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# WILD WEST WEEKLY.



## YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE HAUNTED PASS OR THE SECRET OF THE DEATH TRAIL

AND OTHER STORIES

By An Old Scout



Two skeletons suddenly slid down the face of the cliff, and all but Wild turned and fled. "I reckon we'll find out something about this," he said, springing to grab one of the gruesome objects.

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# WILD WEST WEEKLY

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## YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE HAUNTED PASS

OR,

### THE SECRET OF THE DEATH TRAIL

By AN OLD SCOUT

#### CHAPTER I.

##### MEETING AN OLD FRIEND.

It was a raw, cloudy day in the spring of the year, during the period when there was considerably less law and order prevailing in the region commonly known as the Wild West, when Young Wild West, the champion deadshot and well-known boy hero, might have been seen riding along a rough trail in the mountains, very near the central part of the State of Colorado.

With him were his two partners, the girls of his party and two Chinamen who traveled with them in the capacity of servants.

It would be wasting both space and time to go into a detailed description of these characters. So much has already been written of them that it is doubtful if there are very many of our readers who are not at least slightly acquainted with them.

To sum it up briefly, Young Wild West's companions, who for something like four or five years had been riding over the wildest parts of the mountains and plains of the West in search of excitement, adventure and fortune, consisted of Arietta Murdock, his golden-haired sweetheart; Cheyenne Charlie, the scout, and his wife, Anna; Jim Dart, a fearless Wyoming boy, and his sweetheart, Eloise Gardner, and Hop Wah and Wing Wah, the Chinese brothers.

The dashing young deadshot and his partners had found fortune at the very start, and the rest they were always longing for came with it.

Having the necessary income to permit it, they had continued since that time to rove about on horseback, always ready to lend a helping hand to any one who needed it, and also to help force the laws of civilization to the front.

In their picturesque hunting costumes the party made a fine appearance as they rode along over the rocky trail.

Although the day was a gloomy one and there was a damp chill upon the air that was not altogether common to that particular region, the spirits of the party seemed to be light and cheery.

They were chatting gaily, with Young Wild West and his sweetheart riding in the lead, when, as they neared an abrupt turn in the trail they suddenly heard the sounds that were made by a musical instrument.

Since they all knew pretty well that there could not be anything like a habitation within miles of them it was not surprising that they should bring their horses to a halt and look at each other in surprise.

"What do you think of that, Wild?" Arietta Murdock asked her dashing young lover, she being the first one to make comment.

"If my ears are anything near right, somebody is playing a banjo, Et," the boy answered, quickly, and then a smile showed upon his handsome face.

"That's what it is, Wild, you kin bet your life on it!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, as he gave a nod and then twisted the ends of his long, black mustache, a custom that had long clung to him, especially when he had the opportunity to corroborate anything Young Wild West said.

As they listened their ears became more used to the sounds, and then it was easy for them to make out an old-fashioned tune that was being played by the musician.

"I reckon we may as well go on and see who it is," the young deadshot said, in his cool and easy way. "Whoever he is he seems to be in a very happy mood just now."

Then he took the lead, as usual, and the party rounded the turn.

They could not yet see the player, but the music sounded a great deal plainer as they approached the spot.

Up a short rise they rode, and then, as they reached it, they could hear other sounds, too, which were unquestionably those made by heavy boots as they beat the ground, keeping time with the notes of the banjo.

One more little turn and they came in sight of a scene that was quite out of the usual upon a Rocky Mountain trail.

Sitting upon a rock was a tall, spare man, wearing a dilapidated plug hat and attired in a long-tailed coat and buckskin trousers.

He was twanging away upon a banjo, and before him, dancing a sort of jig was a typical rider of the cattle range.

A good judge might have declared that neither the music nor dancing came up to the average.

But it did not seem to appeal to our friends in that light just then.

They were quite willing to look over the defects and permit the comical side of the situation to carry off the honors.

So engrossed were the player and dancer that they did not notice the party at all, and it was not until they were within about fifty feet of them that they were aware of their presence.

Then both the music and dancing ceased instantly, and then the two stared in surprise at the riders.

"Hello, strangers!" Young Wild West called out, nodding to them reassuringly. "I am sorry we interrupted your little performance. Go right ahead. It's all right. We've been enjoying it immensely."

"Well, by thunder!" exclaimed the man with the banjo, and then he leaped forward, like a shot. "If it ain't Young Wild West!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the boy, with a start. "What do you think of this? It's Bub Sprague!"

"Why, so it is!" Arietta exclaimed. "He hasn't grown

much older, either. But I might have passed him and not recognized him, for whoever expected to meet him here?"

"It's me, Miss Murdock," the tall man with the banjo said, and then he tipped the old plug hat graciously.

All hands quickly dismounted now, and for the next five minutes they were shaking hands with the eccentric banjo-player.

Something like three years before he had lived for a few months at Weston, up in the Black Hills, and our hero and his friends had become sufficiently acquainted with him to know that he was honest to the core, as well as a good entertainer.

"Well, Bub, who's your pard?" Wild asked, after the greetings were over with. "I can't say that I ever saw him before."

"I guess you didn't, Wild," Bub retorted, with a grin. "This man used to be my boss down on the cattle range. Things went a little wrong there an' he lost his job. Then as he seemed to like me pretty well, we thought we would strike out for ourselves an' work our way up to Denver. This ain't the same old banjo I had, but it's a pretty good one, an' we figured that we might pick up enough money at the places we stopped at to buy tickets to the East. This pard of mine ain't never been East, but he thinks it's all right from what I've told him about it. His name is Jerry Junk."

Jerry Junk, as he was called, now took the opportunity of going from one to the other and shaking hands.

He was a breezy sort of fellow, and started in to tell his whole history.

But Bub Sprague cut him short by saying:

"None of that, Jerry. They don't want to hear nothin' about your past life, nor what you expect to do. Young Wild West ain't got time for anything like that. I know it's the same with his partners an' the gals. You might tell it to that heathen to the left back there. Maybe he'll listen to yer. But I've got my doubts if he'll do that, for the first thing you know he would be tellin' you about his uncle in China. He had the most wonderful uncle that any one ever had, Jerry. Ey an' by you'll know all about it, maybe."

The late boss of the cattle range shrugged his shoulders and after staring at Hop Wah, who was the one Bub had pointed out for a few seconds, he gave a nod and then kept his lips tightly closed.

Wild asked Sprague a few questions, and in that way managed to learn that he had been in hard luck and that he had lost his wife a couple of years previous.

He now had an inclination to go back East, where he had been born and reared.

When he declared that he knew he would get there now, for the meeting with his old friends showed that he was at last in a streak of luck, they all laughingly assured him that there would be no doubt of it.

"Still following up the old game, I see," Bub said, as he proceeded to pack away his banjo in the green cloth covering he drew from under his long-tailed coat. "Couldn't manage to make yer feel like goin' East with me, could I, Wild?"

"Hardly, Bub," was the reply. "I reckon the West is good enough for me yet. When it gets so there's nothing to be found in the way of excitement here I might take a notion to travel East. But until that time comes I think this will be good enough for me."

"Still thinkin' the same old way. Always lookin' for a chance to rope in a gang of road agents or bad redskins. I'll bet you have been doin' it right along, too, Wild."

"Every time I got the chance."

"An' Charlie an' Jim stick right to yer the same as they always did."

"You can bet your life on that, Bub."

"But I didn't think the gals would keep on ridin' around with yer like this."

"Well, they seem to be inclined that way yet, Bub."

"It sorter looks so. An' my! ain't it improved 'em a lot, though. I honestly think that they've all got a whole lot better lookin' than they was the last time I seen 'em. That's sayin' a whole lot, too, for where could you find three nicer lookin' gals than Arletta, Eloise an' Anna?"

"Stop that, Bub," the scout's wife spoke up. "Don't throw any bouquets this way, please."

"All right," and the banjo player grinned broadly. "But when I say a thing I always mean it. I won't take it back, though I will say that if you don't like it I won't talk like that any more."

"How me lookee, Misler Bub?"

It was Hop Wah who said this, and the bland smile on the Celestial's face caused Sprague to break into a laugh.

"I thought it was about time I heard somethin' from you,

Hop," he said. "Well, you're mighty handsome, but your ways was, so what's the use of me tellin' you that you improved any? Wing, he looks jest about the same as he ways did. I don't s'pose he could crack a smile now if one tickled him on the nose with a feather."

"Allee light, Misler Bub," Wing answered, smiling as though it was just to please him. "Me allee light. Me mind my own business, me no fool Chinee likee my blother."

"I seen the time once when you thought you was a mighty smart heathen. But when your brother comes along an' shyer then that yer wasn't knee high to him, you settled down started in to be a plain, common heathen, with no ideas of your own. But that's all right. I'll bet there ain't no Chinee livin' what's got as smart a brother as you have."

"Me volly smartee Chinee, Misler Bub," Hop Wah spoke up, cheerfully. "Me gottee uncle in China whatee me muchee smartee, and me allee samee likee my uncle."

"There!" exclaimed Sprague, turning to Jerry Junk in triumph. "It told you that story would come puddy soon. Then, there ain't no use of us hangin' around here as I know of. Most likely Wild is lookin' for a good place to pitch camp. It won't be more than a couple of hours afore it begin to git dark. There's rain comin', too, so we had better move right along. Jerry, you jest ride here alongside Hop an' he'll tell you all about his uncle in China."

"All right, I'm mighty willin' to listen to him, so don't think there's goin' to be anything funny about it," the cowboy declared, for he could see the rest smiling and no doubt he thought it was some sort of joke his friend was trying to play on him.

The horses belonging to Bub and the cowboy were quickly found nibbling at the short grass the other side of a big rock.

All hands mounted, and then with Bub Sprague riding close to Wild and Arietta, they continued along the trail which wound its way upward along the mountainside.

"Ever been over this trail before?" Bub asked the young deadshot, as they rode along.

"No, I can't say that we have," was the reply. "We happened to come up this way by accident, I suppose. We been down at Buckhorn Ranch, and we've been riding along nearly every day through the wildest sections we could find out. We have had quite a lot of adventures, too, Bub."

"I'll bet you have. You're always lookin' for 'em, that's why."

"You have got that about right. But what's the use of bein' if you can't have plenty of excitement? Then again, I was born to help things along in general, I suppose. Nothing can me better than to hear of some wrong doing, so I can have a chance to straighten things out. I've been a very lucky boy too, Bub."

"I know that, Wild. In the first place you kin outshoot anything that ever walked on two legs. Then there ain't no ten men who have got as much nerve an' coolness as you have. Another thing is that you're quicker than lightning, strong as a mountain lion, an' ain't afraid of anything."

"You're piling it up a little too fast, Bub," the young deadshot spoke up, laughingly. "Two or three things were mentioned when you spoke of another thing. But it's all right. Don't say anything further in that line, please. If you're bent upon going East, I'll guarantee you that you will have enough money to buy tickets for yourself and your pard, and before you get to Denver, too."

