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# WILD WEST

## WEEKLY.

### YOUNG WILD WEST OR ARIETTA AND THE BAND OF TEN AFTER THE "VULTURES"

AND OTHER STORIES

By An Old Scout



"Tell them to bring the girl here," Wild whispered, as he pointed his gun at the prisoner. "Do as I say, or you'll die!" "This way with her," the outlaw called, raising his free hand and beckoning.

FRANK JOSEY  
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# WILD WEST WEEKLY

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## YOUNG WILD WEST AFTER THE "VULTURES"

OR,

### ARIETTA AND THE BAND OF TEN

By AN OLD SCOUT

#### CHAPTER I.

##### YOUNG WILD WEST HEARS OF THE "VULTURES."

A few years ago there was a hustling mining camp located in San Miguel County, Colorado.

The camp, which had sprung up like a mushroom and had flourished for more than six months, was quite near to the Utah line and lay in a little valley through which a rather wide but shallow stream flowed.

Gold dust had been taken out in large quantities, but mostly it was placer mining, and this, as the more experienced prospectors claim, will not last any great length of time.

However, occasionally the mother lode is located by following up a dry water-course to the place where the dust is washed from.

In two or three instances men had located these mother lodes, and hence the flourishing condition of Shinbone Bar, which was the name that had been given to the camp.

There was no railroad within many miles of the place, and hence the only means of getting to it from the towns and other mining camps that were scattered about in that region of the Rockies was by stagecoach or horseback.

It happened that there was quite a town located something like thirty-five miles to the east of Shinbone Bar.

There was a big smelter here, and here it was that the majority of the rich ore the miners took from the earth was sent to go through the first process of refining.

Naturally there was a trail that was traveled from one place to the other, and as was very often the case, especially at the time of which we write, there were frequent hold-ups and robberies along the trail.

The name of the town just referred to was Jackson, and here it was that the county buildings were located.

Of course, the names of the two places have been changed since, but we simply give it as it was at the time our story opens.

It happened that in the forenoon of a bleak November day Young Wild West, the well-known Boy Hero and Champion Deadshot of the West, rode into Jackson with his two partners and the girls who traveled with him on his adventurous trips through the wildest part of the region known as the Wild West in quest of excitement and adventure.

It was the first time any of them had ever visited this particular spot, for they had been pretty well through the whole State of Colorado, as well as the other States and Territories comprising the Rocky Mountain region.

Attired in their fancy hunting and riding suits, the party made a pleasing as well as picturesque appearance as they rode up the sandy street that ran with remarkable straightness through the little town.

Good-sized structures were on either side of it, and by the number of the stores and public places it was quite evident that it was a sort of center for quite a surrounding territory.

Our friends were so well known throughout that part of the country that it was not strange that they should be recognized by several men who were loitering in front of the Globe Hotel, which was the leading hostelry of the town.

"Here comes Young Wild West!" a rough-looking man with unkempt hair and beard called out excitedly, and then as the party rode up and came to a halt they were quickly surrounded by as many as a dozen.

"Hooray for Young Wild West!" the man who made the announcement shouted, waving his hat. "He's the whitest boy that ever lived, an' I reckon he's jest the one that Jesse Morgan would like to see now."

Even those who had never heard of the dashing young deadshot joined in the cheer that followed.

Young Wild West looked on smilingly, for he was used to that sort of thing, though it must be said that he never got what is called a "swelled head," no matter how much flattery was showered upon him.

His two partners, Cheyenne Charlie, the ex-government scout, and Jim Dart, a Wyoming boy, were quite like him in this respect, and they sat in the saddle and looked on calmly, while the girls appeared to be only slightly amused at the ovation.

The girls, we might as well say, were Arietta Murdock, the golden-haired sweetheart of our hero; Eloise Gardner, Jim Dart's sweetheart; and Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie.

It must be mentioned right here that with the party were two Chinamen, brothers, named Hop Wah and Wing Wah.

These were hired as servants.

Wing did the cooking, and Hop was called the handy man, though it was never a great deal of work that he had to do.

But he was really quite a character, as will be found later on.

"Gentlemen," Young Wild West said, in the cool and easy way that had helped make him famous, as he nodded to the crowd before him, "I reckon this place is called Jackson."

"Right yer are, Young Wild West," one of them answered, quickly. "It's an all right town, too. Maybe it ain't as big as Denver, but it will be afore very long, an' you kin bet on that."

"I hope it will," and the boy laughed lightly as he glanced on either side at the rows of buildings. "But say, my friend, who is Jesse Morgan? I believe that man standing there remarked that he would be glad to see me."

"Why, Jesse Morgan is the sheriff of San Miguel County. Ain't never heard of him, eh? He was only elected last year, an' he's been doin' great work. But he's got a mighty tough job on his hands now, an' that's why I thought he would be

glad to see you. You have got a reputation of huntin' down road agents an' outlaws, I believe."

"I don't know how much of a reputat'on I have got in that line, but one thing I'll tell you, my friend, I am always glad to break up such bands. There is nothing like pushing civilization, you know, and we are the ones to help it out every time."

"Here comes the sheriff now," a voice called out from the rear of the crowd, and then all eyes turned up the street.

A tall, lanky man with an extra wide-brimmed hat on his head and a pair of heavy revolvers hanging at either hip was walking toward the hotel with long strides.

Others were now seen hurrying to the spot, too, for the picturesque party had attracted their attention from a distance.

Sitting on the back of his clean-limbed sorrel stallion, Spitfire, Young Wild West calmly looked around.

He turned to his sweetheart, who was mounted upon a cream-white broncho, and said:

"Well, Et, it seems that we usually find someone who knows us wherever we go."

"That's right, Wild," Arietta answered, with a smile. "But there's nothing strange about that. Aren't we on the go all the year round, and don't we visit all parts of the West?"

"Yes, that's true enough. But we haven't seen one-tenth of it yet, and I mean to see it all if I live long enough."

"So do I, Wild. When I first started out to make the long horseback rides with you I didn't like it very much. But now I hardly think I could be satisfied to live in a house the year round and never run into danger. It's the same with Anna and Eloise. I am very glad that Charlie married Anna, and that she told him he must either settle down or else take her with him. If that hadn't happened neither Eloise or myself would have been with you nearly all the time."

Their conversation was cut short, for just then Sheriff Morgan came up.

Two or three had gone to meet him, and no doubt they had told him who the strangers were, for with a smile of welcome on his rugged face, he pushed his way straight to the sorrel stallion, and holding out his hand, said:

"Shake, Young Wild West. I'm mighty glad to meet yer. Two or three times I've been talkin' about yer, an' it seems like as if a streak of good luck has suddenly hit me. You're jest the boy I want. I'd like to swear yer in as a deputy right away."

"Never mind about doing that, sheriff," the boy answered, with a smile. "I am not of age yet, and therefore I could hardly serve in the capacity of a deputy sheriff. But that makes no difference. Possibly I can help you out. Just tell me what the trouble is."

"Yer ain't heard, then?" and the sheriff looked at him in surprise.

"No, we just struck the trail that run in here about an hour ago, and we met only one man who was riding along to the south. He was a cowboy, and he informed us that the name of this town is Jackson."

"He informed yer jest right, Young Wild West. That's the name, an' it's a good one, too. Old man Jackson is dead an' gone, but he was the first one as settled here, an' it ain't no more than right that the place should be named for him. But I'll tell yer what's the trouble. At the end of this here street, which you kin see right up there, the trail what goes over to Shinbone Bar starts. It's a putty rough sort of trail, though there's quite a lot of travelin' done on it. Well, there's a gang of road agents what calls themselves the Vultures located somewhere along that trail, an' there's jest ten of 'em. Some calls 'em the Band of Ten. That is the gang I want to git, an' try as I might, I ain't been able to do it yet."

"Oh, I see," and the young deadshot showed that he was considerably interested. "They've been making life miserable for travelers and the owners of the stagecoach line, I suppose?"

"That's jest what they've been doin', Young Wild West. You guessed it the first time."

"There's nothing strange in that, sheriff," the boy said, in his cool and easy way. "Many times we have found just such conditions. It is a common thing for bands of outlaws and road agents to locate themselves along trails where there is quite a little traveling done. Have they cleaned up much in the way of money and valuables since they have been at the business here?"

"I should say they had. Things has got to sich a state that the stagecoach never goes over unless it has three extra men armed with carbines. A lot of money is carried back an' forth, you know, an' it's necessary to guard it. There's been

three drivers shot in the last four months, but never one has one of the Vultures been downed or caught. They're mighty bold in their way of do'n' things, too, an' when they show themselves they've generally got the heads of vultures fixed up with a lot of feathers on their heads, with mash hangin' down to cover the upper part of their faces. I s'pose they ain't nothing more than caps that's rigged up that way, but they say they look like fiends with 'em on."

"You haven't seen them yourself, then, sheriff?"

"No, I ain't. But I've looked for 'em lots of times. It ain't my luck, it seems. Every time I go out with half a dozen deputies there ain't no Vultures to be found. As I said afore there's s'posed to be jest ten of 'em. They give it out that way, anyhow. Here's somethin' that was pinned to a tree about twenty miles from here along the trail. The driver of the stagecoach brought it over yesterday when he come from Shinbone Bar."

The sheriff took a piece of brown paper from the pocket of his coat, and unfolding it, handed it to the boy on the sorrel stallion.

Wild, as he was always called by his friends and acquaintances, looked it over quickly and read the following, which was in a scrawling hand:

"Look out for the Vultures. The Band of Ten is always ready for business. Catch us if you can."

"What do you think of that, Young Wild West?" Sheriff Morgan asked, as the boy handed the paper to Cheyenne Charlie.

"It seems that these fellows are pretty bold," was the reply. "That is what you might call an open defiance. But I reckon they can be caught, all right."

"I told yer so," someone in the crowd shouted. "Young Wild West is the boy to ketch the Vultures, sheriff. Hooray, hooray!"

Then there was more cheering, and the sheriff was forced to hold up his hand for silence.

When Charlie had scanned the inscription on the piece of brown paper he gave it to Jim Dart, who in turn let the girl read it.

Arietta was the last one to take it, and just as she was about to hand it back to the sheriff a piping voice from the rear called out:

"Me wantee see, Misse Alietta."

"What's that?" the sheriff cried, looking surprised.

Then Hop Wah, one of the two Chinamen, rode forward on his piebald cayuse, and taking off his hat, made a profound bow.

"Me allee samee velly smartee Chine. Me wantee lead up paper."

"Kin you read, heathen?" the sheriff asked, doubtfully.

"Me lead allee samee likee Melican man, so be. Me go to Sunday School in 'Flisco, and me learnee evelything."

"Well, jest read that, then," and taking the paper from the girl, the sheriff handed it to the heathen.

"Me undelstandee," Hop declared, as he quickly handed it back. "Allee samee birds; ten bad Melican men. Holdee a pee evelybody whattee come 'long. Stealee plenty monee. Shotee quicke and len hidee in um cave. Me undelstand."

"I reckon yer do, heathen," and the chief official of the county looked quite surprised.

The fact was that Hop could read considerably, though he could not seem to make much headway in mastering the English language.

His pidgin-English was understood pretty well, however, and it made little or no difference.

"How about the other heathen?" the sheriff asked, turning to Young Wild West.

"Oh, he don't want to read it," was the reply. "Wing is a very easy-going sort of fellow. He is our cook, and a good one, too. Hop is different. He wants to know everything that's going on, and I don't mind saying that he is often a very great help to us."

"What kin he do?"

"A little of everything. But maybe he'll show you something of what he can do a little later on. I reckon we'll stay here and have dinner. Then we'll strike out along the trail for Shinbone Bar. What sort of a camp is it over there, anyhow?"

"A mighty lively one. Things is boomin' over there, an' that's what helps this little town along a whole lot. Ain't thinkin' of goin' over there to stake out claims, are you?"

"Oh, no. We have done about all that sort of thing we

had to do for a while. You see, we either own or are interested in mines in different parts of the country, and the income we derive is more than sufficient to pay our expenses, so we can ride about wherever we want to and enjoy ourselves thoroughly.

"So I heard tell," spoke up the man who had first called out that Young Wild West was coming. "You ain't never satisfied unless you're into some kind of a scrimmage with outlaws or bad redskins. Always on the jump an' doin' good for your country."

"You know all about Young Wild West, it seems, Ike," the sheriff said, with a grin.

"I know as much about him as anyone does what never seen him afore, an' I'll bet on it," was the reply.

"I reckon yer do, 'cause I've heard yer say so myself. But it's all right now. Young Wild West is goin' to stop here at the Globe Hotel, an' then he says he's goin' to strike out for Shabone Bar. If it happens that the Vultures show up afore he gits there there'll be some lively happenin's, an' that'sartin. I reckon I'll go along with him."

The sheriff now walked toward the door of the hotel, and was quickly met by a man who was evidently the proprietor.

"Jack," he said, "here's Young Wild West with his pards an' the gals an' two heathens. They want a mighty good dinner here. Jest see to it that they git it, too, an' charge it to me."

"All right, sheriff," was the reply. "Whatever you says has got to go. Jest let the ladies git off their horses an' go right into the parlor. I'll send a couple of men around to the stable to git things ready for the horses. They'll want somethin' to eat putty soon, as well as them what's been ridin' 'em."

Young Wild West gave a satisfied nod when he heard this, and leaping from the back of the sorrel, he turned and assisted his sweetheart to dismount.

Charlie and Jim followed his example in this direction, and Anna and Eloise were quickly upon the ground.

Then all three walked to the regular entrance of the hotel, the door of which was opened for them before they got to it by no less a personage than the wife of the proprietor.

Our hero and his partners then led the horses around to the rear of the building, where the stable was located, the two Chinamen following and leading the pack-horses that carried the camping outfit and supplies.

They were not long in satisfying themselves that the horses would receive proper care, and then our hero and his partners went on back to the front of the hotel.

They had barely got there when two horsemen came riding up.

"Hello, sheriff!" one of them called out, as he waved his hand to the county official. "You're not out after the Vultures this morning, I see."

"No, Cap," was the reply. "But I'll be after 'em this afternoon, you kin bet."

"You will, eh? Well, I hope you get them. They are pretty slippery customers, this Band of Ten."

"Yes, but I've got someone to help me now that will soon fix things up in proper shape. You have heard tell of Young Wild West, the Champion Deadshot?"

"Why, yes," and the horseman looked surprised and then turned and shot a glance at his companion.

"Well, there he is right there. He's jest been around to the stable puttin' away his horse. He's goin' to have dinner here, an' then we're going to strike out for Shabone Bar. If them Vultures happen to show up the chances are that there will be less of 'em afore we git through with 'em."

"You think so, eh? Well, I hope you are right. Maybe we can go with you. Rooster Dick is quite a deadshot, you know, and I happen to be pretty good in that line myself."

"Of course you kin go with us, if Young Wild West says so. You have been sworn in as my deputies, an' I reckon your help will come in all right."

"Just introduce me to Young Wild West, will you?"

"Sartin."

Then after the two men had dismounted the sheriff led them over to where Wild was standing with Charlie and Jim.

"Young Wild West, this is Captain Bird, a mighty good feller an' a deadshot," the official said, and Wild accepted the hand of the stranger and gave it a shake.

"This other feller is Rooster Dick, an' he's another good shot."

"Glad to meet them both, I am sure," our hero answered, in his cool and easy way.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were then quickly introduced, and the man called Captain Bird suggested that they go inside and have a drink.

## CHAPTER II.

### WILD ASSERTS HIMSELF RATHER UNEXPECTEDLY.

Being a close student of human nature and one who could judge a man's character by his general appearance and manner of speech, Young Wild West had formed an opinion of the two horsemen almost before he was introduced to them.

His decision was that they were a pair of crafty men, who were not exactly what they appeared to be.

But he, of course, said nothing of his thoughts, not even to his two partners, and went on into the barroom of the hotel with them.

"The best liquor you have got in the house, Jack," Captain Bird called out, as he tossed a buckskin bag that was no doubt partly filled with gold coins upon the bar. "I consider it an honor to be allowed to treat Young Wild West and his partners. I have read not a little about them, and what I have would fill a book. I am more than glad to think that they have come here, for I firmly believe that they will do much toward exterminating the pest that has located somewhere between here and Shabone Bar. It is getting to be so that it isn't safe to ride over the trail any more. I have been robbed twice by the Vultures, and each time I was so taken by surprise that I hadn't the least chance of shooting at them. Of course, I don't believe in putting up a fight when I find myself covered by a gun. Anyone who would try to fight under such circumstances would show himself to be a fool. It is better to lose what money you have got and get away with your life, I think."

"I think so, too, Cap," Sheriff Morgan declared. "Most likely Young Wild West is of the same opinion."

"I certainly am," our hero spoke up, smilingly. "I wouldn't attempt to pull a gun if I found myself looking into the muzzle of one. The fellow holding it surely could press the trigger before I could get mine ready to shoot."

"Ever been fixed that way, Young Wild West?" Captain Bird asked, showing no little curiosity.

"Well, yes. I have seen the time when the muzzle of a gun was looking me squarely in the face. But I always managed to get away alive, though, and I have never yet paid toll to a road agent."

"Maybe toll was never demanded of you."

"Oh, yes, several times."

"But you just said that if you found the muzzle of a gun staring you in the face you would not attempt to pull your own gun."

"Yes, I believe I did say that. But I meant that I wouldn't try to pull the gun before I knocked the gun from the fellow's hand. That's the way I generally do business, you know."

"Oh, I see. You knock the gun from the fellow's hand and then you cover him before he knows what has happened."

"That's about the size of it, Captain Bird."

"Marvellous!" the man exclaimed. "What do you think of that, Rooster?"

"Putty good, I should say," Rooster Dick answered. "He's jest the one to tackle the Vultures, an' no mistake."

"You bet he is, and we'll back him up, too, won't we, sheriff?"

"We sartinly will. But come on, here's the pizen ready for us to drink."

"Oh, yes," and Captain Bird seized the bottle that had been placed upon the bar before him and pushed it toward our hero.

Glasses had been set along the bar in a row, and all that had to be done now was for each one to pour out what he wanted of the liquor.

Young Wild West shook his head, and with a smile pushed the bottle to Cheyenne Charlie, who sat next to him.

The scout gave a nod of satisfaction and poured some of the bottle's contents from the glass.

Jim Dart was next to him, and he was the last one at that end of the bar, so when the scout thrust the bottle back to Captain Bird the latter evinced considerable surprise.

"Wild an' Jim don't drink," Charlie said, with a shake of the head. "I mean by that that they don't take anything strong. Most likely they'll take a little ginger-pop or somethin' like that."

"Don't drink anything strong? What do you think of that, Rooster?"

Captain Bird certainly was really surprised now, if he had not been at any time before.

"That's what I call somewhat aston'ishin'," Rooster Dick declared, shrugging his shoulders. "Of course, they ain't much more than boys, but they're big enough to drink tanglefoot, I think."

"Certainly. If they're big enough to clean up outlaw gangs and run down bad Indians, they surely are big enough to drink whisky."

"The question of size don't count in this case," our hero remarked, in his cool and easy way. "But the fact is that neither Jim nor I have ever tasted liquor, and if we both keep thinking as we do now, we never will. We have found that we can get along very well without it, though neither of us have any objections as to what others may think about it. If you like whisky you have the privilege to drink it, and it is so with everyone else."

"That is a good argument you're putting up," Captain Bird laughingly remarked. "But I think that you ought to break your rule in this case. Everyone here knows me pretty well, and I hardly think you can find a man in Jackson who will say that there is anything really bad about me. I happen to be pretty well fixed, as I struck it rich last fall, and am living on an investment I made. Now just change your mind and take a few drops of the best liquor that's to be found within miles of here."

"I am sorry, Captain Bird, but I wouldn't change my mind for anything. I'll take a little ginger-pop, if you don't mind."

"Give the kid what he wants," Rooster Dick exclaimed, disgustedly. "Maybe all his talk about his bein' sich a wonder with a gun an' all that is only bluff, after all. Anyone as won't take a drink of liquor now an' then sartinly can't amount to much."

"Easy there, Rooster," warned the sheriff. "I wouldn't talk that way if I was you. There ain't no use of makin' Young Wild West mad."

"Oh, I am not getting at all angry," the young deadshot retorted, laughingly. "The man is simply expressing his opinion, and everyone has that right, you know. But I'll tell you all right here that I am not going to take a drink of whisky. I might add that if every man here was to pull a gun at this very minute and threaten to shoot me if I didn't, I would still refuse."

"An' you kin bet your life that he would git out of here alive, too," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up quickly. "It wouldn't make no difference if every galoot in this here barroom was to pull his gun, Young Wild West would be able to take care of himself."

"Listen to that!" exclaimed Captain Bird, and there was a tinge of sarcasm in his voice as he spoke. "That's what I call genuine spunk. All right, Young Wild West. You and Jim Dart are welcome to take anything you like. I am sorry that the discussion has reached this point."

At this juncture, a big lumbering man who had been asleep at a table at the further end of the room, arose and came staggering toward the bar.

Evidently he had heard some of the conversation, for he promptly called out:

"What's all this talk for? I jest heard that kid say that he wouldn't take a drink of whisky not if every man in this here room was coverin' him with a gun. Where I come from they always make a galoot drink when he says he's temperance. Jest give me a glass of liquor, an' I'll soon show yer how I'll make the kid drink it. I've got a mighty cute way about me, an' when I starts to do a thing I always does it."

"Go an' set down, Jerry," called out the sheriff, sharply. "You ain't got no right to interfere here."

"I'll set down when I git good an' ready, sheriff," was the retort. "Don't think that you kin make me set down, either. I ain't doin' nothin' in the way of breakin' the law. You see this?"

He drew an ugly-looking gun as he spoke and turned the muzzle straight at the sheriff's breast.

"Yes, I see it all right," was the reply. "Put it away. You don't want me to lock yer up, do yer?"

"Yer ain't never done that yet, have yer?"

"No, but I've threatened to do it lots of times, an' if it wasn't that you was a putty good feller when you was sober it would have happened long ago."

"That's all right, Jesse. Me an' you is brothers-in-law. You wouldn't want to lock me up, an' I know it. Your wife is my sister, an' she's a mighty good woman, too. If I was half

as good a man as she is a woman, maybe I'd be all right. But I'm glad to be the way I am, an' I don't want you to interfere in this here piece of business at all. That kid has to take a drink of whisky or I'll know the reason why."

