nose violently.

"It is very singular," he remarked, "that a man can't say a word without being constantly interrupted. Let's see, where was I?"

"You got as far as brothers and sisters," replied Will. "I should imagine that uncles and aunts and cousins come next."

"And don't you be sarcastic, young man," retorted Smith. "Nevertheless, had I not been interrupted, such would have been my next question. Consider it put."

"No."

"No relatives of any kind?"

"None."

"How——" began Ella, and then checked herself.

Little Smith eyed her steadily for a moment and then said: "Ella, I should say this particular red-headed youth about fills the bill."

"He fills it admirably," replied Ella.

"We are indeed fortunate. Have a care of that baby. You are holding it as if it was a bag of beans."

"Don't I even know how to hold a baby, doctor?"

"No; how should you since you never had one of your own? Sam, how much further do we have to go?"

"Not far now, massa. We're awmost dere."

"Ella, let me see that child. Why does it sleep so? Here, hand it over."

The woman obeyed, and little Smith proceeded to undo some of the baby's wraps and to feel its pulse.

The little unfortunate was, indeed, terribly deformed.

"What a homely little monkey it is, to be sure," thought Will.

But the doctor viewed the baby with different eyes. "Exquisite! Superb!" he exclaimed. "Most beautiful example of infantile curvature of the spine I ever laid eyes on! But why does it sleep so?"

"Tired, I suppose," ventured Ella.

"You're a fool," he retorted. "This baby has evidently been drugged. Its pulse is distressingly low. Hurry, Sam!"



This infant needs prompt medical attention or we shall lose him. That crazy woman has doubtless dosed him."

Sam applied himself to his oars with redoubled energy. The boat rounded several wooded islands and presently they came in sight of a large old-fashioned mansion standing on a slight eminence well back from the river down to which a neglected lawn extended.

It was built in the old-fashioned style of Southern plantation houses with a projecting roof and high wooden pillars in front.

"Behold Bellevoir, Ella," said the doctor, waving his hand. "Is it not a prize worth working for?"

"Beautiful enough, but horribly old-fashioned," replied Ella. "How dark the rooms must be."

"The Arundels of the old days did not find them dark," retorted the doctor. "In my youth that mansion was the scene of constant festivity; two hundred slaves ministered to the old Arundels; there were dogs, horses, and——"

"Dogs! Horrors!" broke in Ella. "How I hate them! I hope there are none there now."

"Fo', missy," grinned Sam. "Big fellers. Spanish bloodhounds, and mighty fierce. Beautics, you bet."

"Oh, my goodness me!" screamed Ella. "I'm not going there in that case. George, I won't stand for it. I refuse to land. Positively refuse."

"Peace! Peace," said the little doctor, handing her back the child. "Sam will see to it that you are properly introduced to the dogs, in which case they will not harm you. To talk of backing out now is absurd."

"Wonder if I shall be properly introduced to the dogs?" thought Will. "What can these people be driving at? What can it all mean?"

Well might the boy purser ask himself, but who was to reply to the question? Certainly no one in that boat. The mystery of it all seemed profound.

Ella calmed down as the boat drew near to a little pier, and asked the doctor how many acres the plantation contained.

"There was originally two thousand," replied the doctor, but much has been sold off. I believe about five hundred acres remain undisposed of. All is changed now. The main channel of the river originally lay here, and scarcely a river steamer passed without calling at Arundel's Landing; an immense trade was done in garden truck for the St. Louis market and in supplying the steamers themselves, but hogs were the staple. They were bred by the thousands. It was in that way the Arundels accumulated their wealth."

"An' niggers, too, I'se heerd tell," put in Sam. "Ole mars' General Joe uster ship dem down Souf to de sugar an' cotton country by hundreds I'se heerd say."

"And you've heard the truth, then, Sam," replied the doctor. "I've known my grandfather, old Gen. Joe Arundel, to realize as much as sixty or seventy thousand a year from the sale of livestock alone. Many is the time he has dropped his thousands at the card table coming up from New Orleans after a successful business trip."

"Did he always lose? Did he never win?" inquired Ella.

"Indeed he did win," replied the doctor with a cackle which was intended for a laugh. "Few could get the best

of him when it came to a game of poker. Those were the days. Those were the days. But then I was but a boy."

"Yah! Yah!" cried Sam. "Wisht I'd libbed den. On'y t'ink, I'se de lastest nigger lef' on de ole plantation."

He rounded the boat up at the pier.

The doctor ascended steps and received the baby from Ella, who then followed him, Will coming last.

"Are you sure the dogs are tied up, Sam?" asked Ella, anxiously.

"Sure t'ing, missy. Doan be askeart of 'em. Ah'll fix it all right."

"Is the door unlocked, Sam?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, massa," replied Sam. "Yo' go to de side do' an' walk right in. I'll be along soon's ebbor I kin put up de boat."

They started up a broad walk towards the house.

"Listen, young man," said the doctor, laying his hand on Will's arm. "How would you like to own this fine place and to be possessed of money enough to restore it to its former glory?"

"That would suit me if the thing was possible," replied Will, wondering what this remark was intended to lead up to.

"It is not impossible," said the doctor, quietly. "Indeed, it is quite within the range of possibility, providing——"

"Well? Providing what?"

"Providing you will consent to place yourself quietly in my hands and to do exactly what I say."

"But——"

"Well, but?"

"I cannot consent to lend myself to any crooked scheme."

"Ahem!" replied the doctor. "Different people view such things in different ways. I confess that my forcibly bringing you to the Bellevoir, the former homestead of the once famous Arundels, is part of a scheme, but I am not prepared to call it crooked. Rather the reverse. It would be crooked, for instance, if you in order to obtain this fine estate had to deprive the rightful owner of it. Such is not the case. Young man, I'll go a step further and say to you that if you will unquestioningly place yourself in my hands, not only shall no harm come to you—none can—but you are as sure to obtain possession of this property and a round million with it as the sun is to rise with tomorrow's dawn."

"And if I refuse, what happens?" demanded Will.

"Ah!" said the doctor. "If you refuse, what happens? Now then let us consider that aspect of the case."

## CHAPTER IV.

### OLD KING BRADY HAS A CLOSE CALL.

Memphis reached, the Bradys and Alice went ashore with Mr. Lambert, whose mental condition had not improved.

His grief and anxiety appeared to be intense. It seemed to Old King Brady as if the unfortunate man must surely give way under the strain.

Arrangements were at once made to place the City of Joplin at the service of the detective, and Mr. Lambert adhered to his purpose of accompanying them. Fortunately for their purpose, the steamer was all ready to sail.

Within two hours they were under way, and the run back to the scene of Mrs. Lambert's suicide was quickly made.

They reached it during the night, and Captain Peters tied up until daylight.

Daylight brought Old King Brady on deck, and the captain presently joined him.

"And here you begin your search, Mr. Brady?" he remarked.

"Here we begin our search," replied the old detective. "Really, I am much at a loss to know how to go about it."

"I should think you would be. Queer business this. I must say I have my own ideas."

"Which are?"

"That boy was too young to be purser, anyhow. He never ought to have been trusted. Have his accounts been overhauled?"

"Not that I know of."

"I'd like to bet they will be found short."

"Not having met the young man, I can form no idea. But remember, captain, it is not the purser I am particularly anxious about, it is Mr. Lambert's baby."

"Oh, I know, I am at your service. So is everything on the Joplin, so fire away."

"What lies in that direction?" asked Old King Brady with a wave of the hand towards the Missouri shore.

"The deadest country you ever set foot in. The old Arundel plantation occupies two miles of river front. It is now deserted, everything gone to the dogs, and yet old Joe Arundel is a mighty rich man still. One would think he'd keep the place up just out of family pride."

"St. Louis man?"

"No, the Arundels never lived in St. Louis. I believe they are all dead but this man, who is nearly ninety years old. He has lived abroad for years. Lately, I understand, he has been living in New Orleans. But to get back to the baby. My theory is that it is being held for ransom, and that in a day or two Lambert will find himself applied to for big money."

"Perhaps. But, captain, I want to get over into that country, since that was the way the boat went, or rather appeared to go, on the night of the kidnaping. Can you run in there?"

"It can be done. It's the old original channel of the river. I suppose it's dangerous, but if we go slow and keep to our soundings, I fancy we shan't run much risk."

"Try it," said Old King Brady. "What is the name of this Arundel plantation? Or has it a name?"

"They call it Bellevoir."

"Well, then steer for Bellevoir, since that is the nearest objective point in the direction."

"Now?"

"Yes."

"All right. Let her go."

The captain hustled around, made his preparations, and started in among the islands.

By that time Harry and Alice joined the old detective.

Old King Brady explained his purpose.

"We may as well begin our singular search in one way as another, I suppose," Harry remarked.

"I have no special object in visiting Bellevoir beyond the fact that a deserted house and kidnapers seem to harmonize," said Old King Brady. "Very likely nothing at all will come of it."

Slowly they followed up the now tortuous channel, blocked with newly formed islands and snags.

Captain Peters displayed every caution. It really was wonderful how he worked the Joplin around obstacles which at first sight seemed insurmountable.

At last they emerged into broader water and beheld the old plantation house before them.

"Shoal water, sir!" shouted the lead man. "We can go no further in."

The captain immediately stopped the steamer and dropped anchor.

"There, Mr. Brady, it's the best I can do for you," he said, coming out of the pilot house.

"And with the best we shall have to be satisfied," replied the old detective, producing his glass and focussing it on the house.

"It appears to be all closed up," he said. "A gloomy old Southern plantation house. I propose to visit it, however."

"Don't I see a man coming around in front?" questioned Harry.

"Yes, a colored man. A big giant of a fellow," replied the old detective, raising his glass to his eyes again.

"He appears to be taking us in," he added. "Now he is coming down towards the pier; no, he has turned back. He is going around the house."

"I suppose they don't often see a steamer in here," remarked Alice.

"Never in these days, you can bet," said the captain. "What are you going to do?"

"I think I'll wait a few minutes and see what that darkey does," replied Old King Brady. "Incidentally, perhaps somebody else will show themselves."

Nobody did.

After about ten minutes Sam—for Sam it was—appeared again.

This time he went down to the shore, where he opened up a little boat-house and dragged out a small rowboat, into which he got and began pulling towards the steamer.

"As curious about us as we are about them," said Old King Brady. "Here he comes."

Sam pulled out to the steamer.

"Hi yah!" he called. "Want to buy some chickens or eggs?"

"Perhaps," said Old King Brady. "Who lives in that big house?"

"I do."

"Who else?"

"Nobody else."

"Who does it belong to?"

"B'longs to Mars' Arundel. Him hain't libbed in it, dough, not in many a long day."

"If we go ashore can we go through the house?"

"Hey!"

"Can we go through the house? I should like to see it."

"Why, yes, sah; why not? Nuffin to hide dar, nuffin to hide. Glad to show you de ole house, ob course, on'y mah ole boat won't hole more'n one ob you. Leaks putty bad, an' dat am de trufe."

It was manifestly the truth, and even as Sam said it he shipped his oars and began bailing with an old tin hand basin.

"Captain Peters, I think we shall accept this man's invitation," said Old King Brady. "Can you let us have a boat which will carry all three of us?"

A peculiar expression overspread the captain's face, and he seemed to hesitate.

Old King Brady, glancing around as he spoke, could see no boats—something which he had not observed before.

"Why, the fact is, Mr. Brady, I have no boats," said the captain. "I know we ought not to have sailed so, but such were Mr. Lambert's orders."

"No boats!" exclaimed the old detective. "How does that happen?"

"Ours were about done for. When we began refitting there at Memphis I was ordered to sell them for whatever they would fetch, and did so. The Natchez was to have brought down new ones, but she didn't. I called Mr. Lambert's attention to the matter, and he ordered me to go ahead without them."

"Suppose any accident had happened!" cried Alice. "What a fix we should have been in."

"Oh, we have our life rafts, miss. In case of an accident on the Mississippi they are better than boats, anyway."

"I shall go alone with this man in that case," observed Old King Brady. "I have decided to look through that house."

"All right, boss," called Sam, who had been listening to all this. "How 'bout dem chickens and eggs?"

"We don't want any," replied the captain. "We have all the provisions we need."

Old King Brady, accordingly, got into the boat.

He had no sooner taken his seat than he perceived that Sam had been drinking, something that he had rather suspected from his manner of speech.

The boat leaked terribly.

Sam had to stop and bail again.

As he compelled the operation, before resuming his oars he pulled out a whiskey flask and took a long pull at it.

"Here, here," said Old King Brady, "that won't do. I'm not going to trust myself to a drunken man in a boat like this."

Sam was furious.

"Wha' dat ah yo' say, yo' ole cockermarool!" he roared. "Me drunk! Not on yer life. Git out of mah boat. Git out! Ah woan take yo' ober dar nohow!"

"Pull back to the steamer and I'll get out quick enough," retorted the old detective, perceiving that he had aroused the half-drunken giant's temper to a dangerous extent.

The boat had now drifted some little distance.

Swearing and muttering, Sam picked up the oars and pulled a stroke or two, when suddenly shipping one, he

sprang up, clubbed the other, and dealt the old detective a wicked blow over the head.

Seeing what was coming, Old King Brady half rose and threw up his hands to protect his head.

The attempt was a wretched failure, and the result what might have been expected.

Old King Brady fell backward into the river, while the infuriated black raised the oar to strike a second blow.

The peril of the old detective was great, for he cannot swim.

Harry, seizing a life preserver, leaped from the deck, determined to save his chief.

Alice stood at the rail, nervously watching the outcome.

"You black scoundrel, take that!" bawled Captain Peters, and he drew a revolver and fired at Sam, who was now pulling away for all he was worth.

The shot was a miss.

Old King Brady, who was now perhaps as cool-headed as any of them, called out:

"Don't fire again, captain! Let him go!"

Now, although unable to swim, Old King Brady is no coward in the water. He has learned to handle himself on such occasions after his own fashion.

He lay perfectly still and kept his head; twice he went down, but even then he made no struggle. As he rose the second time Harry was at his side.

Old King Brady clutched the life preserver, and in his coolest fashion said:

"It's all right now, boy. Tow me in. There is no real danger."