"All right, Wild. But if we do have enough money to buy the tickets I want to earn it. I ain't goin' to do no borrowin' from you, nor will I accept anything in the way of a gift. I've made up my mind if I can't earn enough to git back East I'm goin' to stay here in the West. That's the kind of a habit I am."

"That's the way to talk, Bub," Jim Dart called out, laughingly. "But I reckon it won't take many days before you'll find a way to earn enough money to carry you through. There's always something turnin' up in the way of a job, you know."

"Yes, I reckon I know of a good chance, though I don't think much of tacklin' the job. I've got a bill I took from the saloon we stopped at in a little camp three days ago. It says on it that a reward is offered for a notorious outlaw named Nat Havens. He's s'posed to be workin' over this way somewhere, an' that's one reason why we took this particular trail."

"Is that so, Bub?" and Young Wild West became very much interested right away.

"Yes, I'll show yer the bill."

He was not long in producing it, and when our hero quickly read it over he learned that the outlaw called Nat Havens

robbing travelers and holding up stage-coaches along the trail that led into a hustling mining camp called Lucky Spot. The reward was only five hundred dollars, but that had been sufficient to interest Bub Sprague and Jerry Junk.

While neither of them figured that they stood any chance of capturing the outlaw, they had decided to ride up that way and trust to luck.

"So you would like to get hold of that reward, eh, Bub?" Wild said, as he looked at the eccentric fellow and smiled.

"I certainly would, Wild. But I don't know how I'd have a chance of gittin' it, 'cause me an' Jerry wouldn't stand a chance of catchin' the outlaw alone. I know I'd be damned well that you're thinkin' about helpin' me out. But if you was to do it an' we was successful it wouldn't be me who would be entitled to the reward."

"That's all right, Bub. We don't need the money. You know that pretty well."

"No, I suppose not. Everything is goin' along nicely with your mines, I s'pose."

"Some of them are panning out beautifully, and others are not. But I assure you that we all have incomes that are larger than we can spend. That is enough to let you know that we are all right financially. But say, Bub, how far do you suppose it is to Lucky Spot Camp?"

"Can't be more than twenty miles from here, accordin' to what we've been told."

"But this can't be the trail the road agents are working on."

"No, it ain't. But this will fetch us to the regular trail over which the stage-coach runs. I was thinkin' that we ought to strike it before dark. But say, there's another thing that we got hold of, an' it sorter makes the cold chills run down my back when I talk about it."

"What is it, Bub?" and the young deadshot looked at him expectantly.

"There's a haunted pass what the trail run through. Leastwise, they say it's haunted, an' that there's ghosts an' spirits jumpin' around there almost every night. I did hear that travelers is takin' a different route an' goin' ten miles out of their way in order to reach Lucky Spot Camp. All on account of the haunted pass, too."

"Well, Bub, this is surprising. I am more glad that we get you now than ever. Not because I don't appreciate you for having joined with us, but if we had gone on alone we might have got right into this haunted pass you spoke of and then probably the ghosts and the skeletons would have gobbled us up. That would have been an awful thing, Bub. Just think of the warning you have given us."

Sprague and the cowboy at first thought the boy meant all he said.

But when they saw that he was laughing they knew right away that he had no fear of entering the haunted pass.

"Stop talkin' that way, Wild," Bud said, shaking his head. "You know there ain't nothin' that could keep you out of that pass now after you heard it's haunted."

The young deadshot was about to make some sort of reply when the clatter of hoofs sounded ahead of them, and the next moment they saw a horseman approaching.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE THREE MASKED RIDERS.

There was nothing particularly striking about the horseman who suddenly came in sight of Young Wild West's party.

He appeared to be a cattleman, or some one well used to that part of the country, for he was attired in the fashion of such men, and wore the usual broad-brimmed hat.

He might have been forty-five years of age, or younger, for there was no way of telling exactly the age of a man who was constantly exposing his face to the sun and wind.

A dark-brown mustache almost completely concealed his mouth, and a pair of eyebrows of the same hue showed prominently above a pair of dark-gray eyes that were particularly noticeable to Young Wild West as he rode up closer and brought his horse down to a walk.

"How are you, strangers?" he called out, in a free and easy way. "Looking for the Big Cut Trail, I suppose."

"I don't know the name of the trail we are trying to find," our hero answered, coolly. "But we have heard there is a place back here somewhere that is called Lucky Spot Camp. I reckon we want to get there."

"Well, that happens to be right at the end of the Big Cut

Trail. There's a trail that's thirty miles long, running from Big Cut, which is a great deal bigger camp than Lucky Spot, and it ends at Lucky Spot. You have got to get a hustle on you if you strike the trail between now and dark, though. Looks as though it might rain pretty soon, too."

"It won't matter a great deal whether we strike the trail to-night or not," Wild retorted, as he finished sizing up the man before him. "We'll pitch our camp somewhere, and then ride on to Lucky Spot in the morning."

"Oh, you aren't in any hurry, then," and the horseman turned his attention to the girls, looking at them as critically as if they might have been horses that were offered for sale.

"No, in no hurry at all. We want to take a ride through the haunted pass, too."

"Haunted pass, eh?"

The horseman gave a start, and riveted his eyes upon those of the young deadshot.

"Yes, that's what I believe they call it, isn't it, Bub?" and Wild turned to Sprague.

"That's what we heard 'em talkin' about at the last place we stopped," came the quick reply.

"Oh, yes, there's a pass about five miles this side of Lucky Spot that's supposed to be haunted. But I don't believe in ghosts myself, so I don't take any stock in what I've heard say about it. I came through there to-day, and I didn't see anything out of the way. I didn't hear any sounds like chains clanking or groans from dead people, either. Ha, ha, ha! I reckon some one just got that up to scare folks. Maybe it was so that travelers would go around the other way and get held up by Nat Havens and his gang. Maybe you heard tell of those fellows, too, kid."

"Only what these two men told us a short time ago. We just met them a little back here, and one of them happened to be an old friend."

"Have you fellows ever been up this way before?"

The horseman turned and looked at Bub and the cowboy as he asked the question.

"No," both of them answered, quickly. "We're from the lower part of the State, an' we're on our way to Denver."

"Got a good long ride ahead of you, I reckon. But you're going to stop at Lucky Spot, I suppose? Maybe you have got an idea of striking it rich over there. There's men findin' plenty of dust there, so they say, and it seems every day or two that a big strike is made."

"I ain't goin' to bother about doin' any prospectin'," Bub Sprague retorted, shaking his head in a decisive sort of way. "I've made up my mind to go East, where I come from, an' stay there the rest of my life. I've got enough of the West. I ain't got near as much money now as I had when I first got here. I've put in a tough time of it for over four years, an' I'll be mighty glad to git back where I kin git a whiff of the salt air once more."

"Oh!" and as if he was of no consequence at all, the horseman once more turned to our hero.

"If I'm not too inquisitive," he said, after remaining silent for a few seconds, "I wish you would tell me who you are, kid. I've got an idea that you're somebody I've heard of."

"I haven't the least objection to answering your question, stranger. I'm Young Wild West."

"Just what I thought. You're new in these parts, too, I think."

"Yes, I can't say that I have ever been right in this locality before. I may have passed within a hundred miles or so of it, but this trail is entirely new to me. I never heard of Lucky Spot Camp or the place you call Big Cut, either."

"That's funny. Why, Big Cut has got a population of something like three hundred. There's a big smelting plant there, with a brand new ore-crusher and things are right on the jump, I tell you. A spur of the railroad will be run in inside of a year, too, they say, and then most likely Big Cut will become a good-sized city in no time. Never heard of Big Cut, eh?"

"No, that's a fact, stranger."

"I happen to live over there. I'm interested in the biggest mine there, you know. But I've got an eye to business, and I take a ride now and then over to Lucky Spot to see how things are going on. Sometimes I get a chance to buy a lucky miner out, and if things pan out all right I make a big pile of money from doing it. But I haven't told you my name yet, and I suppose you would like to know it."

"Suit yourself about that, stranger."

"Maybe it would be better if I were to hand you my card."

Throwing back his coat, the horseman drew a neat-looking card-case from a pocket of his vest, and opening it, tendered Wild a card.

On it was inscribed "N. H. Driscoll, Mining Engineer, Big Cut, Colo."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Driscoll," Wild retorted, in his cool and easy way, and then he took care to place the card in his pocket, where he might be able to find it again in case he wanted it.

"I suppose all we'll have to do is to follow this rough trail until we strike the one that runs through the haunted pass into Lucky Spot Camp," he went on.

"Yes, but you have got about fifteen miles to go yet, and you'll find it rather rough traveling when you get a little further on. I think it a good idea that you don't try to make the camp to-night. You seem to have a pretty good camping outfit with you," and he nodded toward the two pack-horses that were in charge of Hop and Wing.

"Oh, yes. We are used to camping out in all sorts of weather. We won't mind it much if it starts raining."

"If you think I can be of any assistance to you I'll ride back and help you find a good place to camp. I think there are several of them between here and the trail."

"Don't put yourself out any. I suppose you had some particular destination in view or you wouldn't be riding this way."

"No particular destination, Young Wild West. I am only doing some prospecting. I am supposed to be an expert at that sort of thing, you know."

He turned and felt of the steel pick that was strapped behind the saddle.

"Yes, I see you have the proper sort of tools."

"Oh, yes, a pick and pan is all I want. I have got an eye like a hawk when it comes to sighting pay dirt. All I have to do is to pick loose the earth here and there and it don't take me long to spot anything if I think it's worth while. Then I can fill up a pan and go to the nearest brook and wash it out. If I find that it's worth while I mark the spot and later on some one in the employ of the company will come and stake it out. Then, if it pays, it won't be long before we'll be running the ore over to Big Cut in wagons. I'll admit that I make a big pile of money at my business. But that's what I'm here for. Who would want to rough it? I am not a native of the West, you know. I was born and bred in the city of New York, which is a long distance from here."

"You bet it is," Bub Sprague spoke up. "I wish I was there now."

"You'll get there soon enough, Bub," Jim Dart spoke up, with a laugh. "Just wait till you get that five hundred dollars' reward."

"This man is looking for a reward, then?" Driscoll remarked, somewhat contemptuously. "Does he think he would be capable of capturing a gang of outlaws?"

"Not alone," Bub answered, before any one else could make a reply. "But if Young Wild West said he would help me I know putty well that the reward would be landed all right. When he undertakes anything he always succeeds. That's one of the peculiarities of his character, you know."

"Yes, I believe I've heard something of that sort. Young Wild West has the reputation of being a remarkable young fellow in more ways than one. He's the Champion Deadshot of the West, I believe."

"You kin bet your life he is," Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed, for he no doubt felt that he had remained silent long enough. "If you know any galoot in Big Cut or anywhere else around that thinks he kin beat anything goin' at shootin' an' is willin' to put up money on it, jest let me know. I'll try an' rake up a few hundreds to bet."

"I hardly think I could name any one just now, my friend, though there are many men in these parts who consider themselves experts with a rifle or revolver. Most of them use the revolver, though."

"Wild kin use his gun, too."