"Sheriff," spoke up Wild, sharply, as he raised his hand and motioned him back, "just leave this to me. I have sized up the man up pretty well, and I am satisfied that he is nothing more than a bag of wind. I have met so many bluffers of that sort that I am used to them. I'll take care of him, and won't hurt him much, either. Just you step back and do say a word."

"Thunder!" exclaimed the county official, opening wide his eyes. "I know you're a hummer, Young Wild West, but Jerry is what they call a bad man. I don't mean by that that he would murder or rob anybody, but he's a regular cyclone when he gets drunk, an' he's drunk now."

Jerry, as he was called, swaggered about and frowned as he listened to what was being said.

The fact was he had been very drunk and had awakened from a sort of stupor.

But he had heard enough of what was going on to make him feel as though he ought to take a hand in the game.

He had taken a hand, and now he meant to go through with it.

"Kid," he said, as he fumbled about in his pockets and drew forth a plug of tobacco, "you're a likely lookin' galoot, but I admit. Look as though you might jump over a five rail fence an' not half try. You're plenty big enough to drink tanglefoot. Age don't count, so if you want to stay here an' live in a peaceable way for a while you'll take a drink when I tell yer to."

"See here!" Wild exclaimed, his eyes flashing, while at the same time he motioned for Cheyenne Charlie to keep silent. "I am not going to take a drink of whisky for you or any one else. I believe you heard me say a minute or two ago that I couldn't be compelled to do it. Now, then, you and sit down over in that corner and finish your sleep. I am not in a fit condition to hold an argument."

"I ain't, eh? We'll see about that," and then the man hitched up his trousers and let out a yell that fairly jarred the room, while he brandished his arms wildly about as though he was going to tear everything to pieces.

"Jack," he said, as he recovered his equilibrium, "give me a glass full of whisky; I want it full, understand."

The proprietor hesitated, but Wild gave him a nod, and then he was not long in filling the order.

Jerry again mumbled in his pockets, and finding a silver quarter tossed it on the bar.

"There yer are," he said. "Now then, I'll show yer how to make that kid take a drink of tanglefoot."

Wild was actually smiling now, though those standing about looked on somewhat in surprise and seemed amazed.

The two men called Captain Bird and Rooster Dick seemed greatly interested.

They kept together near the sheriff, and neither said a word, but kept their eyes fixed upon the two principals in the affair.

"Here yer are, kid. There ain't no use of tryin' to crawl out of it. Here's some good old tanglefoot, an' I want you to drink it. If you do it I'll shake hands with yer an' call you true blue."

He stepped a little closer, and then, without the least warning, Wild struck it sharply with his left hand and knocked the glass from his grasp, sending the liquor squarely in his face.

He had no sooner done this when he lowered his head and leaping forward, caught the man by the collar with his left hand, while his right gripped him about the thigh.

A sudden hitch upward, and Jerry went clear to the floor. Then, without pausing for an instant, the young deadshot rushed over to the other side of the room and the bad man was deposited, with a thump, upon the chair he had lately risen from.

"You sit there until I tell you to get up. If you don't I'll fill you full of holes," came the ringing command.

"There!" exclaimed the sheriff, his face beaming with admiration. "That's what I call somethin' a whole lot out of the ordinary. What do you think of that, cap?"

"The boy is certainly strong and active," Captain Bird answered, rather coolly. "But who couldn't handle that fellow like that?"

"Anybody could if he caught him unawares," Rooster Dick remarked.

Wild seldom let his anger get the best of him, but he could not help from making a retort.

"If either of you think that you can handle me in that way, you are welcome to try!" he exclaimed.

"Easy, Young Wild West," and Captain Bird laughed with great coolness. "We didn't say that we could handle you in that way. We were referring to Jerry."

"Well, you said it in a rather sarcastic way, so it makes no difference."

"If I were to try real hard and didn't want to make bad friends with you, I could easily show you how you would be a mere plaything in my hands," the captain said, quietly.

"You could, eh? Well, just forget about the bad friends part of it. I assure you that I won't get the least bit angry if you make a mere plaything of me. To show you that I mean business, and that it will be done in a good-natured sort of way, I'll wager the cigars for all hands that I can throw you over my head, even though I am nothing but a boy."

"He's getting excited, sheriff," the captain said, smilingly. "I have heard it said two or three times that Young Wild West never loses his coolness. But, of course, I am not going to take advantage of what he says. I don't want to excite him so that he will do something rash."

This was a little more than Wild could stand. Springing forward with the quickness of a cat, he seized the man by the collar of his shirt and, with a quick jerk, brought him to the center of the room.

"Now, then, you sneaking coyote!" he exclaimed, his eyes flashing dangerously, "you have either got to throw me out of this room, or I'll throw you out. Get ready!"

Captain Bird stepped back with remarkable quickness and reached for his gun.

No doubt he realized now that he was up against it, so to speak, and that he must act quickly or the boy would make good his threat.

But he did not get the weapon from the holster. Never had Young Wild West been quicker in his whole career.

With a dazzling swiftness he seized the man by the left wrist, and then, with his right hand, caught him by the other arm.

A quick twist and the captain was whirled around like a top, and then, before he knew it, his heels flew up into the air and his back was upon the boy's shoulder, his body perfectly balanced.

"Clear the way there," the young deadshot shouted, and then he made a bee-line for the door.

Almost before the man was able to understand what had happened he was whisked out of the room, and the next thing he knew he landed upon his hands and knees in the dirt, fully six feet from the porch.

"There you are, Captain Bird," Wild said, in his cool and easy way, as he stood on the porch, his arms folded across his breast. "I reckon you went a little too far. I'll admit that you got me roiled somewhat. Now, if you are willing to behave yourself we'll let the matter drop. If you are not, we'll have it out to the finish."

Rooster Dock had been petrified for the space of a couple of seconds, but he now came rushing out as though to interfere.

But a heavy hand gripped him by the shoulder, and when he looked around he saw Cheyenne Charlie holding a revolver close to his head.

"You stand right where you are," the scout said, his eyes flashing dangerously. "You jest try to interfere in this here business an' I'll bore a hole through you in a hurry. No measly coyote like you is goin' to have a thing to say."

"Easy, gentlemen," shouted the sheriff, who seemed to be much disturbed at the way things were going. "This is all a mighty big mistake."

"Maybe it is," Jim Dart spoke up. "But you don't suppose that Young Wild West is going to stand any such nonsense as this. Take it easy, sheriff, and don't say anything more. You are a good fellow, I know, so don't interfere. Everything is bound to come out all right, one way or the other."

"Well, I'll be gum-swizeled!" the county official exclaimed. "I never seen sich a thing afore in all my life. It's a shame that two sich good fellers as Captain Bird an' Rooster Dick should make bad friends with Young Wild West an' his pard."

"Never mind, sheriff," our hero called out, as he nodded to him smilingly. "You can't say that we are making bad friends, when we never were good friends. We were strangers to each other until a few minutes ago, if you recollect. We haven't had time to get friendly."

"Come on in an' have a drink an' we'll call it square," the

sheriff called out. "Young Wild West an' the boy Dart don't have to drink whisky, not when I'm treatin'. They kin take what they like."

Rooster Dick promptly walked inside, though his face was red with anger.

"Come on, Cap," he called out. "What's the use of havin' any more foolin'? Young Wild West is too much for yer, an' that settles it."

"Oh, I know it well enough, Dick," came the retort, as the captain nervously brushed the dirt from his clothing after having risen to his feet. "I was just trying to have a little fun with the boy, that's all. I had no idea that he was going to take it seriously. It's all right; we'll drink with the sheriff and call it square."

### CHAPTER III.

#### TWO OF THE VULTURES.

Wild was as cool as an iceberg when he walked into the bar-room of the hotel.

But, like Charlie and Jim, he was keeping an eye on Captain Bird and Rooster Dick.

All three knew pretty well what sort of men they were now, and they were not going to permit them to steal a march on them.

But neither showed the least indication that they were anything more than ashamed of themselves for what had occurred.

The sheriff treated every one in the house, with the exception of Jerry, the bad man, who had not offered to rise from the chair that Wild had placed him upon.

Some one brought up the subject of the Vultures, the band of ten that was causing so much trouble along the trail to Shinbone Bar, and then it was not long before the sheriff got much interested and asked Wild what time he meant to leave the hotel.

"It all depends upon what time we have our dinner," the boy answered, coolly.

"You're goin' to let me go with you, ain't you?"

"Why, certainly."

"How about Captain Bird an' Rooster Dick?"

"Well, I wouldn't try to stop them if they wish to go along. You claim that they are deputies under you."

"Yes, that's right. They're both wearin' badges."

"All right, then. That settles it."

"I s'pose you're goin' to leave the women folks here at the hotel, ain't yer?"

"Certainly not. They're going with us. We mean to go right on to Shinbone Bar. We want to see what kind of a camp it is. If we are stopped by the Vultures, as they call themselves, there will be a delay. But we'll manage to get there before sunset, I think."

"I don't know about that. It's a good thirty-five miles from here."

"All right, we'll get there after dark, then. It makes little difference. Is there a hotel over there that can accommodate us?"

"Not the kind of a one that would do for the gals," and the sheriff shook his head.

"All right. It's seldom we put up at a hotel when we strike a small mining camp. We generally pitch our tents somewhere and camp, just as if we were a hundred miles away from anything like civilization. I reckon we'll leave here about one o'clock, sheriff."

"You kin do that, all right," spoke up the proprietor of the hotel. "Dinner will be ready at twelve sharp. It's now eighteen minutes past eleven."

"All right. We'll go in and talk to the girls a while, and when the dinner-bell rings you can bet we'll be on hand. Come on, boys."

So saying the young deadshot went out by the front way, and his two partners followed him.

They had scarcely left the room when Hop Wah, who was sometimes called Young Wild West's clever Chinese, entered the barroom by a rear door.

He came in bowing and smiling, and instantly all eyes were turned upon him.

While it was not common to see Chinamen in Jackson, the general run of them were very meek, and kept aloof from those who hung about or visited the barrooms.

To see this Chinaman come in smiling just as though he owned the building was quite enough to arouse the ire of some of those present.

Captain Bird and Rooster Dick looked surprised at first, but quickly ignored Hop entirely.

"Velly nicee day," the clever Chinese said, smilingly, as he made a brief bow. "Me velly smartee Chinese. Me likee havee lillee tanglefoot."

"Easy, heathen," the sheriff spoke up, rather sharply. "Don't you go to gittin' fresh around here, 'cause the boys don't like anything like that. I know you're with Young Wild West, but that don't say that you're goin' to walk in here jest as if you owned the whole town."

"Whattée mattee?" Hop asked, innocently. "Me wantee lillee dlink of tanglefoot. Me gottee money, and me pay velly muchee quickee."

"That ain't the thing. If you want a drink go on an' git it. But don't go to grinnin' at everybody here."

"Allee light, Mislér Sheliff," the heathen answered, showing that he knew who he was talking to, and then he walked up to the bar and deposited a silver dollar upon it, causing it to ring as he let it drop heavily.

As the coin settled upon the bar he picked it up again and threw it down harder still.

This time it rolled over and hit Rooster Dick on the arm. With a quick brush of his hand he sent the silver dollar flying across the room.

"Go an' pick it up, heathen, an' then git out of here!" he exclaimed, angrily.

"Allee light," was the bland reply. "Me gittee velly muchee quickee."

Then, as he started to go after the coin, Rooster Dick gave him a kick which sent him along in a hurry.

But the Chinaman only laughed, and picking up the silver dollar, he came back as smiling as ever.

But before he got to the bar he gave a sneeze, and then cries of astonishment went up, for apparently hanging from his nose was a long string of sausages.

"Whattée mattee?" the Chinaman exclaimed, making out that he broke them loose from his nose and holding the string up so every one could get a good view of it. "Velly stlange, so be."

This was quite enough to make the majority of those present have an entirely different opinion of him.

"Well, I swan!" exclaimed the sheriff, his eyes bulging from their sockets. "Did you ever see anything like that? The heathen sneezed them sausages right from his nose."

Hop slowly turned until he had gone completely around, and then he dropped the string of sausages upon the floor and brought his feet sharply upon them.

There was a report as loud as a gunshot, and then the sausages had disappeared.

"Velly funny, so be," he declared, rubbing his eyes and shaking his head as though he was much puzzled. "Now, len, me havee lillee dlink of tanglefoot."

Down came the silver dollar upon the bar again.

"Here you are, heathen," the proprietor said, when he had found the use of his tongue. "Go ahead an' take a drink. You're sartinly the funniest Chinese I ever seen. What did you do just then, anyhow?"

"Me no undelstand," was the reply.

Hop poured out his drink, and no one offered to interfere with him.

He swallowed the liquor, and then pushed the coin toward the man behind the bar.

As Jack, as he was called, reached for it it suddenly disappeared, while Hop was looking toward the door, as though interested in something that was going on outside.

"Where's that dollar you had, heathen?" came the query.

"Whattée mattee?"

"I don't know what's the matter, but that dollar disappeared mighty quick from the bar."

Hop pushed his way past half a dozen men, and ran around behind the bar.

Then he stooped down suddenly and picked the silver dollar from the floor, or appeared to do so, rather, for, of course, he did not.

"You wantee me puttee in um diawer?" he asked, grinning at the surprised proprietor.

"Yes," was the quick retort. "Go ahead," and the drawer was opened immediately.

The coin was heard to drop among the silver the drawer contained.

But when Jack looked for it it was not there.

"What are you tryin' to do, anyhow, heathen?" he demanded.

"It jest happens that I ain't got a silver dollar in the drawer. There's quarters an' halves in there, but there ain't a dollar to

be seen. You dropped it in there, I know, but where is it now?"

"Me no undelstand," the clever Chinese answered, with a shake of the head. "Maybe you gottee in you pocket."

"No, I ain't. I ain't got no such thing as a hard dollar about me."

"Allee light," and Hop backed around until he was in front of the bar again. "Me bettee you dlinks lat you gottee um dollée in you pockee."

"I'll take the bet."

"What is the use of fooling with this fellow?" Captain Bird spoke up. "I can see perfectly well that he is playing a little sleight-of-hand upon us. He may be a pretty smart Chinese after all. Jack, if he says you have got a silver dollar in your pocket, you can make up your mind that he is telling the truth."

"Maybe you would like to bet that I've got one there, cap?"

"I certainly would like to bet you."

"How much will you bet?"

"Well, I'll wager ten dollars that you have."

Hop grinned, and worked his way up close to the side of the captain.

What he did no one saw, but he certainly dropped something into the man's coat-pocket.

Jack counted out ten dollars and Captain Bird covered it.

"Now, then, let somebody go through me, an' if I've got a silver dollar anywhere on me you win, cap," he said. "The Chinese wins the drinks, too."

"You lookee in you pockee," Hop suggested.

"All right, I will."

Then the proprietor thrust his hands in his trousers pockets and a look of amazement suddenly came over his face.

Reluctantly he drew forth a handful of silver and gold, and one of the coins was a silver dollar.

"I've lost!" he exclaimed, shaking his head in a puzzled sort of way. "But I'll be willin' to swear that I didn't have that dollar there a few minutes ago."

"Velly stlange," observed Hop, with a grin.

Of course, he knew exactly how the dollar got into the man's pocket.

He had placed it there when he was behind the bar.

But more than that, he had slipped another into the pocket of Captain Bird.

"You're like me, Jack," the captain said, laughingly, as he gathered up his winnings. "You don't believe in carrying much silver around with you. I always make it a rule to steer clear of hard dollars. I don't carry them about with me."

"Maybe you gottee one in you pockee now," Hop observed, blandly.

"I hardly think so, heathen, but I may have, for all that. I know pretty well how the dollar got into Jack's pocket. You was behind the bar very close to him, and that accounts for it. But I don't believe you slipped a dollar in my pocket."

"Me bettee you ten dollée you gottee um silver dollée in you pockee."

But the captain was too foxy to bet.

He seemed to know pretty well that they had a very clever Chinaman to deal with.

"All right, heathen," he said, "I won't bet you, but I'll just see if I have."

Then he felt in his pockets and soon drew forth the dollar.

"You're right, my heathen friend," he observed, as he tossed the dollar to him. "That is yours. Put it in your pocket and keep it. I have changed my mind a whole lot about you. You're welcome to stand at the bar and drink all you like. You can say what you like, too."

"Muchee 'bligee," Hop retorted, and then Jack, who was still somewhat mystified, set out a round of drinks.

Hop had made himself solid by this time, and it was not long before he had everybody in a good humor.

He performed a few minor sleight-of-hand tricks, and as most of his audience had never seen anything like it before, it was not strange that they should vote him to be a remarkable personage.

He kept on at it until the dinner-bell rang, and when that occurred Captain Bird whispered something to Rooster Dick, and then, stepping up to the sheriff, said:

"I guess we won't wait and go with you and Young Wild West. We are going to take a ride over to Shiabone Bar, and we'll leave right now."

"How is that?" the sheriff asked, in surprise. "Ain't you goin' to stay an' git your dinner here?"

"No, we both had a late breakfast over at the ranch we are stopping at. If you come over there to-night we'll see you."

Then the two men without any further delay left the hotel,

and, mounting their horses, rode away, leaving a cloud of dust behind them.

The two villains, for such they were, had changed their minds rather quickly.

But this was no doubt due to the fact that they were members of the Band of Ten, and were really so-called Vultures.

More than that, Captain Bird was the leader of the gang that was so defiant to the sheriff and his minions.

He had remained very cool during the time he was at the hotel, but, just the same, he was thinking very hard.

Young Wild West had offered to assist the sheriff in hunting down the Vultures, and certain things had transpired that made the captain think that there was a strong likelihood of the young deadshot succeeding.

Hence it was his desire to get to the cave where his band was located and be prepared when the party came riding along the trail.

As soon as they were a short distance away from the hotel Captain Bird turned to his companion and said:

"Well, Dick, this has been the most surprising time of my whole life. I've heard much about Young Wild West and his pals, but I never dreamed that they were anything like they have proven themselves to be. Just look at me. I have still got the dust on me from being thrown heels-over-head upon the ground. That boy is as strong as a young giant, and he is quicker than lightning. But I thank myself for being level-headed. I never get excited, and that counts for a whole lot."

"I know that, cap," Rooster Dick answered, with a shrug of the shoulders. "If I was somethin' like you in that way I'd give a whole lot. But when I see how you act it makes me keep still. If I'd done what I thought I oughter do I would have shot that kid in a hurry."

"No, you wouldn't have done that, Dick. His partners wouldn't have permitted you. They were on the watch all the time; I could see that. But never mind. They are going to help that old fool of a sheriff to hunt us down. They'll have a tough old time doing it, for I mean to lay a trap for them and clean them up before they have fairly got started. Here we have been fooling the people at either end of the trail right along. But now it seems that we have reached the limit. I am just as certain that Young Wild West suspects us two of being in league with the Vultures as I am that we are now riding along this trail. But it's all right. Let him suspect. He won't be doing it very long. Before he finds out that his suspicions are correct he'll die."

"What do you s'pose would make him think anything like that?" Dick asked, as though he could not quite understand it.

"Never mind. That kid is a quick thinker, and he takes in everything he sees. He's a judge of people. I can see that. I suppose if I had acted differently it would have been better. But when I take a dislike to any one I can't help showing it. That's one failing I've got."

"Me, too, cap. But jest let 'em come along lookin' for us."

"They won't even have a chance to look for us, Dick. We are going to look for them."

Then the two started their horses at a faster pace and went galloping over the trail, bent upon reaching the headquarters of the Vultures as quickly as possible.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE VULTURES APPEAR

Sheriff Morgan went in to dinner with Young Wild West and his friends.

Our hero had passed no remarks about the two men leaving so suddenly, and it was not until the meal was well under way that he brought up the subject.

"Sheriff," he said, looking at the man keenly, "what do you think of Captain Bird and Rooster Dick?"

"Well, I can't say as I like jest the way they acted a little while ago, but I always did think they was all right. They've been willin' to help me out right along, an' that's why I've made 'em deputies."

"You thought, then, that they would be of some help to you in catching this band of ten that is called the Vultures?"

"Yes, I sartinly did. They seemed to be men who wasn't afraid of nothin', an' was willin' to help me."

"Well, in my opinion if you were to wait for them to do anything that would assist you in running down this gang of road-agents you would wait a hundred years, if it were possible for you to live that long. Those two men wouldn't think of such a thing as aiding you in that direction. If I

were going to make a wager I'd risk all I have that they would rather help the Vultures than you. The fact is, sheriff, Captain Bird and Rooster Dick are no good. They are common scoundrels, though the captain is a pretty shrewd sort of fellow and able to deceive most people."

"He couldn't deceive us, though, could he, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie spoke up, a grim smile showing on his face.

"Hardly, Charlie," was the reply.

"I knowed right away what kind of galoots they was, an' so did Jim."

The young deadshot nodded his head and smiled at his two partners.

"You both were pretty certain what I thought about them, I suppose?"

"Of course, Wild," Dart retorted.

"Why wouldn't we think that?" the scout added, quickly. "If I have got my doubts about a feller you're talkin' to I jest watch your face, an' it don't take long for me to understand jest about what you think of him. That's one thing I'm putty good at, Wild."

"Quite clever in you, Charlie," Anna said, smilingly, as she touched him on the arm. "I really believe you are getting to be a very close student of human nature."

"Never mind about the human nature part of it, gal. But I'm livin' an' learnin' all the time. I hit upon somethin' almost every day that I never knowed afore. This is a funny world, this is, but there's a whole lot to be learned in it, jest the same."

It happened that the only guest that day in the dining-room besides our friends was the sheriff, so not caring much about him as far as what they said was concerned, they talked on, he joining in now and then.

But the main subject was the Vultures and the two men who had left the hotel so suddenly.

Gradually the chief official of the county began to believe that he had made a mistake in appointing Captain Bird and Rooster Dick as deputies.

"Say," he said, after he had listened for a while to what our hero and his partners were saying, "suppose it should happen to be that them two fellers was members of the Band of Ten?"

"Nothing strange in that, sheriff," Wild answered, quickly.

"That is my opinion, and it was almost from the very start. I am sorry now I didn't follow them when they rode away, for I feel pretty sure that I would have been able to find out the hidden retreat of the Vultures."

"Great snakes! To think that I could be fooled. But maybe it ain't that way, Young Wild West. You might be mistaken in what you think."