"Get hold of me by the waist," said Harry. "Throw your arm completely around me. Only a minute and we shall be all right."

It was easy handling so cool a man, and in a very short time the dripping detective was hauled aboard, Harry following.

Captain Peters was furious. "I wish you had let me shoot him!" he cried. "What did he hit you for, anyhow?"

"Because I said he was half drunk, which was a piece of foolishness on my part, although it was true," the old detective replied.

"This thing ought not to be passed over."

"Let me change my clothes first, captain, and then we will discuss it," said Old King Brady, and Harry led him away to their state-room.

"Governor," he said as he aided the old detective to undress, "do you think that was all just because you told that fellow he was half drunk?"

"No, I don't," replied Old King Brady. "I think it was a deliberate attempt to kill me."

"And that, if true, argues that you have been seen from that house through a glass by some one who recognized you?"

"Such is my idea. I may be wrong. That darkey risked his life by attacking me within range of Captain Peters' revolver, and he was not so drunk but he must have realized it. I think he deliberately took that last drink to give him courage to do what he had been ordered to do."

"In which case we want to see the inside of that house without delay."



"We certainly do," replied the old detective, glancing out of the state-room window, which overlooked Bellevoir.

"But we won't go just yet," he added. "Look!"

Harry looked out of the window.

Running about the lawn were four huge bloodhounds barking furiously as Sam's boat drew near the shore.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE OLD MAN IN THE BOAT.

Was Will Worthington in the big house at Bellevoir that June morning when Old King Brady was so nearly put out of business by the treacherous Sam?

This remains for the Bradys to discover, for they being detectives, such is their business.

Therefore, Will's affairs must be allowed to rest for the present while we speak of other things.

Old King Brady got into dry clothes and Alice took his wet garments in hand, after they had been dried in the engine-room.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lambert appeared on the scene and breakfast was served.

While they were at the table a council of war was held.

"We must certainly see the inside of that house," declared Mr. Lambert. "I am disgusted to think that I have had any hand in your disaster, Mr. Brady. It was my haste which prompted me to proceed without life-boats, which never should have been done."

"It's all right, and I am none the worse for it, so long as that rascal did not fracture my skull," chuckled the old detective.

"Yes, we must see the inside of that house," he added, "but not this morning. Our correct move now is to permit whoever is running things over there to believe that we have departed. Order the captain to pull out, if you please. We will get at it in some other way."

This was done, and by the old detective's order they steamed further down the old channel, keeping as close in shore as was safe.

Breakfast was scarcely over when the attention of all was attracted by some little confusion on deck, and they went there to see what the trouble was.

"It's a drifting boat," said Captain Peters, pointing down the stream. "There seems to be a dead man in it. Here, take this glass, Mr. Brady, and have a look."

At some distance away lay a small rowboat which had lodged against a snag.

The old detective turned the glass upon it and could see a tall man lying half doubled up in the boat. His hair was snow white, and as he lay his face was not visible.

A pair of oars lay along the seat. As the old detective continued to watch, the man did not move.

Meanwhile, the City of Joplin was rapidly drawing nearer to the boat.

"It looks as you say," remarked Old King Brady as he handed back the glass. "This certainly should be investigated."

They ran on, coming abreast of the boat, where they dropped anchor as the current was swift and danger lay on all sides.

The man in the boat, now plainly seen, was evidently far advanced in years.

His face was as white as his hair. As they looked down upon him all concluded that he was dead.

"If we could only work in a little further I would go down and see how the case stands," said Harry.

"Easy enough if I could only warp a line around that cypress tree," said Captain Peters. "I could snub her in then, but that can't be done without a boat. Hang me if I ever let myself be caught short this way again."

"I'll fix it," said Harry; "get your line ready. First thing we know the boat will go adrift. Then it can't be fixed so easily."

"Do you mean to swim for it?" asked Captain Peters.

"Exactly."

"Look out! It's a swift current here. You handle yourself well in the water, young man, but it may prove too much for your strength."

But Harry, who is a most expert swimmer, laughed at the caution.

Thinking that he might find an occasion to use it while working up this case on the river, he had provided himself with a good bathing suit while in Memphis, and he lost no time in getting into it now.

Then with the line tied around his waist, he dove into the Mississippi and swam for the cypress tree, made fast and returned with the loose end of the line to the steamer.

"There you are, cap," he said as he passed it up. "Now I'll swim for the boat."

He did so and got in.

They saw him bend over the man, and then raising up, he motioned in a peculiar way.

It was a secret sign of which the Bradys have a regular code.

"Not dead," said Old King Brady.

"How do you know?" asked Mr. Lambert.

"I was just told so by my partner by a sign."

Meanwhile, the captain was attending to his "snubbing," and he soon had the Joplin alongside the boat.

"Not dead?" called Old King Brady.

"No, but I'm afraid he is past help," replied Harry. "His clothes are wet with dew. He has evidently been in this boat all night. This man must be nearly ninety years old."

He was quite unconscious, who ever he was, and the problem was to get him aboard.

This was finally accomplished by the aid of a hammock used as a sling.

The old man revived just before they started to lift him, and began muttering.

He seemed to have no clear idea of his surroundings, and when Harry asked his name he only muttered:

"She tried to poison me. Then after a minute it was:

"Money! Money! What good does it do any one? What good has it ever done me?"

After that he seemed to drop away again and no more was said until they got him into a state-room berth.

His clothing was of an expensive make, and he wore a valuable diamond ring on his left hand.

Alice, who has had some experience as a nurse, aided Harry in undressing him and getting him into bed.

Then he opened his eyes and looked at her for the first time.

"Oh, wicked! wicked!" he groaned, pointing at her. "You! you! Finish your work! Give me the poison cup! I'll take it now."

"I'll leave the room," said Alice. "Evidently some woman has been trying to poison the poor old fellow, or at least he thinks so. I'll get out of his sight for the present, anyway."

"Send Old King Brady in," said Harry. "Perhaps an older man can do better with him than we young folks."

This was done, and the old detective, who has quite a knowledge of both medicines and surgery, remained alone with the old man for some time.

At last he came out and softly closed the door.

"How is he getting along?" asked Harry.

"So well that I think he is going to pull through. He had been nearly all night in that boat, and he became thoroughly chilled and exhausted."

"Who is he? Did he say?"

A peculiar look came over the old detective's face.

Harry and Alice know it well.

Now, Old King Brady dearly loves a mystery, and there are times when he looks to be mysterious with his partners, especially when he thinks he sees his chance to do a particularly neat piece of detective work.

"He has one of his mysterious fits on him," Harry said to himself, and so it proved when Old King Brady said:

"Now, look here, you two, I know it don't seem altogether fair, but here is a little problem in the detective line which I want to work out alone—see? Later on you shall have my full confidence, but just at present I am going to keep that old fellow's name to myself."

"Mr. Lambert and Captain Peters may not like that so very well," suggested Harry.

"Let them lump it, then," retorted Old King Brady, and he locked himself in his state-room, merely remarking that the old man needed nothing just then, and that when he did he would let them know.

"Provoking!" replied Alice. "I'm dying of curiosity to know what it all means."

They went out on deck and waited.

Mr. Lambert was not in evidence, but Captain Peters came forward and asked how the old man was.

Harry told him as much as he knew.

"You didn't get his name, did you?" asked the captain.

"Not yet," replied Harry, and the captain moved away.

It was about ten minutes later when, hearing footsteps behind them, they turned to see approaching them what even they for the moment took for the old man in the boat. A second glance showed them that it was Old King Brady most cleverly made up to resemble him.

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed Harry, "this is pretty good!"

"Do you think so?" chuckled the old detective. "I am rather inclined to think so myself."

"But what does it all mean?"

"It means that I have taken up with a new case which I think will work in with Mr. Lambert's all right. By the way, here he comes."

"He" was Mr. Lambert, who looked surprised enough.

"Why, sir!" he exclaimed, "I am glad to see——"

He paused.

"But it can't be," he muttered. "Mr. Brady!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the old detective. "So you see through my disguise."

"I doubt if I should have seen through it if I had not seen the original of your make-up. The man was too far gone to make such a thing possible."

"He is much better. I have just left him. He will come around all right."

"Who is he?"

"I suppose I must answer that question, but it is the only one I can answer, and I tell you his name in the strictest confidence, Mr. Lambert."

"You don't have to tell it at all," retorted the manager, evidently miffed.

"But I am going to do it, and before I do it let me add that I have taken up a case for Mr. Joseph Arundel, the owner of the Bellevoir estate, for such the man is."

"It's not going to interfere with mine, I hope," said Mr. Lambert, quickly.

"On the contrary, it is going to help you along if I know anything. Further than that I cannot go."

Mr. Lambert hesitated for a moment and then said: "My case is a desperate one, and in desperate cases it is no time to change doctors, so I must submit; but, Mr. Brady, I hope you will keep my anxiety constantly in mind."

"Not for one instant shall I forget it," replied the old detective. "Of that rest assured. But one question. What color was the hair of your missing purser, Mr. Lambert?"

"As red as possible."

"Then that settles it. Not a doubt exists in my mind that young Worthington is now at Bellevoir, but whether he went there voluntarily or was forced to go I cannot tell. If he is there then probably the baby was taken there, too. I propose to go there at once. I expect and hope to gain prompt admittance. Now that you know that much, you will see, Mr. Lambert, that I am by no means neglecting your case. You know how to run a steamer, my dear sir. Permit me to say that I know how to do the detective act."

"Upon my word, I believe you!" cried the manager, and he walked away.

"And now, governor, what is it all about?" questioned Harry. "If you propose to go to that house, I must either go with you or have your confidence. I simply insist."

"You are going with me," replied Old King Brady. "This is one of the cases where it won't pay you to know too much. We are going up against a pair of bold, desperate plotters. Alice, I shall have to send you alone to St. Louis to look after Mr. Arundel, who must be taken to a hospital. I will have a further talk with Mr. Lambert and arrange to have the steamer run up there without delay. What became of that boat?"

"The captain took it aboard."

"We go in it to Bellevoir. Ha! What's coming now?"

"Looks like a small steamer," said Harry.

"And that's what it is. I must vanish. Fix it with Captain Peters. None of you know anything of any old man adrift in a boat. Quick, now!"

Harry hurried to the captain and explained as well as he could.

Accustomed to give orders, Captain Peters was equally ready to obey them.

As the steamer drew nearer she was seen to be what might be termed a gentleman's river yacht—a cross between a regular yacht and a house boat.

Her name as seen on the wheel-house was the "Josephine."

"Was the old man aboard of her?" asked Captain Peters.

"I assume so," replied Harry. "I don't actually know."

As the yacht drew nearer a young man sighted them through a glass.

He was presently joined by a young woman, who pointed at the Joplin and appeared to be talking earnestly.

They waited, and as the Joplin came within hailing distance the young man produced a megaphone and called:

"Aboard the City of Joplin! Have you seen anything of a drifting rowboat with an old man in it?"

The captain, also employing a megaphone, called back that he had not.

"Do you know how far we are from Mr. Arundel's plantation, Bellevoir?" was then asked.

Captain Peters gave what he considered the distance, and then at Harry's suggestion stopped the steamer, and the Josephine came alongside.

"What's the trouble? Have you lost somebody?" asked Captain Peters.

"Why yes," was the reply. "This yacht belongs to Mr. Joseph Arundel, of New Orleans. He is very old and out of his mind. I am his private secretary and this lady is his trained nurse. Last night he gave us the slip and got away in a rowboat, as we believe. When we discovered that he was missing we turned back and tried to find him, but failed. Then we had the misfortune to get stuck on a snag. We have just now got away and are covering the same ground by daylight. We may as well give up the search, I suppose. The old man was probably drowned."

"Bad business," said the captain.

"Why, yes," was the reply. "Still, he was a very old man and could not have lived much longer, anyhow. May I ask what you are doing in here, captain? I was told that this channel was very dangerous for boats of your size."

"It is," replied Captain Peters. "We are not loaded, however. Just out making a survey. Hope you find the old man."

"I've given up hope," answered the secretary, and both boats moved on their way.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NIGHT ALARM.

Let us now return to the boy purser at Bellevoir.

Will had just asked the little doctor what would be the

result if he refused to lend himself to his schemes, it will be remembered, and the doctor's reply was that that aspect of the case must be considered.

"I don't like to indulge in threats," he went on to say, "nor do I propose to. I will simply remark as a medical man, Mr. Worthington, that I don't think it would be good for your health to refuse. A word to the wise is supposed to be sufficient."

They had reached the side door of the great house by this time, where Ella stood waiting for them.

"You go in and light up, doctor," she said. "I'm afraid."

"Afraid of what?" sneered the doctor. "The ghosts of my ancestors?"

He opened the door and struck a match.

Beyond lay a large room filled with fine old antique furniture. A lamp and also a lantern stood on a table near the door, and the doctor lighted both.

The room was now seen to be in a terribly dusty condition.

"Horrors!" cried Ella. "It will take a month to clean this house, I suppose. Pity we couldn't have sent some one down here ahead of us to attend to it."

"Stop your grumbling," retorted the doctor. "This is a case in which we shall have to take things just as we find them. But here comes Sam. It can't all be as bad as this."

Sam began to apologize for the condition of things.

"I've cleaned up some since youse was heah, marsa," he said, "but I haven't got around to dis yere. Come upstairs an' yo'll find t'ings better."

They were. Sam showed them two bedrooms, which he informed them were intended for himself and his wife, which Ella, although young enough to be the doctor's granddaughter, Will now assumed her to be.

"This will do very well," said the doctor. "Now, Sam, I will introduce your young master. This is Mr. William Fairfax."

Sam grinned.

Will did not protest. What was the use? he asked himself. He was alone with these people. He knew nothing of the surrounding country. Outside were the bloodhounds ready to tear him to pieces. He could hear their deep baying even then. For the present, at least, there was nothing to do but to submit.

Sam took him to a handsomely furnished chamber in a distant part of the house and left him to himself, saying that supper would soon be ready and that he could come down when he heard the bell ring.

Then with one of his villainous grins he advised Will not to venture outside, calling his attention to the dogs, and left.

Will sat down and tried to think.

That he was being made the involuntary tool of a pair of clever schemers he plainly saw.

What, then, should be his course?