"Hold on, Charlie," our hero said. "I reckon there's no need of bragging about what I can do. I don't believe in it myself. I don't even claim to be the Champion Deadshot of the West. It's only a name you and several others have given me."

"That's right, Young Wild West," Driscoll observed, with a smile. "You're a little modest, and I like you all the better for it. But I don't want to detain you any longer, for I can almost feel the rain coming. I'll ride on, and I know I can find some place to stop at between now and dark."

"I don't know where you're goin' to find it," Jerry Junk, the cowboy, spoke up. "We've been ridin' up this way all day, an' we never seen the least thing that looked like a shanty. These folks didn't, either, though they come up from further to the south."

"You didn't cross the trail, I suppose."

"No. I guess not."

"Well, that accounts for you not finding anything in way of a shanty. I know where a couple of hunters camped up this way, and it is not more than three or four miles from here, at that. If you feel disposed, you can come with me. Maybe it would be the best thing you could do."

"No, thank you," Wild answered, quickly. "We'll ride and do the same as we always do. We don't know exactly where we are going to stop, but the first good place we most likely will be the one."

"All right, I'll bid you all good day and wish you luck. Probably I may get over to Lucky Spot to-morrow, and I'll be glad to see you if you're still there."

Then he waved his hand, after which he tipped his hat to the girls and rode away.

"What do you think of that galoot, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie asked, when the horseman had disappeared behind a bend in the trail.

"I've been thinking a whole lot, Charlie, but I can't say that I have much of an opinion of him as far as his honesty and good qualities go. He strikes me as being a man who is capable of deceiving the average person. Yet he may be right, so I am not going to condemn him at all."

"I was thinkin' he might be one of this outlaw gang that Sprague was tellin' us about."

"Is that so, Charlie? Well, some such a thought popped into my head, too. But never mind. Wait till we see what happens again. I'm pretty sure it won't be so very long before we do. Now then, it certainly is going to rain, which is just what that he was right on that point. Let's move along a little more lively and find something in the way of shelter. While we have a couple of good tents with us, it would be much better if we could get under some cliff where there's a brook to drink by and fodder for the horses."

"Lots of them places through this part of the country," the cowboy observed, as though he was not worrying about finding a camping place.

Half an hour later raindrops began falling, and then it was not long before a sort of drizzle struck it.

This gradually continued until it was a genuine rain, and then our friends were fortunate enough to come to just the sort of spot they had been looking for.

Tumbling down the mountainside was a good-sized cascade, and at the foot of it a bubbling, foaming brook.

The water continued on an almost level stretch for a few yards, and right within easy reach of the stream a cliff projected out several feet, leaving more than ample space to accommodate the whole party, including the horses.

"Here we are!" Young Wild West exclaimed, as he vaulted along the edge of the brook and brought his horse to a stop. "I'm just beginning to get a little worried, and I'm mighty glad to have found this place."

He vaulted lightly to the ground, and the rest were not long in following his example.

The two Chinamen led the pack-horses forward to the spot where they intended to erect the two tents, and it was not long before they were relieved of their burdens.

Meanwhile, Young Wild West and his partners and the two guests, as they might be called, were looking after the rest of the horses.

They were all tied with lariats where they could see the grass and other vegetation that grew along the bank of the stream, and in case they got tired of this they could partly shelter themselves under the overhanging cliff.

Hop and Wing went right at work, and as they had a system of doing it they were not long in putting up the tents.

Then the girls lent a hand and put them to rights, as they called it.

This was all done inside of twenty minutes after the rain was made.

Then Hop and Wing, with the assistance of Cheyenne Charlie, gathered a big pile of wood, and when a fire was kindled the garments that had become moistened by the rain were hung about so they might dry, while others were put in their place.

Just when they thought they had everything in good order and were thinking about supper, three horsemen suddenly came riding along, and as if they knew exactly where to find our friends, galloped swiftly to the spot.

There would have been nothing strange in this if it had not been that the faces of the three were concealed by black masks.

"Get to cover, girls," Young Wild West called out, sharply.

being the first to recover after seeing the masked men approaching.

Then his rifle flew to his shoulder in a twinkling, and in a ringing voice, he exclaimed:

"Stop right where you are, you sneaking coyotes!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### TWO PRISONERS ARE TAKEN.

The trio of riders brought their horses to a halt with wonderful quickness.

Evidently they had not figured on meeting with such a reception.

There stood the boy, the rifle at his shoulder and his cheek resting upon the stock, the barrel swaying slightly so it covered them alternately.

One of them had a revolver in his hand, but he made no attempt to use it.

Wild's sudden action had been the signal for Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart to pull their guns.

It happened that our hero's Remington rifle was within easy reach of him at the time, and hence it was easy for him to grasp it and cover the approaching horsemen.

There stood the three men, their horses moving uneasily under them, completely at the mercy of Young Wild West and his partners.

"I reckon you fellows have made a little mistake," the boy said, in his cool and easy way. "Probably you have had an idea it would be easy to get the best of us. Of course your intention was to rob us. But let me tell you right here that we are not in the habit of being robbed, especially by such fellows as you are. Now then, if either of you attempts to fire a shot it will be the last thing you'll ever do on earth. You fellow with the gun, just let it drop, and be quick about it."

The boy knew that his partners had the men covered, so he turned his rifle straight for the heart of the man he referred to.

"Hold on, kid," the fellow said, persuasively. "Don't get so fast. How do you know that we are not simply trying to frighten you folks?"

"I don't know for a fact. But I have my idea of it. You just drop that gun inside of two seconds, or I'll drop you."

Thud!

The revolver fell from the man's grasp and lay upon the ground.

"Now then, remove that mask. I want to see your face."

"Hold on, kid. Don't go too far with me. You'll be sorry for it some day, if you do."

"Do as I say," commanded the boy, his eyes flashing dangerously.

The fellow shot a glance at his two companions, who were on his left, and then suddenly ducking his head, he pulled hard upon the bridle-rein, causing his horse to wheel.

He was taking the chance of being shot, and no doubt he knew it well.

But probably he was very much opposed to showing his face.

As the horse swung around and started to gallop away, Wild caught sight of his half-turned head as it bent over the neck of the steed.

A quick sight from the boy and the trigger was pulled.

Crang!

As the report rang out the black mask flew from the man's face, while a sharp cry of pain sounded.

The face was turned that way for an instant, and then our hero recognized the man as N. H. Driscoll, the mining engineer, who had met them along the trail a short time before.

"Come back here," he shouted. "I showed you how I could slip that mask from your face. If I fire again I'll kill you."

But the command was not obeyed.

With a yell of defiance the villain rode on and quickly was out of sight behind a clump of rocks.

Wild could easily have shot him, of course, but it was not his intention to do so just then.

The discovery he had made seemed to satisfy him for the time being.

Meanwhile, the other two horsemen had not attempted to make their escape.

Charlie and Jim had them dead to rights, while Arietta was standing close by, a rifle at her shoulder.

"We'll let that fellow go, boys," our hero said, nodding to

his partners. "I suppose you caught a glimpse of his face after I shot the mask from it."

"I know who he was, Wild," Arietta spoke up. "I saw the face plainly, though it was only for the fraction of a second. It was the man we met down upon the rocky trail."

"That's right, Et. He gave his name as N. H. Driscoll, and he said he was a mining engineer. But I reckon he's an outlaw, possibly Nat Havens himself. Probably these fellows can give us a little information. We'll let them take off their masks, so we'll be able to recognize them if we should happen to meet them again somewhere."

Without having to be told to do so, one of the villains raised his left hand and pulled off the mask.

The face was a strange one to our friends, though they marked it well as they looked upon it.

"I don't know you," Wild said, shaking his head. "How about you?" and he turned to the other.

"I s'pose I've got to show my face, too," was the reply, and then off came the mask.

They both looked to be ordinary men of that region.

It could not be said that they were exactly villainous in appearance, either, though the fact that they had appeared with masks on their faces was enough to warrant their true character.

"Do you fellows feel like living very long?" Wild asked, as he drew a gun from the holster at his side and placed his rifle against a nearby rock.

"There ain't no use in askin' sich a question as that," the one who had been first to remove his mask answered, quickly. "Go ahead with your game, kid, an' ask us what you want."

"I want to know who and what that fellow who got away is."

"His name is Driscoll."

"That's all right. He goes by some other name, too."

"Maybe he does," and the fellow shrugged his shoulders and looked questioningly at his companion.

"Isn't he Nat Havens, the outlaw?"

The boy took a step closer and reached out a little further with the revolver he held in his hand.

"You know who I am," he added, his eyes flashing dangerously. "Probably you have heard of what I am capable of doing, too. You value your life, of course. You want to live a good while yet. But I promise you if you tell me a lie you'll die inside of two minutes."

"I don't know as there's any use in me lyin'. You have guessed it right, Young Wild West. Nat Havens was the man who jest got away from here. He was a little too quick for yer, which shows that he knows his business putty well."

If the man had refused to answer his question Wild would have been just as well satisfied that it was Nat Havens, the outlaw, who had escaped from them.

But now it was an absolute fact, for it was hardly likely that such an admission would be made if there was any doubt of it.

"Wild," said the scout, after a short pause, "hadn't we better hang the two galoots right away an' have done with it? It ain't safe for sich fellers to be ridin' around loose, an' there ain't no use in troublin' ourselves by takin' 'em to the minin' camp."

Charlie's words caused the two prisoners to show great uneasiness.

But he hardly meant what he said, and when they saw a broad grin show on his face they realized it.

Young Wild West usually had his own ideas of doing things.

No doubt a great many if they had been in his place would have disarmed the two men and held them as prisoners until they could have been taken to some one in authority.

But that was not his intention.

He had two reasons for acting in another way.

One was that should he hold them and start to take them to the mining camp that lay at the other side of the pass that was supposed to be haunted, it was a pretty sure thing that their friends would ambush them and try hard to effect a rescue.

The other reason was that by letting them go and following them he might discover the hiding place of the outlaw band that had been causing so much trouble in that part of the country.

The boy thought quickly, and it did not take him long to figure out just what he should do.

"Boys, let those fellows dismount and have supper with us. Then, after we have talked with them a while, I am going to let them go."

The two villains showed signs of pleasure, but no one appeared to notice it.

"Get down off your horses," Wild said to them.

One of them obeyed promptly, but the other was a little slow, and Cheyenne Charlie felt it his duty to assist him, which he promptly did, the result being that the villain landed upon his back when he struck the ground.

The scout was not long in taking from him the weapons he had, while Jim relieved the other of his hardware.

Each of them had carried a brace of revolvers and a hunting knife, and their supply of cartridges was rather large, showing that they felt it necessary to be well prepared for an enemy.

Wild called Bub Sprague and the cowboy and told them to tie the horses and leave them saddled just as they were.

This was soon done, and then the two prisoners were forced to sit down upon a rock close to the fire.

They were very uneasy as they obeyed, but for the space of a few minutes they remained silent, while our friends talked matters over and kept a watch in the direction the trio had appeared from.

Wild and his partners had seen quite enough of N. H. Driscoll, alias Nat Havens, to make them feel that he was capable of doing something daring, and it might be that he would take a notion to try to rescue his two pals.