"I might be, sheriff, but I don't believe I am. As soon as we have finished dinner we'll see about getting ready to set out for Shinbone Bar. If we don't meet Captain Bird and Rooster Dick before we get there we certainly will come across the Vultures. You say there are ten of them. That isn't so many when it comes to a pinch. We have handled more than that many a time."

"But not slich fellers as they are," and the sheriff shook his head doubtfully. "They're a very foxy lot. They've got ways of showin' up right afore yer when you ain't expectin' 'em, an' it seems that they kin git out of sight ag'in as if by magic. There's all sorts of stories been told about this here Band of Ten."

"No doubt of that. But stories are not always true. Just give us a chance and we'll see what we can do for you."

"I'm goin' to give you all the chance in the world, an' I'm willin' to be led by yer. I ain't goin' to boss the job. You kin do that, Young Wild West, an' let me tell yer, there's a reward offered any one who is the means of breakin' up this here gang. It's two thousand dollars, too, an' if you succeed in doin' it the money is yours."

"All right, if the county has put up that much money I'll be willing to take it if I succeed. We'll divide it among us, won't we, boys?"

"Don't we get a share, too?" Arietta spoke up, laughingly.

"That all depends upon what part you take in the game, Et," Wild answered.

"Well, I mean to take part in it, you can be sure of that."

"Yes, I suppose you will have to get into it somehow."

"You don't mean to tell me that she's goin' to try an' hunt for the Vultures?" the sheriff asked, looking amazed.

"Why not, sheriff? She can shoot just about as well and as quick as most of the men I have met, and she always keeps cool, too. Arietta is not like the general run of girls, and she was brought up in Wyoming in the times when every one had to be ready to shoot for their lives, for bad Indians were

continually raiding the settlers. Yes, Arietta is not like the average girl, you can depend on that."

"But wouldn't the Vultures take her a prisoner an' keep her if they got a chance?"

"If they were to do that it would not be the first time such a thing has happened."

"I reckon not," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up. "She's been caught by outlaws an' Injuns more times than you kin count on your fingers an' toes, sheriff. She's always come out all right, too, an' generally been the means of helpin' things along for the benefit of the rest of us, too."

"Well, I swan!" and the sheriff then looked at Arietta in admiration, forgetting to eat what he had on his plate.

They all took their time about disposing of the meal, and finally when they were through Wild excused himself and went to see if the Chinamen had been fed.

He found them just getting up from a table in the kitchen, where they had been eating along with a couple of the employeess of the hotel.

"Hop, you and Wing can go and get the pack-horses ready as soon as you are ready to do it," the young deadshot said. "We are not going to linger around here very long. We'll hit the trail for Shinbone Bar, and if we don't get there tonight we will some time to-morrow. You have got to look out for yourselves, too, for the chances are that you will see a lot of men wearing masks and hats that look like birds' heads. Vultures, you know. They're a bad lot, too, and maybe they have wings, so they'll be able to pick you up and fly away with you."

"Lat allee light, Mislter Wild," Hop answered, quickly. "Me no 'fraid of um Vultures. Me velly smartee Chinees. Me shootee um birds velly muchee quickee."

"You might get a chance to shoot Captain Bird."

"Lat light, Mislter Wild," and the Chinaman winked knowingly. "He allee samee um Vulture. Me velly sure of lat."

"You think so, eh?"

"Yes, Mislter Wild. Me see Meilcan man likee him before. He comee 'ound and foolee evelybody. Captain Bird allee samee bad man. Velly muchee smartee, too. Me knowee lat."

Wing had nothing to say at all.

Evidently he was satisfied that his brother could do enough talking for the pair of them, so he turned and went out of the kitchen, making straight for the stable.

Hop followed him a couple of minutes later, and then while the girls were making preparations to leave the hotel, Wild and his partners strolled out of the front way and entered the barroom.

The sheriff was there waiting for them.

"My horse will be here in a few minutes, an' all you have got to do is to say the word an' I'll be with yer," he declared.

"All right," Wild answered. "I suppose you mean to go right on through to Shinbone Bar if we are not interfered with on the way."

"Yes, I want to go over there, anyhow. I've just got the notices ready to put up for the reward for the cleanin' up of the Vultures. Here's one of 'em."

He showed Wild and his partners a placard which contained the announcement that two thousand dollars would be paid for the arrest and conviction of the gang that was known as the Vultures, or Band of Ten.

"I s'pose I oughter put on it that it will be paid if they're caught dead or alive. That would give you a better chance."

"There is something in that, sheriff. It wouldn't do any good to convict a man if he is dead," and the young deadshot laughed lightly.

"All right, I'll see to it that it's put on the placards. I've got two for this town an' one I'm goin' to take over to Shinbone Bar. I'll put that up in the whisky-mill over there, so everybody kin read it. Then maybe there'll be more interest taken in the affair."

He found a man who was able to do the lettering for him, and by the time the pack-horses were led around to the front of the hotel the placards had been fixed to his satisfaction.

Our hero and his partners then went to the stable and saddled the horses.

They mounted their own and led those belonging to the girls around to the front, followed by Hop and Wing, who were leading the loaded pack-horses.

The girls came out promptly enough, and as soon as they had mounted the sheriff got upon his horse and they were ready to leave.

Quite a few men were there, and they wished them good luck as they rode away.

It did not take them long to leave the town behind them, and

then the horses cantered along the winding trail that led over the mountain to Shinbone Bar.

Wild questioned the sheriff as they rode along, and he learned that the hold-ups had occurred in various places along the trail, and that generally the Vultures had appeared on foot, their horses being nowhere to be seen.

"Sometimes they've showed up within two miles of Shinbone Bar. Then, ag'in, there's been folks held up within a couple of miles of Jackson. But most of the times the trouble has been about half-way between the two places," Morgan said.

"Well, we can look out for something to happen when we get about half-way, then," the young deadshot retorted. "You say it is thirty-five miles from Jackson to Shinbone Bar?"

"Yes, jest about, as near as you kin git at it."

"All right, then. When we've gone eighteen miles and the Vultures don't appear I'll begin to think that they are going to let us go on through without molesting us. Maybe we may meet your two deputies before that, though."

"You mean Captain Bird an' Rooster Dick?"

"Yes."

"Maybe we will. I hope we do, 'cause I'd like to ask 'em a few questions."

"Don't say anything to them that would make them have the least idea that you were suspecting them, sheriff."

"You think I'd better not?"

"Yes, I do."

"All right, jest as you say, then. I won't ask 'em nothin', any more than why they went on ahead. But we ain't met 'em yet, an' most likely we won't see 'em till we git to the minin' camp."

But Wild had got it in his head that they would see them before that, and the more he thought about it the more convinced he became that he was right.

They continued on the journey, and when about ten miles had been covered they came to a defile that ran almost straight between high walls of rock.

"That looks like a good place for a hold-up, sheriff," our hero observed, as he nodded to him and then looked straight ahead.

"Yes, I reckon it does. But I don't know as there's ever been any hold-ups right here in this pass. As I said afore, they've appeared at different places."

"Don't the stage come over to-day? I think I heard some one say so at the hotel."

"Yes, we'll meet the outfit about ten miles further on if it's on time."

"All right. We'll be on the watch for it when it comes along."

Our hero and his companions were pretty good judges of distance.

When they thought they had gone something like seventeen or eighteen miles they came to a halt, and the sheriff wondered what this meant.

When he inquired about it, Wild smiled at him and said:

"I reckon this must be about half-way."

"Yes, I should say it was jest about that."

"And we haven't met a soul yet."

"No, an' we ain't likely to, unless them Vultures show up. Blamed if I don't wish they would show up. I'd like to see 'em once. I want to know jest how they look."

After giving the horses a short breathing spell, Wild decided to go on.

They had just about started when they heard the sounds made by horses at a walk not far ahead of them.

A few seconds later two horsemen came around a bend not more than two hundred feet ahead of them.

A single glance showed them to be Captain Bird and Rooster Dick.

"There they are, Wild!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed, in a low tone of voice. "I was dead sartin we would meet them galoots afore we got to Shinbone Bar."

"So was I, Charlie. But just take it easy now. We'll see what they have to say."

The two men acted as though they were glad to see them coming.

"We thought it pretty nearly time for you to come along," Captain Bird said, as he doffed his hat to the girls. "We took it along rather easy, you know, and thought we would wait for you."

"Your horses don't look as though you took it very easy, Captain Bird," Wild said, as he pointed to the two steeds they rode, which were fairly steaming.

Captain Bird frowned slightly, but answered promptly:

"We were riding a little fast just now when we came back, after deciding to wait for you."

"Oh, I understand. Didn't see anything of the Band of Ten with their vulture heads on them, did you?"

"Not a sign of them. But say, Young Wild West, one reason we have for coming back to meet you was that we talked it over and thought some kind of an apology was coming to you."

"It isn't at all necessary, Captain Bird. Don't bother yourself to make an apology."

"All right, then. I only wanted to show you that we have nothing but the best of feelings toward you and your friends."

"I am glad to hear that. But just let the matter drop. You are going on with us to Shinbone Bar, I suppose?"

"Certainly, if you will permit us to ride with you."

"I reckon nobody will object to it."

They had halted at a place where the trail was very narrow. On one side the cliff reared itself almost straight above them, while on the other a rocky slope went on up for perhaps a dozen feet, stunted oaks and tall pines growing upon it, with here and there a bunch of prickly bushes.

Wild knew his partners were keeping a close watch upon the two villains, so he took in his surroundings. At the right where the slope ran upward was a stumpy cedar tree that was dead, and when the boy saw this move slightly he could not help thinking it rather strange, since there was no air stirring that could possibly cause the movement.

The cedar was a very big one, and was brown instead of green, since the sap had long since ceased running upward from the roots.

Without saying a word the young deadshot drew his revolver, and taking aim at the tree, pulled the trigger.

Crack!

As the report rang out the tree fell down, and then all hands caught a glimpse of a man as he leaped behind an adjacent rock.

"That was a pretty good shot, eh, sheriff?" our hero said, nodding to the surprised official. "I knocked that tree down with a bullet from my gun."

"There was a man holdin' it up as sure as you live, Young Wild West," was the reply. "I seen him jump behind that rock there."

"I reckon you did, sheriff. I saw him, too. I happened to notice that the dead cedar moved slightly, and I knew it wasn't caused by the wind. That's why I took a shot at it. I'd be willing to wager a hundred dollars to ten that it was one of the so-called Vultures who was holding up the tree. How about it, Captain Bird?"

"I didn't see anything of a man," was the quick reply. "Did you, Rooster Dick?"

"No," and the man addressed shrugged his shoulders and acted as though he was getting nervous.

"Well, I am going to make a little investigation. It strikes me that it is not going to take us very long to run down the Band of Ten. Here goes!"

The boy leaped lightly to the ground, and just as he did so Captain Bird whistled sharply, and then, whipping out a revolver, called out:

"I guess I have got you folks dead to rights. There is no use playing this farce any longer."

Then from before and behind them several armed men appeared.

Their faces and heads were covered with the vulture heads, too, and there was no mistaking who they were.

## CHAPTER V.

### ARIETTA DISAPPEARS AND SO DO THE VULTURES.

Young Wild West had hardly expected this movement on the part of Captain Bird, and as the whistle sounded he turned quickly and found that he was the one who was covered by the villain's revolver.

He was too far from him to have a chance to knock the weapon from his hand, so he simply stood there, gun in hand.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were as much surprised as any one there, and the girls, when they saw the queer-looking men assemble so quickly, could not help screaming.

Rooster Dick, with a gun in either hand, looked on, his face beaming with delight.

There was no getting out of it. Our friends had been caught neatly.

They were covered from almost every side, and Wild, being the only one who had dismounted, stood the best chance of reaching cover.

But he did not take his gaze from the face of Captain Bird, and holding his revolver with the muzzle toward the ground, as it had been when he turned, he said:

"Well, it seems that you have caught us napping. What are you going to do about it?"

"You'll find out quickly enough, if you don't drop that gun," came the reply. "If I went in strict accordance with my feelings I'd send a bullet through your heart right away. But I am not going to do that. I want to take you a prisoner. I am Captain Bird, the leader of the Vultures. There are just ten of us, counting myself and Rooster Dick. A fine lot of men I have, too, Young Wild West. You thought you were very smart, didn't you? But I made up my mind to nip this piece of business in the bud. I think I have done it nicely, too."

"You want me to drop my gun, do you?" the boy asked, for he was now as cool as he ever had been in his whole life.

"If you don't do it inside of five seconds I'll shoot you!"

As our hero had turned to go in the direction of the fallen cedar tree he had noticed a sort of hole in the ground.

It was only about three or four feet in depth, and went on down behind some rocks.

He had just started to step around this when the whistle sounded.

He could not see the hole now, but knew about where it was. "I suppose I'll have to do as you say, Captain Bird," he said, forcing a smile.

Then, with lightning-like quickness, he leaped to the left and, turning, dropped into the hole.

The movement was so unexpected that Captain Bird did not even shoot.

"Keep cool, everybody," the boy shouted, as he scrambled down the short descent and got behind the rocks. "Don't run any risk, boys. They have got you dead to rights, but they haven't got me yet."

Crack!

A revolver shot sounded from behind the rocks where the man had leaped as the cedar tumbled down when Wild shot at it.

The young deadshot heard the hum of the bullet as it went over him, and he knew that he had to look out.

But he quickly crawled a dozen feet further, and then found a clump of rocks that would conceal him pretty well, and at the same time give him a chance to see any one who might attempt to come that way.

"I'm all right," he shouted. "Boys, keep cool. Et, don't lose your nerve."

None of the Vultures could see him now, and they were somewhat stumped.

Charlie and Jim and the sheriff were forced to hold their hands over their heads.

There was no other way, so, reluctantly, they did so.

The girls were not asked to do this, for it seemed that the Band of Ten did not regard them as being at all dangerous.

"You two heathens come right on up here. We want to see what you have got there," Captain Bird called out.

Hop and Wing obeyed.

"Here yer are, captain," one of the Vultures said, as he handed over a vulture headdress. "You had better put this on. It will make it look more natural like."

"Thanks," the villain said, politely, as he took it and pulled it on over his hat.

Rooster Dick was then given one, and he, too, was quickly transformed into a Vulture.

Arietta was, perhaps, as cool as any one of our friends. She had heard the leader say that there were ten of them. But all she could count was nine.

The tenth man must be behind the rocks, however, so that made the right number.

When Wild called out that he was all right the girl's spirits rose a hundred per cent.

"Do you mean to rob us?" she asked, looking at the leader boldly.

"Yes, miss, that's our line of business. But I mean to do a little more than rob you all. I am going to take you a prisoner."

"You'll never do that," Arietta retorted, defiantly, and then she suddenly drew a revolver.

But before she could raise it it was knocked from her hand by one of the villains who was standing close to her.

Then, at a nod from Captain Bird, the girl was seized and pulled from the back of her horse.

Almost before the rest were aware of it she had been whisked out of sight.

But a sharp cry came from her, and Charlie and Jim knew that she had been carried into a rather wide crevice that was but a few feet from her horse.

There was only one chance for them to get the best of the Vultures, and Jim Dart thought of it just then.

Turning his head, he shot a glance at Hop and gave a slight nod.

The clever Chinese understood.

"Me no wantee be killee," he called out, suddenly, acting as though he had suddenly become very much frightened. "Me goodee Chinese."

"Shut up, heathen," Rooster Dick exclaimed. "I feel jest like killin' you, anyhow, an' if you say another word I'll do it."

The Chinaman put his hands over his face and made out that he was weeping.

Then he slipped his right hand under his blouse, and the next thing they knew something hit the ground right in the midst of the Vultures and there was a loud explosion.

"Hip hi!" shouted the clever Chinese. "Evelybody gittee 'way velly muchee quickee."

What appeared to be a cloud of steam came up from the spot where the explosion had occurred, and realizing that their only chance had arrived, all hands started their horses forward and went galloping away from the spot.

We say all hands, meaning, of course, those who were mounted and ready to make the dash for the escape.

Young Wild West and Arietta were left behind.

The former was crouching in the niche something like thirty feet away, while there was no telling where the latter was just then.

Luckily for them there was a sharp bend in the trail very close to the spot where the excitement took place, and they all succeeded in getting around it before the Vultures came to a realization of it.

The instant he saw that they could not be seen by the villainous band, Cheyenne Charlie reined in his horse and called out excitedly to Dart:

"Hey, Jim, let the others go right on. We've got to save Wild an' Arietta."

The boy answered with a nod and stopped his horse immediately.

Then both urged Anna and Eloise to ride along with the two Chinamen.

Hop, however, did not go but a few yards before he left the pack-horse he had been leading in charge of his brother and came riding back to where Young Wild West's partners were at a halt trying to agree upon some plan of action.

"Me wantee helpee, Misler Charlie," the clever Chinese said, earnestly.

"You have helped a whole lot already, heathen," was the quick reply. "You done it so quick that I didn't know it an' I wasn't ready for it. What did you do, anyhow, to make that explosion?"

"Me heavee bottle of somethin', Misler Charlie. When um bottle bleak it makee velly biggee bang. Plenty steam, so be."

"Some of them chemicals you're always foolin' with, I s'pose. But, anyhow, it's all right," and the scout showed that he was perfectly satisfied.

"I should say it was all right," Jim Dart spoke up. "We were in a mighty tight place just then. Those fellows surely had us dead to rights. It's too bad that they got Arietta. Wild will be quite able to take care of himself. But just where they took her I don't know."

"I know putty well where they took her," the scout answered, with a shrug of his shoulders. "There's all kinds of nooks and crannies in them rocks back there, an' most likely there's a cave right there. The one as grabbed her didn't have very far to go. If he had we would have seen jest what he done with her. But keep your eyes open. Them galoots might come sneakin' this way. They ain't got their horses, I reckon, an' that's why they ain't followed us."

Jim nodded and then they listened for the space of a minute.

But not a sound did they hear, and becoming satisfied that it was time they went back to tackle the band, Charlie, without saying anything, started right around the bend.

Jim came after him, Hop following a short distance behind. As the scout was half-way around he looked straight ahead to the spot where the excitement had occurred.

But there was no one there now.

The place was absolutely deserted.

"What do you think of that, Jim?" Charlie said, as Dart ran to his side. "Them Vultures has gone."

"It seems so, Charlie," was the reply. "Well, I suppose they're satisfied with what they have done. They have got Arietta a prisoner, and maybe they are willing to let it go at that for the present. But just look out. They sprang upon us so suddenly that it seemed almost as if the ground had suddenly opened to let them do it and give us a surprise. We must find out where Wild is."

"Yes, that's right. I reckon I'll take a chance of yellin' to him."

"All right, go ahead. I'll keep a watch while you're doing it."

"Wild! Wild! Hello, Wild!" the scout shouted.

"Hello!" came the reply immediately.

"Come on, the sneakin' coyotes has gone."

There was a short wait then, and Young Wild West suddenly came in view.

Revolver in hand, he stepped down the little slope upon the trail.

But instead of joining his partners, whom he saw right away, he motioned for them to come to him.

"Hop," said the scout, "you had better ride on an' git Spittfire. Wild will want him putty soon, I reckon."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie," and the clever Chinese at once turned and rode away at a gallop.

Charlie and Jim then unhesitatingly rode back to the spot where all the trouble and excitement had occurred.

Wild was standing in the center of the trail, so he could keep a watch at either side.

"Boys," said he, for he was now very cool, "a rather strange thing has happened. They've got Arietta; I know that, but I don't see just how it happened. But I heard a scream, and that was enough to tell me all about it."

"It was the greatest thing I ever seen, Wild," the scout answered, in a low tone of voice, for it seemed as if he feared some one might be listening close at hand. "Them Vultures, as they call themselves, had us dead to rights, an' there we had to set in the saddle, our hands over our heads. There was no use tryin' to put up a fight, 'cause they was all around us jest as quick as if they had dropped from the sky, an' a blamed sight quicker, too. Arietta didn't scare a bit, an' she was goin' to shot one of 'em when the gun was knocked from her hand. Then, afore we knowed it, she was pulled from her horse, an' in a twinklin' she was out of sight. But there's the place where they took her. I'm sartin' of that."

He pointed to a crevice in the rocky wall at the side of the trail.

"All right. That might be the way to get into a cave, or it might only be just a little break in the bank. But if you're satisfied it was there she was taken in such a hurry it must be that there is a passage or a cave there. But I am satisfied there is more than one way to get into this cave, if there really is one right here. I think there is one beyond a doubt, for I never saw men appear so quickly before in all my life. Of course, it is possible that the Vultures could have been hiding behind the rocks around here, and simply waiting for their leader to give the word for them to spring upon us. I am inclined to think that this is the solution of the mystery. But that dead cedar I knocked down with a bullet means something. It strikes me that there might be a hole up there, and that after firing the shot at me while I was getting out of sight the villain entered it. I'll tell you what you do. Get off your horse and go and stand back close to the rocks right there. There certainly is no opening there, so they can't surprise you from behind. Keep your eyes open and shoot the first man you see. Shoot them all, if they happen to show up and you have the chance to do it. I am going up there to that dead cedar and make an investigation. If they took Arietta into a cave through that crevice it can easily be that there is a way to get in it up there on the hill, for if you will take notice it is almost directly above here, and the distance is not more than fifty or sixty feet."

The young deadshot's partners nodded and quickly dismounted.

Then leaving their horses standing in the center of the trail, they pushed against the solid wall of rock, taking care to tap it with the butts of their revolvers before doing so.

This was to make sure that a false covering was not there to deceive them.

The young deadshot no sooner saw them in the proper position to watch than he turned deliberately and walked up the slight hill in the direction of the fallen cedar tree.

He not only watched carefully, but listened as well as he made his way along, and he stepped so lightly that it would have been impossible for any one to hear him coming, even though they were but a short distance away.

Reaching the cedar, the boy was not long in discovering that it simply had been propped up against a big stone.

There was nothing like a hole or any other opening there, so he turned his attention to the clump of rocks the man had disappeared behind after he had fired the shot at the tree.

Then he saw something that carried out his idea of it.

What appeared to be a natural crack in the strata of rock that was right on the surface lay before him.

It only extended a few feet, and was about two feet wide in the center, narrowing down to nothing at either end.

The young deadshot gave a quick glance all around him, and then stepped fearlessly to the crack.

When he was directly over it he looked down and was able to see the bottom of the hole not more than ten feet below.