Was the boy tempted by the hints the doctor had thrown out?"

Not a bit.

Will was as honest as the sun. He was also remarkably shrewd.



"There is probably big money involved in this business, as he says, or they never would have dared to take the risk," he assured himself. "Mr. Lambert will surely start a search for his baby. Perhaps he will succeed and perhaps he won't, but as he is really my employer I owe a duty to him in this case. I ought to stop right here and look after his child."

This was one line of thought which came to the boy now.

But Will had a good business head on his shoulders.

He thought he could see a chance to make big money for himself by exposing the schemes of these plotters when the right time came, and if he remained on guard with the baby then Mr. Lambert would surely hold him secure in his place.

But in order to expose the schemes of the plotters it was first necessary to know them.

To Will there seemed to be but one way, and that was to pretend to enter fully into the doctor's plans and wait and watch.

"I'll make no attempt to escape," he resolved. "I'll be just as agreeable as possible and learn all I can. I see a big chance for me in all this."

And in this frame of mind Will descended to the dining-room when the supper bell rang.

The doctor and his wife were already seated at the table.

The woman was loudly laying down the law, declaring that she would not remain in the house without a woman to help her.

"Be quiet. You'll have help enough when they come," Will heard the doctor say, but as he entered the room the conversation ceased.

"Sit down," said the doctor. "Here we have fried chicken and fried eggs, tomato sauce and some sort of flummydiddle which Sam seems to have concocted in the way of a custard, from all of which I trust you will be able to make out a supper, for I want you to be thoroughly comfortable while you are here. Pitch in."

"I'm sure I shall," replied Will, cheerfully. "How is the baby?"

"Still asleep," replied Ella.

"Yes, but sleeping naturally," added the doctor. "The child has been dosed with laudanum up to the limit. I have administered an antidote, and I daresay it will come around all right. If not, why, I shall have the pleasure of dissecting it."

"Oh, you horrid man!" cried Ella, pushing away her plate. "How can you go on so at the table! Positively, you make me sick!"

"I daresay," laughed the doctor. "I am merely speaking the truth. Women seldom care to hear the truth."

He cooled down after that, however, and the remainder of the conversation was upon general topics, in which Will joined with a degree of freedom and a display of interest which appeared not only to surprise the doctor, but to greatly please him.

"We shall get on, my boy," he declared after supper was over. "I see plainly that we shall get on. Better go to bed now. We'll talk things over in the morning. Yes, yes, I'm quite sure we shall get on."

Will returned to the room, lit his lamp and tried to settle himself down to read an old book of travels which he had picked up in one of the lower rooms, for before parting with the doctor he was shown through all the rooms on the ground floor.

He had not been long at it when Sam suddenly opened the door and entered without knocking.

"Oh, so youse heah, am yer?" he said. "Jest wanted to know."

"Next time you want to know you might as well knock on the door," said Will. "The doctor told me I was going to have this room to myself."

Sam retreated with a look on his face which made Will feel decidedly afraid. He wished there was a key or a bolt to the door, but there was neither, nor was there any heavy piece of furniture in this room which he could use as a barricade.

He remained up until eleven o'clock, and then everything having quieted down in the house, he undressed and got into bed.

It was some time before he could compose himself to sleep, but he succeeded at last. The bed was a large one and very comfortable, and very likely Will might have remained asleep until morning if his rest had not been rudely disturbed by the sound of horses galloping up to the house, and loud shouts in a man's voice for Sam.

"What's going to happen now?" thought Will, sitting up in bed.

It was no use to look out the window, for the shouting was at the front of the house, while Will's room was in the rear.

The dogs began barking furiously now, while Sam's voice could be heard speaking to them.

Will was just thinking of lighting his lamp when he heard the patter of naked feet in the hall, and the doctor, dressed only in pajamas, entered the room carrying a lantern.

His face was the picture of terror.

"Did you hear all that racket, boy? Did you hear?" he demanded.

"Yes, certainly," replied Will. "What is it all about?"

"Don't ask me. I'm afraid, though, there is going to be trouble—that we have been betrayed by Sam. Will you stand by me if that is the case?"

"Why, certainly," replied Will. "But what do you think? Would Sam let in people who would murder us?"

"How can I tell? I have my own ideas, though. I must hurry to my wife, who is frightened out of her senses. Dress just as quick as you can and come to my room. You know where it is."

Will jumped up, hurried on his clothes and made his way to the doctor's door, which was quickly opened when he tapped upon it.

"Come in!" whispered the doctor. "Mrs. Arundel is in the adjoining room, where I have advised her to remain with the baby. Have you heard anything more, Will? Have you heard anything, boy?"

"I heard people walking about downstairs," replied Will. "There seem to be three of them. I noticed that it was all lighted up, too, as I came through the hall."

"Great heavens! what can it mean?" groaned the doctor.

"It can't be—but no. That's impossible! It may be niggers bent on robbery, or some band of outlaws which has been using this deserted house for a hang-out, but whatever it is it spells trouble for me, of that I am sure."

He was fully dressed now and he had already locked the door.

Ella called from the inner room to know if he had learned what the matter was from Will.

"No, no! Not yet. We know nothing. Be quiet, like a good girl. You only confuse me," the doctor replied, and then he added:

"Hark! Don't you hear some one coming upstairs?"

"Yes."

"They are going towards your room. Why didn't you lock your door or bolt it? I expected you would."

"There was no bolt on the door nor any key in the lock."

"There were both when—when I last examined it."

"Neither is there now."

"Then Sam must have removed them. This is a plot. What a fool I was to take that wretched nigger into my confidence even to the small extent that I did. But hush! They are coming."

One man was coming, that was certain, and he walked with a heavy tread.

Suddenly came a thunderous knock on the door.

"Oh, my goodness me!" screamed Ella. "Don't open the door, George. We shall all be killed!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### Alice Does a Turn at St. Louis.

Yielding to Old King Brady's wishes, Mr. Lambert ordered the City of Joplin to proceed to St. Louis.

He returned with it, and with it also went the old man picked up in the boat, who was now the object of Alice's especial charge.

Before the start was made Old King Brady in his disguise, accompanied by Harry, who was dressed like a native of the river district of Missouri, entered Mr. Arundel's boat at a point near Bellevoir and pulled away.

But before this start was made Old King Brady, after a prolonged conversation with the old man, called his partners together and told them all he had to tell.

Just what it was all about will develop as our story proceeds.

Sufficient to say at present that old Mr. Arundel had now quite recovered his head. He no longer feared Alice. Before they reached St. Louis he had become much interested in her, and had so far recovered as to be able to sit on the deck.

But following out Old King Brady's instructions, as soon as the City of Joplin was rounded up at the levee, a closed carriage was called and Alice rode with Mr. Arundel to a hospital.

Here the doctors looked him over, but declared that for a man of his age his condition was truly remarkable. They saw no necessity for his remaining in the hospital, consequently the old gentleman went with Alice to the

Planters Hotel, where a fine suite of rooms were engaged in the name of Henry Anderson, Alice registering as Miss Anderson and posing as the old man's granddaughter.

It was a busy day for Alice. She was out most of the time, but at five o'clock she returned to the hotel, where she found Mr. Arundel eagerly expecting her.

The conversation which took place between them we propose to report.

"Well, Miss Montgomery, well?" began the old gentleman. "Have you met with any success?"

"Some," replied Alice, "but not quite what I could desire."

She seated herself and, producing a small bottle, stood it on the table.

"My supposed poison bottle," said Mr. Arundel. "What is the chemist's report?"

"That it contains a small quantity of arsenic."

"Exactly so. Enough to start the ball rolling. The intention was to have me die by inches. When they got me at lonely Bellevoir, however, it would not have taken them long to have doubled their dose and put me out of business. How fortunate that I happened to overhear the conversation between my secretary and the nurse. The wicked woman! I hated her from the moment I first laid eyes on her. When I found what I had run up against I determined on the instant to get away while I still had a chance to do so unobserved, for if they had once suspected that I distrusted them I never should have been given the chance."

"You ran a fearful risk, Mr. Arundel," observed Alice. "A man of your age——"

"Oh, never mind my age," he broke in. "When I was a young fellow I was the best hand at a boat for miles around Bellevoir. I knew every inch of the shore as it used to be, and in my excitement and terror I was foolish enough to forget the changes which I should have remembered time must have brought. That's where I fell down. In the darkness I could recognize nothing."

"Should you have gone to Bellevoir if you could have got there?"

"No. I thought of all that. Some one is behind this business. I realized that. I was heading for an inlet I knew which would have taken me to a farm-house where I hoped to have found old friends. If they still lived, I mean."

"It is well put in, Mr. Arundel. A man of your age can scarcely hope to find old friends."

"Oh, I don't know," he answered. "I'm not so old. Only ninety-one. My father lived to be a hundred and two, and but for an unlucky fall, which shook him up internally, he might have lived ten years longer. The doctors at the hospital told me that all my vital organs are in splendid shape. They had no reason to lie to me. They didn't know who I was nor even that I am a rich man."

Alice inwardly smiled at this talk, for if ever a man had aristocracy and wealth written all over his face, it was old Joe Arundel, to say nothing of his clothes and the diamond ring he wore.

But it seemed necessary to get him off himself and on to business.

"And now," said Alice, "I suppose you want to know how I made out?"

"I certainly do," was the earnest reply.

"Well, first of all, I visited the office of Mr. Craigthorpe, the lawyer Dr. Arundel engaged to look up the past history of your so-called grandson."

"Well, well! What did he have to say for himself?"

"Nothing. He is out of town."

"Too bad."

"Wait. His office was a small, measly furnished room in an old building where rents must be cheap."

"Why, my cousin wrote me that he was one of the most prominent lawyers in St. Louis!" Mr. Arundel broke in.

"He is nothing of the sort in one sense, and a good deal of that sort in another. I went to the chief of police and inquired about him. I find that the man is one of the most notorious rascals in the city, who has narrowly escaped being disbarred."

"Indeed! Indeed! Then it must be as Old King Brady says, that there is some deep-laid plot on foot against me."

"Not a doubt of it exists in my mind. Next, I started in to look up the record of Dr. Arundel, your cousin, of which you know something already."

"And found——"

"That it is decidedly shady. The young woman he has recently married was formerly his stenographer. Previous to engaging with the doctor she had been stenographer for various swindling concerns, and has been twice arrested for swindling herself, although each time she managed to escape conviction. She dresses like a man, and I am told is a person of unusual shrewdness. She is away with her husband at present and their house is closed."

"This looks bad, Miss Montgomery."

"It does. Dr. Arundel's reputation is bad. His letters to you speaking of his reformation and change of heart and all that sort of thing cannot be relied upon. You will do well to go very slow with him. Another thing. I visited his neighbor on Barmore street, directly opposite, and found her an observant and communicative woman. She has a very low opinion of the doctor and a lower one still of his wife. She assures me that no young man has been living at his house as he wrote you. The doctor and his wife occupy the first floor and live alone. The upper floors are let out to lodgers, all of whom are women."

"You have caught him in a downright lie, then?"

"It seems to me so, Mr. Arundel. But now as to your daughter."

The old man's face clouded.

Alice had put her finger upon one of those family secrets which most people like to forget.

A word of explanation is needed here.

Old Mr. Arundel had remained a bachelor until he was past forty. Marrying then, he lost his wife a year later. She left an infant girl behind her, and the child grew up to be the apple of the old man's eye, and it almost broke his heart when at eighteen she eloped with a dissipated worthless fellow named William Fairfax.

Mr. Arundel could not forgive, so he tried to forget.

He refused to hold any communication with his daughter whatever. When she notified him of the birth of a grandson he never answered the letter. When she wrote

him six months later that her husband had been shot dead in a drunken brawl, and that she was ill and in dire poverty, he never answered that appeal either. After that he heard no more of her until the year of which we write, when he was informed by his cousin, Dr. Arundel, who had opened up communication with his uncle after years of estrangement, that she had died, while her child was still an infant and in dire poverty.

And this brings us back to Alice's work, part of which had been to verify the report of Mrs. Fairfax's death.

"She is undoubtedly dead," she said. "I saw Mrs. Terwilliger, and she verified Dr. Arundel's statement. Mrs. Fairfax died in her house seventeen years ago. The baby was sent to the city nursery, as Dr. Arundel said. I visited the nursery and looked up the records. The boy was adopted by a family named Turner, also, as he claims. I could not find any trace of the Turners. That is as far as I have got."

"All this fits in with my cousin's claim as far as it goes," said Mr. Arundel.

"Yes, and why should it not?" replied Alice. "Even if he is deceiving you he would naturally make it fit, for any one can cover the ground I have covered to-day. It would have to fit. Just what is his claim about the boy?"

"That he is now eighteen years old, which is correct. That he first met him in the street and was struck with his resemblance to the Arundels; that he learned the boy was an orphan, who knew nothing of his parents except that he had always been told that his name was William Fairfax. That he then employed Craigthorpe to look up his history, and that he had traced the boy back to the Turners and held proofs to that effect."

"And you then ordered him to bring the boy to Bellevoir, stating that you would come North on your yacht and meet him there?"

"Exactly."

"Just then your private secretary died and you engaged this Henry Welch to take his place?"

"Yes."

"And that when you were taken ill just previous to your leaving New Orleans you engaged this trained nurse, Miss Bertram, to accompany you on your trip?"

"That's it, and those two tried to poison me."

"Let us investigate a little deeper. How did you come to select Welch as a secretary? You told me, I know, but I want to rehearse the points of the case."

"Why, he came to me with a letter of introduction from my cousin George, asking me to help him get work. I wanted a secretary; he seemed a nice young man, so I engaged him myself."

"Exactly. Did Dr. Arundel know that your secretary was dead?"

"Yes, I wrote him so."

"And Miss Bertram?"

"Welch recommended her."

"And so you see how you stand, Mr. Arundel, you, who have already made your will in favor of this supposed grandson who, if Old King Brady is right, is a fraud."

"I have acted very unwisely."

"You have, indeed, since you were foolish enough to ap-



point Dr. Arundel your sole executor and the boy's guardian when you actually knew nothing of the man."

"Blood is thicker than water, Miss Montgomery."