It continued to rain, and soon the clothing of the prisoners were steaming from the heat of the blazing fire.

"I reckon that fire feels rather comfortable, don't it?" our hero said to them, when he thought it about time for them to talk again.

"The fire feels all right, but I ain't goin' to say that I'm glad I'm here," one of them replied, forcing a smile.

"Don't like it much, eh?"

"Not much."

"Well, suppose you answer a few questions while our cook is getting the supper ready."

"Fire away. I'm willin' to answer anything you ask me, if I'm able to do it."

"There ain't no use in tellin' everything you know," the other spoke up, warningly.

"It wouldn't be an awful lot if I was to tell everything I know. What hurt could it do us, anyhow? All we know is that we jest got acquainted with Nat Havens about an hour ago, an' that he promised us a chance to make piles of money if we'd come with him. There ain't nothin' wrong in tellin' that, is there, Lon?"

"Maybe not, but you don't have to tell that much, though."

"You keep quiet and let this fellow do the talking," Wild advised, shaking a finger at the fellow who showed signs of being rather grouchy.

Then he turned to the other man and said:

"What is your name?"

"Bill Murray," was the prompt reply.

"And the other fellow's name?" motioning to his companion.

"Lon Hoke. I suppose his first name is Alonzo, same as mine is William. But we generally go by nicknames in these here parts."

"Yes, I know that much. So your name is Bill Murray, and his is Lon Hoke, eh?"

"Yes, that's right."

"You're sure you're telling the truth?"

"See here, Young Wild West, I don't know as I'd have any occasion to lie about my name or Bill's either. I'm willin' to tell yer anything you want to know, so go ahead an' ask me."

"You just said that you had never met Nat Havens until about an hour ago."

"Yes, I said it, an' it's the dead truth, too."

"But you had heard of him before?"

"Oh, yes. We met a friend of his about three weeks ago, an' he told us that Havens wanted a couple of good men to help him in his business on the trail up this way. We bein' in that particular line talked it over an' sent word three days ago by the stage coach from Big Cut that we would meet him to-day. We didn't come by the regular stage-coach trail, 'cause he didn't want us to. He met us not long after he was talkin' to you folks. He told us all about that part of it, an' said as how he had give you his card. He wasn't lyin', either, when he told you he was a minin' engineer, an' I s'pose his real name is Driscoll. But Nat Havens is the name he goes by when he's in the hold-up business. He must be a man with a sort of double nature, I s'pose. I don't know what else you could call it."

Our friends were quite satisfied that the man was telling the truth.

They watched the other prisoner, and it was easy to see that he objected to the way his pard was talking.

But he had been told to keep silent, and he said nothing.

"After you had talked with Nat Havens a while, I suppose he proposed that you accompany him and assist in robbin' us. Is that right?" Wild continued.

"That's jest right. He told us that you was Young Wild West, too. But that didn't stop us from bein' willin' to help him. We had heard so much about Nat Havens that we thought that he couldn't fail in anything he undertook. Hades heard an awful lot about you, only that you was the Champion Deadshot an' all that."

"I see. But you were somewhat surprised when you found the mistake you had made?"

"Yes. I was knocked plumb silly. I couldn't have pulled a gun if I had tried. You sartly did git that rifle of you to your shoulder in a hurry. Why, I jest thought you would all chuck up your hands right away when you seen the marks on our faces. Lon thought so, too."

"Never mind what I thought," Hoke spoke up, sharply. "Ain't s'posed to do any talkin' jest now, an' you ain't s'posed to tell what I thought, either."

"Be silent," commanded our hero, shaking a warning finger at him.

While the conversation was going on, Wing Wah, the cook, was working away just as though nothing out of the ordinary had taken place.

He had a coffee-kettle swung over the fire, and was preparing some bear-steaks for broiling, while already a number of potatoes had been placed in among the red-hot coals. The scout's wife sometimes assisted him, and when he started to make a batch of corn muffins she came to his aid and the work progressed while Wild and his partners had their attention attracted otherwise.

Arietta and Eloise sat on a stone near the overhanging ledge, the former with her rifle ready to fire a shot at a moment's notice.

She was doing the most of the watching for the other fellow to appear, it seemed.

Wild went on questioning the rascal who was so willing to answer him, but he could gain nothing further than that he and his companion were new recruits for the band of outlaws Nat Havens was leading.

Murray declared three or four times that he had no idea just where the headquarters of the band was located.

Havens had told him, he said, that when they got to it both were to be blindfolded and taken inside, where they would have to take an oath of allegiance to the band before they would be permitted to see again.

This seemed plausible enough, so Wild was willing to let it go at that.

"Now then," the young deadshot said, when he had finished with Murray, "Lon Hoke, I am going to ask you a question or two."

"I don't care what you ask me," was the reply.

"Well, the first thing I am going to ask you is if you expect to live very long."

"I'll live till I die, that's sartin," was the quick retort.

"There's nothing brilliant about that answer. Everybody will do that. But I mean by the question, do you really expect to live many days longer?"

"What are you askin' me that for?"

"Just because I have an idea that if you stick to your intention of joining the outlaw band that Nat Havens is the leader of, you will die pretty soon."

"I don't know as I'm very anxious about joinin' it now."

"Oh, you have changed your mind, then?"

"Maybe I have."

"But you know as well as I do that if we were to let you go as soon as you met Havens you would go with him and be sworn in as a member of his band."

"I don't know whether I would or not."

"You would, wouldn't you, Murray?" Wild asked, turning to the other.

"I s'pose I would," was the truthful reply.

"All right. You can do as you like about it, but if you take my advice you'll do your best to get away from Havens and strike out for the place you came from as soon as we let you go. I want you to understand that I am going to let you go free just as soon as we have supper. There's nothing more about us. When we have guests, especially of your sort, we never like them to go away hungry."

The boy laughed lightly at this, and the two men could not help smiling, it seemed.

Wild now left them to themselves, while Charlie and Jim kept a watch upon them.

Picking up his rifle he nodded to his sweetheart and said: "That's all right, Et. I see you are doing guard duty."



going to take a little scout around and try and find out what Nat Havens is hanging around anywhere. I have an idea that he didn't go very far."

"Be careful, Wild," the girl advised, looking at him seriously. "I have seen quite enough of that man to make me believe that he is dangerous. Don't let him have the least bit of a chance."

The boy laughed lightly, and then made his way along the crest of the cliff, rifle in hand.

He continued on until he was at least a quarter of a mile away, but failed to find the man he was searching for.

As far as he could see, the tracks of the villain's horse continued right on, and thinking it useless to go any further he then, he turned and made his way back to the camp, and was just in time for supper.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE OUTLAWS OF THE HAUNTED PASS.

It will be in order for us to follow Driscoll, alias Nat Havens. It was certainly a bold move on the part of the villain when he refused to obey the command of Young Wild West and made a dash to get away.

The bullet from the young deadshot's rifle grazed the skin above his left ear and took some of the hair with it when it cut loose the black mask, and it almost caused the man to lose his balance and pitch from the saddle.

But he kept right on, hardly hearing our hero's last words. However, when he found he was out of sight of him, he gathered his wits sufficiently to make a desperate effort to escape, and he kept his horse going at full speed until he became convinced that he was not being followed or that there was no danger of his being shot at again.

Then he slackened the pace a little, and began to gather himself fully together.

"That was what I call the greatest experience of my whole life," he muttered, as he looked back over his shoulder and then shook his head to throw off the raindrops. "At first I thought that boy meant to kill me when he fired the shot. But now I can see that he merely meant to shoot the mask from my face. A wonderful shot, I must say, but it was a close call for me at the same time. To think that a boy could have the nerve to shoot close enough to a man's head to cut loose the string that held a mask! But I've heard that he's the Champion Deadshot of the West. I now believe it. I also believe that he is a dangerous customer to tackle, and that I was a fool to think of such a thing as attacking them for the purpose of relieving them of their cash and valuables. But the two new recruits I had with me needed something in the way of excitement, I thought, and that is one reason why I planned it. Sorry now I am. But, of course, I expect to have satisfaction. The chances are that my new recruits are lost to me before they have really been made members of my band. But that is all right. I have six good men, and probably that will be enough, after all. Sometimes a big crowd only makes matters worse. There are more to handle, and it would only make more work for me. The worst part of it, however, is that my identity has been discovered. I have been working this double game for three months or more, and it has been going on successfully, too. I suppose Driscoll, the mining engineer, will have to be reported as missing at Big Cut. That is too bad, for I surely made lots of friends in that place. But never mind. This is a big country, and if I am forced to it I can go somewhere else and do the same thing over again. I haven't the least doubt but that Young Wild West will try and oust me from these parts. He has showed that he is much interested in the haunted pass. Ha, ha, ha!"

The villain laughed lightly, then, and rode on through the rain in silence until it began to grow dark.

He did not seem to mind the wetting he was getting at all, and being mounted upon a good horse he kept on at a good pace, for he was now following the regular trail that was used by the stage coach on its way to and from Big Cut and Lucky Spot Camp.

After what no doubt seemed a very long time to him, considering what had happened, he came to a halt upon the trail directly at the mouth of a narrow pass.

To the right of this the trail branched off, but it was easy to see that it had not been used a great deal.

"Here we are," he muttered, as he tried to pierce the inky gloom. "Now is the time to let the outside world know what I have named this trail. I have been carrying the placards

with me for two or three days now, and have neglected to post them. I'll do it now, even though I am wet to the skin and badly in need of food and drink."

Dismounting, he left the steaming horse standing in the center of the trail, and unbuttoning his coat, drew from a pocket a small roll.

Then from another pocket he produced some small nails.

It was easy to find a stone that would answer the purpose of a hammer, and once he had done so Nat Havens, the outlaw leader, stepped to a big pine tree and tacked one of the cards to it.

Having done this, he lighted a match which he shielded with his hands long enough for him to see the inscription on the thick cardboard:

##### "THE DEATH TRAIL."

That was all there was to it.

The villain laughed in a pleased sort of way, and then rolling the other card he placed it back in his pocket and turned to his horse.

"Straight ahead is the haunted pass," he said, again laughing. "To the right is the Death Trail. I rather think that a stranger happening to come this way in the daylight would be apt to try the pass after reading that little sign of mine on the tree over there. Now then, I will go on to the cave, and if it happens to stop raining before it gets too late I'll proceed to the other end of the pass where the Death Trail comes out and put up the other sign. That will let any one know at both ends."

Once more the laugh sounded above the noise made by the pattering raindrops and sighing of the pines overhead.

Straight into the haunted pass, as he called out, the outlaw rode.

The ground was stony, but comparatively level, and the clang of the steel hoofs as they came in contact with the rocks sounded strangely out of place in the darkness.

But Havens rode on for perhaps half a mile, and then bringing his horse to a halt he remained in the saddle, looking up and down the pass alternately for the space of fully five minutes.