"That's where the villain went, I reckon," he thought. "I've found out something, anyhow. Now, then, I wonder what I had better do. Of course, I must get inside there and save Arietta. But would it be advisable for me to go this way, or should I wait? I reckon I had better go this way, so I'll let Charlie and Jim know what my intentions are."

Then the brave boy stepped around the rocks, and catching the eyes of his two partners, he made motions to them so they would know that he was going to descend into the hole.

Having done this, he stepped back, and throwing his feet over the edge, grasped the other side with his hands and promptly lowered himself down.

His feet would not quite touch the bottom, but he could see it plainly enough, so he did not hesitate to drop, landing lightly and scarcely making the least sound.

Young Wild West now felt certain that he was in the hiding-place of the Vultures.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CHARLIE AND JIM ARE IN LUCK.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were both rather uneasy when they understood that Wild was going into some sort of an opening he must have discovered.

They waited there patiently after he had disappeared, and when five minutes had elapsed their attention was called further up the trail.

They looked that way, and saw Hop Wah riding back, leading the sorrel stallion, while close behind him was Sheriff Morgan.

"The sheriff has made up his mind to come back, eh?" the scout said, in a whisper. "I didn't say nothin' to him when I asked you to come. But I thought he would have sense enough to do it. I reckon he ain't no braver than he oughter be."

"It looks that way, Charlie," Jim answered.

Up came the three horses, making quite a clatter.

Hop halted the sorrel and left him standing close to the heads of Charlie and Jim.

The sheriff rather timidly came to a stop and called out: "Found out anything?"

"Not much," Jim answered.

"Where's Young Wild West?"

"He's around close by."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes."

"Where is he now?"

"He went up the hill."

"Lockin' for them Vultures, eh? Do you think they had horses the other side of the hill, an' that they went that way?"

"That's what Wild thinks," Jim said, thinking it advisable to talk in that way, since he knew it was possible that some of the villains might be listening.

"Why didn't you go with him?" the sheriff asked, becoming a little more easy.

"Because he told us to stay here until he came back."

"Oh!"

Then Morgan dismounted.

Hop got off his horse, too, and began looking carefully about.

When Cheyenne Charlie saw him treading pretty close to the rift that he was certain Arietta had been carried through, he watched keenly but said nothing.

Hop was looking into every crevice and niche he could find, holding the big, old-fashioned six-shooter he always carried with him in his hand as though he was ready to shoot down the first outlaw he met.

As he reached the crevice he thrust his head and shoulders in and tried to pierce the gloom that was ahead.

At that very moment there was a rattling caused by falling

dirt and stones, and he disappeared from view, uttering a sharp cry of alarm as he did so.

"There he goes!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed, darting forward.

"I saw him just as he went, Charlie," Jim said, as he followed him. "But I am pretty certain that no one pulled him in there. As he took a step into the opening the ground caved under his feet. I saw it plainly."

"Then he's tumbled down somewhere."

"That is just what has happened. I am sorry he wasn't more careful."

"Well, it's all right, anyhow," and the scout seemed to think it really was. That's where they took Arietta, an' if Hop has got in there he'll sartinly be able to do somethin' to git her out ag'in."

"It isn't likely that Arietta is very close to this place, Charlie," Jim said, winking to make him understand that he was merely talking for the benefit of any one who might be listening. "Maybe there's a passage through there that leads to the other side of the hole above. That is where the scoundrels took the girl, undoubtedly."

Then they listened in the hope of hearing something from Hop.

But not the least sound came to their ears.

The sheriff had become very nervous again.

"Say," he said, suddenly, "let's ride on over the top of that hill an' look for them Vultures. I'll bet they had their horses up there an' that Captain Bird seen to it that they was hidin' here while he come to meet us. That feller is a slick one. I never would have believed anything like this of him. The idea of his bein' the leader of the Vultures, an' me swearin' him in as a deputy sheriff."

"That's where you didn't have your eyes open, sheriff," the scout declared. "A man in your position ought to have more sense, anyhow."

The official took this without a murmur.

No doubt he was heartily ashamed of the ignorance he had shown in the matter, and was not going to get angry when it was spoken of.

"I'll tell you what you kin do, sheriff," Charlie observed, after a short silence.

"Tell me an' I'll do it," was the quick reply.

"Git on your horse an' ride over the hill there an' see if you kin see anything of Young Wild West. He went on foot, you know. His horse wasn't here then."

"All right, I'll do it, an' you kin bet if I see one of them fellers with a vulture's head on him I'll pop him over quicker than chained lightning. I ain't goin' to stand no more foolin'. I don't care whether I take 'em alive or not. After they've took the gal the way they did they deserve nothin' short of killin' an' they'll git it from me, you kin bet."

Then he flourished his gun and quickly mounted his horse.

Without saying anything more he rode up the hill, pausing close to the hole Wild had dropped into, but not taking any notice of it.

Meanwhile, Charlie and Jim, now left to themselves again, were sorely perplexed.

After talking it over in whispers for a few minutes, they decided to use a rope and one of them entered the place Hop had slipped down into.

"It's a big risk, I know," Jim declared, with a shake of the head, "but I am willing to take it. Wild has got in from the other side, and Hop has tumbled in. We already know that Arietta must be in there somewhere. Give me the noose of your lariat, Charlie, and I'll slip it under my arms and go down there."

"All right, Jim, I'll do it; but be mighty careful."

The next minute Dart had the noose about his body, and then while Charlie held tightly to the rope he stepped to the crevice and soon sat down.

His feet touched the ground, which slanted sharply there.

Working himself along by degrees, the boy was soon lost to view, Charlie paying out upon the rope meanwhile.

But Jim did not have to go downward more than six or eight feet before he came to an almost level spot of solid rock.

Enough light was admitted for him to see this plainly, and when he saw there was nothing there that looked anything like Hop's hat or anything belonging to him he decided that probably the heathen had taken advantage of his sudden entrance into the place to proceed to make a search.

The boy walked along the passage until he was brought to a stop with a jerk.

He could no longer see ahead of him now, so he thought it advisable to go back and let Charlie know how things were. Back he went, and stretching himself upward against the

slanting earth and rock, he was able to see the scout squatting outside and peering down at him.

"Just tie that rope around a rock somewhere, Charlie," he whispered, softly. "I think I could get out without being assisted by you, but it will be just as well to have it ready in case we have to come back in a hurry. I want you to come down here with me."

"Did you see anything of Hop?" Charlie asked, eagerly.

"Not the least sign of him. But I'm satisfied now that he's working around in the cave. There seems to be one here, or else this passage goes on straight to the other side of the hill."

"All right, I'll come right down there."

Charlie was not long in making the rope fast, and then he slid cautiously down and soon was standing beside the boy.

Jim led the way along.

He had removed the rope from about his body, but carried it in his hand and did not drop it until it had stretched to its full length.

"There you are," he said, in a whisper. "If we have to come back in a hurry we can catch on the rope and pull ourselves along to make us all the quicker in getting out."

Charlie nodded and then endeavored to pierce the inky blackness that lay before them.

He waited for Jim to lead the way, however, for he seemed to think that the boy had the right to do it, since he had been the first to come there.

Dart stepped along cautiously, making sure that he could not drop into any pitfall.

He followed the left side of the passage, too, and Charlie came along after him without making the least sound.

In this way they proceeded for perhaps twenty-five feet, and then suddenly they were able to see ahead of them.

A light was admitted from somewhere, though just where they could not tell.

As their eyes became accustomed to the dimness they were able to discern things more plainly.

It seemed that they had struck a veritable network of passages.

But they soon decided to find out where the light was admitted.

The first passage they tried was a failure, for it grew darker instead of lighter as they pushed their way through it.

Then they came back and tried another, and were rewarded for doing it, for in less than a minute they were standing right at the entrance of a good-sized cave.

The light came through from a rift overhead and to the right, and as they looked around they saw evidences of some one having been there.

There were a couple of barrels close to the wall to the left of them, and beyond them were some rocks.

Walking over to them they made an examination, but quickly came to the conclusion that no one had been using it lately for a sleeping or living place.

"Whisky barrels, I reckon," the scout whispered, after he had looked closely at them. "They're empty, too. Them galoots must be putty hard drinkers to clean up a couple of barrels. I don't know how long they've been here, but from what the sheriff said it can't be so very long."

Jim nodded without making any verbal reply.

He was well satisfied that the headquarters of the Vultures was somewhere within the cavernous place.

This part of the cavern might have been used at one time for them to store things, but they certainly had never used it for even a stable.

He motioned to Charlie to follow him, and then turned and walked toward the other end of the rocky chamber, which was somewhat in the shape of an oblong.

As they reached the darkest corner the faint sounds of voices came to their ears.

Charlie gave a start, and then taking off his hat went through the performance of giving a noiseless cheer.

"Easy, Charlie," cautioned Jim. "I reckon we are on the right track now."

"I reckon so," was the reply.

Jim was not long in discovering a natural archway, and through this he stepped boldly, for it was in that direction the voices came from.

Twenty feet straight ahead, and then a sharp turn to the left, and daylight showed again.

The voices were plainer, too; so, much encouraged, the two continued on and in a few seconds found themselves looking into another chamber, the headquarters of the Band of Ten,

1 the shadow of a doubt.

ding and sitting about three round tables, such as are

used in saloons for card-playing, were ten men, all of them wearing the vulture masks and headdress.

Jim Dart counted them quickly, and he felt like giving vent to a sigh of relief when he found that the full number was there.

This meant that there were none of them outside to watch what was going on.

He waited until he had made sure that there were exactly ten of them, and then looked around for Arietta, or Wild, or Hop, for he did not know but what they might all be prisoners there.

But there were no traces of any of them.

However, there were alcoves and jutting pieces of wall that nature had formed in the big cave to be seen all around.

Behind any one of these obstruction prisoners might be kept. The Vultures seemed to be holding a sort of meeting.

One of them, whom they readily knew was Captain Bird, sat at one of the tables.

He was talking in low tones, and at every few words he would say the rest would nod approvingly.

Presently he raised his voice slightly and said:

"Now, then, the question before the house is what shall be done with the girl? I have never made war upon defenceless women, or even those who were able to put up a fight for themselves. This girl seems to be quite able to do that. She's the pluckiest one I ever saw in my whole life. We have decided to wipe out Young Wild West and his partners and the sheriff as well. They must never get away from here alive. We all know pretty well that they'll be in no hurry to leave here. They want to find the girl too much for that."

"If you don't want the gal, cap, give her to us an' we'll chuck dice to see who wins her," one of the men spoke up.

"No," was the quick reply. "Nothing of the kind will ever happen as long as I'm leader of the Band of Ten. I think I had better decide the question for good and all."

"You have got the authority to do it, cap," another of the villains observed.

"Yes, I know I have, and I'll do it right now. She shall be kept a prisoner here until such a time arrives that it will be safe to take her somewhere and give her her liberty. That settles the question."

Charlie and Jim were eager listeners, as might be supposed. They now knew for a certainty that Young Wild West and Hop must be somewhere in the cave, and were searching for the very spot they had found.

Jim was just about to whisper something to Charlie when he felt a light touch on his shoulder.

Turning quickly he saw the grinning face of Hop Wah, while right behind him stood Young Wild West.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CAPTAIN BIRD IS CAPTURED.

Feeling doubly sure that he had found a way to get into the hiding-place of the Vultures, Young Wild West listened for the space of a full minute before he took a step.

Even then he looked upward and made pretty sure that he would have no great difficulty in getting out of the hole should he be compelled to make a hasty exit, and then he started through what was surely a passage.

It ran slightly downward and was rocky and uneven.

But what light there was to come in from the opening showed him the way for several yards, and when he finally came to where it was too dark to see ahead of them he went forward slowly, feeling every step and keeping his left hand upon the rocky wall.

He kept on until he came to a rather sharp turn, and then saw light ahead.

This was encouraging, and a minute later he found himself looking into the underground apartment that must have easily covered an area of five hundred square feet.

Light was admitted through a jagged opening at one side, and it was not more than a few seconds before he was able to see horses standing along the rocky wall at one side.

"I reckon it isn't going to be so very hard to settle this business," the boy thought. "Only for the fact that Arietta must have suffered quite a fright, I could call it a lucky thing that the scoundrels got her. Anyhow, she isn't the girl to faint or become hysterical over such a thing. If they haven't harmed her it's all right, for she will soon be free. We'll have the Vultures, too."

The boy started across the underground chamber, treading softly.

He was satisfied that there was no one there, and that the horses occupied it alone.

This meant that the place where the outlaws had their quarters must surely be close by.

The boy had been in many similar underground places before, so it did not strike him as being strange that such a spot was there.

Young Wild West never did anything hasty, especially when he had time to think it over.

He felt that he could gain nothing by hurrying matters now. What must be done first by them was to locate exactly where the Band of Ten were.

Keeping to the right side he went along until he found an opening, and peering into this, he saw that it was natural gallery that extended away in zigzag fashion.

There was enough light there for him to distinguish objects, so he decided to go further up and run the chance of finding the part of the cavernous place he was looking for.

After turning this way and that and covering a distance of easily a couple of hundred feet, the boy suddenly found himself at the end of the passage.

Before him reared a jagged cliff at the top of which he could see trees and bushes growing.

He went outside, but it happened that a high point of rock lay between him and the trail.

"Charlie and Jim are right over there somewhere," he muttered. "Well, I reckon I won't go to them now, for it may be that some of the villains are on the watch for me, and they might drop me before I knew it. I'll go back the same way and try again. One thing is certain, they'll wait there until they think that something must have happened to me or I return."

Having decided upon this course, he turned and went back through the passage.

He was not long in reaching the chamber where the horses were, and then he looked about for another way out of it.

The mouth of a smaller gallery was close at hand, and entering it, he proceeded on for probably a hundred feet, walking upward all the time, and presently found himself looking outside once more.

This time he knew he was not far from the hole he had dropped into when he discovered the cavernous place.

Of course, he could not see anything of his partners from there, so he turned and went back to look again for what he was so anxious to find.

When he was half-way back to the stable, as it might be called, he heard a faint cry and the sounds made by dirt and stones falling down from somewhere.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "I wonder what that means?"

Then stepping over to the side of the passage from which the sounds came he went along and soon came to a branch of it.

It was just light enough for him to see an object moving about thirty feet ahead of him.

Of course, it was a man.

The young deadshot knew that right away.

But he held his revolver in readiness, and stepping behind a corner, waited expectantly.

With a great degree of caution the man came toward him.

Wild was watching from behind the rock, and suddenly he gave a start.

It was Hop Wah he saw, and, not a little surprised, he remained right where he was until the Chinaman had passed him.

Then, in a low whisper, he said:

"Hello, Hop!"

"Misler Wild!" came the startled exclamation, but in a very low tone of voice.

"Yes, I'm here, Hop. How did you manage to find the way I came?"

"Me allee samee fallee down, and when me see um passage me thlink me bettee lookee for Missee Arietta."

"You fell down a hole, then?"

"Lat light, Misler Wild. Me lookee where Misler Charlie say um outlaws takee Missee Arietta. Um glood allee samee give way, and me comee down velly muchee quickee. Maybe Misler Charlie and Misler Jim velly muchee suplise, but me no care for iat."

"You should have gone back and let them know that you were all right, Hop," the young deadshot declared.

"Allee light, Misler Wild. Me go back now, so be."

"Go ahead. I'll follow you. We'll get them down here, and

then probably we won't be long in saving Arietta and catching the Vultures."

Then both turned and started back through the passage, but as luck would have it, Hop kept a little to the left, and without knowing it he was leading the way through an entirely different passage.

This led along in a crooked fashion for many feet, and finally the clever Chinese stopped in the darkness, and in a low whisper said:

"Me makee lillee mistakee, Misler Wild. Me no findee where me comee in."

"How is that?" the young deadshot asked, impatiently.

"Me no undelstandee."

"Come on back, then. We must have struck a fork in the passage, and that's why we came the wrong way."

Back they started, and in the faint light that pervaded the passage they moved along straight to where they had met, as they thought.

But, as has been said, there was a veritable network of passages under the earth in that particular spot, and when they had gone a couple of hundred feet they suddenly found themselves looking into the chamber where the horses were kept.

Wild shook his head.

"This is a regular puzzle, Hop," he whispered. "A fellow can't tell where he is going here. But never mind. There is one thing certain, and that is that the horses must be pretty close to where their owners are. We'll go over to the other side now and see if we can't make a discovery."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," Hop answered, with a nod.

The young deadshot was soon right among the horses.

Half-way between the line of them he found a broad opening, though it was very dark within it.

The boy listened for a few seconds, and then took the risk of striking a match.

As he held it up before the opening he saw that it was a much larger passage than any he had seen before, and satisfied that he had struck it right now, he nodded for the Chinaman to follow him, and boldly walked along through the darkness, permitting the match to drop to the ground.

There was a turn about thirty feet from the big chamber, and then light could be seen ahead.

At that very moment the two could hear the sounds of voices, though they were not altogether distinct.

"We're all right now, Hop," Wild said, in his cool and easy way. "I never thought of looking where the horses were before. But this is the way the horses are led in, I am certain. Now, then, we'll soon be looking at the sneaking coyotes who think they are so clever. I reckon I'll show Captain Bird that he don't know as much as he thinks he does. No doubt he feels that he has won a big trick in the game by seizing Arietta and moving over into this cavern. But he'll soon find out his mistake, for by doing that he has simply made it possible for us to find his hiding-place."

The clever Chinese gave a nod, and as dark as it was our hero could see that a broad smile shone upon his yellow face.

Around the turn in the passage they went, and then they found themselves in a rather narrow chamber, the ceiling overhead being irregular in shape, with sharp points of rock showing up all over it.

But it was more than high enough to permit a man to ride on horseback, and the light that came in from some place at the right enabled them both to see the marks of hoofprints on the stony ground.

The voices sounded much nearer now, of course, and it did not take our hero long to locate the direction they came from.

Proceeding on through the narrow chamber, they came to a large one, where it was a little darker.

The voices were now quite distinct, though they could not catch many words that were being spoken.

Wild crouched down beside a rock, and the Chinaman followed his example.

They had hardly done this when they heard a faint sound off to the right.

The young deadshot touched the Chinaman on the arm, motioning for him to remain perfectly silent.

Hop understood and said nothing.

Half a minute later they discerned two forms, cautiously making their way along near the opposite side of the chamber.

It was altogether too dark to see them clearly, and though Wild had a faint suspicion that they might be Charlie and Jim, he was not going to take any chances.

No doubt the Vultures were in the habit of moving softly about, especially when they knew they had enemies outside the cavern.

The two figures went on and were soon lost to view behind a natural pillar of rock.

Then after waiting for two or three minutes, Young Wild West decided to go closer to where the voices came from.

He nodded for Hop to follow him, and stepped softly around an angle.

Then, following the rocky wall almost directly back again, he soon came to where it turned and ran across.

In this way he managed to get on around to the other side of the chamber.

He paused here and listened and was able to hear pretty well what was being said.

It was Captain Bird, who was talking about Arietta, and when the young deadshot heard him say that she was not to be harmed he felt a great deal easier.

Finally he decided to go a little closer, and when he had taken about ten steps he suddenly came in sight of Charlie and Jim, who were crouching in a listening attitude.

The boy could not help recognizing them now, for it happened that it was pretty light there.

He quickly pointed them out to Hop, and the Chinaman gave a nod and without waiting to be told what to do, stepped forward and touched Jim lightly on the shoulder, as has already been stated.

Delighted at meeting each other, the four could hardly keep from saying something aloud.

But they were so well used to such situations that they managed to keep from doing it and simply shook hands.

"Well, Charlie," our hero said, in a whisper, "I reckon I'll have a peep at those fellows inside. Are they all here?"

"Every one of 'em, Wild," was the reply. "Jest say the word an' we'll open fire on 'em an' clean 'em up in short order."

The boy made no reply to this, but stepped around so he could have a good look into the headquarters of the band.

The villains still had on their disguises, and in the semi-darkness that pervaded the cave they looked ghostly and mysterious.

But it was not Wild's intention to open fire on them and shoot them down ruthlessly.

Even though they were a determined band of villains of the worst kind, it was not his way of doing business.

What he wanted to do was to take them all alive, if possible.

Well satisfied that his sweetheart was safe and that she was not far away, he set his brains at work to think of a plan that would enable him to do the job in the best possible manner.

There were ten of the Vultures in the cave, and if the three chose to they might easily shoot them all down before they had a chance.

That would be one way of settling it in a hurry.

Wild could not help thinking of how easy it would be, but he merely shook his head and muttered to himself:

"No, it shan't be done that way."

He remained standing there for nearly a minute, Charlie and Jim near him and watching all that was to be seen.

Presently Captain Bird, who had been sitting at the table in a thoughtful mood, arose to his feet and said:

"Well, boys, I suppose they are outside yet. I think I'll go out and have a look at them."

Wild nudged Jim Dart, who was standing close to him, and the boy knew exactly what he meant to do.

Charlie did, too, for he quickly whispered:

"Goin' to ketch the galoot, eh, Wild?"

"That's it exactly," was the reply. "You and Jim get ready to follow him as he goes out. Be careful that he don't see you. Hop and I will stay right here and look for a possible chance of getting Arietta away from them. I would like to find out just where she is, you know."

That was all that was said.

The four drew back in the shadows, and the next moment the leader of the Band of Ten walked out.

Unconscious of the fact that his enemies were so close to him, Captain Bird turned to the left and entered another of the many passages the cavernous place contained.

Charlie and Jim went after him noiselessly, and when they discovered that he was ascending a slight rise and that the passage was broad and high enough for horses to pass through, they figured that he was going out by what might be termed the main means of entrance and exit.

There was plenty of light ahead, and this forced Young Wild West's partners to go a little slower, for if it happened that the villain looked behind him he would surely see them.

The result was that Captain Bird walked on up and went

out into the open air before Charlie and Jim were within fifty feet of him.

But they went on, just the same, and stepping softly through the passage, they found themselves in a narrow gallery which turned sharply to the left.

They were just in time to see the captain of the Vultures disappear, and then nodding to each other, they started after him.

A minute later they saw him crouching behind a rock and looking down on the trail, which was not more than fifty feet away.

Charlie grinned when he saw the villain shake his head in a puzzled way.

No doubt he could see the horses of our friends there, but the fact that no riders were visible must have surprised him somewhat.