"Oh, I know that's a good old saying. Suppose you were to die to-day, then for three years Dr. Arundel will have full control of your estate."

"It is true, and you think I ought to make a new will at once, I suppose?"

"I certainly do."

"Not until Old King Brady has seen and talked with this boy, however. I am good for ten years yet."

"What infatuation!" thought Alice. "The wonder is that this man has any property to leave."

"How did Dr. Arundel come to be poor?" she asked. "Did not his father receive his share of the Bellevoir estate?"

"Most certainly he did," was the reply. "It was a full half, but I got the plantation house. My brother George, who was his father, simply ran through everything, and the property passed into other hands. That's the whole story. The doctor began life as a rich man's son. He was born at Bellevoir, and as boys we were like brothers, so can you wonder that I was willing to trust him in spite of the fact that at one time he was wild and dissipated?"

The conversation ended here.

Soon after supper was served.

Shortly after supper the following telegram addressed to Alice was handed in:

"Come down here at once, providing Mr. A. is in good hands. Come via Iron Mountain R. R., first train. Will meet you at De Lassus. HARRY."

This despatch was in cipher.

Alice read it to Mr. Arundel.

"Do you think you can get along without me?" she asked.

"Certainly I can," was the reply. "I'm all right now."

"You must remain in strict seclusion and receive no strangers until you hear from us."

"I promise you to do so, Miss Montgomery."

Alice then telephoned the office and learned that she could get a train for De Lassus that evening.

"Probably Harry figured on that," she thought. "I must go at once."

Thus the close of that busy day found Alice on her way to Bellevoir.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CRAIGHTHORPE, THE LAWYER.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when Harry pulled Old King Brady up to the little pier at Bellevoir.

Mr. Arundel's yacht lay at anchor, and the master, Captain Spriggs, having spotted the approaching boat, was at the rail as they approached.

"Now to see how my disguise is going to work," said Old King Brady.

"I predict success," replied Harry. "Only don't appear

to be too spry; there's where you are liable to fall down. Fortunately, you are about Mr. Arundel's general build."

"Yes," replied the old detective. "But for that I never should have made the attempt."

By this time they were within hailing distance, and the captain shouted:

"Good heavens, sir, you can't think what a surprise this is, or how happy I am to see you safe!"

Old King Brady waved his hand at him, but made no attempt to reply.

He knew that Mr. Arundel felt every confidence in the man, and he intended to make use of him and his crew, who numbered five.

"He wants to go aboard the steamboat, mister," shouted Harry, doing his best to imitate the Missouri twang.

"He shall go where he likes," cried the captain. "Why not, since the Josephine belongs to him?"

He was on the pier to help Harry get Old King Brady up.

As far as they could see he entertained no suspicion whatever.

They went aboard the steamer and sat on deck.

A change had now taken place up at the big plantation house.

Where before the blinds and windows had been closed they were now open.

A man and a woman appeared on the piazza and stood staring down at the steamer.

Then the man went inside and came out with another, a large, heavily-built person, who stared also.

Meanwhile, Old King Brady, imitating Mr. Arundel's voice and manner, of both of which he had made a careful study, was explaining things to Captain Spriggs.

"Why did I go away?" he said. "Well, I'll tell you why I went away, captain. I was afraid for my life. That's why. I shan't tell any one where I've been, either. I'm my own master. It's nobody's business. I pay my bills. I'll tell you this much, though, but for this young man—Tom Wendell is his name—I should have perished last night. I owe my life to him."

"Heaven bless him for that, Mr. Arundel, and he has mine, too. You have been a good employer to me, sir, and I don't want to appear to be forcing myself into your confidence, but I should like to know just what you mean. Who in the wide world would want to take your life on board the Josephine?"

Old King Brady looked at the man steadily for an instant.

He felt satisfied that he was sincere.

"Captain, you shall have my confidence," he said. "I accuse Mr. Welch and Miss Bertram of trying to poison me. I know what I am talking about, too."

"It's hard to believe it, sir, but since you must suspicion somebody, I'm glad it's them, for, as you know, they are the only two on the Josephine over whom I have had no control. Indeed, I can't say I'm much acquainted with them, so I ought not to presume to put my opinion against yours, but it is to be hoped that you are not making any mistake."

"No mistake, no mistake," said Old King Brady. "I know exactly what I'm talking about. For the present, captain, I shall stay aboard. I am tired now and I am go-

ing to lie down. My faithful friend Tom here takes Welch's place for the present. If anybody comes down from the house, don't allow them to come aboard under any pretence. Promise me that."

"I promise," replied Captain Spriggs, "and you may rely upon my promise being faithfully kept."

Harry then took Old King Brady into the cabin, where they had no difficulty in picking out Mr. Arundel's stateroom.

"Leave me now," said the old detective. "Some of the bunch will doubtless be down in a moment. Watch, listen; spot the baby or the red-headed purser if you can."

Harry returned to the deck to find that the younger man and the woman had almost reached the steamer.

"Them's Welch and Miss What's-her-name, I s'pose?" he asked Captain Spriggs.

"Yes," was the reply, "but surely the old gentleman must be mistaken about them."

"I don't know nothin' about that," retorted Harry. "He's been liberal to me and I propose to play straight with him, that's all."

"I'd like to catch you doing anything else," replied the captain. "But tell me, how did he ever get away with the boat?"

"Don't ask me; I don't know nothin' about it, and even if I did I wouldn't tell you nothin' only what he orders me to tell. He's my boss now."

By this time the secretary and the nurse had reached the pier.

"Captain!" cried Welch, "who is that old man who just came aboard? Surely not Mr. Arundel?"

"Surely it hain't no one else," replied the captain, coldly. They started to cross the gangplank.

"No!" cried the captain, waving them back. "What do you mean?" thundered Welch. "I am Mr. Arundel's private secretary."

"Were, you mean," retorted the captain. "He tells me you hain't holding that office no more, and that I'm not to let you aboard, nor Miss Bertram, neither."

They stopped, looking confused. It was noticeable that the nurse turned pale. "Did he say why?" demanded Welch.

"No."  
"Then I must see him and ask an explanation. It is my right."

"You hain't got no rights on my yacht, young man. If you try to come ahead I shall be forced to knock you overboard."

"This is a high-handed outrage!"  
"Is it? I don't know. I obey orders if I break owners. This here young feller is holding down your job just now. For further information I refer you to him."

Welch looked Harry over contemptuously. "Who the mischief are you?" he demanded. "Name of Wendell," drawled Harry. "First name Tom. Anything more you'd like to know?"

"Isn't Mr. Arundel coming up to his house?"  
"I s'pose he is when he gets good and ready."

Welch drew back and he and Miss Bertram consulted in whispers:

"I demand to be allowed to talk with my employer," he finally said.

"See here!" roared the captain. "I'll waste no more words. Quit bothering me or I'll turn the hose onto you."

"Come, Henry! Come," said Miss Bertram. "This is no place for us. Let us consult Mr. Craighorpe. He'll know what to do."

They turned away together, and Captain Spriggs exclaimed:

"Thar! Did you hear that? She called him by his first name! When they were aboard they scarcely seemed to be acquainted. The old man is right. Thar's something wrong sure."

Harry lit a cigar and waited. He saw the stout man meet Welch and the nurse when they returned.

For a long time they stood talking on the piazza and then all went inside.

Contrary to Harry's expectations, they did not return nor did Craighorpe, Dr. Arundel's lawyer, whom Harry assumed the stout man must be, came down to the yacht.

After awhile they saw him walking in the direction of the barn. A little later he rode away on a white horse, returning shortly after five o'clock.

Of all this Harry kept his chief informed. Up to this time Old King Brady had not shown himself on deck, but now he determined to act.

A little later those who were undoubtedly watching at the house saw the supposed Mr. Arundel cross the gangplank leaning on Harry's arm.

Ahead of them walked Captain Spriggs and behind were two of the yacht hands, big husky fellows who looked equal to any emergency.

They made straight for the house where the stout man stood talking to Welch.

Miss Bertram was not in evidence, nor thus far had anything been seen of Sam.

As they drew near the broad veranda, Welch stepped forward and said:

"My dear sir, I am thankful to see you in such good shape. There seems to be some misunderstanding in regard to my position if Captain Spriggs had stated the situation correctly. At your convenience I should like an interview with you. Meanwhile let me introduce Mr. Craighorpe, of St. Louis."

"Mr. Craighorpe needs no introduction to me," replied Old King Brady, quietly. "As for you, sir, and your companion I order you to leave my house as soon as you can find means of getting away."

"This is harsh treatment, Mr. Arundel," protested Welch. "I demand a reason. It is my right."

"Ask your own conscience," was the abrupt reply, and then addressing the lawyer civilly, Old King Brady asked to see Dr. Arundel.

"Why, the doctor is not here, my dear sir," replied Craighorpe. "What is more, I don't know where he is. I came here by appointment expecting to meet the doctor and his wife and to confer with you as arranged between us by letter. I cannot account for Dr. Arundel's absence."

"Doubtless he has been delayed. The young man — is he here?"

"He is coming. He has been in my charge for the past week. He is all anxiety to meet you, my dear sir. We may look for him at any time. Circumstances made it necessary for him to remain behind me at St. Louis. But won't you come in, Mr. Arundel? This is your house. Why do you stand there, sir?"

"A man of my years naturally hesitates in the presence of one who has attempted to murder him," replied Old King Brady, pointing at Welch, who turned pale and stood silent.

"However," he added, "I am coming in. I desire to go through my old home once more, but I shall not remain here. For the present I intend to stay on board the Josephine. As for you, Mr. Craigthorpe, I shall wish to confer with you in the cabin this evening. Say at eight o'clock. If young Fairfax arrives you can bring him along."

"And me—" began Welch, but suddenly checking himself he turned on his heel and entered the house. The Bradys were sure that he acted in obedience to a sign made by Craigthorpe.

They now ascended to the piazza, where the lawyer extended his hand.

Old King Brady shook hands, but checked him when he asked what was meant by what had been said about Welch.

"I don't care to discuss that now," he said. "You shall have the whole story this evening. Come, captain. I will show you Bellevoir."

"Are these men all to go through the house?" demanded Craigthorpe.

"Most assuredly if I wish it, and I do," retorted Old King Brady.

No more was said. They went all over the house, the lawyer bringing up the rear.

Old King Brady said little. It was impossible for him to display the familiarity with the house which he would have liked, so he held his tongue.

They saw nothing to indicate the presence of Dr. Arundel, the boy pursuer, nor the Lambert baby—nothing, in short, to help the Bradys along in their singular search, nor did they encounter Welch or the nurse, who appeared to have left the house.

Craigthorpe seemed ill at ease and quite at a loss to grasp the situation, as well he might be.

As they were leaving he once more suggested that the proper thing for Mr. Arundel to do would be to take up his quarters in his own house, adding that he would see to it that Welch and the nurse left at once and that he would even keep out of the house himself if necessary.

"No," replied Old King Brady. "I shall stay on my yacht until you and I have settled our business, Mr. Craigthorpe; there I shall look for you at the time named."

They then returned to the Josephine little wiser than they left it.

"That knocks your theory, governor," remarked Harry. "Where is your red-headed boy pursuer who was to be palmed off as the Arundel heir?"

"Where, sure enough!" replied the old detective. "And where are our little old man and the woman with the derby whom I assume to be Dr. Arundel and his wife?"

"Not to mention the Lambert baby."

"Exactly. We don't seem to have advanced one step in

our singular search. I wish I could get a peep at the cards held by that fellow Craigthorpe. Harry, we shall have to do some detective work to-night."

"But the bloodhounds!"

"There's the rub. They will be turned loose on the grounds, I suppose. However, perhaps we shall be able to pick up some points when I have my interview with Craigthorpe to-night."

But that interview never took place.

Harry continued to watch the house until dark, but saw no one come outside. Eight o'clock came, but it failed to bring the lawyer. It was a starlight night and the Bradys remained sitting on deck until after ten.

Bellevoir was clouded in darkness. Not a soul did they see, but shortly after nightfall the four bloodhounds were turned loose by some one and they did more or less barking at the yacht. To venture ashore was thus put out of the question. Things were not going Old King Brady's way. He was entirely at a loss how to proceed.

"I've a great mind to take Captain Spriggs into my confidence, Harry," said the old detective at last. "He seems a good fellow. I see no risk."

"Better wait till morning," replied Harry. "It can't do any good to tell him the truth to-night, and something may turn up in the morning to make you sorry you did it."

Old King Brady assented. Calling the captain, he told him he wanted a watch kept all night. "One man will be enough," he added. "If anybody shows themselves let Wendell be at once informed."

Harry proposed watching himself, but Old King Brady saw no necessity for it, and they both went to bed, occupying different staterooms.

This was at about eleven o'clock.

At some time away along in the night Harry suddenly awoke with an ill-defined impression that he had heard a noise outside in the cabin, and feeling queer in his head.

He listened, but could not hear a sound.

Turning on the electric light, which was controlled by a storage battery, he got up and opened the stateroom door.

An overturned chair first attracted his attention and then he observed that the door of Old King Brady's room stood wide open.

"Something wrong," flashed over him, and he made a dart into the room.

It was deserted.

"What on earth has happened, and how could I ever have slept through it?" thought Harry.

And now he realized that there was something the matter with himself.

He was so dizzy that the room seemed to swim about him.

Grasping the berth, he held on a moment and in a measure managed to recover himself.

On the floor lay a handkerchief which appeared to be wet.

Harry picked it up and at once caught the odor of chloroform.

Then he understood!

As quickly as he could he made his way on deck.

Here a sight met his gaze which showed him the desperate character of those with whom they had been dealing.

One of the crew lay sprawled out on the deck in a pool of blood.

Harry saw at once that he was dead and a closer examination showed him that the man had been stabbed.

He hurried to the captain's room, which was on deck, and opened the door.

Here the odor of chloroform was overpowering. Captain Spriggs was perfectly unconscious. Indeed, Harry doubted if he ever would recover from the dose.

Up at Bellevoir all was dark and silent. Even the dogs were not in evidence now.

And the stars shone down upon the old plantation house, shining also upon a badly disgusted detective.

"This must be the work of that rascally lawyer," thought Harry. "Oh, if I had only held out."