It seemed that the villain was showing the utmost caution, and no doubt he felt it necessary to do so, since he was now virtually at the entrance of the hidden retreat he had fitted out for the purpose of making his headquarters while he carried on his villainous work of robbing travelers and holding up a stagecoach occasionally.

Not the least sound could be heard that would indicate the approach of any one from either direction, and finally becoming convinced that it was all right, he dismounted, and taking the horse by the bridle, turned sharply to the right and entered a narrow split in the great wall of rock that loomed almost straight above him for two or three hundred feet.

For a distance of perhaps fifty feet he went, and then he paused and produced a match safe.

Striking a match he held it in front of him, and then with a nod of satisfaction pushed hard upon what seemed to be a jutting part of the solid rock.

But it was not, for it promptly slid inward, leaving a hole. But this was not all.

Slowly a wide door swung open.

Nat Havens again took the horse by the bridle and pushed through the doorway, and then another match was struck.

By its light he found a lantern on a shelving rock, and when it had been lighted he closed the door, which was really made of stout boards and covered with a sort of cement to imitate the rock.

Having tried it to see that it was secure, he moved on with the lantern, leading the horse at the same time.

It was not far that he had to go before he found himself into a broad cave, where several horses were hitched and munching away at hay.

"Hello!" a voice called out, sharply.

"It's all right," the outlaw answered. "I've got back, boys."

Hasty footsteps were heard, and a man appeared carrying a lantern.

"Anybody with you, Nat?" he asked.

"No," was the reply. "I met the two fellows we were expecting, but they've been forcibly detained. The fact is, I am lucky to be here myself."

The man followed him into another part of the big cave, which was partitioned off by the hand of nature, and formed quite a habitable apartment.

Pieces of rude furniture were scattered about, and at one end was a row of roughly-constructed bunks.

Sitting and standing about were five other men, and all looked at him expectantly as the leader of the band came in. "Pete," he said, turning to the man who had come to meet him, "I guess you had better take this lantern back so it will be in the proper place if any of us happen to want it."

"All right, Nat," was the reply, and the fellow promptly took the lantern and went back to the secret door.

Havens did not have anything to say as to what had happened until he returned.

Then, when he had thrown off his coat and other wet clothing to don the dry garments that one of his men furnished him with, he called for a match, and, taking a pipe that belonged to one of the gang, he asked for some tobacco.

When he had filled the pipe and lighted it he took a seat on a chair and proceeded to relate his adventure.

They listened to him with undisguised amazement, but there were few interruptions as the story proceeded.

When the outlaw leader had finished he puffed away on the pipe in silence for a moment, and then looked inquiringly at the faces of those about him.

"Hard luck, I should say, Captain Nat," one of them ventured.

"You might call it that," and the villain smiled, though rather faintly. "It is the first time in my life that I ever had anything of the sort to happen. I haven't been in the hold-up business so very long, but every time I made the attempt to get money and valuables from a person or persons I always succeeded. This time I failed. But when I come to think of it there is nothing so strange about it, after all. This kid who is called Young Wild West is really a great character. He is about the coolest proposition I ever met. I can't get over his having shot the mask from my face so he might see who I was. That puts me in a very bad position, for now I dare not go back to Big Cut again, unless it be in disguise. I'll never dare to make myself known there again, boys. That means that the jig is up, as far as one part of my business is concerned. I suppose it will not be a great while before we'll have to pack up our duds and emigrate from here. Unless Young Wild West is stopped suddenly he'll surely clean us out. But probably I'll find a way to stop him. I think I'll be able to, anyhow."

Then he again relapsed into silence, while the men talked in low tones.

Presently the leader drew the pipe from his mouth, and looking at the faces around him, said:

"Heard anything more about the ghosts, boys?"

"We haven't had anything to do in that line for a week or two, cap. You know that well enough," one of them answered, with a laugh. "But everything is all ready the first time any one starts to go through the pass. It's haunted just the same as ever."

"How about the Death Trail?"

"Now, you're talkin' about somethin' that's puzzlin'," came the reply. "I sorter thought that you ought to know somethin' about that yourself."

"Well, I don't," and the leader's face took on a grave expression. "You say there's a man hanging around there and that he disappears quite suddenly. Those who have seen him don't seem to be able to give any description of him. I may as well tell you right now, boys, that I have a suspicion of who it is. I have a mortal enemy, and it is possible that he has followed me here and is waiting to get a chance at me."

"It's funny you never told us that afore, cap," an undersized man with shaggy brows said, as he shrugged his shoulders uneasily.

"I don't know. It doesn't say that if a man has a mortal enemy that he has got to tell about it, does it?"

"No, but you're tellin' about it now."

"That's right. I suppose that is because I was defeated by the kid they call Young Wild West. It makes me feel a little strange, and I suppose that is why I mentioned the fact that some one was looking for me. If we had not started the ghost business in the pass, travelers would never have chosen to go by the other trail, which I have dubbed the Death Trail. By the way, boys, I put up a sign at the beginning of the trail, and I mean to put up another at the end. If it stops raining pretty soon I'll go out and see that it's done this very night."

"I don't believe it's rainin' much now. Let's go out, cap," another of the men spoke up, showing his eagerness to assist the leader.

"All right. I think I have worked up an appetite now, so I'll have a cup of coffee and something to eat. In the meantime you can go out and see how the weather is."

One of them who was no doubt the cook for the party,

quickly put a coffee-pot over a smouldering fire, which stirred into a bright glow and fed with some fresh fuel.

The man who was anxious to go out and assist Havens was not long in coming back, and he reported that the rain had about ceased, though the weather was still threatening.

"Wait until I've eaten something, and we'll go out," said the captain.

In a little while the coffee was ready, and then he ate and drank until he was satisfied, after which he put on a dry coat and nodded to the man to go on.

A lantern showed them the way through the other cavern to the secret door, which was quickly opened by simply pushing a knob that worked a wooden spring.

Through the passage they went and were soon into the narrow pass.

There was not much rain to speak of, so after extinguishing the lantern and hiding it the two walked on toward the mouth of the pass, which was less than a quarter of a mile from the spot.

It was right here that the new trail joined it, though the distance over the latter took up quite a few miles, since it led away off to the right and around through a cut, thus making the trip from Big Cut to Lucky Spot much longer.

A convenient tree was found, and when the second place of cardboard had been securely tacked to it Nat Havens declared himself satisfied and started back for the hidden retreat with his companion.

As they were nearing it the unmistakable sounds made by approaching horses came to their ears.

The outlaw leader took his companion by the arm and drew him back behind a rock, and the next moment the shadows of two horses and riders appeared before them.

A nudge from Havens told the other what he intended to do. Revolver in hand, the outlaw leader suddenly sprang upon the two horsemen and called out:

"Hands up!"

"Don't shoot," came the startled cry, and then up went the hands of both men.

"Hello!" Havens exclaimed, his voice changing quickly. "Why, it's the new recruits I went to meet. Hello, boys! How do you get away alive?"

Sure enough, the two men were Bill Murray and Lon Hoke, who had been given their liberty by Young Wild West and his friends after they had been treated to their supper.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE OUTLAWS' RETREAT IS DISCOVERED.

The two villains who had been anxious to become members of Nat Havens' outlaw band showed that they were hungry, and they ate the supper our hero and his friends provided for them with great relish.

As soon as they were through Wild told them they were at liberty to go, and he even went so far as to give them back their weapons.

"I have already advised you to steer clear of this man they call Nat Havens," he said to them, as they were departing. "But you can do as you like about that. If you join his band and stick to him it's a pretty sure thing that you won't live more than a couple of days."

"I ain't goin' to have nothin' to do with him," Bill Murray declared, but Lon Hoke did not deign to make a reply.

It was about dark, of course, and the rain was still falling, though not as heavily as before.

As soon as the two men had disappeared from view, Wild turned to his companions and said:

"Now then, boys, I reckon a couple of us will follow these fellows. I have an idea that the outlaw will be looking for them. The chances are that he is in need of some extra men and he won't let them go if he can help it. Charlie, you go with me, if you like."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the scout, showing his delight. "I was waitin' to hear you say that. You kin bet your life I'll go. We've run up ag'in what I call a putty good adventure. Here's a band of outlaws an' a place where there's s'posed to be ghosts. If that don't make enough excitement to last us for a while I'll miss my guess."

"Let me go with you, too, Wild," Bub Sprague spoke up. "I like this here sort of thing, blamed if I don't. Anyhow, it will kinder take the worry off my mind about gittin' back East."

"All right, Bub," was the reply. "I reckon you can go

You have been out with me before, and I happen to know that you know how to act. Hurry now and get your horses, boys. We don't want to let those fellows get too far ahead."

Then the young deadshot hastened to his own horse and was soon putting on the saddle and bridle.

Arietta was standing near him when he was ready to mount. "Wild," said she, shaking her head, slowly, "be very careful. You ought to know that you have a very cunning scoundrel to deal with. Look out that he don't get the best of you."

"I'll see to that, little girl," was the reply. "You just take it easy, and stay right here at the camp. It may be that we won't return until well toward morning. But we'll come back all right, and to-morrow we'll all have the pleasure of riding through the haunted pass."

Jim Dart seemed quite satisfied to remain at the camp, and so did Jerry Junk, the cowboy.

Wild felt sure that they would be quite secure there, so without saying anything further he started his horse forward, Charlie and Bub, who had already mounted, following him.

The three rode along over the rocky ground, hearing nothing but the sounds made by their own horses' hoofs and the patter of the rain.

It was fully ten minutes before they heard anything ahead of them that would indicate that they were approaching the two men they were following.

Then the faint sounds made by hoofs came to their ears. "We're all right now, boys," the young deadshot said. "The horses know enough to follow them, anyhow. I'm sure Spitzler would lead us right to them, if I were to let him have his way."

In this way they came to the regular trail, and kept on riding, now and then being able to hear the two ahead of them.

Though they had been almost wet to the skin once that day, they did not seem to mind getting that way a second time. They knew pretty well when they got back they would have dry clothing to put on, and another thing it was not so cold that they were uncomfortable.

It was a longer ride than any of them expected to take, but bent upon finding the place where the outlaws had their hiding place, and feeling almost certain that the two men would lead him to it, Young Wild West hung on the trail intently.

Though neither of the three had ever been there before, they knew quite well that it was the haunted pass when they came to it.

"Now then, Bub," Wild whispered to Sprague, "I believe you said from what you heard this was not a very long pass."

"Not more than half a mile, I reckon, Wild," was the reply.

"All right, then. We've got to be careful. Charlie, keep your ears open and your eyes peeled."

"I'm doin' that all the time, Wild," the scout answered, in a low tone of voice.

Unhesitatingly the three rode into the pass, and they had not gone more than a hundred yards when they plainly heard the sounds made by the two horses ahead of them.

It was easy for them to regulate the speed of their own animals to conform with that of those in advance of them, and they kept on until suddenly they heard a sharp command for the two ahead to halt.

Instantly Young Wild West and his companions reined in their steeds and listened.

Though Murray and Hoke were over two hundred feet ahead of them, they plainly heard the words of the man who had stopped them.