"Come on, Jim," the scout whispered, as he nudged his companion. "I reckon we'll make that galoot a prisoner right away. If he goes to puttin' up much of a fight I'll crack him on the head with the butt of my gun. Blamed if I won't give him a good hard one, too."

"Wild wants to take him alive, you know, Charlie," Dart answered.

"Yes, I know. It's all right; come on."

The two then crept stealthily forward, and the next instant they were within six feet of the man.

Charlie suddenly leaped forward and caught him by the throat with his left hand, at the same time pressing the muzzle of his gun against the side of his head.

"One little cry an' the top of your head will go off, you sneak-in' coyote!" he exclaimed.

Surprised as he was, Captain Bird put up a desperate struggle.

But Jim was right there, and he was thrown violently to the ground and his arms pinned to his sides.

He did not make an outcry, for the muzzle of the revolver was pressing against his head and he had sense enough left to probably realize that his life was not worth very much just then.

"You heard what I said!" Charlie exclaimed, threateningly. "You jest yell out once an' I'll shoot you jest the same as if you was a snake. I ain't got no use for sich galoots as you anyhow, an' it would be a pleasure for me to put you to a finish."

"You have got me," was the reply. "Everything is going your way now, but my turn may come later on. Go ahead and do as you please with me."

They certainly did this, and it was not long before Jim had his arms bound to his sides.

Then, not knowing what else to do with the prisoner, they forced him to go down to the trail with them, where the horses were waiting.

"Well, Jim," the scout said, with a shrug of the shoulders, "I reckon you had better stay here with him. I'll go back an' let Wild know what we've done."

"All right, Charlie," was the reply. "Go ahead."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOP MAKES A MISTAKE BUT REDEMMS HIMSELF.

Young Wild West and Hop Wah were both satisfied that Charlie and Jim would make no mistake.

They would surely catch the leader of the Band of Ten, all right, so there was nothing to do but to wait and watch for a chance to find where Arietta was.

But the young deadshot soon came to the conclusion that it would be a difficult task to do this.

There seemed to be but one way to get into the living part of the cavern, and that was by the way the leader had come out.

Five minutes passed.

They heard nothing that would indicate that anything had gone wrong outside, and then Wild, becoming more eager in his desire to find where his sweetheart was, took the risk of creeping a little closer to the opening between the two rocky apartments.

He found that he could see about the entire interior now and looked around sharply for a possible place where his sweetheart might be hidden from view.

In a corner at the extreme left a blanket was hanging at full length, and stretched across what might be an alcove or smaller apartment.

The boy decided that it must be here that Arietta was located.

Still, it would be impossible for him to get half way to the spot without being discovered.

He shook his head and did some more thinking.

Finally he decided to wait until he heard from Charlie and Jim.

It seemed to be a long time, though it was really but a few minutes, before a slight sound not far distant indicated the presence of some one.

Wild and the Chinaman instantly turned their attention in the direction the noise came from, and then they saw the scout returning.

He shook his hand in a jubilant sort of way, which told them plainly that everything was all right.

Wild stepped back from the opening, and the moment the scout was near enough he said:

"You got him, eh?"

"Yes. We didn't have no trouble about doin' it, either. We followed him right outside. He stopped behind a rock an' was lookin' down at our horses when me an' Jim come on him. He put up a fight, but he had sense enough not to yell out after I told him not to do it. I come back to let yer know. Now, then, jest tell me what's next to be done."

"I don't know exactly. I am pretty well satisfied that I have located the place where Arietta is confined. Still, I am not sure about it. But in order to get in there we will have to let our presence be known. As I am still of a mind to take the Vultures alive, we don't want to start a shooting-match here. Perhaps Hop can help us out a little."

"Me helpee velly muchee quickee," the clever Chinese said, with an eagerness that told plainly how willing he was.

"Let him chuck a big firecracker in among them galoots, Wild," suggested the scout.

"That woud be a good idea, probably."

"Me fixe velly muchee quickee," Hop observed, with a chuckle.

He was always provided with different sorts of explosives, and it must have occurred to him just then that he ought to use something good and strong, so it would have all the more effect upon the band of villains.

When he took an oblong package from one of his many pockets and held it up, Charlie grinned and whispered:

"That looks as though it oughter do somethin'. Is it full of powder, Hop?"

"Velly muchee full, so be, Misler Charlie," was the reply.

"Makee velly biggee bang."

"Go ahead with it, then," Wild spoke up, for he was getting impatient.

The Chinaman soon pulled the end of a fuse from the package, which was bound thoroughly with a strong cord, and then he produced a match and lighted it.

The moment the flame was going right he touched it to the fuse.

There was a sharp hiss, and then taking good aim, he hurled the package into the cave where the outlaws were.

Just as it struck the ground, causing the Vultures to look around in a startled way, it exploded with such a loud report that even Wild and Charlie, who were expecting it, were almost deafened.

A rumbling followed it, too, and then a portion of the rocks and dirt at one side of the chamber fell in with a crash.

Wild bounded forward through the smoke, but when he found the way blocked he gave vent to an exclamation of disgust.

The fact was that the terrific explosion had caused a cave-in from above, and the way to get into the apartment where the Vultures and Arietta were had been shut off.

"What's the matter, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie cried, as he endeavored to push his way forward and nearly fell down over the stones that had fallen there.

"Hard luck, Charlie," was the reply. "Hop went it a little too strong, it seems. But take it easy. Don't get excited."

Chagrined at being baffled just when he thought the way would be made clear for the rescue of his sweetheart, the young deadshot was still quite cool.

The underground chamber was full of smoke, and he could not see Charlie or Hop.

But there was a draught through the cave, and remaining right where he was he waited for the atmosphere to clear.

Meanwhile, loud shouts and cries of alarm had been heard from the adjoining rocky apartment.

Just as the smoke cleared away sufficiently for them to see what they were about, the cries ceased, and all was as silent as the tomb.

"Charlie," the young deadshot said, as he pointed to the mass of earth and rock that had effectually blocked the way, "this is what I call too bad. I reckon there must have been another way to get out of that place inside there, for nothing can be heard of the scoundrels now."

"It looks that way, Wild," was the reply, with a shake of the head. "They was sartinly makin' enough noise a little while ago. Them galoots was about scared out of their wits, I reckon. But I didn't hear nothin' of Arietta."

"No, I didn't, either. But there is nothing strange in that. They may have compelled her to keep quiet. I think they have gone out of the cavern by another way. Since it will be impossible for us to get through here, we had better look and see."

"Come on, then, an' let's hurry up about it."

"Lat light, Misler Wild," Hop spoke up, for he no doubt felt sorry that the explosion had caused the sudden cave-in.

Charlie knew the quickest and best way to get out, so he now led the way, and in a very short time all three were outside.

They hurried around to the trail, and found Jim waiting there with the prisoner and the horses.

Dart waved his hand exultantly when he saw them coming, for no doubt he expected that Arietta was with them.

But when he saw that she was not his face fell, and he then said:

"Anything wrong, Wild? I heard the explosion and I know that Hop must have caused it."

"There's a whole lot wrong, Jim," our hero answered. "You were right in thinking that Hop caused the explosion. But he went it a little too strong, and the earth and rocks caved in and prevented us from getting into that part of the cave where the villains were. We have strong reason to believe that they went out, for it's as silent as the grave in there now."

"They certainly didn't come this way, then. I haven't heard a sound that would mean that they were anywhere close by, either."

The prisoner, who still wore his mask and headgear, laughed derisively.

"They've outwitted you, Young Wild West," he called out.

"Don't you think that I have been leading a set of fools. There is not a man among the Vultures who wouldn't know what to do in a case like this. You will never see the girl again."

"You think so, eh, Captain Bird?" Wild answered, as he strode up to the prisoner. "Well, I can tell by the way you are talking that you are putting up a bluff. You know as well as I do that it won't be long before we'll have the whole bunch of them. But first of all I want to save the girl."

"I know that well enough. But you'll never do it. Rooster Dick will lead the boys to safety, and they'll take the girl with them. They would be foolish to let her go now, for even if they are not now aware of it, they will find out soon enough that you have me a prisoner. The place around here is full of underground passages. They can go under the trail and back again at their will, and there are as many as a dozen openings. That is one reason why they have managed to appear and disappear so quickly. This is not the only place that all the hold-ups and robberies have been committed by the band, but the most of them have."

"You haven't told me a thing that I have not already found out," declared Wild, who was just as cool as ever. "But you wait. I'll show you whether they'll get away with the girl or not."

"All right," and again the villain laughed, but it was a forced one, as his hearers well knew.

"Me go findee um Vultures, Misler Wild," Hop spoke up just then. "Me velly solly me makee um biggee bang."

"Go ahead and find them, Hop," was the retort. "I am going, too. Jim will stay here with the prisoner, and Charlie can strike out on his own hook. I reckon between the three of us we'll soon locate them."

The clever Chinese promptly started from the spot.

It was evident that he felt keenly the result of his action in the cavern.

He could just as well have set off something that would have caused a much lighter explosion and the result would have been all right.

Bent on making amends for his mistake, he started up the hill toward the spot where the cedar had fallen when Young Wild West fired the shot after they had first reached the scene.

He turned and then went on around behind the ridge, taking it for granted that the cavern lay in that direction.

It was a pretty good guess the Chinaman made, for he

had not gone more than a couple of hundred feet when he caught sight of a man wearing a Vulture headgear.

The fellow disappeared almost instantly around some rocks, and Hop paused a minute, expecting that others might appear.

But none did, so it struck him that this might have been the last of them, or that he was simply one who had been sent out spying.

Anyhow, he quickly started forward again, and when he reached the place where the Vulture had disappeared he peered cautiously around the rocks.

Hop could hardly suppress an exclamation of joy, for less than a hundred yards from him in a narrow defile where the rocks were plentiful, he saw the band gathered in a bunch.

But that was not all.

Standing with her back against the cliff was Arietta.

As he looked at her he could not help noticing that she appeared to be perfectly cool, and kept looking up and down as though she expected at any moment to see her dashing young lover come to her rescue.

"Lat velly goodie," the clever Chinese muttered, nodding to himself. "Now, len, me go backee velly muchee quickee and tellee Misler Wild."

He looked around for a good way for our hero and his partners to ride up on horseback.

But there seemed to be none.

It was a gully full of rocks, so to speak, and almost directly to the left was a hill upon which some cattle were grazing.

Hop knew that there must be a ranch somewhere close at hand when he saw them, but he cared little about that, though it struck him that possibly some of the men belonging to the band might live there when they were not playing their parts as road-agents.

The only thing for him to do was to go back as quickly as he could and inform Wild of his discovery!

Taking in his surroundings carefully, so he would make no mistake about it, he turned and ran lightly back.

It did not take him more than three or four minutes to reach the trail, and when he got there he found Jim guarding the prisoner.

Wild and Charlie were nowhere to be seen.

But he had heard them say that they were going to make a search for the outlaws, and with a nod of his head he ran up to Jim, who looked at him expectantly, and exclaimed:

"Me findee velly muchee quickee, Misler Jim. Um Vultures allee samee aloud lere," and he pointed in the direction of the spot where he had located them.

"What's that, Hop?" Dart asked, both delighted and surprised. "You saw them, you say?"

"Me see lem, Misler Jim. Ley gottee Missee Aletta, too. Me see her. She standee by um cliff, and um Vultures lere, too."

"Good! Go and find Wild and Charlie right away. Wild went that way," and he pointed to the right, "while Charlie thought he would go across the trail over there."

"Me findee Misler Charlie, len."

The Chinaman promptly started away, and he had not gone very far when he saw the scout walking about.

The moment Charlie saw him he started toward him.

"Come on, Misler Charlie," Hop called out. "Me findee um Vultures allee light. Hully uppee."

"Great gimlets!" and Charlie ran forward, for he did not doubt that the heathen was telling the truth. "Where are they, Hop?" he asked, excitedly.

Hop told him, and then the two were not long in getting over to Jim.

Jim told them both where they might find Wild, so they hurried down the trail and then turned to the left.

"Misler Wild go allee light, so be," the Chinaman declared, nodding his head approvingly. "He go 'lound lat way, and maybe he see um Vultures."

They searched for over five minutes without seeing a sign of the young deadshot.

Then Charlie happened to find some footprints, and he easily recognized them, or claimed he did, anyhow, and he gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

"He went down here, Hop," he declared, as he pointed to a rather steep hill before them.

"He no findee, len," was the reply.

They hurried on down the hill, and came to quite a wide gorge through which a stream of water flowed.

Charlie made his way to the edge of the high bank and looked over.

At first he saw no one, but just as he was going to step

back he caught sight of Wild as he was stealing along, revolver in hand, among the rocks.

Knowing that the outlaws were close at hand, he did not call to him, but, stepping back, found a stone about the size of an egg and then threw it as far as he could in the direction of the boy.

The stone struck the ground, making considerable noise, of course, and almost instantly Wild turned and looked behind him.

When he saw the scout waving his hat to him and beckoning for him to come back, he lost no time in starting.

The two waited for him until he reached the top of the hill. "Me findee, Misler Wild," Hop exclaimed, clapping his hands softly. "Me velly smartee Chinese. Me makee lillee miltakee in um cave, but evellything allee light now. Me showee you. Comee 'lound his way."

"Hurry up, then, Hop," came the reply. "Did you see anything of Arietta?"

"Me see Missee Aletta, allee light. She watchee for you to comee, so be. She no 'fraid of um Vultures."

Back they went over the rough and rocky ground, and soon returned to the spot where Jim was waiting with the prisoner.

Hop told Wild exactly where he had seen the villains, and the young deadshot was very anxious to get to them, as might be supposed.

"Just fetch that fellow along, Jim," Wild said, in his cool and easy way. "I reckon we'll need him in order to save Arietta. Once we have done that we'll make short work of the Vultures. Of course, I expect to take them alive, but if they put up a fight we will have to shoot, that's all."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE VULTURES ARE ROUNDED UP.

During the time that had elapsed since the rather mysterious disappearance of Arietta, Sheriff Morgan had been in a state of excitement.

He had gone back to keep the company of Anna and Eloise and Wing Wah, and he remained there until the explosion Hop had caused was heard.

"I wonder what that was," he said, looking at the two girls in surprise.

It was a heavy report, but still muffled, and sounded out of the usual.

"I think I know who caused it," Anna answered, quickly. "Hop Wah probably did that, and if he did it was done for a good purpose, you can rest assured."

"The clever Chinese, you mean?"

"Yes."

"I think I oughter go back there an' see how they're makin' out. I've been here long enough."

"It might be a good idea, sheriff. We are not afraid to remain here."

"But some of them Vultures might come sneakip' around, though," and he shook his head.

"If they do we'll shoot them, that's all," Eloise spoke up, for she had seen quite enough of the sheriff to believe that he did not possess any more courage than he should.

"That's the way to talk, gal. Well, I'll go back there, I think."

But he hesitated about doing it, and it was not until about five minutes had passed that he decided to go.

Cautioning the girls to keep a sharp watch, he went along the trail toward the spot, which must have been probably three hundred yards away.

He held a revolver in his hand, and had no doubt nerved himself to put up a fight if it came to the point.

When he was a little more than half way he paused, and scratching his head, thoughtfully, muttered:

"Maybe I'd better go up the hill to the left an' take a look around. I reckon I'll do it, anyhow."

Then he did so.

It took him probably three or four minutes to get to a high point from which he could see pretty well around the immediate vicinity.

But it happened that Jim with the prisoner and horses were hidden from his view.

However, he caught sight of the Vultures just as they were coming to a halt in the place where Hop had discovered them.

The sheriff gave an exultant cry, and then when he had

anted them and found there were nine of them he shook his head and said:

"I wonder where the other one is? There's ten of 'em, that's certain. I reckon I had better go an' find Young Wild West right away."

Down the hill he went, and reaching the foot of it, he paused upon the trail again and appeared to be doubtful about it.

"There's one of 'em left, that's sure," he thought. "This is a puzzle to me, anyhow. Just how them fellers got away with the gal right afore our eyes I can't understand. Then, when them Vultures showed up as if they had come out of the ground. What makes it all the more puzzlin' is that heavy report we heard. The gals back there thinks it was the Chinese what done it. But I don't see how he could have done it. It sounded like a cannon beln' fired away off. It might have been an earthquake, though."

He kept on thinking in this strain until another five minutes had passed, and then once more plucking up courage he started directly along the trail.

It happened that he was just in time to see Young Wild West and his partners with the clever Chinese and their prisoner. "Jumpin' cats!" the sheriff exclaimed. "There's the tenth man, blamed if it ain't. They've got him. Well, it begins to look as though Young Wild West is goin' to keep his word. He said he would git 'em, all right, an' he's got one of 'em. That sartainly is a good starter."

Thinking he was going to give an important piece of information, he ran hurriedly to the spot, waving his hand excitedly.

Wild had just started to walk from the spot, leading Captain Bird by the arm.

He paused when he saw the sheriff coming.

"I know where the rest of the gang is, Young Wild West," the latter said.

"Is that so, sheriff? Well, we know, too."

"Oh, you do, eh? I thought maybe you didn't. I climbed up a hill back there an' I seen 'em. They've got the gal there, too. I counted 'em, an' there was only nine. You have got the other one."

"Yes, that's right, and he's Captain Bird."

"Is that so? Well, ain't I glad! Do you think we'll be able to ketch the rest of 'em."

"I certainly do, sheriff. Just keep cool. You're awfully excited, I think."

"Maybe I am, but I can't help it. I feel like letting out a yell."

"Don't do it, please. I reckon you had better remain here with the horses."

"If you say so I will."

"All right, do so, then. We'll be back in a short time."

Captain Bird had not said a word, but had been listening to all that was said.

He now knew that his men were likely to be given a surprise, and it seemed as if his bluffing way had entirely left him.

Hop took it upon himself to lead the way, since he had been the first to discover the whereabouts of the Vultures.

Wild, holding tightly to the arm of the prisoner, came next, and Charlie and Jim followed.

It took them but a short time to get into the gully among the rocks, and then Hop quickly pointed out the villains, who had not moved from where they had stopped.

Arietta could not be seen now, but this did not worry our hero one bit.

Pushing the prisoner forward, he pointed out the spot where the nine men were gathered and said:

"There are your comrades, Captain Bird. What do you think of the situation now?"

"I think it's all right," was the reply. "They are there, and they must certainly have the girl with them. You don't suppose they are going to give her up, do you?"

"I certainly do. I am going to make you cause them to do it, too."

"Make me do it, eh?"

"Yes, that's right. Do you see this gun?" and the boy pushed the muzzle of his revolver close under the villain's nose.

"Don't shoot, Young Wild West," came the cry.

"You don't want me to shoot, eh? Well, I certainly will shoot you dead if you don't make those fellows free the girl. Now, then, you may as well give up the idea of getting the best of us. What are you going to do about it? Do you want to live a little longer, or do you want to die right now?"

The prisoner shrugged his shoulders and remained silent for a moment.

"How am I going to make them set the girl free?" he asked. "Easily enough. All you have got to do is to tell them to."

"Do you want me to call out to them to do it?"

"Not just yet. Wait until we get a little closer. Charlie, you just fetch him along behind me. I see a way to get pretty close to the bunch of scoundrels."

"Right you are, Wild," the scout answered, and he promptly grabbed the outlaw by the arms.

Wild's eyes were more keen than Hop's, and though the Chinaman had claimed to find a way to get nearer to the Vultures without being seen, he had not.

He turned slightly to the left and began moving along behind some rocks.

The scout followed him, causing the prisoner to get upon his knees and move along in that way.

He was not going to untie his hands, so it was with no little difficulty that Captain Bird got over the ground.

But it was only a short distance they had to go in that cautious manner, for once they reached the cover of some rocks that lay directly opposite to the cliff where the Vultures were in waiting it was easy enough to creep forward without being observed.

"Make him lie behind that big boulder, Charlie," Wild whispered. "I'll get a little closer and try and find out what they are talking about."

"I kin hear them mumblin' over somethin' every once in a while, Wild," the scout answered, as he touched the captain's breast with his revolver and forced him to do as the boy said.

Our hero paid no attention to the last remark, but crept up to within twenty feet of the Vultures.

Some of them were squatting upon the ground, while others were standing.

They were all holding revolvers in their hands, which told plainly that they expected to be attacked at any minute.

As the boy peered around a rock he caught sight of his sweetheart for the first time since she had disappeared so suddenly.

Arietta was sitting on a stone, apparently anything but frightened.

The fact was that she had quickly got over the sudden fright caused by her capture, and since that time had been waiting expectantly for Wild and his partners to come to the rescue.

Even when the explosion had occurred in the cavern she had not shown fear, for she readily guessed who it was that caused it.

Very glad to get outside, for she seemed to feel much better in the open air, she was satisfied that it would not be long before Wild would come.

The fact that Captain Bird had not returned worried his men a whole lot, and Arietta took delight in it.

None of them seemed to have the least idea what had caused the explosion, and she certainly was not going to enlighten them any.

It had been the enemy's opinion that the best thing they could do was to get out of the underground place at once, and this they had done as soon as they were able to find their way through the smoke.

Wild had been mistaken in thinking there was no other outlet to the chamber.

There was one, and it was through it that the villains had made their way, taking the girl with them.

Unable to get to their horses, they had decided to wait there in the hope that Captain Bird would appear and give them the advice they were so much in need of.

Though he was a sort of lieutenant, Rooster Dick had been unable to suggest anything that seemed of value to them, and he had given it up as a bad job.

But he knew it was policy to hold the girl a prisoner, for by doing so there might be a chance to save themselves in case Young Wild West surprised them.

Unaware of the fact that the young deadshot and his two partners had located them and were at that minute but a few yards away, the villains talked in low tones, all the time wondering where Captain Bird was.

Sitting upon the stone, Arietta looked to the right and left, and then straight ahead, alternately.

She seemed to feel the near presence of her dashing young lover, and as the minutes wore on she could not resist the temptation to rise to her feet.

"Set down there, gal," one of the villains commanded, as he turned and looked at her through the eye-holes in his bird-like mask.

"I am not going to run away," she answered, coolly. "I know I wouldn't get very far if I tried it."

"Set down, anyhow."

It happened that Wild had got as far as he could without being discovered by the villains, just then.

At first he was going to call out for them to release the girl instantly, but he changed his mind, and after peering at Arietta from behind the rock, he turned and went back to where Charlie was holding the prisoner.