## CHAPTER IX.

### A CASE OF DOG EAT DOG.

What had turned the tables on Dr. Arundel?

It was one villain turning on another—that was all.

The thunderous knocking on the doctor's door brought with it an inkling of the truth.

"Who's there?" demanded the doctor, in a tremulous voice. "What are you doing in my house this time of night?"

"Your house?" was the sneering response. "Bellevoir is not yours yet and never will be, you old scoundrel! Open the door!"

"Ha! You traitor! I know you now," groaned the doctor. "Then this is the way you keep faith with me!"

"Faith with you! Have you kept faith with me? Open the door or I'll break it in. I am not alone here. Yield if you expect your life to be spared."

"But, Braigy, Mrs. Arundel is in bed. I can't open the door. What is your purpose? Out with it. Give me time to think."

"I'll give you no time, you double-dealing scoundrel. What scheme is this I hear about? Who is the red-headed boy you have brought here? Who is the child?"

"Listen, Braigy. I saw a chance to get a head-head and I embraced it—that's all. I didn't mean for an instant to go back on my bargain with you. As for the child, that's a mere incident. He is one of nature's freaks. I wished to make a study of him. It was easy to bring the baby along with me and I did."

"Then you have played the fool as well as the villain. But stay, is Mrs. Arundel dressing? She better. I'm coming in and I'm bringing others with me."

"Ella, do you hear?" called the doctor. "It's Craig-thorpe. I can't keep him out. You'll have to dress."

"I'm dressing," came the reply from the other room. "I hope you are satisfied. I told you how it would be."

"She's dressing, Braigy. Just a minute," whined the doctor. "Say, can't we fix this thing? Can't we make a sure deal? Upon my word and honor, I never meant

to go back on you. It was only that I couldn't bring myself to killing my cousin, I thought by this scheme we could manage without it. I think so still."

"I'm waiting," was the only reply. "Open the door as soon as your wife is dressed."

All this was interesting listening for Will, of course. That he had no relish for the prospect ahead of him after the door was opened need scarcely be said.

"Can't we do something?" he whispered. "If you've got a revolver, I'm not afraid to use it."

"No, no. I'll keep my revolver," was the answer. "I—oh, I don't know what to do! We are dealing with a desperately bad man."

All this was said in whispers.

Just then Ella entered the room.

"You'll have to open the door, George," she said coolly, "so you might as well do it now."

Evidently the doctor agreed with her, for he threw the door back.

There stood a large, stout, red-faced man and with him four others of the roughest type, wearing long boots and big hats.

Evidently they were natives. Each was armed with a revolver and there were bowie knives in their belts.

Dr. Arundel at once gave up all hope of coming to an understanding.

"What's all this?" he whined. "Do you propose to murder us?"

"Not exactly. At least not yet. Dr. Arundel and wife, Colonel Jinkman. Doc, this a Colonel Jack Jinkman, a good client of mine. For the present he will take charge of your family affairs and of this red-headed protege of yours, too."

The doctor shuddered.

Will looked at the big fellow, who made a clumsy bow to Ella, with no small interest.

Colonel Jack Jinkman was a notorious outlaw, a train robber, a hold-up man, who for years past had been the terror of Central and Eastern Missouri; a man with a price upon his head.

The men with him were evidently members of his gang.

"Say," he drawled; "you uns are gwine erlonger me. Orders is to shoot one or all of you if any kick-up is made. Them orders is ergwintar be obeyed. Put up your hands, you three! Boys, go through 'em. Get their guns and their knives. Watches an' cash, if they've got any, you can divide among yerselves."

There was no help for it. The search was made and a fat roll taken away from the doctor.

Once more he appealed to Craigthorpe, but got no answer.

"You uns are now to come erlonger me," said Colonel Jack. "We are heading for a little hold-out of mine back among the hills."

"Outrageous!" cried the doctor. "Craig, for heaven sake remember that I'm an old man."

"See, here," snarled the lawyer, "not another word or I'll order you shot. The prize has slipped through your fingers. You go, I stay, and I'll attend to cousin Joe's case when he comes. You dare not betray me, you old scoundrel! Instead of half the Arundel fortune, I propose



to have all. There's no reason under heaven why I should divide with you."

"Can't I take the baby?" demanded Ella, who appeared to have become really attached to the child.

"Oh, bother the baby!" snarled Craighorpe.

"Hold on, boss," drawled Captain Jack. "I draw the line at babies; any thing else I'd as soon kill as eat, but it's bad luck to kill a baby, I say. Let the hen take her chick along with her if she wants to. I don't care."

While Ella went to the other room for the baby Craighorpe asked Will what his name was, and got a truthful answer.

The lawyer looked at him curiously.

"Jack," he said, "guard this boy with extra care. I may want to use him later. There's no telling. Mind what I say."

They were taken downstairs then and passed outside.

Here were more outlaws, and Sam stood grinning among them.

These men were already mounted on excellent horses. The doctor was forced to mount and so was Will.

Ella, who protested that she could not ride a horse, was tied to the saddle, and the others mounting then, they rode off into the night.

"By-bye, Doc!" Craighorpe called after them. "You leave me master of Bellevoir, and master I propose to remain."

It was the beginning of an interminable ride.

All through the rest of the night, all through the long, hot morning which followed it they rode on.

Roads were avoided; they kept to the woods, which were of the "oak opening" order as it is called in Missouri; that is, without underbrush.

These men seemed to know just where to go and how to avoid being seen.

The country was almost a wilderness. Will did not see half a dozen houses during the entire ride, and those were at a distance on hills or down in hollows.

No white man was met, but they did pass a few colored people who seemed to know them and who fled at their approach.

At last at about two in the afternoon they struck a rougher country and passed up into a range of rocky hills, where they finally came to a halt at what appeared to be an abandoned iron mine, judging from the character of the buildings and the fact of a great quantity of iron ore lying scattered around.

Here there was a big, roughly-built frame structure which had evidently been the workman's boarding-house.

Dogs flew out to greet them, and men as rough as themselves followed.

All through the ride Will had remained separated from the Arundels, nor did he get any chance to hold communication with them, for as he dismounted he was taken charge of by two men who hurried him across the iron-strewn ground to a small stone structure standing by itself.

This was the former powder house of the mine as one of the men informed him. In other words, where the high explosives of whatever sort had been in use here were kept.

It had an iron door, but no window; it was a dark,

gloomy cell, but into it Will was thrust without a word and the door locked upon him.

This was the way Colonel Jack meant to keep the boy prisoner safe in case Craighorpe should want to use him!

The day passed, the night passed, the next day passed, too.

Will was fed three times a day if greasy bacon and some half-baked cornbread can be called food.

He had not even a stool to sit on nor anything but the earth floor on which to rest his head.

Disagreeable situation this; another boy might have worried himself into a fever under such treatment.

But Will was not that kind. He was a worker and after he had rested up a bit and recovered from the effects of his long, hot ride, to work he went and that with a will.

What did he find to do in such a place may be asked.

This will be shown later; in the meantime let us say that there is work for the worker everywhere, under all circumstances. It is only the idler or the invalid who even finds himself so placed that there is nothing to do.

And while he worked Will kept thinking and thinking.

Of course, his thoughts ran much to Dr. Arundel's frustrated scheme, and all this thinking seemed to revive the boy's memory of the past.

Not that there was much that was pleasure to remember in the distant past, for Will's early life had been a hard one. It had been spent up to his eighth year in the family of a man in Central Missouri who belonged to the very class of the man in whose power the boy was now.

It was a long time since Will had given much thought to Cal Turner, as this person was called, and yet he could not remember back of the time when he lived with this man whose only redeeming feature was a kindly nature exhibited when he was sober, but as he was usually drunk, and then his nature was just the reverse, this scarcely counted.

The days and the nights passed. Towards evening on one of these days Will had just finished hiding all traces of his work when he heard footsteps outside and a key was thrust into the lock.

It was the man who was bringing him his supper the boy prisoner thought, and he was right.

But judge of his surprise when upon the iron door being thrown back there stood Cal Turner looking just the same as Will remembered him ten years before.

It was the first time this man had shown himself here. He carried an old tin pail in which was Will's evening meal.

"Heowdy," he said, in a good-humored fashion which showed Will he must be sober. "Want yer grub? Gee whiz, but your hair does be red for keeps. Never knowed but one feller who had a red head like yours, and he was the boy I uster own long ago," he replied.

"Same boy," cried Will, springing up and facing the man. "Pa Turner, how de do? Don't you remember me?"

## CHAPTER X.

### DEALINGS WITH A SHYSTER.

Old King Brady never knew what struck him.

He went to sleep in his berth on board the Josephine, he woke up to find himself lying all doubled up in a long,

home-made rowboat which two roughly-dressed men were pulling down the Mississippi river.

Ahead of them was another and better boat in which were several men.

The minute his captors saw that the old detective had opened his eyes, one shouted:

"Hey, boss!"

"Hello!" came the answer, from the other boat.

"He's come to; shall I heave him overboard, or are you still of the same mind?"

"Keep him close," came the reply. "I may decide to put him out of business, but I want to have a talk with him first."

Old King Brady straightened up and got on the stern seat.

He was half dazed, but the condition of his head told him what had happened.

"Chloroform or ether, I suppose," he thought. "I am in the hands of the enemy. I have been caught napping for fair. Heavens! I do hope Harry is safe."

He was glad enough that he did not have to talk then to anybody, for he was scarcely able to think.

On they went for a mile or two further and then striking up an inlet they landed at a place where there was actually a stretch of sandy beach, so unusual on the banks of the Mississippi.

"I don't see nothing of no horses!" called one of the men in Old King Brady's boat.

"No; they are not here," replied Craigthorpe, who had already been recognized by the old detective as the man who had called back from the forward boat.

"They'll come along in good time," he added. "It's most too soon to expect them. Colonel Jack will surely get the word I sent."

He stepped out of the boat as he spoke, being the last to leave it.

Old King Brady's captors now sprang out upon the beach and pulled the boat upon the sand.

"Are you able to get out, Mr. Brady?" asked the lawyer, "or do you require help?"

"I can get out without help," replied the old detective disgustedly, and he did so.

He had expected nothing less, however, for he had already made the discovery that his detective's shield was missing as well as his revolver, watch, money, and everything else he owned of any value.

"Good!" said Craigthorpe, as he stepped ashore. "Glad you didn't pass in your chips, as at one time I thought you would do. So the tables have been turned upside down. Say, you're a wonder. You actually did fool me. When I went for you to-night I thought I was going to get old Joe Arundel. It was a complete surprise to discover who you really were when I came to look you over. Whatever started you out on such a lay?"

"The name is really Craigthorpe, I suppose," replied the old detective coolly. "I always like to know who I'm talking to."

"The name is as surely Craigthorpe as yours is Brady," was the reply. "But answer my question. I've no special grudge against you, old man; if it had been so I should have made mighty short work of you. Every man to his trade. Mine's that of what is commonly known as a shys-

ter lawyer, yours is to do the detective act. Did old Joe Arundel put you up to this?"

"Not at all. It came about by accident," the old detective replied.

"Tell a feller. It won't do you any harm and it may do me some good."

Briefly Old King Brady stated the circumstances under which he began his singular search.

"Uh, huh! So that's the way of it," said Craigthorpe. "I little guessed when I sent my nigger out to you in that boat yesterday A. M. You've been frank with me, so I'll be frank with you. I spotted you aboard the Joplin. I had seen you in court at St. Louis and knew you at a glance. Being engaged in a little deal there at Bellevoir, I naturally didn't want to be interfered with. However, Sam botched the job. It didn't work. If I'd only known you were out after that crooked monkey of a baby I'd have saved it for you."

"Then the child was actually taken to Bellevoir by your partners?"

"Right and wrong. It was actually taken to Bellevoir, but not by my partners, for just at present I haven't any."

"And where is it now? Dead?"

"Not that I know of. It was taken away last night by friends of these gentlemen. They may have put it out of business. I have no means of knowing. But say, old man, you haven't told me all I want to know yet, nor half. Your reason for that excellent disguise comes first on the list. Did you find Old Joe Arundel in a boat?"

"Yes."

"Alive?"

"Yes."

"Where is he now?"

"That's the one question which I decline to answer."

"Have a care, old man, the bird that can sing and won't must be made to sing, they say. I can think of a dozen ways of forcing you to tell what you know, all of which will be decidedly unpleasant to you."

"Shan't tell," said Old King Brady. "Better strike in on another line."

"Oh, all right. Anything to oblige. Say, did you have a talk with the old man?"

"I did."

"He told you that an attempt had been made to poison him?"

"Yes."

"And who does he believe is at the bottom of it?"

"You for one."

"And for another?"

"His cousin, Dr. George Arundel."

"So? Did the old buck show you his will?"

"No."

"Did he tell you that he had made one?"

"Yes."

"Who's the executors?"

"There is only one, and if I did not know that you are already well informed I should not answer that question. The executor is Dr. George Arundel."

"He didn't make another will after you met him then?"

"No."

"One question more and that is the last. The will

leaves his estate to his grandson, William Fairfax, does it not?"

"Yes, the red-headed purser, Werthington, whom you and your late partner meant to palm off on the old man as his grandson. As I take it, there is no such person as William Fairfax actually in existence.

Craigthorpe laughed heartily.

"You are certainly a clever one," he said. "However, you have saved your own neck for the present. Tell me where the old man is and I'll turn you loose right now, Brady."

"No."

"Very good. If I was a fool like some mean I know I should tell you that if you didn't tell all I'd kill you; but I'm not that sort. I can't afford to kill you till I know what you have done with the old man, whom I happen to know is not on the Josephine. I doubt, though, if he is far away."

"Right," said Old King Brady, "and while I refuse to tell you simply can't afford to kill me, and you know it."

"Exactly. Not while there exists a chance of bringing you to terms, but I can make it mighty uncomfortable for you, old man, and that I propose to do."

He walked away then, leaving the old detective to himself.

It was perfectly safe. The scene was a dense forest.

From both boats the oars had been taken and hidden somewhere.

Old King Brady could not have got away if he had tried.

He sat down on a log and attempted to think.

His situation was bad enough, but it bid fair to be worse.