A thrill shot through Young Wild West, and leaning over close to the scout, he whispered:

"Here we are, Charlie. I reckon we are paid for riding such a long distance. We've got them dead to rights. Now then, get off your horses. You too, Bub."

The two dismounted instantly, and Wild was upon the ground almost at the same time they were.

He led his horse close to the foot of the cliff, and throwing the bridle-rein over his head, was ready to proceed on foot.

He did not even wait for the two, but started walking noiselessly through the darkness.

In a few seconds he was able to see the outlines of the two horsemen.

Then he could see the two men standing near them.

They were talking in low tones, and Wild could not understand the words.

But he cared nothing for that.

What he wanted to do now was to learn where they intended to go, for the fact that two of the men were on foot

told him quite plainly that the hiding place must be very close at hand.

Nearer he drew to them, Charlie not more than six feet behind him, and Bub Sprague creeping along slightly in the rear of him.

Presently Wild was so close to the men that he thought it advisable to halt and wait.

His companions stopped also.

It happened just then that the fellow called Bill Murray was explaining what had taken place after they had been captured.

He told his story somewhat hurriedly, and when he had finished he declared that he thought it better for him to take Young Wild West's advice and ride on to Lucky Camp.

Then it was that Lon Hoke spoke up, and he condemned his pard fiercely for what he said.

Nat Havens laughed lightly, all three of the listeners recognizing the laugh as belonging to him, for they had marked his manner and voice well when they first met him on the trail that afternoon.

"Chicken-hearted, eh?" they heard him say, with something like contempt. "Well, you are on the verge of becoming a full-fledged knight of the road. You can do as you like about it. If you think I am not a match for Young Wild West, go on to Lucky Spot."

"Oh, I don't want to leave my pard," Murray answered, showing plainly that he was giving in. "I ain't no coward, but I will say that Young Wild West acted white. He give us a good feed afore he sent us away. I s'pose we could have stayed with him if we had wanted to."

"Not much we couldn't," Hoke spoke up, sharply. "You don't s'pose he would have us around, after knowin' that we come there with masks on our faces to rob him an' his crowd, do yer? Nat Havens, I'm ready to jine your band, an' I'll take any kind of an oath you want me to. I'll stick to the oath, too, an' you'll always be able to depend on me."

"I will, too, then," said Murray, after hesitating for a moment. "If I take an oath you kin bet I'll keep it, too."

"You're beginning to get your senses back, I see," Havens said, laughing lightly. "All right. I believe I can trust you both. It's just because Young Wild West frightened you a little that you were willing to take his advice, Murray. You'll soon get over that after you have joined our band. There are seven of us now, and you two will make nine. That means that we'll be able to do a lot of business. Think of the money you'll make, too. It will keep coming right to us almost daily. All we have got to do is to keep the ghosts working in the pass here so as to attract the attention of those who are brave enough to come through, and then it will be easy to swoop down on them and relieve them of their money and valuables. It's an easy life, boys, and there's plenty of money in it."

Lon Hoke expressed himself as being delighted at the prospect, and Murray hastened to declare that he no longer considered the advice of Young Wild West as amounting to anything.

"If you're ready we'll go right into the cave now," Nat Havens said, after a short silence. "Miller, you take one horse by the head, and I'll take the other. But wait. I almost forgot. They must be blindfolded."

"I thought you was forgittin' somethin'," Hoke observed, with a chuckle. "Don't think that I'm afraid to be blindfolded. I'm in this thing for all I'm worth, an' I'll stick, as I jest said a little while ago."

"An' I'll stick, too," added Murray. "You'll never have no cause to call me a traitor, Mr. Havens."

With their own red cotton handkerchiefs the two were blindfolded, and then the outlaw leader and his companion took their horses by the bridles and led them in single file through the narrow passage until they came to the secret door.

Wild stepped cautiously along after them, and he was within six feet of the hindmost horses when Havens lighted a match so he might find the knob which must be pushed in order to force the door open.

The boy saw it quite plainly, and that was enough for him. He waited there until the four had passed through, and then he found Charlie right at his back.

But Sprague was a few feet behind, and when the door shut to, making but a slight sound, he moved up a little closer, and whispered:

"By jingo! This is what I call great. Now then, I'm goin' to help you capture Nat Havens, the outlaw, an' then if you feel like it you kin give me my share of the reward."

"Never mind the reward now," the young deadshot retorted. "That part of it will come later on. I want you two to come inside that place with me. We'll give them a chance to put

away the horses, and then I'm going to try and open that door. There's a door there, all right, though we can't see it in the darkness."

The boy stepped forward until he was leaning against the door.

He listened and could hear the sounds made by the horses as they were being relieved of the saddles.

Then the faint footsteps of men could be heard receding.

When the sounds had died out he struck a match, and sure enough, he located the knob right away.

He pushed upon it gently, but at first it would not move.

A harder push and it slowly went back, and then a draught of air blew in his face.

The door was open.

Fearing that a guard might be inside, he waited, but nothing happened, so beckoning to his companions, who were right at his elbow, to follow him, the young deadshot boldly stepped into the cave.

Wild was not going to run the risk of being caught in the place, so whispering to his companions to stand where they were a moment, he went outside, and finding a stone that must have weighed at least fifteen pounds, he carried it back and placed it against the door so it could not shut of its own accord.

"There you are," he whispered. "Now then, come on. It seems that they don't take the trouble to have a guard here. Probably Nat Havens feels certain that no one would ever think of such a thing as there being a door here. But that's all right. It's a door, though in the light of the match it certainly don't look like one. It's made of boards, too, boys, and covered with some kind of mortar or cement to make it look like the solid rock."

Neither Charlie nor Bub Sprague said anything, but both nodded, though the boy could not see them do this, for it was as dark as pitch where they now were.

The horses could be heard stamping and munching away at the fodder the outlaws had provided for them, and Wild went a little closer in the hopes of being able to perceive some sort of light.

He was fortunate in doing this, for by moving in that direction he came to a turn in the rocky chamber and was able to discern something that looked like a passage.

Only a faint light showed from it, but that was sufficient.

Charlie and Bub followed him, of course, and moving toward it, the three were soon where it was much lighter.

Then a minute later they found themselves peering into the cave that was used as a habitation by the outlaws.

They were just in time to witness the initiation of the two new recruits.

Still blindfolded, Bill Murray and Lon Hoke were standing in the center of the rocky apartment, while around them in a circle stood six men, each with a mask covering his face and an upraised knife.

Also masked and with a long cloak upon him that came to the ground stood a man whom the three readily guessed to be Nat Havens.

There was a deathly silence in the place, and this was no doubt intended so the new recruits would be deeply impressed.

To get a better look at what was going on, Bub Sprague stepped a little to the right.

It was an unfortunate movement on his part, for a stone turned under his foot, and before he could catch himself he pitched forward, striking an empty barrel, which rolled from the place, making an unearthly clatter.

## CHAPTER VI.

### VERY SATISFACTORY RESULTS.

Young Wild West was quick to think and act.

He realized instantly that their position was a bad one, and without waiting the fraction of a second he made a grab for Bub Sprague and succeeded in catching him by the collar of his coat.

Back into the passage he pulled him, and fortunately there happened to be a good-sized niche right there.

Charlie remained fully a second longer looking at the outlaws in the chamber.

When the barrel rolled in they were much startled, as might be supposed.

Exclamations of surprise went up from nearly all of them, and then all but the two who were being initiated started for the spot.

Charlie knew exactly what Wild was doing, so he put his hand and caught hold of a small spur of rock to assist him in getting there without showing himself in the passage.

Much to his surprise the piece of rock gave way, and had all he could do to dodge it.

Crash!

It struck the rocky floor of the passage, making a loud noise.

Then the scout crept into the niche, and crouched near Wild, who had just got Sprague safely there.

The outlaws were in no great hurry to enter the passage.

Our friends could not see them, of course, but they had their right at the mouth of it and looked at the barrel with a small degree of surprise.

Of course they had known it was there, but to have bounce into the cave in such a sudden way made it appear as if human assistance had caused it.

All had revolvers in their hands, for probably their thought was just then that some one had found a way to get inside the secret cave.

The falling of the stone Charlie had loosened as he came from the spot added to the alarm felt by the outlaws.

They stood there listening for a few seconds, and then Nat Havens himself advanced a few feet into the passage.

The first thing he saw was a stone that had dropped to the ground.

He looked at it sharply, and then his gaze turned to the place where it had come from.

He soon discovered the spot, and when he put his hand into the opening a piece of rock and some sand fell down.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, in a tone of voice that showed great relief. "Boys, I guess there's no cause for alarm. There's been a slight cave-in here, it seems. You can see where the piece of rock fell from. It's hardly likely that any one could get it to fall. It tumbled down of its own accord, probably because the earth around it gave way just then."

"Yes, but what made the barrel roll in here?" one of the men asked, in a puzzled way.

"Something may have dropped from above and upset it. That would easily account for it," the leader explained.

"That's so," another of the villains exclaimed. "I'm mighty glad we know what done it."

"Well, boys, I think the barrel rolled out and the stone fell down from natural causes. There's one thing certain, we know pretty well that no one could possibly get into the cave unless they knew the way to do it. It happened to be the last one in myself, and I'm certain that there was no one outside when I came in. I can't for a moment make myself believe that the disturbance just now was caused by any human agency. But to make sure of it we had better make a thorough search of the whole cave. Two of you stay with the candidates and the rest of us will look around."

"I don't see no use of lookin' much," the man called Miller observed, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"I don't, either," the leader answered, with a laugh. "I just merely suggested it to satisfy you all."

Wild and his two companions were taking all this in.

It occurred to the boy that should they go through the passage to the place where the horses were stabled and find the secret door open they might change their opinion.

Nat Havens was so near to the niche where they were crouching that there was no possible chance of leaving it open and shut the door or to get out if they wanted to.

The only thing they could do was to remain right where they were and trust to luck.

But it happened that the outlaw leader decided that the cause of the racket had been explained, and he turned and walked back into the cave and once more took his position before the two waiting candidates, who were no doubt a little alarmed by the proceedings.

However, they may have thought it was a part of the initiation, and since neither of them asked a question, Nat Havens let it go that way.

When the last man had taken his place in the circle Wild thrust his head cautiously from the niche.

Then he crept outside, at the same time advising Bub Sprague to remain where he was.

Charlie followed him, however, and the two lay upon the ground and watched what was taking place.

The barrel had not been put back where it was when it slipped and fell against it.

It remained where it had stopped rolling, but was not in the way of those in the main cave.

Charlie thought just then that if Hop was only there the

might have some fun with the barrel and give the outlaws a genuine scare.

He whispered something to that effect to our hero, who promptly told him that such a thing would be out of the question, as they were not there for the purpose of scaring the outlaws, but simply to spy upon them and then arrange a plan to capture them all.

Meanwhile, the initiation of the new recruits was again taken up.

The members of the band stood in position with their upraised knives, the leader reciting a short but binding obligation, which the two repeated readily.

When they had sworn to all that was required of them, Havens removed the hoodwinks from their eyes.