"Don't you open your mouth until I tell you to," he said, sternly, as he touched the villain with his revolver. "Now then, Charlie, we'll drag him over to that big rock. We'll have to slide along or they'll see us. Come on, and don't make any more noise than is possible."

The scout gave a nod, and then in about a minute they had pushed the prisoner behind the rock.

"Get upon your knees," Wild whispered.

Captain Bird obeyed, for he knew his life was not worth much if he refused.

"When I tell you, I want you to rise up and say 'Hello!' to your men. Do you understand?"

"I suppose I will have to do it," was the whispered retort.

"If you don't you will be shot, that's all."

Wild peered around the rock and found that the situation was about the same.

There was no need of waiting any longer, so he told Captain Bird to get upon his feet.

Slowly the villain did so.

Wild cut the rope that held his right hand to his side, and then holding him by the left arm, nodded for him to go ahead.

"Hello, boys!" Captain Bird called out, in a voice that was rather shaky.

Instantly the eyes of the Vultures were turned in that direction.

"Hello! Hello!" came the reply, and some of them started to run over to him.

"Tell them to bring the girl here," Wild whispered, as he pointed his gun at the prisoner. "Do as I say, or you'll die!"

"This way with her, boys," the outlaw called out, raising his free hand and beckoning.

It happened that one of the gang was holding Arietta by the arm at the time, and though apparently somewhat surprised, he promptly started forward with her.

Wild gave the captain a nudge with his revolver.

"Tell them to let her come alone to you," he said.

"That's all right. Let her come alone here. I want her," the villain said, just as though he meant it.

The man promptly released his grasp upon her arm and then Arietta, not exactly knowing what to expect, started to move away to the right.

But at that moment Wild called out, softly:

"This way, Et. Everything is all right."

His voice was heard by the Vulture who had come close to the rock, and the villain gave a startled cry.

But Arietta lost no time in leaping over a boulder, and the next minute she was at her young lover's side.

Charlie now reached up and, grabbing the prisoner, pulled him to the ground.

He had a rope ready, and with remarkable quickness wound it about his arms.

"You scoundrels!" Young Wild West exclaimed, as he showed himself to the astonished Vultures. "Hold up your hands! You are all covered, and the least move you make to get away will mean death for you!"

Such a command as that could hardly go unheeded.

While the villains certainly knew how many there were in the party, they could not tell if others had come or not.

They looked at each other, but no one offered a suggestion.

"You heard what I said," the young deadshot went on, in his cool and easy way. "Up with your hands!"

"An' be mighty quick about it," the scout called out from his place of concealment.

One of them slowly raised his hands above his head.

This was the cue for the others, it seemed, for in less than ten seconds the whole nine men were standing with upraised hands.

Charlie now leaped to his feet and stepped toward them.

"There's jest fourteen men behind them rocks, an' each of 'em has got a rifle," he said. "You fellers seem to know putty well when you're well off."

"I surrender!" called out Rooster Dick.

"So do I!" came from several of the others.

"All right. That shows that you know when you're well off. Come on, Jim. Let's fix 'em up."

"I want to take a hand in this," Arietta called out, while Wild remained standing behind a rock, a revolver in either hand.

The brave girl fearlessly approached the Vultures, and proceeded to relieve them of their weapons.

Hop Wah came to assist her, carrying a lariat with him.

Then with the assistance of Charlie and Jim, he tied them all securely, not one man offering to make the least resistance.

When the last one had been bound, Cheyenne Charlie took off his hat, and bowing in a mocking way, said:

"Now, then, them fourteen men with rifles will come on an' show themselves."

All eyes were turned toward the rocks, but when no one appeared and the scout laughed heartily it dawned upon the villains that they had been duped.

But the victory had been won, and what the sheriff and his deputies had failed to do in three or four months, Young Wild West and his partners had accomplished in a few hours.

They had run down the Band of Ten that was called the Vultures, and the whole ten had been taken alive, too.

A few minutes later the prisoners were marched around to the trail.

Then Hop went with Jim Dart, and the horses were led from the cave, for that part of the underground place had not been disturbed by the explosion.

"Well, sheriff," our hero said, smiling at the chief officer of the county, "I reckon everything is all right. Shall we go on to Shinbone Bar, or go back to Jackson?"

"Go back to Jackson, I say," was the quick reply. "I reckon we kin git there by the time it gits dark, if we hurry."

"All right, Jackson it will be, then."

It is not necessary to dwell any further upon this particular adventure of Young Wild West and his friends.

They all rode back to Jackson, arriving there shortly after darkness set in.

There was much surprise, of course, when it was discovered that the Band of Ten had been captured so neatly and quickly by the dashing young deadshot and his partners.

They were all lodged in jail, and the reward was paid the following day, after which our friends were again ready to set out in quest of further adventures.

As they were leaving the hotel, Jerry, the bad man, was so loud in his cheering for them as any one else, and this was somewhat gratifying, for to think that the fellow had been tamed and was not "sore" about it was a winning point for Young Wild West.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST CALLING THE TWO-GUN MAN; OR, SAVING A SHERIFF'S LIFE."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

## CURRENT NEWS

No longer the silk stocking brigade dwelling in the exclusive residential district of San Francisco will be bothered by the cock's crow at sunrise, for A. J. Weinland, a retired chemist, of Santa Monica, has manufactured a concoction which, on being fed to roosters, prevents them from crowing. According to Weinland, his preparation contains only ingredients that are harmless to the birds, while putting an effective stop to the early morning call.

Free milling gold said to assay thousands of dollars to the ton, was discovered by two prospectors, McLaren and Belway, twenty-six miles from Kitsumkalum, at Marcon Point, B. C. The towns of Kitsumkalum and Terrace are deserted. Fifty claims have been staked and according to reports received here to-day hundreds of prospectors, storekeepers, lawyers, doctors and miners are on their way to the find. Kitsumkalum is ninety miles up the railroad from Prince Rupert, B. C.

Confirmation has been received at Kingston, Jamaica, of the destruction of many banana plantations by the hurricane. An average of 60 per cent. damage has been done to spring fruit. Several wharves have been destroyed, but no shipping casualties have been reported. Great damage has been done to roads and bridges, a number of which have been washed away or destroyed on the north side of the island. The German steamer Sigismund, which arrived recently, had her boats, wireless apparatus and rigging carried away.

A large amount of solid silver tableware stolen from George W. Vanderbilt's summer residence at Bar Harbor eighteen years ago was found recently, hidden in the rocks at the base of a cliff by Simon Violete, a teamster. Violete went to the cliff for a load of rock, and in handling the stone came upon the silverware, which was covered by rock, earth and underbrush. The silver is valued at \$1,000 or more, and is part of plunder valued at many thousands of dollars taken from the Vanderbilt home. A large sum of money and much valuable jewelry were never recovered. The silverware was marked with the initials "G. W. V."

The bark of the California redwood tree, which has heretofore been practically a waste product of the many large lumber mills of the state, is now likely to be used to a large extent in the manufacture of paper. Heretofore redwood lumber mills have been unable to dispose of the bark to paper manufacturers for the reason that there seems to be no way of removing the red color. Recently, however, a process has been discovered by which the color can be removed or changed, so that white paper may be made of the redwood bark. A company has been organized to manufacture paper from the redwood bark and is purchasing the waste material from the big mills in the forest regions of Mendocino County, Cal.

A rabbit hunt on the outskirts of Great Notch, N. J., the other day, was brought to an unexpected ending at the base of an old apple tree into which the rabbit had sought shelter. The hunters, John Lyons and Robert Dodd, of Upper Montclair, had fired two shots at the little animal, and as the smoke cleared away saw their prize run into the hollow of the tree. As the hunters were preparing to smoke the rabbit out they discovered in the tree hollow a much worn pocketbook. It contained one \$100 bill, five twos, three fives and eight one-dollar bills, all in fair condition. The rabbit hunting was immediately stopped. There was nothing to show to whom the money belonged, and the supposition is that it had been hidden by a thief.

The Prussian Diet is now giving its formal official consideration to a project for taxing bachelors. The original bill has been amended so as to make the tax effective only in the case of unmarried men whose income exceeds \$750 a year. Such men will be called upon in case the bill passes to pay a tax of from 10 to 20 per cent, higher than married men with corresponding incomes. The bachelor tax will take the form of an income sur-tax. The idea of the legislators who are backing the bill is that men who have to support wives or children ought not, in justice, be compelled to pay as much toward the support of the state as men who are leading the care-free, irresponsible lives of bachelors. The project is fathered by the Conservatives of the Diet and has every prospect of becoming a law.

Wide search has been made for the next of kin or heir-at-law of Henry D. Winters, who died in the West on June 20, 1911, leaving an estate valued at \$100,000. Mr. Winters left no will. Nelson H. Tunnicliff has advertised extensively for persons who might have an interest in the estate, but so far none has appeared, although he believes it not unlikely that heirs are now living in New York city or near by. Unless they come forward the \$100,000 estate will go to the State of New York. Mr. Winters was born near Albany in 1828. He was twice married. His first wife died many years before her husband. He had a daughter by his first marriage, who had no children. Mr. Winters was married a second time in 1879, to Miss Alida E. Shufelt. There was one child by this marriage. Mr. Winters was in the business of buying up county and school warrants and also handled large eastern investments in western properties. About thirty-one years ago his wife and child visited Mrs. Winters' relatives in Albany. None of these has been able to give any information about Mr. Winters. The daughter by his second marriage was drowned in California. The records of Albany show no reference to Mr. Winters. It is known that in 1886 the dead man had a cousin in New Jersey, whom he visited. The cousin is dead, and while his children remember the visit of Mr. Winters, they are unable to give any information of value.

# THE SUNKEN FLEET

OR,

## WORKING FOR MILLIONS

By **DICK ELLISON**

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XV.

#### A TREMENDOUS SURPRISE.

Positively Tom Hunter had not fully realized the perplexities of his situation until he found himself alone.

But the more dismal thoughts thrust themselves upon him, the more resolutely did the boy push them to one side.

"It's time enough to fight each difficulty as it comes," he reflected. "First and foremost I'm going for that light."

He had not far to go.

Beating his way through the dense tropical growth, now stumbling over some huge root projecting above the ground, now finding his progress barred by some great vine hanging suspended from the branches above, he reached, after a few moments, a small clearing where the remains of perhaps half a dozen adobe houses could be seen, with a small church far on the road to absolute ruin standing in their midst.

The light proceeded from the church, shining even more dimly than ever, now that it had the stars for rivals, through one of the rear windows not a dozen yards from where Tom stood.

Now Tom's first thought was to advance boldly and find out who was inside the church.

This he probably would have done, and there is no telling what it might have led to if it had not been that just then he perceived a man emerging from the low doorway of one of the ruined huts nearest to the church.

The man was Dick Price!

He walked rapidly across the open space and disappeared within the church.

What could it mean?

Had the Terror made a landing at last?

If so and Captain Terrible was in the church there would be some one to appeal to, for since the day of their first meeting, the master of the Terror, bad and all as he was, had certainly stood his friend.

But on the other hand it might be that Price and the crew had mutinied and seized the boat—it was best to exercise caution before making a decided move.

Tom crept across the open and gained the window through which the light shone.

There was no sash to the window, which was a very tall one and reached down almost to a level with the boy's waist, so he had no difficulty whatever in looking through it and discovering all that was going on inside.

He at once perceived that the light proceeded from a fire built directly upon the stone floor of the ruined church.

About the fire sat Dick Price, Jake and every other member of the crew of the Terror except Caesar the stevedore and Charley Brown. Tom looked eagerly from face to face, hoping to see Captain Terrible, but he was not among the rest.

The men were all smoking and talking in voices quite loud enough for Tom's ears, and the first words which he heard told the whole story.

"Boys!" the mate exclaimed, "it was the prettiest piece of torpedoing ever you see. I had her bearings fore and aft went down, and struck one of our biggest torpedoes right in her path. Then rising up at a safe distance, I attracted her attention by signals, and while they were all a-wondering who and what we were, pop she went."

"Price, you're an old blower," exclaimed Jake, knocking the ashes from his pipe. "You know blamed well that the hull scheme was mine, not yours. Now, no more of your slack. The old man is dead, and all his fine schemes die with him. That Hunter boy has disappeared, the mate knows where, and we've got Brown a prisoner in the hold beyond. Here we are, and now what be we going to do?"

"Divide the gold, of course, that's the fust thing," growled one of the sailors; "we've spent half the night getting it off the wreck. There's a slew of them bars, and they're all aboard the Terror. Price, how much do you kalkerlate they're wuth?"

"Wuth a million, I'm thinking," answered Price, "and there's all the gold we got off'n the Spaniard. That's good fifty thousand more. But where's the use in dividing here? We've got to get somewhere before it'll do us any good."

"What do you mean? I for one ain't going back aboard the Terror. I'm going to have my share of the gold and am going down to Mazatlan."

"Man, you're crazy!" cried the mate, angrily. "Mazatlan is five hundred miles from here. The country about us is a perfect jungle. You could never reach Mazatlan alive!"

"You're a liar! You mean to cheat us out of our share. I know you!"

"Don't call me a liar!" roared the mate, springing to his feet.

"Won't I? You are a liar, and a confounded mean one. I know you, Dick Price—I——"

Crack! Crack!

Price had whipped out his revolver and fired two shots. "May the fiends take you! I'm shot!" bawled the sailor, falling back upon the floor.

In an instant all was confusion.

The men sprang to their feet as with one accord, and a shot after shot rang out within the ruined church.

Tom did not see the end, nor did he ever know it.

At the first shot he sprang away from the window, and bounded with all possible speed toward the hut from which he had seen the mate emerge.

"Charley! Charley!" he called, for there, lying upon the ground, he could distinguish dimly the body of a man.

"By George! Tom, is that you?"

"You bet it is!" whispered Tom, springing to the side of his friend.

"Get me loose, will you, for Heaven's sake. Price and the others have seized the boat. Captain Terrible is dead, and——"

"Hush! Not a word now!" breathed Tom, he had already cut the cords with which Charlie was bound. "They are fighting inside there like demons—I know all. Where's the boat?"

"Right down the shore a piece, just the other side of the wooded point. But look here, what do you propose to do?"

"I propose to capture her. Quick now, or it will be too late."

They sprang out of the hut together, but from appearances it was too late even then, for there were Price and Jake running out of the church, and the others after them.

Just as Tom caught sight of them he saw the mate turn and fire again.

"There's the boat," whispered Charley, pointing toward the shore. "I was wrong—I thought they left her where we landed on the other side of the point."

Uncertain as was the light, Tom could now see the turret of the Terror just rising above the water a few yards out from the beach.

There was no time to be lost and the boys started on the dead run for the shore, but before they had gone ten yards a loud shout from Price told them that they had been seen.

"Hold on there!" he roared. "By thunder, it's Tom Hunter and Brown! Hold on, or I'll put a bullet in your backs!"

Even before the boys had time to obey—which they never thought of doing—a ball flew past Tom's ears.

"Whew!" whistled Charley, "things are getting hot!"

"It's all one. They'll kill us now if they catch us. Here we are, old man, and thank goodness there's the turret window open. Is the water deep?"

"Blest if I know!"

"No matter we can swim for it, if we must," cried Tom, dashing into the water.

As Charley followed another ball flew harmlessly past them—they could hear the mate bawling to them to stop at the top of his lungs.

In less than a minute Tom had come alongside the boat, and, grasping the sill of the turret window, pulled himself in.

A dark face rose suddenly before him from behind the wheel.

"Great golly! Oh, de good Lawd protect us! A ghost! A ghost!"

"Cæsar! It's only me! Be quiet, you fool!" cried Tom, springing toward the frightened darky, who stood facing him with rolling eyes and chattering teeth, when to his utter amazement he saw that it was not Cæsar at all, but the dusky steward of the Cyclops—it was Ed!

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SURPRISE FOLLOWS UPON SURPRISE.

"Oh, oh! A ghost! Two ghosts! Now you jest keep away from me!" yelled the dusky steward of the Cyclops, dodging around the wheel. "You ain't Marse Tom Hunter nohow. He's done drowned."

Tom Hunter, scarcely less amazed than the darky, sprang forward and tried to seize him, Charley scrambling through the window at the same time.

"Ed! Ed! Great Scott! what does this mean?"

"Means that this is the Cyclops and not the Terror," cried Charley.

"Ah! yah! de debbil's after me!" bawled Ed. "Youse is nuffin' but ghosts! Keep off! keep off!" and giving Tom the slip, he dashed down the turret ladder and disappeared.

"By the great horn spoon!" ejaculated Charley, "if this doesn't beat all."

It certainly was the Cyclops.

One glance at the shining brass work around the turret would alone have been sufficient to tell Tom that they were not on board the Terror, where all was dirt and disorder, even without the sight of Ed's frightened face.

"What can it mean?" he cried.

"Blest if I know, Tom."

"It makes no difference, Cyclops or Terror, we've got to get out of this."

He sprang to the wheel and struck the bell to back the boat.

Crack! Crack!

The echo of the bell had not yet died away when two shots were heard from the direction of the shore, and a ball whizzing past Charley's head lodged in the woodwork behind him.

Charley ducked behind the wheel, and then gaining courage, slammed down the thick plate glass window.

"That was a close call," he muttered, just as the screw began grinding and the boat moved away from the beach.

Meanwhile, Price and the others could be heard shouting from the shore; the shots were not repeated, however, and presently they were out of range.

Tom, grasping the wheel, kept one eye on the receding shore, the other being fixed on the turret ladder.

"Who started the boat?" a stentorian voice was suddenly heard shouting below.

"It's father!" gasped Tom. "He's coming up, Charley! Won't he be surprised!"

Quick footsteps were heard ascending.

(To be Continued)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### RED HUNTING CAPS IN PENNSYLVANIA.

Red caps have come to be a regular hunters' uniform in Pennsylvania. To the new custom is credited the fact that not an accident has been reported since the hunting season opened. Whenever a hunter ventures into the woods without his "blood red emblem" he is met by some hunter properly equipped with the safety device and advised to hustle for regulation head covering under penalty of being mistaken for a deer and shot. Red caps are displayed in all the gun stores throughout the hunting sections.

### RESCUED NAKED IN BALLOON.

Albert von Hoffman and Captain John Berry, the crew of the balloon Million Population Club, entered from St. Louis in the James Gordon Bennett race from Stuttgart, arrived at New York recently from Hamburg with a thrilling tale of how they escaped drowning in the Baltic Sea.

Captain Berry, who was formerly a parachute jumper, said that the balloon entered a thunderstorm during the race, and to rise above it all the ballast was thrown overboard. When the clouds cleared away he and his companion found they were far out over the Baltic Sea and the balloon was falling rapidly.

Everything in the basket was thrown overboard, he said, even the provisions, but the balloon continued to fall. Finally they felt the spray of the waves dashing in their faces, and as a final frantic effort both men disrobed and threw away their clothing. That lightened the car, and a gust of wind caught it and bore it toward shore. When about a hundred yards from the breakers the balloon finally sank in the water, but fishermen on shore had seen them and they were rescued.

### BASKETBALL DATES OUT.

Ralph L. Morgan, secretary of the Intercollegiate Basketball League, announced the schedule of league games for the season. Because of the withdrawal of Yale from the association only twenty games will be played, the contending teams being Dartmouth, Columbia, Cornell, Pennsylvania and Princeton.

The opening contest will be played at Princeton on December 14, when the Tigers and the Pennsylvania five meet. The final games will be between Cornell and Dartmouth, at Hanover, and Columbia and Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. The schedule is as follows: Dec. 21, Columbia vs. Cornell, at Ithaca; Jan. 10, Princeton vs. Columbia, at New York; Jan. 11, Dartmouth vs. Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia; Jan. 13, Dartmouth vs. Cornell, at Ithaca; Jan. 17, Cornell vs. Columbia, at New York; Jan. 18, Princeton vs. Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia; Jan. 21, Columbia vs. Princeton, at Princeton; Jan. 24, Pennsylvania vs. Cornell, at Ithaca; Feb. 8, Pennsylvania vs.

Dartmouth, at Hanover; Feb. 8, Princeton vs. Cornell, at Ithaca; Feb. 12, Pennsylvania vs. Columbia, at New York; Feb. 14, Cornell vs. Princeton, at Princeton; Feb. 15, Cornell vs. Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia; Feb. 15, Columbia vs. Dartmouth, at Hanover; Jan. 18, Dartmouth vs. Princeton, at Princeton; Jan. 22, Dartmouth vs. Columbia, at New York; March 1, Cornell vs. Dartmouth, at Hanover; March 1, Columbia vs. Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia.

### BALLOONIST HELD AS SPY.

Arthur T. Atherholt, the Philadelphia aeronaut who took part in the international balloon race held last month in Germany, descended in Russia and was detained in the belief he was a German spy, arrived home recently and told an interesting story of his troubles.

"Nothing but trouble from start to finish," said Atherholt. "Of course we were looking for trouble during the five days we were in the air, but when we touched land we thought we were beyond danger. But we hadn't reckoned with Russia. John Watts of Kansas City accompanied me.

"We landed in a place called Pakoz, forty miles outside St. Petersburg. We didn't know we were in Russia, but we soon found out. A crowd of villagers speaking a strange tongue surrounded us, and in a few moments the police arrived. They spoke only Russian. We tried them in English, French and German, but they did not understand. They took us to a detention house and locked us up. The officials made no attempt to bring an interpreter so there we were, prisoners, without a chance to explain.

"The Russian officials refused to allow us to communicate with any person or to send any message to our friends in Germany or anywhere else. However, they were very polite and did not treat us brutally.

"Finally a man came from St. Petersburg. He spoke German and we made him understand that we had been taking part in the balloon race. He explained that we were detained owing to the trouble in the Balkans. The war had made the Russian police very active and they feared spies, especially from Germany. The fact that we had crossed to Russia from Germany in a balloon made us look very suspicious to them.

"At length we were released, and we were advised to make all speed back to Germany to prevent further trouble.

"We didn't even wait to look after our balloon, but after the Russians make a thorough search of it I understand it will be returned to Germany.

"As for the balloon race, I want to say this: 'The best man won.' All credit is due to Le Blanc, the Frenchman.

"In our five days in the air we encountered all kinds of weather conditions and were in danger again and again. It was only by constant work that we were able to keep the big bag aloft. We went without sleep most of the time."

# THE KING OF CRIPPLE CREEK

OR,

## THE BOY WITH A BARREL OF GOLD

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

## CHAPTER XI. (Continued)

We propose to pass over the events of the next few months, hurriedly, and to show, in a few brief words, the wonderful progress which our two boy miners made.