Personally he had no knowledge of this slyster lawyer. He had formed his conclusion of the man from the facts told him by Mr. Arundel and events had fully justified said conclusions. He felt that he had very little to hope from him—so little, in fact, that he had not even asked about Harry and Captain Spriggs, for he would not have believed anything Craigthorpe told him where it was in the least to his interest to lie.

An hour's wait followed, and then four mounted men, bringing with them led horses sufficient for the entire party, came galloping down a path which led back into the forest.

It was easy enough to size them up as a bunch of that peculiar kind of bad men with which Missouri has always been more or less infested.

With some of them Craigthorpe appeared to be acquainted, with others not.

A start was at once made.

Old King Brady was forced to mount, and after they had passed through the thicker forest which bordered the river bank and came into a more open, though still wooded tract, Craigthorpe rode up alongside Old King Brady and, suiting his face to his again, began to talk.

"Look here, Mr. Brady," he commenced, "as I said before, I haven't got a blessed thing against you. Why can't we get together on this deal?"

Expecting something of this sort and seeing in it a chance to better his condition, even if only temporarily, Old King Brady was prepared.

"It is not impossible," he replied. "I work to make money like other men."

"Exactly. There is big money involved here. I am no hog. If you can help me out in this emergency I am willing you should have your share of it."

"Well, now what can I do? What, at least, except to tell you where I have hidden Mr. Arundel, which I certainly won't do at present."

"We will pass on that. You may reach a different state of mind later. In the first place, let us assume that you will, that we become partners. I confess to being puzzled over the situation. Kindly advise me."

"That I can do, but before I begin, tell me what happened to that young fellow Wendell, and to Captain Spriggs?"

The time had come to put this question, but Old King Brady was careful not to display too much anxiety.

"I'll tell you and I'll give it to you straight," replied Craigthorpe. "I chloroformed them both, but as they got no heavier dose than you did I see no reason why they should not pull out of it all right."

"Very good. Now go ahead."

"What I want to know is this. Originally I went into this deal at the suggestion of Dr. Arundel. He had taken up a correspondence with his cousin after years of silence having passed between them in the hope that he might be named his heir. He soon found that the old fellow had no such intentions. He promised the doctor a legacy of a few thousands, but frankly stated that he intended to leave the rest of his estate to found a hospital in New Orleans. Incidentally he remarked in one of his letters that if his daughter Kate's child had lived he would have given up this project and named the young man his heir."

"That's right. He told me that."

"Very good. The doctor showed me the letter and wanted me to see if it was possible to trace out the boy. 'Craigthorpe' he said, 'if William Fairfax lives he is only eighteen. I shall be named sole executor if I can produce him. My cousin writes me so and he is a man of his word. That will give me three years to pick out the plums from that valuable pie and you shall help me. I strongly suspect there won't be much left for the boy to pick after we get through.'"

"Ah, I see," said Old King Brady. "Well, this is worth thinking over, at all events. Have you any idea of what this property consists of?"

"I don't. Dr. Arundel does. He has it all down fine."

"Can't we get the inventory from him and look it over together? Mr. Arundel was very reticent to me about the matter. If I can see that it is really going to be worth my while I'll go in for this."

Craigthorpe appeared highly elated.

"Sure we can," he said. "We are going to Dr. Arundel now. We'll make him show his hand. But tell me, Brady, is Joe Arundel where you can put your finger on him at any moment?"

"Absolutely."

"Good! And do you think he will make a new will at your suggestion?"

"I'm quite sure of it. But about this boy purser. There is——"

"Nothing in him, nothing in him. It's just that I

utterly failed to trace up Kate Fairfax's boy beyond a certain point. Dr. Arundel was greatly vexed at this. He happened to see this Worthington boy and it occurred to him that he would just fill the bill, so he made his arrangements to kidnap him and put the scheme up to him to claim to be William Fairfax, this because his hair was fiery red and his age about right, and so on. He thought I didn't know what he was about, but I had a detective shadowing him and was fully posted."

"And the baby? Why did he take it?"

"Merely because the child was a freak. The doctor really is interested in his profession. He's an enthusiast. He jumped at the chance to examine this anatomical curiosity at short range—see?"

"I want that baby if we go in for this deal, Mr. Craigthorpe."

"You shall have it, my dear sir. I promise you that."

"Did the boy enter into the doctor's scheme?"

"He seemed to as far as I can find out from Sam, the colored man, who is in charge of Bellevoir. Why wouldn't he? Anyone would do it under the circumstances."

"One question more and I'm all in. Was an attempt really made to poison old Arundel?"

"Now come, Brady, you surely can't expect me to compromise myself by answering that question. I never saw the old buck in my life, so how the deuce should I know? I will say this, however, my scheme was to make a practical prisoner of him at Bellevoir and by working on him get him to make a new will, leaving me executor. I doubt if he would have lived very long after he had signed such a will, so you can draw your own conclusions."

"What a thorough rascal!" thought Old King Brady. "Upon my word, this man is the limit. But I must pretend to stand in with him till I can work out of this fix at all events."

And so they rode on through the oaks. Old King Brady felt that he was making good headway along those lines.

He was and he wasn't.

When at last they reached the old iron mine, for such was their destination, Craigthorpe suddenly turned on the old detective, and said:

"Well, here we are at last. Now what is the word? Will you tell me where you have put old man Arundel?"

"Not yet," was the reply. "I shall have to see that inventory first."

"Then I shall proceed according to the lines I originally laid down," retorted the shyster, angrily. "I shall have to lock you in and treat you as a prisoner until we come to terms."

## CHAPTER XI.

### STILL ON THE SEARCH.

When Alice left the train at De Lassus it was between two and three A. M.

Devoutly she hoped that she was going to find Harry in waiting, but as it was, there was not a soul around the station except a sleepy agent who was as cross and surly as a man could well be

"I was expecting a gentleman here to meet me," said Alice. "Have you seen anyone waiting for this train?"

"No," growled the agent. "You had a right to be sure of your arrangements before you landed here alone at this time of night."

"Pardon me, sir, but I thought I was sure," answered Alice, mildly. "Can you direct me to the hotel?"

"There hain't no hotel. Leastways there is one, but it's busted and the man who ran it last went away owing the railroad company ten dollars which I shall have to make good out of my own pocket."

"But I must go somewhere till daylight. Can I sit in the station?"

"No, you can't. It's locked up and I'm not allowed to open it before six o'clock. Besides, it wouldn't be safe. There's a lot of tough characters around here."

Poor Alice was in despair. Not a light shone anywhere. What to do she did not know. She felt confident that Harry had intended to meet her. Something might have delayed him she thought. He was liable to come at any time.

There was but one way, it seemed to her, and that was to buy civility.

"Look here," she said, "if you will open up the station and let me wait here for my friend I will give you ten dollars and that will put you square with the railroad company without loss to yourself."

The surly agent jumped at the offer, and changed his tone instantly.

"Waal, I s'pose I might strain a point and do that," he said, "but you better take the key yourself and keep the door locked in case any tough characters come snooping around."

"Are there many tough characters in this neighborhood?"

"Well, quite some. The worst is the Jack Jinkman gang. I'll tell you, though I wouldn't tell everyone, they hang out at the old Cowdrey iron mine, ten miles from here back among the hills. They are the limit, but so far I've managed to keep on the blind side of Colonel Jack myself."

Alice gave him the money and received the key.

"If you leave before morning, lock up and put the key in the despatch box outside here," he said, and then departed, leaving Alice to do the best she could for herself on the hard bench inside the station.

An hour passed drearily enough.

So far not a sound had been heard except for several passing freight trains, but now it seemed to Alice that she was beginning to hear the steady clatter of horses' hoofs far in the distance.

She thought of the Jack Jinkman gang and the thought was not reassuring.

Eagerly she listened.

More and more distinct grew the sounds until at last they were close upon her.

Removing her hat, she crouched low on the bench and peered out of the back window.

A party of at least twenty armed and mounted men came dashing up to the station.

It was too dark to distinguish faces, but to Alice's excited imagination they seemed like a pretty tough gang.

Judge of her satisfaction then when one, pulling out a watch, remarked:

"We are a good hour late, sheriff. If she came, and I doubt that she did, it is going to prove a problem to find her."

She recognized Harry's voice!

Not an instant did she lose in unlocking the door and showing herself, but as it was, they had started away.

"Harry! Harry!" she cried, and her cry being heard, the riders turned and in a moment Harry was at her side.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I thought I had missed you altogether. Sheriff Bright, this is my partner, Miss Montgomery. Alice, this gentleman is Sheriff Bright, of this county. We are out hunting for Old King Brady, the red-headed purser, and the Lambert baby."

"A singular combination to search for," laughed the sheriff, "especially as we haven't the most remote idea where to look for them."

"I suppose it was foolish for me to send for you," added Harry, "but I did it on the spur of the moment, feeling that I should like to have you with me in this emergency. I have quite a long story to tell. You may as well prepare your mind for the worst. It is quite possible that Old King Brady may be dead."

"Suppose we ride on as we talk," suggested the sheriff. "We are losing time here."

"Where are you riding to?" asked Alice.

"To the Ironton Hills, ten miles from here," replied the sheriff. "You see Mr. Brady has reason to believe that his chief has been carried away prisoner by a gang of outlaws headed by one Jinkman, a notorious train-robber and outlaw."

"Colonel Jack Jinkman?" broke in Alice.

"The same. What do you know about him?"

"Finish what you are saying first, please, sheriff," replied Alice, thankful that she was likely to be of some service in this emergency.

"I was only going to add," continued the sheriff, "that we haven't the faintest idea where to look for the fellow, beyond the fact that I have recently learned that he has a hangout somewhere up among these same Ironton hills. There is a big reward on his head, and as Mr. Brady has offered me another in case we can get that baby and rescue his partner, I naturally jumped at the chance."

"I can help," said Alice, quietly. "I am informed that Colonel Jack Jinkman's hangout is the old Cowdrey iron mine, wherever that is."

"You don't mean it!" cried the sheriff.

"Who told you that, Alice?" asked Harry.

"That I prefer to keep to myself for the present," answered Alice, not wanting to involve the station agent. "All I know is what I have told you, and whether that is true or not I don't know. But, sheriff, do you know where this mine is?"

"I don't, beyond the fact that it is somewhere in the Ironton Hills," replied the sheriff. "However, we can find it. Better mount, Miss. Now that we are going to act on a definite clew we want to be on the move."

A horse had been provided for Alice, and as she was unencumbered with baggage save for a small handbag which

Harry had already made fast to the saddle, she quickly mounted and they rode away.

Harry drew in close alongside her and told the story of the chloroforming and of Old King Brady's disappearance.

"And did Captain Spriggs come out of it?" Alice asked.

"Yes, after awhile," replied Harry. "He was furious when he learned what had happened. The poor fellow who was murdered was some relative of his it seems."

"And what did you do then?"

"Why, we went up to Bellevoir and found everyone gone but that fellow Sam. He set the dogs on us. We shot all four and captured him. By that time he was ready to tell all he knew, which was very little beyond the fact that the Colonel Jack Jinkman gang had been engaged by the lawyer, Craighorpe, to carry off Dr. Arundel, his wife, the purser, and the baby. Old King Brady was taken down the river in a boat by Craighorpe and some of the outlaws, but whether dead or alive, Sam professed not to know. It was one of the outlaws who stabbed that poor fellow on the Josephine."

"Perhaps they didn't know themselves," said Alice, "but if he was alive, mark my words, they won't kill him. They will hold him a prisoner and try to force him to tell what has become of old Mr. Arundel, and that he never will. But how came you to pick up this sheriff, Harry?"

"Why, of course, I had to do something, so I took this horse out of the Bellevoir stable and rode to the town of Ledue to inquire about this Jinkman gang. There I fell in with the sheriff and quickly made a deal with him. He seems a good fellow and I think his posse are all fighters; only trouble is we have no idea how many there are in the Jinkman gang."

They rode on until dawn and then, going into camp, breakfast was ready.

They were yet at some distance from the foot of a range of wooded hills, plainly seen. The sheriff declared that these were the Irontons, and hurrying through his breakfast, he rode off alone to inquire of a farmer in the neighborhood about the old Cowdrey mine.

He was gone an hour and when he returned he had no news of importance to report.

"I am satisfied that the fellow knows where the mine is," he said, "but he would not tell. He is too badly afraid of the gang to be induced to give them away."

"And what shall you do?" asked Harry.

"We'll ride up into the hills, anyhow," was the reply; "it is all we can do, for this country is perfectly wild and I am very little acquainted with it. Let us hope we may strike somebody who can and will give us the proper steer."

Soon they were on the move again, and before the sun was two hours high they had reached the Ironton Hills.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

Cal Turner, the outlaw, was taken all aback.

"You! You little Billy!" he cried. "Gee whiz! Who'd



ever have thunk it? Say, Billy, I'm terrible glad to see you again, blow me if I hain't, but I wisht I didn't hev to see you here. I hadn't no idee it was you."

"I knew you as soon as I laid eyes on you," said Will, determined to work this lucky find for all it was worth. "How's ma these days?"

"Oh, say, she's dead these five years," replied Turner. "Things has all went wrong with me, Billy, and it's ended up in me joining this here gang. A bad bunch, betwixt ourselves. But say, what's this business all about?"

Now Will had no affection for this rough man, who certainly had used him none too well, but on the other hand he felt that Turner might be induced to aid him if he was open and free with him, so he began the story of his singular adventures, and as the man seemed interested, he told it all, even to mentioning that Dr. Arundel had intended to palm him off on some rich man under the name of William Fairfax.

The outlaw listened patiently to the end

"William Fairfax," he repeated then. "And that was the name he was gwinter give yer. And thar's a big fortune into it, yer say?"

"That's what the doctor says, if you can believe him," replied Will.

"Then break my bones, Billy, ef I don't believe yer the trew an' lawful hair to that thar fortune!" cried Cal, "and the old snoozer knows it. Looker here, boy, that's yer real name. When ma took you out of the nursery at St. Louis you had been adopted wanst before by a woman named Worthington and she gave you her name. She died three months later and her husband gave you back to the nursery—see?"

"Yes, yes. Well? The name?"