Then, in the light from a swinging oil lamp, Mill Murray and Lon Hoke saw the upraised knives, the points pointing right toward them.

It was an awe-inspiring sight, no doubt, but neither of them seemed to be more than ordinarily affected.

At a word from the master of ceremonies the knives were lowered and quickly placed in the belts of the masked men.

Then Havens shook hands with the two new members and told them they were now on the same footing as were those around them.

This was a signal for the rest to come up and shake hands, and when they had all done so the masks were removed, and the leader took off the long black gown.

It was all very interesting to Wild and Charlie, of course, but it was not the first time they had witnessed such a ceremony.

Quite often such things were practiced by different bands of outlaws in various parts of the West.

Every band wanted to be as secret as possible, and they would scarcely be blamed for making a new recruit swear to stick by them.

When the outlaws began chatting and laughing, Wild thought it about time to leave the place.

He gave Charlie a nudge, and then stepping to the niche, whispered to Bub to come on out.

Sprague got out very carefully, for he felt humiliated at having so nearly caused disaster by one careless step before.

The three passed on to the other chamber, and they were not long in reaching the door.

Out they went, and Wild pushed it to.

He lighted a match and not knowing just how to fasten it looked around until he found the knob of stone he had pushed in.

He was just able to catch the edge of this with his fingers, and when he pushed it back there was a faint click, and he knew the door was locked.

"There you are, boys," he said. "Now then, all we have got to do is to get our horses and ride back to the camp. I am sorry it is so far away, but it can't be helped."

When they got out into the pass they found it still very dark, though there was no rain falling.

However, the storm had not cleared, and they might expect to get thoroughly soaked before they could reach the camp.

Mounting their horses, they started off, putting them to a fast pace at the very start.

For several minutes they rode along without any one making a comment.

Then Cheyenne Charlie got alongside the young deadshot, and said:

"Well, Wild, what are you goin' to do about capturin' them outlaws?"

"I haven't exactly made up my mind yet, Charlie. But I think it will be better to wait until to-morrow. If we can manage to get them when they are out of the cave we could go inside and easily surprise them when they come back. This ghost business we have heard about is certainly being conducted by Nat Havens and his gang. I want to find out something about that part of it. Bub, I believe you said that skeletons and ghosts have been seen in this pass."

"That's what me an' Jerry Junk was told," Sprague answered, promptly.

"Ghosts usually show up in the night. How about those who have come through here in the daytime?"

"The daytime is when the ghosts an' skeletons has been seen. I don't s'pose they could see 'em very well in the night. Of course if somethin' white was to pop out in front of us now we could see it all right. But I ain't afraid of ghosts, an' you know that putty well, Wild."

"Yes, I've heard you say that before, and I believe you're telling the truth. Well, there's one thing certain, we can't bother to look for any ghosts to-night. If we did I'm sure

we wouldn't see any. But we'll be on the watch for them to-morrow. Nat Havens will surely fix up something for us if he finds we are going through the pass which is supposed to be haunted. If we go the other way the chances are they'll have something fixed up for us there. Of course he don't mean to let us get to Lucky Spot Camp without robbing us. Most likely he'll want to shoot some of us, too, for he certainly must have a grudge against me for having shot the mask from his face. But it's all right. We'll try and fix it so we can see some of the ghosts and catch the outlaws at the same time. If we can only manage to get them out of their retreat long enough for us to get there ourselves it will be an easy thing to do. We'll get them all right, I'm confident of it."

They talked about in this way as they rode along, until finally the conversation ceased by mutual consent.

It was really a long ride, and it was quite a little after midnight when they got back to the camp.

It was beginning to rain again, and they were fortunate that they were not a little later in getting there, for it was not long before it came down very hard.

The girls got up when they heard them talking, and would not be satisfied until they heard the story of their experience.

They were delighted as well as surprised, for the girls took as much interest in running down outlaws as any of the rest.

They believed that honesty should prevail and that law and order must be upheld wherever they went.

It was a little later than usual when Young Wild West arose the following morning.

He was quick to see that the storm had cleared and the bright rays of the sun, which had just appeared over a distant range of hills, made the scene look cheerful enough.

Charlie had got ahead of him this morning, and he grinned broadly when the boy came out of the tent.

"Must have been putty sleepy last night, Wild," he said.

"I reckon so, Charlie. Why, hello! Wing has the breakfast ready."

"You kin bet your life he has. I've been up about ten minutes myself. Hop woke me up on purpose when he went out. He stuck a pin in my foot."

"Misler Charlie allee samee thlinker um snakee bitee, so be," Hop spoke up, gleefully, though he took care to keep out of the scout's reach.

"That's all right, heathen," Charlie said, shaking a finger at him. "Jest let me ketch you foolin' around me ag'in an' you'll sartainly lose a couple of inches of that pigtail of yours."

"The same old thing," called out Bub Sprague, cheerily, as he sat near the fire tinkering with his banjo. "Charlie an' Hop always quarrelin'."

"That's right, Bub," Arietta answered, with a laugh. "But they never harm each other a great deal, and I really think if it came to the point it would be hard to tell which thinks the most of the other."

"Hub!" exclaimed Charlie, as though disgusted.

"Whatee mattee?" Hop added, shaking his head. "Me no likee Misler Charlie, and Misler Charlie no likee me."

Wild had gone to the brook, and in a few minutes he returned refreshed from having bathed his face and ready for his breakfast.

The rest had been waiting for him, of course, and they now sat down and soon were engaged in eating the substantial meal that Wing had provided for them.

Bub put aside his banjo, declaring that it was in first-class shape, and that it was dry enough to use.

While they scarcely thought they would be bothered by the outlaws, they did not fail to keep a pretty good watch around them as the meal proceeded.

But no one showed up, and when it was over Bub took up his banjo, and finding a convenient seat on a log near at hand, he sat down and began to play and sing.

Really Bub's voice was a little out of tune, and he could scarcely carry a tune.

But the words he sang were comical, to say the least, and that offset what he was lacking in.

Cheyenne Charlie applauded the loudest of any of them, though all showed that they appreciated the efforts of the eccentric man.

Hop must have thought it about time for him to show his hand.

He had played quite a few funny tricks upon Bub Sprague in the days gone by, but since meeting him this time nothing of the sort had occurred.

Just as Bub started in to sing another song in response to the encore he had received, Hop slipped away and went around behind the rock upon which he was sitting.

No one seemed to observe him, and, of course, he did not want them to.

Bub was twanging away at the banjo and had just started in upon the second verse of the song when—

Bang!

A loud report sounded and he was enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

"Hip hi, hoolay!" a voice shouted, and then Hop Wah came running from a direction that was entirely opposite to the spot where the explosion had occurred.

The smoke quickly cleared away, and then Bub was discovered sitting upon the ground, his banjo hanging in a clump of bushes about six feet from him.

"That settles it," he said, when he saw the laughing faces before him. "I won't never play or sing ag'in as long as that heathen's around. I know he done it. He set off a big fire-cracker or exploded some gunpowder right under me. I oughter ketch him an' chuck him in the brook, that's what I oughter do."

"Go ahead an' do it, Bub," suggested the scout, who was ready to witness just such a thing. "He's sartinly deservin' of it."

"No, I won't do it," and Sprague shook his head sadly and got upon his feet.

Then as he took the banjo from the bush and looked it over carefully he added:

"It's all right. I oughter been watchin' him, that's all. Maybe I'll have a chance to git square with him afore I start for the East."

He tested the strings then, and finding everything all right, placed the banjo back in the green bag and laid it where it would be ready when the camp was broken up.

The little entertainment Sprague had given them delayed our friends somewhat in making the start.

But they now made up for it by hurrying to saddle the horses.

Hop and Wing were assisted by Bub and the cowboy, and the pack-horses were loaded in a jiffy.

Then all hands mounted and started from the spot.

"We have got quite a little ride ahead of us, Et," Wild said to his sweetheart, who as usual was riding at the front with him. "But we'll strike the haunted pass about the middle of the forenoon, I reckon. Then you can look out for something to happen."

"I'll be on the watch, Wild," the girl answered, with a nod of her golden head. "I want to catch a glimpse of the ghosts and skeletons Bub has been telling us about."

## CHAPTER VII.

### WILD CAPTURES A SKELETON.

When our friends struck the regular wagon trail they could proceed at a faster pace, and they rode along at a good clip and somewhere about the middle of the forenoon they came in sight of the high bluffs through which ran the pass.

When they got near the spot the sharp eyes of Young Wild West caught sight of the piece of cardboard that had been tacked to a tree by the leader of the outlaws.

The young deadshot promptly called the attention of the rest to it, and then hurried the sorrel stallion a little and reached the tree first.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "Here is something else we have got to look after. According to that sign to the right it is the Death Trail, and from what we have already heard straight ahead means that we'll have to ride through the Haunted Pass. Now then, which way shall we go? Shall it be the Death Trail or the Haunted Pass?"

"You know which way you're goin', Wild," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up. "It was in what they call the haunted pass that we struck luck last night."

"Of course, Charlie. But don't talk so loud. I forgot myself that time. There may be some one hiding close at hand. We are going to start to go through the haunted pass, though it may be that we won't be permitted to get to the other end of it. But we'll try it, anyhow."

Then he looked again at the sign on the tree, after which he rode a short distance to the right over what was called the Death Trail.

As he was turning to go back and join his waiting companions he caught sight of the figure of a man just as it disappeared behind a cleft in the rocks something like a hundred feet ahead.

Wild's curiosity was aroused, and making a motion with his hand which indicated that they were to wait for him, he swung his horse around again and rode swiftly along the trail.

As he neared the spot he kept his eyes open, and then suddenly saw a man creeping along a ledge toward a small opening in the cliff.

It was but natural that the boy should think it was one of the outlaws.

"Hold on, there," he called out, leveling his revolver. "Stand right where you are, my friend."

The man obeyed instantly, and seeing that he had him where he wanted him, Wild added:

"Come on down here."

Without a word of reply, the fellow did as directed, casting the earth and small stones to rattle down as he descended.

He was a medium-sized man attired in the usual costume that miners and prospectors are in the habit of wearing.

His face was bearded, but there was a paleness that showed distinctly.

While he appeared to be somewhat frightened, the man had not altogether lost his nerve.

"Well," he said, "you stopped me. What do you want of me?"

"I reckon I'll make you a prisoner," the young deadshot answered, coolly.

"What for? I haven't done anything to you."

"Maybe not. But that don't say you won't if you get the chance. Where are the rest of the gang?"

"Oh, I understand," and the stranger's face lighted up. "I think I belong to Nat Havens' gang."

"I did have such an idea," Wild answered, never once lowering his revolver.

"Well, that's where you make a mistake. I am no outlaw. I followed Nat Havens to these parts for the purpose of killing him. He did me a great wrong, and I'll never feel satisfied until the debt is paid. Three times I have missed a chance of shooting him, and each time I have made up my mind that it would not occur again. But who are you, young fellow?"

"My name is Young Wild West."

"A peculiar sort of name," and the man shook his head, showing plainly that he had never heard of the young deadshot.