One-eyed Ike, giving up his place in the Spread Eagle, became superintendent of the Lucky Strike, and proved to be a most useful man.

Shanties were built for the workmen, steam was introduced and every mining appliance necessary purchased and run down the canyon.

For two months the work went on swimmingly, and the big raft made weekly trips to the mill, carrying down altogether over one million dollars in gold.

Hudson and Tolliver were now rich.

Strange as it may seem, these two poor boys, in less than one short month, had been able to divide over a million between them, and the lonely canyon had become a scene of restless activity, for Jack had found other ways of making money beside digging gold.

The entire surface of the two islands had been thoroughly prospected and found to be very rich. In fact, they seemed to be just a mass of nuggets which had lodged there and in process of time had become covered with sand.

Kissing Canyon claims were booming now.

Jack's purchase covered two miles of the creek, and this he proceeded to divide up into smaller claims which he advertised for sale in Denver and Cripple Creek papers.

Purchasers were as plenty as flies around a molasses barrel.

The little steam launch which Jack had built in Denver and now ran daily up and down Deer Creek, kept bringing purchasers down until the last claim was sold.

Instead of one mine, twenty were soon in full operation, and Jack Hudson began to be called the "boy gold king;" and this sobriquet was soon changed to the King of Cripple Creek, for Jack had now taken up his residence in the town and joined the mining exchange. His name was known far and wide, and he was pointed out to strangers as one of the wonders of the new mining camp.

"There he goes!" people would say. "That's young Jack Hudson, the King of Cripple Creek. He came in here a tramp, six months ago, and now he is worth millions."

And this was strictly true; for Hudson & Tolliver were now good for at least four millions, and wealth was still rolling in on them every day. But people said a great deal about Jack, and not much about Terry, for Terry was one of the quiet kind and kept entirely to himself.

It was about this time that Jack and Terry had a series of adventures which must now be described.

One day, late in the fall, just as winter was about to set in, the little steam launch came flying down Deer Creek, and upon landing at the pier at the end of the island, Jack stepped out and hurried up to the comfortable cottage where Terry lived with One-eyed Ike and the three foremen in charge of the mine.

Terry was out working in Shaft No. 2, which adjoined the one into which the five toughs had been entrapped.

This shaft was now nearly eighty feet deep, and much richer than No. 1. Jack hurried down there and rang the electric bell at the bottom three times, which was his private signal to Terry, to inform him that he had come to the mine.

In a few minutes the cage came flying up out of the shaft, and Terry stepped on deck.

"Hello, Jack!" he exclaimed. "When did you come? What's up? Something new? I see it in your face."

"That's right," replied Jack, putting his hand down into his coat-pocket and pulling out a lump of quartz which fairly bristled with gold.

"By gracious, that's a beautiful specimen!" cried Terry. "Where in the world did you get it?"

"That's what I'm here to tell you," replied Jack. "Come up to the house, Terry, I want to talk to you. If there isn't another million dollars in this for us, I greatly miss my guess."

Jack was all excitement, but Terry showed none at all. He was a queer fellow, was Terry. The possession of millions had not changed him one bit.

He did not seem to know what to do with his money. All Terry wanted was to keep at work, and be the friend of the King of Cripple Creek.

## CHAPTER XII.

## STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT STILLMAN'S.

As soon as Jack and Terry got inside the house the former closed the sitting-room door, pulled down the shades and spread upon the table a folded map, rudely drawn, "There you are, Terry!" he exclaimed. "There's where we are going, and we start right away."

"Where is it?" asked Terry. "I can't make anything out of that."

"Here," said Jack, putting his finger upon a long, red

line which ran between two lines of rudely drawn mountains. "Breakneck Canyon, forty miles from here, over the range. That's where this piece came from, and Bill Beers, the fellow who brought it to me, says that it crops right out of the wall rock of the canyon for as much as half a mile."

"All like this?" asked Terry, picking up the specimen.

"Pretty much. I've got half a bushel of it down at the house. Bill brought it to me last night. It all runs pretty much the same."

"It's mighty rich, Jack. How did Bill come to find it?"

"Oh, he was prospecting over there and happened to strike it. You know what a stupid, ignorant fellow he is. He has no idea how to organize a company nor handle a claim. He brought it to me as I was coming off 'Change yesterday afternoon. He wants us to go over there with him first thing to-morrow morning, and he promises to turn the whole business into our hands if we will give him a half interest in the company when it is formed."

"Well, I don't know about Bill being so stupid," said Terry, doubtfully, "I sometimes thought he only put it on and pretended to be. When he worked here, I didn't like him for a cent. Neither did Ike. Ike says he is strictly N. G."

"Oh, Ike is prejudiced," Jack replied, carelessly. "He's a harmless enough fellow. Now don't say a word, Terry. The horses are to meet us at the head of the creek at eight o'clock to-morrow morning. Bill has gone ahead and is to meet us at Stillman's. All there is about it, we go."

This settled it, of course; for Terry never made objections when Jack insisted.

Bright and early next morning the boys went shooting up the creek in the steam launch, and, finding the horses ready for them, mounted and went riding up the steep trail toward Stillman's, which was a small claim where an old miner of that name worked alone.

It was a tedious, up-hill ride to Stillman's, which was located on one of the high ridges of the Rocky Mountain range, several thousand feet above Cripple Creek.

When at last they reached the top of the ridge they found the place apparently deserted, which was unusual, for Stillman was almost always on hand; and to make matters more unpleasant it had turned off very cold, and was now beginning to snow.

"Confound it all! What's the matter with Bill that he isn't here to meet us, according to agreement?" exclaimed Jack, throwing himself out of the saddle. "Where's Stillman, I wonder? He can't be far away. Hello, there! Hey, Stillman! Hello!"

There was no answer except the howling of the wind which blew so violently that it seemed as if it must surely sweep them off the ridge and down into the deep valley on the other side.

Throwing the bridle to Terry, Jack pushed his way through the half-open door of the hut. The door slammed behind him with a gust of wind, and at the same instant Terry heard a sharp cry inside which was instantly followed by a shot.

Terry's heart almost stood still. The horses, startled by the shot, began jumping about. He sprang from the saddle and made for the door; but before he could reach it two more shots rang out in quick succession and to the boy's

dismay the horses wheeled around and went galloping down the trail with the speed of the wind.

It was useless to think of stopping them, and Terry did not try. Bursting open the door of the hut he went dashed in, with his revolver cocked and ready.

To his intense surprise the single room which the hut contained on the ground floor was vacant. There was not a soul to be seen.

Terry was fearless enough where Jack was concerned. There was a ladder leading up to the loft above, and he sprang up the rounds without an instant's loss of time.

He might as well have saved himself the trouble, for when he got into the loft there was no one there, either. The place was entirely deserted; and after a good two minutes' search, which included the deep, open trench behind the hut where Stillman did his gold-digging, Terry was no wiser than when he started.

Jack had simply vanished, leaving no trace behind.

By this time it was snowing very hard; a perfect blizzard seemed to have set in, and the air was so thick with flying flakes that Terry could not see ten yards away from the door.

Just then he heard the jingle of mule-bells in the distance, and the sound told him that an ore train must be coming up out of the Breakneck Canyon where several prosperous miners were located.

Glad of any company, Terry ran out and shouted. His cry was immediately answered by a voice calling out of the gloom:

"That you, Bill Beers?"

Why he should have done it, Terry could not have told, but something impelled him to call out, "Yes."

"All right," was the answer. "I can see. I'm going the lower way. Say, did you catch your sucker? Did you get the King of Cripple Creek?"

That time Terry did not answer.

It was all a plot. He saw it plainly now. Jack's was in great peril, if, indeed, he was not already dead.

At the same moment the sound of the mule-team became muffled, and he could no longer hear them after a few seconds.

"I'll know what this means if I die for it!" thought Terry, and he ran down over the ridge through the snow.

In a moment he came to the mules' trail. Instead of coming on up the ridge the footprints turned aside upon a rocky shelf which overhung a precipice where there was a sheer descent of several thousand feet.

Still following, Terry suddenly came to the end of the shelf.

He was now up against a dead wall of rock at least fifty feet high and close to the base of the wall the hoofprints could be seen.

There was no turning aside. They ended right there at the foot of the solid wall of stone.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE MAN IN THE HUT.

Terry was a timid sort of boy, and in case of an emergency always lost his head.

He had lost it now, completely.

He just stood there staring at the wall, not able to think

(To be Continued)

## TIMELY TOPICS

The water in Boston harbor was swelled the other day 1,532 bottles of beer which were thrown overboard from a schooner by United States Deputy Marshal Ruhl. The destruction of the beer was ordered by Judge Morton of the United States District Court, on a proceeding of United States District Attorney French. In behalf of the federal food authorities a bill of information had been filed in the court alleging that the bottles containing the beer were mislabeled. The shipment was made from Brooklyn. The labels represented the beer to be two well known brands, which the government showed was not true.

A recent press dispatch states that three German chemists at Frankfort-on-the-Main have discovered a method of making milk synthetically in the chemical laboratory. According to the dispatch several scientists, including Sir William Crookes, tasted and tested this milk and pronounced it palatable. It is proposed to manufacture the milk in London and sell it at six cents a quart. The milk is made entirely from vegetable ingredients digested in a mechanical stomach." Be that as it may, we hope that there is some truth in the report, for there could be no danger of tuberculosis or any other disease germs in the synthetic product.

By the will of Mrs. Matilda Hasbrouck, who died on Oct. 25 last in her home, No. 237 Central Park West, New York, \$25,000 will be used for benevolent purposes. The Stony Wold Sanitarium, Northport, L. I., will receive \$10,000, and St. Mathew's Church, New York; St. Luke's Home for Aged Women and the West End Exchange and Industrial Union will get \$5,000 each. The rest of the estate, which is estimated at more than \$200,000, is bequeathed to relatives, friends and servants. Among the employes who are beneficiaries is her Adirondack guide, who will receive \$200.

Elmer E. Johnson of Indianapolis, who, with Mrs. Johnson, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Genter of Lawrenceburg, Ind., has just returned from a trip in a small gasoline boat up the Kentucky river. Among the trophies of the hunting and fishing trip are the skin and rattles of the largest diamond rattlesnake ever killed in that part of the country. The snake was about twenty years old and was killed with a bowie knife. Mr. Johnson and his party camped the first night near the mouth of the Kentucky river, and early the next morning, while he was gathering sticks to start the camp fire, he stepped on the snake. The rattler coiled and, with a powerful spring, struck at Mr. Johnson. He struck back with his bowie knife and threw his body back. When Johnson recovered from the fright the snake lay headless on the ground. The snake had struck the handle of the knife with such force that Mr. Johnson believed he had been bitten on the thumb, but after taking a cure for snake bite he made an examination of the thumb but could not find a wound.

A tiny black poodle which had been her constant companion in recent years was the sole guardian of the body of Mrs. Lulu Waslee, who was found dead in her home in Philadelphia Nov. 19. When the police entered the house the dog tried to prevent them from touching the body. As Lulu Wieant, the woman married several years ago George Waslee, resident manager of an express company. They were divorced, and Mrs. Waslee continued to occupy her North 11th street home, which was well furnished. In recent years her former prosperous appearance had given way to signs of poverty, and she was seldom seen in the street except with the little dog. Physicians said the woman died from natural causes, but the coroner will investigate the case. When the police searched the body of Mrs. Waslee they found about \$30,000 worth of negotiable paper, including bonds, and also some mortgages hidden about her person.

"Old Joe" Kirch, the "Hermit of Millstone," was brought to the Somerset County (N. J.) jail by members of the Millstone Vigilant Society, charged with numerous robberies. He lived in a cave in winter and a tent in summer, by the Millstone river. It is alleged that he was about to go into winter quarters and made a raid on Saturday night which caused Constable Wyckoff, the leader of the Vigilant Society, to go hungry over Sunday. Wyckoff tied his horse and wagon under the hotel shed at Millstone on Saturday night. He left his stock of Sunday provisions in the wagon, but when he drove to his home, some miles from the village, later in the night, they were missing. Meat was also stolen from a butcher shop and clothing from a store on Saturday night in Millstone. The stolen goods were found in the hermit's cave to-day when it was entered by the vigilants, who captured "Old Joe" after a hard fight.

In Florida the bees work all winter, and they have as good feed in February and March as they do in July. The orange orchards are alive with the honey gatherers, and their buzzings blend into almost a roar in March, for that is when the orange flowers are open; but it must be confessed that the honey has a tang, something like the acidity of an orange and it does not compare at all with that made from the basswood. Besides the orange there are successive flowerings of legumes of all sorts all the year, every one having a positive flavor and very few of them giving to honey a similar flavor. Yet Florida is a natural home of the bee, and honey in the southern States will yet become as familiar a product as cane sugar. In the Mississippi valley and elsewhere professional beekeepers carry their hives to the south to meet the coming of the flowers early in the season, turning around toward the north and carrying them to gather the later sweets from the later flowering apples and berries. In this way, or by carrying them up and down mountainsides, the feeding spells on clover or basswood and other trees can be lengthened.



## \$650,000 AT STAKE.

By D. W. Stevens.

It was a cold, foggy night in New York, a few people in vehicles in the murky streets, and a gloomy air enshrouding the city.

Lights flickered dimly in street lamps, smothered whistles shrieks and dull bell clangs came from the hazy rivers, and everything was drenched, for a shower had fallen.

Within the Central Office sat the chief of detectives at his desk, writing, in blissful indifference to the wretched weather outside, when there came a knock, and the door-keeper was gone, he said:

"A gentleman to see you, sir," he announced in low tones.

"Who is it, Andy?" asked the inspector, glancing up.

"Dick Midwood, the bank safe expert. His business is important."

"Then show him in at once!"

Nodding, the man withdrew, and presently ushered in a tall, pale-faced individual of forty, in neat, dark clothing and a high hat.

Excitedly approaching the chief as soon as the door-keeper was gone, and said:

"Inspector, I've got a confession to make to you."

"What's the matter now, Midwood?" queried the chief, who was acquainted with the gentleman.

"It's all about a big bank burglary!" was the startling reply.

"Indeed! You interest me. What is the game?"

A gang composed of Hustling Bob Scott, Jim Dunlap, Red Leary, Billy Connor and John Berry are going to blow open the vault of the Harlem Bank," explained the safe expert.

"How do you know?" demanded the chief, interestedly.

"Well, you are aware that I am the best expert on safes in this country, and get a large salary from a company in this city. The gang learned that I knew the combination of the Harlem Bank lock, and collared me. Luring me into a Hester street dive to-night, they got me into a room, and at the point of a revolver tried to make me tell them the combination of the bank lock I have mentioned. I refused. Then they went away and left me bound and helpless in the room, and they swore they'd get into the safe, anyway, by cutting into the vault and blowing off the door."

"How did you escape?" asked the inspector.

"The police raided the place, which was a low gambling saloon, and by that means I got away an hour after the bank burglars nabbed me."

The chief saw that Midwood had been drinking, and feared that the story might be exaggerated.

He questioned the safe expert minutely, and having thoroughly posted himself he dismissed the man and touched an electric button on his desk.

A panel door, which the keenest eyes could scarcely have detected in the wall, was pushed noiselessly open, and a detective came through.

"Jerry Atkins!" exclaimed the chief.

"Here, sir," replied the officer, saluting. "I overheard every word."

"Go up to the Harlem Bank and shadow the place. If anything transpires, telephone the nearest police station for a squad to help you."

The detective saluted, and left the office.

Proceeding up to Harlem in a Third avenue car, he alighted in front of the bank and saw that it was under a small opera house, the side door of which was unlocked.

Entering the hall, the detective groped his way up the broad stairs, and reaching the floor above he found that the door of the place of amusement was unlocked, but there was no light inside.

He had scarcely set his foot across the threshold, however, when he received a stunning blow on the head that staggered him, and as he reeled and fell, a muscular hand grasped him by the throat, stifling a cry that arose to his lips, and the dazzling light of a dark lantern was unmasked and flashed in my face.

"The burglars!" he gasped, and then he lost his senses.

When the detective revived, half an hour later, he found himself sitting in an orchestra chair, bound and gagged.

He saw several men flitting to and fro as quick and noiseless as shadows.

Directly in front of him part of the flooring had been removed, a layer of stone, and another of railroad iron had been taken out, and then a square hole was cut through the steel plates of the vault below, in which stood the Harlem Bank's safes.

Scott and Dunlap dropped down through the opening they had made into the vault and examined the safe with a dark lantern.

They then plugged up all the seams in the door with plaster of paris, except a small crack at the top and bottom.

At one crack they placed fine powder, and at the other an air pump, which, when worked, sucked the powder into the crevice.

Dunlap then fastened a pistol at the crack, and by means of a string he discharged it, as they each crouched in separate corners of the vault.

The explosion was terrific, yet smothered.

The safe was ripped open.

Half deafened, the two burglars groped through the smoke, and taking from the safe what seemed to be packages of greenbacks and bonds, they thrust them in the bosoms of their shirts.

The packages contained \$150,000 in money and \$500,000 in negotiable bonds.

"Hurry!" hissed a warning voice above. "The explosion was heard."

Scott and Dunlap came out of the vault nearly unconscious from inhaling the smoke, and the former developed a fatal disease from it that eventually ended his life in Sing Sing.

"Carriage!" gasped Dunlap.

"There's one at the door!" whispered John Berry.

"Put us in—can't walk."

Red Leary and Billy Connors supported the exhausted men.

"Where d'yer wanter go?" asked Leary gruffly.

"Clyde's dock—take steamer for Fernandina till this blows over."

"Good! We'll meet there in a month to divide," said Connors.

They did not get out any too soon, for the bank watchman had been alarmed by the smothered explosion, and heard their hurried footsteps retreating overhead.

He came rushing up, when it was too late, to find out the cause of the noise, never dreaming what had actually occurred.

"What is the matter up here?" he shouted, releasing Jerry.

"The bank vault was cut open and the safe blown!" explained the detective as soon as he was free.

"Yes, yes. But who are you—how came you here in this state?"

"Detective," laconically replied Jerry, showing his badge. "But don't waste time talking, my friend. I've got a chance to catch them before they get away with the swag, as I know where they are going. You hurry and telephone to police headquarters all the facts. Say that Dunlap and Scott are on a Clyde steamer bound for San Fernandina, and tell the police to send out men to look for John Berry, Red Leary and Billy Connors."

And without waiting to say any more to the horrified watchman, Jerry clapped his hand to his pistol pocket, felt that his revolver was there and rushed from the building.

Down the street he ran at full speed, and presently, encountering a cab, he hailed it, sprang in, and shouted to the driver:

"Clyde steamship dock! Five dollars if you reach it in forty minutes!"

Delayed by excess of freight which it was obliged to take aboard, and the burglars knowing that a strike then in progress among the stevedores would keep the vessel in port at least till midnight, they planned to get away on this particular vessel.

Jerry sprang from the cab, paid the driver and rushed for the steamer.

"Too late!"

For the steamer, having completed shipping its cargo, had been unmoored and was swinging out into the stream.

Over fifty feet separated it from the dock, and as Jerry stood on the string-piece, and peered at it through the mist, he saw two men standing on deck at the railing beside a lantern whose faces he knew.

They were Dunlap and Scott.

Running out to the street, he looked around to find a vehicle to carry him down town, but not only had his cab disappeared, but there was no other carriage in sight.

A belt line horse car came jingling slowly along, not a passenger in it, and the driver and conductor half asleep.

Jerry ran up to it and sprang upon the front platform.

"I'll give you five dollars if you get down near the Battery in five minutes!" he exclaimed, addressing the driver.

"Can't do it, boss," said the man. "It's agin rules ter go faster'n I'm goin."

"The case is desperate!" said Jerry, grimly, as he produced his revolver and pointed it at the alarmed driver's head. "If you don't drive your team as fast as they can rip, I'll put a ball in you!"

In an amazing short time Jerry found himself in the

vicinage of the South Ferry and alighted, leaving a five dollar bill clutched in the frightened driver's hand.

He knew where he could hire a boat near the Bank office, and upon reaching the place he descended a flight of slippery steps to a float, and there found his man.

This individual answered to the name of Tom.

There was only one skiff at the float, a large, clumsy affair, and the boatman sat in it, ready to row away with a tall man attired in a long coat and slouched hat.

"I say, Tom!" exclaimed the detective.

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered the man, recognizing him.

"I want a boat."

"It's engaged," said the tall man, coolly. "Give away Tom."

"I've got to head off a Clyde steamer that is coming down the East river with two escaping bank burglars aboard," said the detective, "and I'll have the use of the boat to do it, if I fight for it!"

"Oh, you are a detective?" blankly asked the tall man.

"Exactly! Isn't that warrant for what I am doing?"

"Certainly. I am a revenue officer myself, and I'm going out to collar some cigar smugglers who are working the Havana steamers."

"Then row for the middle of the river, Tom," said the detective, "and I'll catch my men yet."

A few moments later the outlines of a steamer began to show through the fog, and Jerry grasped a lantern, sprang from the boat, and began to wave it.

His signal was seen by the lookout, for the whistle blew again, but the steamer bore straight down on them.

As it came nearer Jerry saw that it was the steamer which Scott and Dunlap had embarked.

"Steamer ahoy!" yelled the revenue officer.

"Out of the way there, or we'll run you down!" came the gruff reply.

"Haul to! We must board you!" replied the detective.

A rope was hoisted, and the detective caught it, and ran fast to the painter of the skiff.

Jerry boarded the steamer, and was met by the captain, to whom he explained his mission.

He led the detective down into the saloon.

It was brilliantly lighted, and the quick eyes of the manhunter detected Dunlap and Scott standing at the liquor locker with the steward imbibing some brandy.

"In a twinkling Jerry had them covered with his revolver.

"You are wanted! Hands up!" he exclaimed, sternly.

Jerry handcuffed them together, deprived them of their weapons, secured the booty which they had hidden in the stateroom, and brought his prisoners down in the hold, cast off, and Tom rowed them ashore at the Battery.

The chief was delighted with the promptness of the detective's work, and lodged the prisoners in jail.

Next day the rest of the gang was captured, and the bank was given the money and bonds they had lost.

This was the last regularly organized gang of bank robbers in the metropolis, and they were all given two year sentences.

Jerry is still on the force, but he can never forget the exciting experience when there was \$650,000 at stake, and he broke up the last gang of bank robbers.