"It was this way. Them nursery people they telled ma that yer real name was Fairfax, but it had been changed to Worthington. Ma she liked that name better, so she stuck to it, but Fairfax is yer real name an' I can prove it. Say, Billy, hev yer got that there little baby locket which sister hung 'round yer neck?"

"Sure I have. Ma always told me that the lady's picture in it was probably that of my own mother."

"Well, boy, you hold on to it now. That there locket spells a fortune to you, and say, I'm sick and tired of this here life and am about ready to quit. Keep your shirt on. When it comes night thar may be something doing. S'pose we hike up to St. Louis together and consult a laywer? I must go now or they'll suspicion me."

Off went Cal, and once more Will was locked in.

His mind was filled with strange hopes now.

Was it true that he really was the Arundel heir?

The thought made the boy purser gasp.

"And all my work for nothing!" thought Will. "However, that don't matter, if Pa Turner only keeps his word?"

What work?

Why, just that Will, by patiently working at the mortar between bricks had so loosened several in one of the walls that he could pull them out with his fingers.

That night he had expected to be able to force his way through the wall.

He did not have to!

The hours passed. Will slept some and watched some, and along towards morning his patience was rewarded, for the door of his prison was unlocked and there stood Cal Turner again.

"Quick, Billy!" he breathed. "The time has come. Slide out, boy, an' we'll be off out of this in two shakes of a ram's tail!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The prison selected by Craighthorpe for Old King Brady was not so bad.

The old detective was locked in an upper room in the big building which had once been the boarding-house of the mine.

No one disturbed him during the night, and being thoroughly exhausted, he was glad of the chance to rest.

Morning came and it brought Craighthorpe at an early hour.

"Well, old man," he said, "have you slept on my proposition? Have you come to any conclusion yet?"

"That inventory," replied Old King Brady. "Have you got it from Dr. Arundel?"

"No; he has no inventory. He lied to me when he said it, for he has been lying right along. He told me, though, that old Joe Arundel owns real estate in New Orleans and in St. Louis, that he has stocks and bonds and so on. The fact is, I don't believe he knows how much the man is worth; it may be more than a million for all I can tell, or for all he knows."

"Just so. Well, be it big or little, I can't help you, Mr. Craighthorpe. I have thought it over and have determined to keep my secret. That's all there is to it, but if you will turn over the baby to me and let me go away from here peaceably, I'll guarantee that no move shall be made against you for what you have done. That is all I can promise."

Old King Brady took this ground because he could not see his way clear to keep the lawyer on the string any longer.

The case seemed hopeless. He felt that he might as well bring matters to a head first as last.

He had brought them to a head with a vengeance!

Craighthorpe was furious.

"You've been playing it on me!" he roared. "You have wormed the whole plot out of me and now you turn on me. You shall be made to regret this, you old snoozer. I'll find means to make you tell!"

And with this he bounced out of the room and locked the door.

"I'm up against it," thought Old King Brady. "I'm sure I don't know what I shall do, but while I hold my secret at least my life is safe."

It was barely that!

Jack Jinkman was in an ugly mood that morning and into the hands of the outlaw chief Old King Brady was destined to pass.

For Will's escape had been discovered and Cal Turner's part in the matter was known. It was on Colonel Jinkman's own particular favorite horse that Will rode down the Ironton Hills in the early morning and Jinkman's own particular favorite rifle had vanished with the horse. The colonel was swearing vengeance with a will.

Morning found the fugitives well on their road, but it was not the regular road used by the outlaws; that Cal Turner carefully avoided, choosing another and longer way, for Cal had no notion of being captured by the gang. Quite the contrary. He was in the mood now to give his old associates away out of revenge for many a fancied injury on the part of their chief.

And as it happened, this was the man of whom Sheriff Bright inquired the way to the old Cowdrey mine.

Harry's party ran upon them suddenly or Cal would surely have dodged.

Little did Harry guess that the red-headed youth with him was the missing purser.

"Them uns are a bad lot," drawled Cal, after making the way to the mine so plain that the sheriff could not possibly mistake it. "Ef you uns are gunning for them I advise you to look out for yerselves—that's all."

"How many are there of them?" asked the sheriff, who strongly suspected that Cal might be one of the gang.

"Heow should I know?" was the reply. "I don't know nuthin' about 'em no more'n what I've telled yer. They're a bad bunch though, an' I hope yer deown 'em—that's all."

They rode on then, and the sheriff let them go.

"We'll be good for them, Mr. Brady, never fear," he said. "The reward's on Jinkman's head dead or alive. Forward, boys! Full speed!"

There was need of haste if Harry had only known it.

Craigthorpe was getting ready to try to force the old detective's hand.

There was no breakfast for Old King Brady that morning.

The next he knew Jinkman and the lawyer came into the room together with two others armed with revolvers behind them.

"Old King Brady, will you tell me where Joe Arundel is?" the lawyer asked.

"No; I won't," replied the old detective, camly.

"Settles it," said Craigthorpe. "Go ahead, Jink!"

The big outlaw seized Old King Brady roughly by the arm and ran him downstairs and out into the open closely followed by the men.

Ten men were gathered under a tree. One held a rope.

"String him up by the thumbs, boys!" thundered Jinkman. "Let him hang there till he tells my friend Craigthorpe what he wants to know."

And this barbarous order was carried out.

It was a terrible ordeal for the old detective.

As his feet left the ground he almost fainted. He felt that he should have to yield.

But the ordeal was a brief one.

Almost on the instant the clatter of hoofs was heard. Noiselessly had Harry's band stolen upon the camp.

"Charge! Fire! Shoot 'em down!" shouted the sheriff, and the rifles cracked.

Then Old King Brady actually did faint, and the next he knew he was lying on the ground with his head resting in Alice's lap.

The fight was over, the battle won. Jinkman and two others had been shot dead. Several were wounded, all were captured, Craigthorpe among the rest.

As soon as Old King Brady was able to travel, which was not for some hours, he and Harry with Alice and five men started for Bellevoir with Craigthorpe and the Arundels as prisoners. The Lambert baby went in Alice's charge. The sheriff took his prisoners to Ladue.

Bellevoir reached, the Bradys ran their prisoners up to St. Louis on the Josephine, and there they were put in jail.

Mr. Lambert, delighted to recover his child, was most liberal with the detectives.

Old Mr. Arundel felt that way too, and drew a large check.

Nobody wasted a thought upon the boy purser beyond supposing that it must have been he whom Harry and Alice met.

Then came the surprise when next day Mr. Lambert sent for Old King Brady, and introducing Will and Cal Turner, the disclosure of the boy's identity was made.

Will's proofs were positive. The locket with his mother's picture settled it. Old Mr. Arundel received him with open arms and declared him his heir. The doctor and his wife along with Craigthorpe got a state prison sentence for theirs.

But Will has not come into his grandfather's estate yet, for old Joe Arundel declines to die.

Alice declares that she believes he told the truth when he said he should live to be one hundred and two.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BRADYS AND THE SKELETON CLUB; or, THE SECRETS OF THE SILENT SIX."

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## A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE.

By Kit Clyde.

"I will have your life for this!"

The speaker was a man with a dark and evil face, now rendered almost demoniac in its expression from the rage that possessed him.

The person addressed was a young man of slight yet powerful build, who stood a short distance away, his arm thrown protectingly around the waist of a young girl, who clung to him with every evidence of terror.

"I care nothing for your threats, Lou Le Clair," the young man said. "It is only your presence that annoys me. Begone at once, or I shall have to repeat the punishment I have already given you."

The above scene took place in a sort of woodland grove, and the man named Lou Le Clair, with, if possible, a more malignant expression upon his face, turned, and walking rapidly away, was soon lost to sight among the surrounding trees.

The grove was situated a short distance from a small town on the Hudson, and in the summer time was a favorite resort of the inhabitants.

This evening, however, on account of a boat race a few miles further down the river, it was deserted, with the exception of Lou Le Clair and Agnes Aylward.

For such was the name of the young girl. She was an orphan, and lived with her uncle, a miserly old man, who refused to allow her to participate in even the simplest pleasures usual to her age.

Thus it came that walks and meditations in the woodland were her only happiness.

This fact Lou Le Clair well knew, and being also aware that her uncle would not allow her to attend the boat race, had come here for the express purpose of meeting her.

Lou Le Clair was the only son of a man who had amassed a considerable fortune by dealing in wild animals. Most of the menageries in the country were supplied from his stock. He was possessed of a great command over animals of all sorts, and this power Lou had inherited.

For the past year or more he had been traveling with a menagerie as a "Jungle King," and his performances with lions and tigers were such as to cause much alarm to nervous people.

He had known Agnes almost from childhood, and conceived a strong passion for her, but the girl had always felt an instinctive repugnance toward him.

He had on this occasion visited the grove to again declare his passion for her. He was determined to be heard, and when the girl, after coolly acknowledging his salutation, turned away, he placed himself in her path.

"Agnes," he said, "you must hear me. I have worshipped you for years."

Surprise, with which not a little fear was mingled, filled the girl's breast at this declaration, but not allowing it to be seen, she answered:

"Pray do not speak in that way, Mr. Le Clair. I have already told you that your suit is hopeless. I can never be more to you than I am now, and any further reference to the subject can only give us both pain."

"But you must listen to me!" he cried, vehemently. "I love you, and I cannot live without you!"

Her terror increasing, Agnes sought to hide it under an appearance of haughtiness.

"You have no right to speak to me in that way," she said. "I command you to let me pass."

"Not until you have promised to be mine," was the reply.

"I will call for assistance."

Le Clair gave an evil laugh.

"There is no one to hear you," he said. "Before I allow you to pass you must promise to be mine."

He made a step nearer to her as he spoke, and now thoroughly terrified, Agnes raised her voice in an appeal for help.

In an instant the villain had sprung forward and clasped her in his arms.

"No, my beauty!" he cried. "That will not do. You are in my power, and I must have your promise before I consent to release you."

He attempted to press his lips upon her cheek as he finished speaking, but before he could accomplish his purpose the girl was wrested from his grasp and he received a blow behind the ear that felled him to the ground.

The person who had arrived so opportunely was a young man named Harry Stafford. He was the son of a gentleman who owned considerable property in the neighborhood, and he also loved the girl, not with the fierce animal passion of Le Clair, but with a strong, true love.

It was several moments before the discomfited villain recovered from the stunning effect of the blow he had received, and though his first impulse had been to rush upon his assailant and grapple with him, he refrained, well knowing Harry's fame as an amateur athlete, and instead uttered the threat:

"I will have your life for this!"

"Calm yourself, Miss Aylward," Harry said, as the villain disappeared among the trees. "Sit down for a few moments and rest. When you are sufficiently recovered, if you will allow me, I will escort you home."

He led the girl to a mossy stone a few yards away, and seated herself upon it, in a few minutes she was sufficiently recovered to offer her thanks to the young man who had so opportunely come to her assistance.

"Do not mention it, I beg," he answered. "I only did what any gentleman would have done under the circumstances. How could I do less when the lady was my friend?"

He paused a moment or two, and then added:

"I may call you so, may I not?"

"Oh, yes," Agnes answered, and from the look upon her face, and the tone of her voice, Harry's hopes that he might some day call her by a dearer name were raised considerably.

When he parted with her at the door of her uncle's house, had it not been for the thought that it might look like trading on the service he had rendered her, he would have asked the momentous question then and there, but on that account he refrained.

Harry was not given to melancholy brooding, and Le Clair's threat, after a day or two, passed from his mind;

but he was destined to have it recalled to his memory in a terrible manner.

As has already been stated, he had won considerable reputation as an amateur athlete. As a bicyclist, also, he had carried off the prize in several competitions, and he was at present practicing for another race soon to come off.

His usual practicing place was a stretch of highway but little frequented, and leading along the bank of the river.

It ran past the farm on which the elder Le Clair kept his zoological collection, and if ever a thought of Lou's threat crossed Harry's mind, it was when he was passing it.

On the third evening after he had saved Agnes from the villain's insults, as Harry was passing the farm he heard a fierce growl, and at the same time the sound of some heavy body breaking through the bushes that skirted the road.

The next moment a huge specimen of a Bengal tiger sprang into the highway, not a dozen yards behind where the young man was proceeding leisurely along on his bicycle.

Almost at the same instant came a peal of mocking laughter.

As he heard it a cold chill ran through Harry's frame. In an instant he understood its meaning.

Lou Le Clair was putting his threat into execution, and in a way fiendish in conception as it was ingenious.

The villain had released the tiger, and utilizing his wonderful power over the brute creation, had led him to the side of the highway just at the time he knew Harry would be passing.

Of course he would make it appear that the fierce brute had broken out of his cage, and no blame could be attached to any one.

With the rapidity of lightning these thoughts flashed through Harry's mind, and involuntarily the action of his limbs quickened.

Like a living thing the bicycle sprang ahead, and not for several seconds did the young man dare to look behind him.

Then he saw that the tiger was still following.

He had gained a few yards upon the fierce brute, however, and the fact made him redouble his exertions to still further distance him.

The speed of the bicycle became terrific. It was a veritable race for life.

Again, after a few moments, Harry looked around, and he saw that the tiger still was following, and the distance between them had not increased.

Even if he could keep it from decreasing, it would be something, but that was impossible.

His strength, strained as he was now straining it, could not hold out long, while a stone or rut in the road might throw the bicycle off the track, and leave him wholly at the mercy of the fierce brute that was following him.

Still he went on. Suddenly an idea struck him. A wild, almost mad, idea, it is true, but it was his only hope.

A short distance, a quarter of a mile or so, ahead of him was a narrow line branching from the highway, and

running direct to a precipitous bluff overlooking the river.

The lane was seldom used, except by visitors, for the bluff commanded a beautiful view, and it was comparatively smooth and level.

On he went until the lane was reached; then he suddenly turned into it.

The action gave him a momentary advantage over the tiger, who had not been prepared for it, but only momentarily, for the lane was more uneven than the highway had been, and exert himself as he would, he could not keep up his original speed.

Slowly but steadily the tiger gained upon him, until the bicyclist was within half a dozen feet of the edge of the bluff.

Then, with a terrific roar, the fierce brute sprang upon him.

Harry heard his heavy body come bounding through the air, and then he swung the bicycle around and ran it along within a foot or two of the brink.

As he did so he felt one of the tigers' claws strike him on the shoulder, and his claws enter his flesh. Then its huge body flew past him, headlong over the edge of the cliff.

His desperate idea had proved successfully, but only by a second; another, and he must have been carried with the tiger over the cliff, and been dashed into a shapeless mass upon the rocks below.

The reaction of his feeling was such that he nearly fainted; but after a few moment the dizziness passed away, and he examined his wounded arm.

It was but a mere scratch, after all, and binding it up as well as possible, he again mounted his bicycle and rode slowly homeward.

But the experiences of the day were not yet ended. As he reached the Le Clair farm, almost at the very spot from which the tiger had sprung forth, he heard a stifled cry for help. It was a woman's voice, but sounded faintly, as if she were being strangled.

In an instant he had leaped from the bicycle and plunged into the bushes.

Then he saw that his surmise had been correct, and the cry for help had been uttered by a woman, who was struggling in the grasp of a man.

He recognized them both. The one was the girl he loved, and the other was the villain Lou Le Clair.

In an instant he had sprung forward, and, heedless of his wound, seized the miscreant by the throat.

A short struggle ensued, and then Le Clair attempted to draw a revolver. His finger was on the trigger when Harry seized his wrist and forced back his arm. As he did so, the weapon was discharged, and with a single cry of mortal agony Le Clair fell back a corpse, the bullet having entered his temple and pierced his brain.

When the facts of the case became known, none could think of attaching any blame to Harry. Indeed, it was quite the reverse; and Le Clair's fate was regarded as a righteous retribution for his evil deeds. Harry and Agnes were soon after married, and though they are some years older now, neither can recall without a shudder the incidents we have narrated of their terrible experience.

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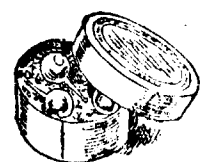
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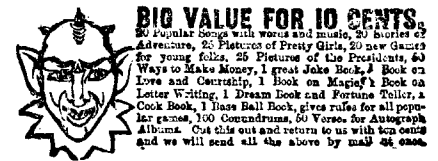
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**THE MAGIC WALLET**  
 Lots of fun can be had with it, puzzling people, while being used in a practical way to carry bank bills, letters, invoices, etc. Open with the straight bands on the left, lay a bill on top of bands, close wallet; open to the left, and the bill will be found under the crossed bands. Close wallet, open to the right, and the bill will be found under straight bands. How did it get there? That's the question. Price, 12 cents each, postpaid.



**HINDOO FLOWER-POT TRICK**  
 With this trick you can make a plant grow right up in a flower-pot, before the eyes of your audience. An ordinary empty earthen flower-pot is handed to the spectators for examination. A handkerchief is then placed over it, and you repeat a few magic words, and wave your wand over it. When the handkerchief is removed there is a beautiful plant, apparently in full bloom, in the pot. Full directions with each outfit. Price, 15 cents by mail, postpaid.  
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**FIFFL**



Also known as a Japanese butterfly. A pleasing novelty enclosed in an envelope. When the envelope is opened Fiff will fly out through the air for several yards. Made of colored paper to represent a butterfly.

By six inches wide. Price, 10c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**VANISHING CIGAR.**



This cigar is made in exact imitation of a good one. It is held by a rubber cord which, with the attached safety pin, is fastened on the inside of the sleeve. When offered to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

**JAPANESE TWIRLER.**



A wonderful imported paper novelty. By a simple manipulation of the wooden handles a number of beautiful figures can be produced. It takes on several combinations of magnificent colors. Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**SPRING TOPS**

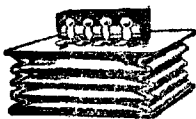


Something new for the boys. A top you can spin without a string. This is a decided novelty. It is of large size, made of brass, and has a heavy balance rim. The shank contains a powerful spring and has an outer casing. The top of the shank has a milled edge for winding it up. When wound, you merely lift the outer casing, and the top spins at such a rapid speed that the balance rim keeps it going a long time. Without doubt the handsomest and best top on the market.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

**LITTLE ACCORDEONS**



The smallest, cheapest, and best sounding musical instrument for the price. This perfect little accordion has four keys and eight notes, a complete scale, upon which you can play almost any tune. It is about 5 x 2 1/2 inches in size, and is not a toy, but a practical and serviceable accordion in every respect; with ordinary care it will last for years, and produces sweet music and perfect harmony. Anyone can learn to play it with very little practice.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**THE NEW FROG JOKER.**



Bushels of fun! "Froggy" has got a very croaking and rasping voice, and when held in the hollow of the hand and made to croak, one instinctively looks around for a bullfrog. An amusing joke can be played on your friends by passing the ratchet-wheel of the frog down their coat-sleeve or the back of their coat. The ripping, tearing noise gives them a severe shock, and they have a sigh of relief when they find that their clothes are sound and whole as before. A good joke is to make a gentleman's or lady's watch a stem winder. With the frog concealed in your hand, you take the stem of the watch between your thumb and finger, and at the same time allow the ball of your thumb to pass over the ratchet-wheel of the frog, when to the company you will seem to be winding the watch, but the noise will startle them, for 'twill sound more like winding Barnum's steam callopo than a watch, and you can keep winding indefinitely. The possessor of one of these Frog Jokers can have any amount of fun with it. It is made of bronze metal and will never wear out. Do not fail to send for one. Price, 10c., 3 for 25c. by mail, post-paid; one dozen by express, 75c.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

**Ayvad's Water-Wings**

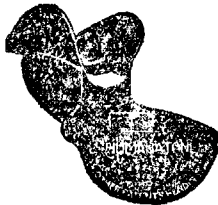


**Learn to swim by one trial**

Price 85 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two wings on the inside of the mouthpieces.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

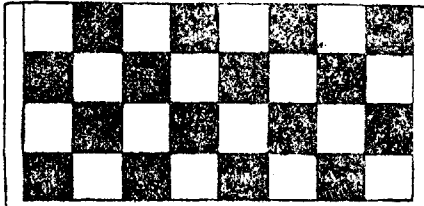


**HUMANATONE.**

The improved Humanatone. This flute will be found to be the most enjoyable article ever offered; nickel plated, finely polished; each put up in a box with full instruction how to use them. Price, 18c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St. N. Y.

**LITTLE CHECKER BOARDS.**



Price 7 cents each by mail. They are made of durable colored cardboard, fold to the size of 6 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches, and are so handy in size that they can be carried in the pocket. They contain 24 red and black checkers, and are just as serviceable as the most expensive boards made. The box and lid can be fastened together in a moment by means of patent joints in the ends. Full directions printed on each box.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

**DOUBLE CLAPPERS**



They are handsomely made of white wood, 6 inches long, with carefully rounded edges. On each side a steel spring is secured, with flat leaden discs at the ends. They produce a tremendous clatter, and yet they can be played even better than the most expensive bones used by minstrels. The finest article of its kind on the market. Price 7 cents a pair, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**LIGHTNING TRICK BOX.**



A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the nearest and best cheap trick ever invented.

Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**CARTER AEROPLANE No. 1.**



Will fly on a horizontal line 150 feet! Can be flown in the house, and will not injure itself nor anything in the room. The most perfect little aeroplane made. The motive power is furnished by twisted rubber bands contained within the tubular body of the machine. It is actuated by a propeller at each end revolving in opposite directions. Variation in height may be obtained by moving the planes and the balance weight. It can be made to fly either to the right or the left by moving the balance sideways before it is released for flight. Price, 35c. each, delivered.

L. Sazanow, 247 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

**LITTLE RIP'S TEN-PINS.**



In each set there are ten pins and two bowling balls, packed in a beautifully ornamented box. With one of these miniature sets you can play ten-pins on your dining-room table just as well as the game can be played in a regular alley. Every game known to professional bowlers can be worked with these pins. Price, 10c. per box by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

**FIGHTERS.**



A brand new idea for amusement. They consist of small cardboard figures of soldiers, Indians, swordsmen, etc., and are mounted on wires. The moment you twist the wires between the little figures, they instantly become animated, and charge at each other in the most astonishing manner. No end of fun with these toys. Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**BUBBLE BLOWER.**



With this device, a continuous series of bubbles can be blown. It is a wooden, cigar-shaped blower, enclosing a small vial, in which there is a piece of soap. The vial is filled with water, and a peculiarly perforated cork is inserted. When you blow in to the mouthpiece, it sets up a hydraulic pressure through the cork perforations and causes bubble after bubble to come out. No need of dipping into water once the little bottle is filled. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

J. KENNEDY, 303 W. 127th St., N. Y.

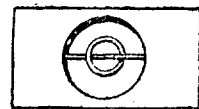
**HALF MASKS.**



False-faces beaten a mile! There are 7 in a set and represent an Indian, a Japanese girl, a clown, Foxy Grandpa, an English Johnny Atkins and an Automobile. Beautifully lithographed in handsome colors on a durable quality of cardboard. They have eyeholes and string perforations. Price, 6c. each, or the full set of 7 for 25c., postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**MYSTIC PUZZLE**



The newest and most novel puzzle on the market. It consists of a flat piece of wood 1 1/2 x 3 inches, neatly covered with imitation leather. The cross-bar and ring in the hole are nickel-plated. The object is to get the small ring off the bar. It absolutely cannot be done by anyone not in the secret. More fun to be had with it than with any other puzzle made. It is not breakable and can be carried in the vest pocket.

Price 10 cents each by mail, post-paid

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn., N. Y.

**TABLE RAISING TRICK**

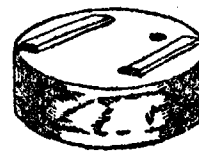


The most mystifying trick ever done by a magician. The performer shows a plain light table. He places his hand flat upon its top. The table clings to his hand as if glued there. He may swing it in the air, but the table will not leave his hand until he sets it on the floor again. The table can be inspected to show that there are no strings or wires attached.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**MUSICAL SEAT**



The best joke out. You can have more fun than a circus, with one of these novelties. All you have to do is to place one on a chair seat (hidden under a cushion, if possible). Then tell your friend to sit down. An unearthly shriek from the little round drum will send your victim up in the air, the most puzzled and astonished mortal on earth. Don't miss getting one of these genuine laugh producers. Perfectly harmless, and never misses doing its work.

Price 20 cents each, by mail, post-paid

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## "Secret Service"

NEW YORK, JUNE 21, 1912.

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### ITEMS WORTH READING

Magnetic properties are not confined to iron. Alloys made from various combinations of metals—copper, manganese, tin, aluminum, bismuth and some others—show more or less marked magnetism. Recent work has shown that the highest amount of magnetic power among ironless alloys is obtained by mixtures of copper and manganese plus either aluminum or tin. It is difficult to explain why such alloys should be magnetic.

Die Woche, one of the most widely circulated of German magazines, publishes some figures which explain how it is that German toys can be sold in America so much more cheaply than similar articles made here. For example: Makers of toy guns are paid less than 5 cents an hour. Women who paint lead soldiers make about \$1.20 a week, and supply their own brushes, colors and light. A carpenter who makes dolls' furniture earns from \$1 to \$3 a week, according to his skill.

If you see a man with hard lumps or corns on the back of his fingers, just at the bottom of the first joint and particularly well marked on the little finger, you may be pretty sure that he is a harnessmaker. The corns are caused by the thread used rubbing across the backs of the fingers, and they appear on both hands, for in sewing harness both hands are used alternately. The saddlemaker also has a distinctive hand. It is strong and well developed, with characteristic corns on the palm at the roots of the fingers. His nails are usually split, broken down or otherwise injured.

With reference to the announcement that camels' flesh is being served in Parisian restaurants as a delicacy of the season, a writer in a Paris contemporary, in a reminiscent mood, refers to the days of the siege. At that time any animal food was acceptable, and the Jardins d'Acclimation et des Plantes were unable to find food for their animals. Four camels were killed, and the flesh formed part of the menus of the restaurants of the day. But the writer declares that, having had a period of forty years to reflect, he has no desire to renew his acquaintance with the flesh of the ship of the desert.

Those who say that the Chinese have never been fighters speak without the book. The world's first book of war was written by a Chinaman. But China is a peace-loving country and enters the family of great powers as moderator of the assembly. China realizes two things—first, that her own prosperity depends on the preservation of peace, and, second, that the world's prosperity depends on peace. During the negotiations between the Republicans and the Manchus the former actually proposed that peace should be established first, and details left to The Hague tribunal. When Yuan Shih Kai was recalled to Peking the first thing he proposed was peace between the two factions. This is the temper of the people.

### WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS

Autoist (as he dodges another chicken on the pike)—I wonder what makes all those chickens get into the middle of the road? "I don't know," replied his friend, "unless they go there to lay the dust."

She—Isn't it lovely? Papa consents. He—Does he, really? She—Yes. He wanted to know who you were, and I told him you were tape clerk at Scrimp & Co.'s, and he seemed really pleased. He—I am delighted. She—Yes, and he said we could be married just as soon as you were taken into the firm.

Henry was very proud of the new kittens, and went for them to show them to the visitors. His mother heard them coming along the hall, and, alarmed at the noise of the procession, called out: "Don't hurt the kittens, Henry." "No, mother," came the reassuring answer, "I'm carrying them carefully by the stems."

"Say, old man," remarked one of his neighbors, "why have you given your home a new name? What was the matter with 'The Nutshell?'" "Why," responded the man, with some warmth. "Because I was tired of being joked. There isn't a boy for a mile around who hasn't stopped and rung the door-bell every time he passed to ask if the colonel was in."

A Highland minister, who was rather a pompous gentleman, came to a shepherd's house to baptize a child. "Are you prepared?" he asked the fond parent. "Ou, ay, munnister; I have got a grand ham for tea." "I mean spiritually prepared," thundered the cleric. "Af coorse I am; oh, yes. I got two bottles o' first class whiskey from the inn," replied the imperturbable Celt.

Friend—Doesn't the ride back and forth in the country every day seem long? Mr. Suburb—Long? It's too short. When I take the train in the morning I know I've got to pitch in and work like a horse the moment the train reaches the city. That makes the ride seem too short, doesn't it? Friend—I presume it does. But how about the ride back? Mr. Suburb—Well, I always remember after I start that I've forgotten something my wife wanted particularly, so that ride is always over too quickly.



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