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## NEWS OF THE DAY

A severe earthquake occurred at Mexico City, Nov. 19. The movement was oscillatory, and passed from north to south. It lasted more than three minutes. Many brick walls and a few poorly constructed small houses were thrown down. The street pavements buckled, and several watermains were broken. The extent of the damage to property is slight. Government reports indicated that the area embraced a wide district in the west and south of Mexico, chiefly in the state of Guerrero. According to the police reports, the only casualty was that of a laborer.

"I guess I'll just slip this roll under the seat," muttered Driver West of the Standard Dairy Company of Bloomfield, N. J., as he reached the lonesome section of Allwood, on the outskirts of Passaic, early the other morning. "This is a good place to be held up." The premonition saved the dairy company about \$200, as West had no sooner placed the money between the folds of a blanket on the seat of his wagon, than three masked men jumped from the brush and conducted a regular old-time hold up. "Get out of that wagon and keep your hands up," was the order, and West obeyed with alacrity. The bandits' search was unavailing, as West had only eighteen cents in his pockets.

A severe criticism of students sent to Oxford University under the Rhodes scholarships was delivered at Washington by Dr. George R. Parkin of Oxford, executive secretary of the Rhodes scholarship trust, before the National Association of State Universities, which began its seventeenth annual session at Washington. Dr. Parkin divided the students sent to Oxford from the United States into three classes. The first third, he said, were high grade students; the second third were fair, while the other third—"well, it is a mystery to the Oxford faculty how they ever got there." Dr. Parkin said merit should be the determining factor in awarding the Rhodes scholarships. Well rounded students were desired, he declared, regardless of financial or social standing.

Diplomatists in London believe that Britain and Russia will make joint proposals for a more efficient regency in Persia, and that the Regent, who is at present in Europe and is a very able man, but weak, will be asked to make up his mind whether he is going back or is resigning his position. A new electrical law will be introduced under the aegis of the two powers and a new Medjliss or Parliament will be set up with much restricted powers. The gendarmerie will undoubtedly be officered in part by Russians and British, a step to which Persia will take the strongest objection. On the other hand, both nations will endeavor to withdraw their troops as soon as possible. Finally, a loan will be made to Persia on conditions, and its imminence explains the presence of Lord Revelstoke at Balmoral.

Because of his love for his pet dog, Charles Leffenbine, a Glenville, Conn., contractor, is in the Greenwich Hospital with a broken leg, cuts, bruises and possible internal injuries. Mr. Leffenbine was returning from church the other morning when A. M. Zabriski, a son of Professor Zabriski of Wells College, appeared with his automobile. The dog ran out in front of the car and Leffenbine followed. He leaned over to seize his dog and save its life, but as he did so the front spring of the car hit him in the knee and he was thrown over the fender and carried 70 feet. The dog was saved. Leffenbine was taken to the hospital and Zabriski surrendered himself to Sheriff Finnegan. He was released upon his own recognizance.

Gottfried Hugg, until recently first sergeant of the 27th company, Coast Artillery, and Charles W. Caton, private in the 10th Coast Artillery, at San Francisco, shot themselves recently in an attempt to commit suicide because they had been disciplined for participating in poker games at the Presidio. Hugg and ten other non-commissioned officers were reduced to the ranks, and Caton and 24 other privates were sentenced to pay fines for their part in the game. Hugg has been in the army for 27 years and a sergeant for 14 years in the 27th company. He has seen service in Indian campaigns, in the Spanish war and in China at the time of the Boxer uprising. His record has been clear until the present affair. Before shooting himself he wrote a note to his company commander, saying that he felt that he had not been given a "square deal," and that his long service entitled him to some consideration. Hugg's wound is considered serious, but Caton's injury is said to be slight.

After completing a hunting tour which occupied the greater part of two years and which has been conducted in the wilds of three continents, C. E. Lucas, an English hunter and naturalist, who is visiting Vancouver, will make arrangements before his departure with the British Columbia government and game wardens of the province for the accommodation of several hundred red deer which will be brought from his father's estate at Warnham, Surrey, England, early in September next year. These animals have been given to the government of the province by C. H. Lucas, Sr., the intention being to turn them loose in the wilds of the Rockies and allow them to increase until their numbers warrant the passing of a game ordinance allowing them to be shot in limited numbers. Mr. Lucas said that it was originally intended to send the deer out this year, but unhappily the outbreak of foot and mouth disease among the English cattle had prevented the exportation of any live stock from the old country. Consequently the animals were retained. About fifteen years ago his father had made a similar gift to the government of New Zealand, and since that time they had multiplied so rapidly that they were now shot every season. During a recent visit to the islands he had been able to secure four magnificent specimens.

## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### TO BRING SHAMROCK IV.

"I'll bring my Shamrock IV here in 1915 for an international yacht race if there is any one here to compete with," said Sir Thomas Lipton, the English yachtsman, on his arrival in San Francisco. Yachting is Sir Thomas Lipton's pleasure and delight, and to further it in whatever way he can he has come to San Francisco to do his part in arranging for an international yacht race here during the exposition. The America's Cup, the elusive prize for which he sought in 1889, 1901 and 1903, is still before his eyes. "When I go to New York I hope to arrange for a race for this cup in 1914," he said. "What is good enough for Uncle Sam is good enough for me, and I want to race under American conditions."

### HOCKEY PRACTICE BEGUN.

Hockey practice began at Columbia College when a squad of thirty-five candidates reported to Tom Howard, the old Yale coach, for the first workout of the season. The drill was held on the handball courts in the gymnasium and was confined almost entirely to shooting the puck across the cement floor. Until the latter part of next week the players will have to content themselves with this kind of practice. Then there will be daily workouts at the St. Nicholas Rink. Howard plans to get his men into condition as early as possible. It is probable that a western trip will be taken during the Christmas vacation in preparation for the regular league contests. J. S. Bates, P. G., is captain of the seven, and the other veterans who reported were R. J. Trimble, '13 L.; R. W. Milbank, '15; W. Todd, '15; F. W. Washburn, '13 L.; J. L. Smith, 14 S.; L. E. Harris, '13.

### GERMANY'S EXPENSES RISE.

Some leading items in the budget of the empire for the coming year were given Nov. 16 in the Borsen Courier, a leading financial daily. The income and expenditures are balanced at approximately \$762,000,000 each, an increase of about \$74,000,000 over last year. The estimate for the navy is given at \$119,250,000, an increase of \$1,500,000. The ordinary naval expenditure increases by \$4,000,000, and the non-recurring expenditure by \$5,250,000, but the extraordinary expenditure is reduced by \$7,750,000, owing to the approaching completion of the naval construction programme. First appropriations are asked for a battleship to replace the Woerth and for a battleship designated as "T," for a large cruiser to replace the Hertha, for a small cruiser to replace the Gofion, and for another to replace the Hela, for a gunboat marked as "C," and for a new imperial yacht to take the place of the Hohenzollern. The naval estimates also include an appropriation of \$5,000,000 for submarines. The army estimates are increased by \$14,250,000, which includes the increases of the forces provided for in the new military bill, one of which is the organization of ninety-three machine gun companies.

### DEBUT OF MISS CLEVELAND.

Miss Esther Cleveland, daughter of Mrs. Grover Cleveland, made her debut at Princeton, N. J., at a brilliant reception given in her honor at Westland, the home of the late ex-President. Miss Cleveland was a White House baby. She has been a favorite in Princeton, and the interest in her entrance into society was universal. Princeton, Mrs. Cleveland's fiance, shared in the interest of the many guests. He was congratulated on all sides. More than four hundred guests were present, including the families of the faculty of the university, the theological seminary and the other local and neighboring institutions, as well as the general society of Princeton. Many others were present from Newark, Morristown, Trenton and other New Jersey cities, and from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and other distant points. The house was decorated principally with palms and chrysanthemums and the many roses sent to Miss Cleveland. Mrs. Cleveland, with her mother, Mrs. Prine, and her daughter, Miss Esther Cleveland, received the guests in the drawing room.

### KRAMER AND MORAN TEAM FOR BIKE RACE.

Against the advice of his friends, trainer and some of his fellow bicycle riders, Frank Kramer will again compete in the six day race. Kramer, who has been the best of the short distance riders of the world for the past twelve years, rode his first six day race last year, and improved his form as a sprint rider, but his friends contend that another race will take off that fine edge and sends him across the tape a few inches ahead of his opponents. Joe Fogler, the veteran six day rider, says that this kind of racing makes an "in and out" of a competitor in short distance races. Fogler believes that Kramer will never again be the sprint champion if he goes through the coming race in the Garden. Kramer, however, is of the opinion that another race will make him stronger than ever in open and handicap races.

As an all around rider Kramer was never better than he was this season. For years he has not been good in five and ten mile races and handicaps, but he has seldom been beaten this season in any kind of a race. The champion asserts that the six day race last winter taught him to punish himself, which is the essential thing in long races. Last year Kramer rode with Jimmy Moran and finished second to Jackie Clarke and Fogler. The pair won the race by a full lap, Kramer and his mate riding on even terms with five other teams at the start of the last mile. Kramer beat the field in a final sprint.

Moran will ride with Kramer again this year.

Moran is a brilliant six day rider and the Kramer-Moran combination will be called the American team. Moran has won two races in New York, was second, third, third in two and finished fourth, fifth and sixth in other races in the Garden. He also won two races in London and won six in other cities in this country. With Fogler, Moran won the recent six day race in Boston.

**MAGIC COINER.**



A mystifying and amusing trick. Tin blanks are placed under the little tin cup and apparently coined into dimes. A real money-maker. Price, 20c. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

**THE FOUNTAIN RING.**



A handsome ring connected with a rubber ball which is concealed in the palm of the hand. A gentle squeeze forces water or cologne in the face of the victim while he is examining it. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing ring in water same as a fountain pen filler. Price by mail, postpaid, 12c. each. E. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

**ITCH POWDER.**



Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It will make him scratch, roar, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The terrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off the best joke of all. Price 10 cents a box by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**TRICK FAN.**



A lady's fan made of colored silk cloth. The fan may be used and then shut, and when it opens again, it falls in pieces; shut and open again and it is perfect, without a trace of a break. A great surprise for those who see the trick. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid. M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**GREAT PANEL TRICK.**



This remarkable illusion consists of a simple, plain wooden panel, octagonal in shape, with no signs of a trick about it. The panel can be examined by any one; you then ask for a penny or silver coin and place it in the center of the panel; then at the word of command the coin immediately disappears. You do not change the position of the panel any time, but hold it in full view of the audience all the time. The coin does not go into the performer's hand, nor into his sleeve; neither does it drop upon the floor. The second illusion is as wonderful as the first; at the word of command the coin again appears upon the center of the panel as mysteriously as it went. We send full printed instructions by the aid of which any one can perform the trick, to the astonishment and delight of their friends. Price, 15c., 2 for 30c. by mail postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**"UNCLE SAM" BANKS.**



For Quarters, Nickels, Dimes, and Pennies. Every deposit registers. Quarter Banks register 80 deposits or \$20.00, the Nickel Bank holds 200 deposits or \$10.00, the Dime Bank holds 200 deposits or \$20.00, and the Penny Bank contains 100 deposits or \$1.00. These banks are about 4 1/2 inches long, 4 inches high, 1 1/2 inches wide and weigh from 7-8 lb. to 1 1/2 lb. They are made of heavy cold rolled steel, beautifully ornamented, and cannot be used until the full amount of their capacity is deposited. When the coin is put in the slot and a lever is pressed, a bell rings. The indicator always shows the amount in the bank. All the mechanism is securely placed out of reach of meddling fingers. It is the safest, easiest, and most reliable bank made. It has no key, but locks and unlocks automatically. Price, \$1.00 each. E. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



**Solid-breech Hammerless .22 REPEATER**

**SOLID-BREECH HAMMERLESS SIDE-EJECTING**

Sure Safe Shooting for Man or Boy—And a Simple Rifle to Care For

The Remington-UMC .22 Repeater is rifled, sighted and tested for accuracy by expert gunsmiths. It shoots as you hold. The simple, improved safety device on every Remington-UMC .22 repeater never fails to work. Accidental discharge is impossible.

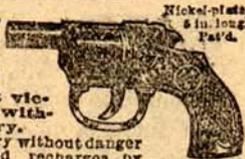
The Remington-UMC .22 Repeater is easily cared for. In taking down, your fingers are your only tools. The breech block, firing pin and extractor, come out in one piece—permitting the barrel to be cleaned from the breech.

The action handles .22 short, .22 long or .22 long rifle cartridges—any or all at the same time without adjustment.

Remington-UMC—the perfect shooting combination

REMINGTON ARMS-UNION METALLIC CARTRIDGE CO. 299 Broadway, New York City

**Wizard Repeating LIQUID PISTOL**



Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury. Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling the trigger. Loads from any Liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Money order or U. S. stamps. No coins.

PARKER, STEARNS & CO., 273 GEORGIA AVE., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

**FALSE MUSTACHES, BEARDS, ETC.** Mustaches 15c. each, 2 for 25c.; full beards and side whiskers, 75c. each. Can be had in five colors—gray, red, dark brown, light brown and black. Name Color you want. Address CHAS. UNGER, Dept 4, 316 Union Street, Jersey City, N. J.

**BOYS AND GIRLS** Air Rifles, Opera Glasses, Rugsby and other presents given free after you sell 15 pictures of Taft, Roosevelt or Wilson. Pictures sent free. Write. G. SCHAPPA, 102 James St., New Haven, Conn.

**THE MAGIC DAGGER.** A WONDERFUL ILLUSION. You can stab a friend. Your friend is not injured in the least. It will startle all. Price 12c. each, or 3 for 35c. CHAS. UNGER, 316 Union St., Dept. 4, Jersey City, N. J.

**JAPANESE WATER FLOWERS** Without exception, the most beautiful and interesting things on the market. They consist of a dozen dried-up sprigs, neatly encased in handsomely decorated envelopes, just as they are imported from Japan. Place one sprig in a bowl of water, and it begins to exude various bright tints. Then it slowly opens out into various shapes of exquisite flowers. They are of all colors of the rainbow. It is very amusing to watch them take form. Small size, price 5 cents; large size, 10 cents a package, by mail, postpaid. M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

**POCKET FLASH LIGHT SQUIRT.** Made of decorated enameled metal, representing an exact flash pocket lighter; by pressing a button instead of the bulb's eye, an electrically lighted up stream of water is ejected into the face of the spectator; an entirely new and amusing novelty. Price, 30c., postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

Watch, Foot-ball, or Fountain Pen free for a little work. If you want one, write to-day for full particulars. P. S. IRONS, Desk A, No. 107 N. Vermilion St., Danville, Ill.

New, Fancy Pecans in Ten-pound Bags; express paid, \$2.50. W. C. BELL, Box 322, Altus, Okla.

**ASTHMA** REMEDY sent to you on FREE TRIAL. If it cures, send \$1.00; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. W. K. Sterling, 837 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio.

**MYSTERY, MAGIC AND FUN.** 250 Jokes and Riddles, 75 Toasts, 67 Parlor Tricks, 3 Fortune Telling Secrets, 33 Money-Making Secrets, 22 Funny Readings. All 10c. Postpaid. CHAS. UNGER, 316 Union Street, Dept. 4, Jersey City, N. J.

**LOTS OF FUN FOR A DIME** Ventriloquists Double Throat. This sort of mouth always performs the most marvelous and profitable thing you can do. Ask and you shall receive. Write for a copy of our new book, "Lots of Fun for a Dime." Price only 10 cents. The 25 cents or 15 for 50 cents. DOUBLE THROAT CO., DEPT. K, FRANKFORD, N. J.

**OLD COINS** \$7.75 paid for RARE date 1855 quarters. \$30.00 for \$8.16. We pay a CASH premium on hundreds of coins; keep all money dated before 1894 and send TEN cents at once for our New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your fortune. C. F. CLARKE & CO., Coin Dealers, Dept. 63 LAKOY, NEW YORK.

**WATCH THIS STEM WIND FREE!**

Genuine American Watch, fine time-keeper, guaranteed for five years, solid Composition Gift Metal Case, looks and wears like gold with Chain. Both FREE for selling 24 packages of Needles at 10 cents each. Write today.

**STAR NOVELTY CO.** BOX 106, QUINCY, MASS.

**GOOD LUCK GUN FOB**

The real western article, carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather, with a highly nickeled buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

### MYSTERIOUS SKULL.



Shines in the dark. The most frightful ghost ever shown. A more startling effect could not be found. Not only will it afford tremendous amusement, but it is guaranteed to scare away burglars, bill collectors, and book agents. It cannot get out of order and can be used repeatedly. Price, 4x5 inches, 15c.; by mail.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

### CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### JUMPING JACK PENCIL.



This pencil is made up in a handsome style and looks so inviting that every one will want to look at it. The natural thing to do is to write with it, and just as soon as your friend tries to write, the entire inside of the pencil flies back like a jumping jack, and "Mr. Nosy" will be frightened stiff. It is one of our best pencil tricks and you will have a hard job trying to keep it. Your friends will try to take it from you. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

### NEW SURPRISE NOVELTY.



Foxy Grandpa, Mr. Peewee and other comical faces artistically colored, to which is attached a long rubber tube, connected with a rubber ball, which can be filled with water, the rubber ball being carried in the pocket, a slight pressure on the bulb causes a long stream, the result can easily be seen.

Price, 15c., Postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### GOOD LUCK BANKS.



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickeled brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

### IMITATION CIGAR BUTT.



It is made of a composition, exactly resembling a lighted cigar. The white ashes at the end and the imitation of tobacco-leaf being perfect. You can carelessly place it on top of the tablecloth or any other expensive piece of furniture, and await the result. After they see the joke everybody will have a good laugh. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

### AUTOMATIC COPYING PENCIL.



The importance of carrying a good reliable pencil need not be dwelt upon here. It is an absolute necessity with us all. The holder of this pencil is beautifully nickeled with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry.

Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### TRICK MATCHES.



Consist of a Swedish safety box, filled with matches, which will not light. Just the thing to cure the match borrowing habit. Price, 6c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

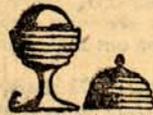
### POCKET SAVINGS BANK.



A perfect little bank, handsomely nicked plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

### TRICK CUP.



Made of natural white wood turned, with two compartments; a round, black ball fits on those compartments; the other is a stationary ball. By a little practice you make the black ball vanish; a great trick novelty and immense seller.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### THE AUTOPHONE.



A small musical instrument that produces very sweet musical notes by placing it between the lips with the tongue over the edge, and blowing gently into the instrument. The notes produced are not unlike those of the fife and flute. We send full printed instructions whereby anyone can play anything they can hum, whistle or sing, with very little practice. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

### MAGIC PIPE.



Made of a regular corn-cob pipe, with rubber figures inside; by blowing through the stem the figure will jump out. Made in following figures: rabbits, donkeys, cats, chickens, etc.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### MAGIC MIRROR.



Fat and lean funny faces. By looking in these mirrors upright your features become narrow and elongated. Look into it sidewise and your phiz broadens out in the most comical manner. Size 3 1/4 x 2 1/4 inches, in a handsome imitation morocco case.

Price, 10c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

### THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.



Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price by mail, 10c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### PICTURE POSTALS.



They consist of Jungle sets, Map and Seal of States, Good Luck cards, Comics, with witty sayings and funny pictures, cards showing celebrated person's buildings, etc. In fact, there is such a great variety that it is not possible to describe them here. They are beautifully embossed in exquisite colors, some with glazed surfaces, and others in matt. Absolutely the handiest cards issued.

Price 15c. for 25 cards by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.



The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price by mail, postpaid 10c.; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

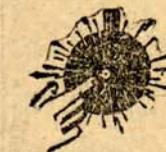
### THE INK BLOT JOKER.



Pool Your Friends!—The greatest novelty of the age! Here a joke which makes everybody laugh. More fun than any other novelty has been shown in years. Place it on a tablecloth, or any piece of furniture, as shown in the above cut, near some valuable papers or on fine wearing apparel. Watch the result! Oh, Gee! Price, 15c. each, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

### ELECTRIC PUSH BUTTON.



—The base is made of black walnut, the whole thing about 1 1/4 inches in diameter, with a metal hook on the back so that it may be slipped over the edge of the vest pocket. Expect to view your New Electric Bell, when your friend pushes the button expecting to hear it ring. As soon as he touches it, you will see some of the liveliest dancing you ever witnessed. The Electric Button is heavily charged and will give a smart shock when the button is pushed.

Price 10c., by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

### SNAKE IN THE CAMERA.



To all appearance this little starter is a nice looking camera. The proper way to use it is to tell your friends you are going to take their picture. Of course they are tickled, for nearly everybody wants to pose for a photograph. You arrange them in a group, fuss around a little bit, aim the camera at them, and request the ladies to look pleasant. As soon as they are smiling and trying to appear beautiful, press a spring in your camera. Imagine the result when a huge snake jumps out into the crowd. Guaranteed to take the swelling out of one's head at the first shot.

Price 35 cents, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

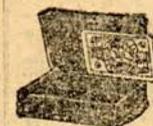
### THE MAGIC DAGGER.



A wonderful illusion. To all appearance it is an ordinary dagger which you can flourish around in your hand and suddenly state that you think you have lived long enough and had better commit suicide, at the same time plunging the dagger up to the hilt into your breast or side, or can pretend to stab a friend or acquaintance. Of course your friend or yourself are not injured in the least, but the deception is perfect and will startle all who see it.

Price, 10c., or 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

### THE MAGIC CARD BOX.



One of the best and cheapest tricks for giving parties and stage exhibitions. The trick is performed as follows: request any two persons from your audience to each take a card from an ordinary pack of cards, you then produce a small handsome box made of imitation pebbled leather, which anyone may examine as closely as they wish. You now ask one of the two who have selected cards to place his or her card in the box, which being done, the lid is closed and the box placed on the table. You state that you will cause the cards to disappear and upon opening the box the card is now placed in the box; the lid is closed and when the box is opened the card appears as strangely as it went. Other tricks can be performed in various ways, may cause several cards to disappear as they are placed in the box, and then you cause them all to appear at once. You may tear a card up, place it in the box, and upon lifting the cover it will be found whole and entire. In fact, nearly every trick of appearance and disappearance can be done with the Magic Card Box. Full printed instructions by which anyone can perform the different tricks, sent with each box.

Price, 20c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.