"Who are you?" Wild asked, after a short silence, during which he watched the fellow sharply.

"You can call me the Man of Mystery, if you like. I wouldn't tell you anything further if you shot me full of holes for refusing. But you can believe me when I tell you that I am not an outlaw. What little I have said to you is the truth. The outlaws finding that they have made a mistake by frightening travelers so the majority of them don't go through the pass any longer, are now turning their attention to this trail. But I have had my attention here a few days, and I have fixed up something for them. Two or three travelers have been shot down because they put up a fight when they were held up. But the time will come when I'll get face to face with Nat Havens and pull a trigger which will mean his death. I don't want to shoot him when he is not looking for it. I want to see him and tell him something before it happens. He did me the greatest wrong that one man could do to another."

The man grew excited as he spoke, and it occurred to Wild that possibly there was something just a little bit wrong about his mind.

But he had become convinced that he was not an outlaw, and that he really was looking for the life of Nat Havens.

Having become tired of waiting for him, Arietta came riding up just then.

"Who are you talking to, Wild?" the girl asked, in surprise.

"Excuse me, young fellow!" the Man of Mystery exclaimed excitedly. "Here comes a young lady, and I mustn't stand here."

"Don't be in a hurry," the boy said, reassuringly.

"But I must go now," and then in spite of the fact that Wild was still holding the revolver he turned and ran behind some rocks and disappeared from view.

"Well, Et," our hero said, as he turned to his sweetheart. "there's something more to think about. Here is a fellow who calls himself the Man of Mystery hanging around among the rocks here. He isn't an outlaw, I'm sure, and he declares that he is here for the purpose of causing the death of Nat Havens, who did him a great wrong at some time or other. A funny piece of business, I must say, little girl."

"I should say it was, Wild. Tell me all about it."

that there was to tell Wild let her know as they perched their horses to walk back to their waiting friends.

Then it had to be told again, and to say that there was such surprise evinced would hardly be expressing it.

"Haunted Pass an' Death Trail!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie shaking his head. "Say, if there ain't enough to keep us busy around here for a while I'll never take another chaw-bucker. Man of Mystery, too. What are you goin' to do with it, anyhow, Wild?"

"We'll ride on through the pass and we'll go it a little ways," was the reply. "Maybe we'll have a chance to see the bones and skeletons. If we don't most likely we'll come upon the outlaws. I don't mean to ride all the way through just to see. When we come to the spot where we left our horses I might I think we had better halt and be a little careful." "That's it, Wild. Come on. I'm in a hurry to git there." The scout showed a great eagerness, and it was about the same with Jim Dart.

They all permitted their horses to walk along, and it was only a very few minutes before they came to the place where Charlie and Sprague had stopped the night before after leaving the two new recruits to the outlaw's cave.

Dismounting, the horses were led among some rocks at the side of the pass, and then Wild nodded to his sweetheart and

"Now then, Et, I want you to stay right here with the horses. I am going to take a look around, and I suppose Charlie and Jim will want to do the same."

"An' you kin bet I will, too, Wild," Sprague spoke up.

"I may as well go along. I ain't done nothin' yet to show you I'm made of," Jerry Junk observed, as he felt of his revolver.

But before any of them could leave the spot voices were heard at a short distance away.

Wild held up his hand warningly, and then slipped along behind the rocks and soon saw Bill Murray and Lon Hoke coming almost directly in front of the little cut that led to the secret door of the cave.

Two skeletons suddenly slid down the face of the cliff, and Wild, hardly making up his mind what to do, the young deadshot turned to those behind him to follow, and then started walking toward them.

The two new recruits heard their footsteps right away, and when they saw them coming showed signs of great surprise.

"Hello, you fellows!" Wild called out, but not speaking in a very loud tone of voice, for he knew it was possible that some of the outlaws were near at hand.

"Hello, Young Wild West!" Murray answered, acting very much as though he was pleased. "Jest got here, eh? Where's the rest of yer?"

"We left the girls and the Chinamen at the end of the pass. We didn't want to let them come on through here and take the risk of getting shot. Most likely Nat Havens is waiting for us, you know. Have you seen anything of him?"

"No, not a thing."

It was Lon Hoke who said this, but Bill Murray shook his head in the negative to bear out the lie.

They all got in a group, and were talking away when suddenly an unearthly clatter sounded from the top of the cliff to the left of them.

Instantly all eyes were turned in the direction of the cliff. Then a startling thing happened.

Two skeletons suddenly slid down the face of the cliff, and Wild turned and fled.

"I reckon we'll find out something about this," he said, starting to grab one of the gruesome objects.

Charlie and Jim had hung back a little, and when they saw the action of our hero they ran swiftly to the spot.

But he did not need their assistance, for he seized one of the skeleton figures by the thigh-bone just as it started to go toward him.

Something snapped, and down it came, rattling in a way that might have been called ominous.

The other skeleton went on up rapidly and quickly disappeared through a cleft near the top of the rocky wall.

"I've got him, boys," the young deadshot called out, in his usual easy way. "I'm sorry it isn't a ghost, but a skeleton of a man, I reckon."

Then he climbed over the rocks, dragging his prize with him.

But Sprague, in spite of his boasting that he was not afraid of ghosts, had fled with the two villains.

There he was now no one seemed to know, for they had disappeared.

But Jerry Junk soon came from behind a boulder, and

looking rather sheepish, hastened after Wild and his partners. Wild thought surely that Bub must be with the girls, for the fact was that he never thought anything about him.

But when he got there and found him missing he was somewhat surprised.

"We saw the hideous objects, Wild," Arietta said, as she looked at the skeleton he was dragging along with him and shook her head. "What did you bring that thing here for?"

"Oh, so I could have a chance to look it over and see how it is fastened together," was the reply. "But say, where is Bub Sprague?"

"Why, I don't know," and then all hands looked toward the spot where he had been last seen.

"Wild," said Charlie, catching the young deadshot by the arm and showing no little excitement, "I'll bet he run on into the outlaws' cave with them two sneakin' galoots."

"Do you think he would be foolish enough to do that, Charlie?"

"Well, it sartinly looks that way, don't it?"

"Yes, but could he have been so frightened that he did not realize where he was going?"

"Most likely. He was puttin' up a big bluff when he said he wasn't afraid of ghosts an' sich, an' he even asked you if he wasn't that way. I believe you said you thought he was, or somethin' like that."

"Yes, I may have made such a reply, Charlie. It really does look as though Bub lost his head for the time being and that he has gone right into the den of the outlaws. Quite likely Murray and Hoke were as much frightened as he, and they have let him follow them in without thinking."

"Well, if he's in there it isn't likely that Nat Havens and his gang will let him out very soon," Jim Dart observed, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"No," and our hero shook his head and looked rather serious. "But," he added a moment later, "maybe he has run and hidden himself somewhere else. We'll wait a while and see if he turns up."

Satisfied that their position was a pretty good one in case the outlaws made an attack upon them, Wild advised his two partners to keep a watch and then he turned his attention to the captured skeleton.

He quickly found that the bones were fastened together by a copper wire, and that wire had been used to lower it down the cliff.

"This thing might be called cleverly put together, and I suppose it is," he observed, when he had finished his examination, while the girls and the cowboy were looking on. "But I reckon any one could put a skeleton together if he took the time to do it. Just think how foolish it is for any one to get frightened at such a thing as this. While it is true that it is the bones and skull of a human being, it certainly can't hurt any one."

"I don't like the looks of it, though," declared Jerry Junk. "It sorter reminds me what I'll be some time or other."

"It is a sort of reminder," and the young deadshot smiled at him. "I think I'll keep this as a souvenir of our trip through the haunted pass. But I don't feel like taking it with me just now, so I'll try and find a place to hide it until I can come and get it."

"There's plenty of places right along here where you kin hide it an' if anybody ain't watchin' yer they'll never find it," the cowboy said, suggestively.

Wild nodded to him, and then starting back along the foot of the cliff he soon came to a crevice that was amply large enough to conceal a skeleton.

He carefully pushed it in, and then rolled a boulder against the opening.

"That will be safe enough there until I want it again, unless, as Junk says, somebody watched me as I was putting it there," he observed, as he came back and joined the rest. "Now we have got to find out where Bub is."

"He's in the outlaws' cave, as sure as guns," the scout declared.

"I'll creep along that way and have a look. The rest of you wait here," the young deadshot said, when he had thought for a moment.

Then without losing any further time he proceeded to make his way along, hiding himself as well as he could behind the rocks that were so plentifully strewn along through that side of the pass.

He was within about fifty feet of the little passage that led to the cave when he heard low voices.

The young deadshot pricked up his ears and listened.

Presently a man appeared at the opening and looked cautiously up the pass.

His face was concealed by a black mask, and Wild gave a nod of satisfaction, for it was surely one of the outlaw band.

"I don't hear anything of 'em goin' away," the masked man said, in a low tone of voice, "so I reckon they must be there yet. Had we better go on up an' tackle 'em, Nat?"

"Yes, we might as well make a clean job of it. We've got one of the crowd, though I can't say that I want him. We ought to be able to surprise them now, for they must be looking at the skeleton they captured. A mighty clever trick of Young Wild West's, I must say. That's what I got for treating our two new men to a little show. I wanted to surprise them, but I had no idea that any one else would come along and become spectators. It's too bad, for when this gets spread about it will spoil the ghost business here. If we remain here and keep in business I suppose the Death Trail will be abandoned altogether, and travelers will use the pass as before. I don't like it, boys, and that's why I'm willing now to go ahead and make a clean job of it. I want to have the pleasure of shooting Young Wild West, and you want to see to it that his partners get the same dose. Don't harm the girls or bother with the Chinamen. We don't want anything to do with them."

"All right, Nat."

This was said by some one further back in the opening.

Wild had heard enough to satisfy him that an attack was to be made right away.

He made his way hurriedly in and succeeded in reaching his friends before the villains showed themselves in the pass.

"Boys," he said to his two partners, "take the girls and go and mount your horses right away. The outlaws are coming out to make an attack here. You won't have to ride very far, because they'll be on foot. I am going back there, and when they come out I'll go into the cave and bring out Bub Sprague. Go on now, and do as I say. But be careful you don't let them get too close to you. If they do you'll have to shoot them down, that's all."

The words were spoken hurriedly, and Charlie and Jim at once started to obey.

Back went Young Wild West, creeping along as before, and when he was nearly at the spot where he had been listening two men suddenly appeared from the opening in the side of the cliff.

They were followed by another, and then four more came out, one after the other.

All were masked, and had revolvers ready to shoot.

Wild crouched behind a rock and just as they had passed him he heard his friends riding away.

"Come on, boys," he heard one of the men exclaim, and he knew it must be Nat Havens. "They've started to go away. We've got to hurry or we'll miss them."

Then as the villains started on a run, Wild slipped from behind the rock and made his way to the entrance of the underground rendezvous.

Through the opening he hurried, and when he found the door was wide open he did not hesitate to hasten inside.

Treading lightly he crossed that part of the rocky chamber where the horses were kept, and then through the short passage to the cave that was occupied by the outlaws.

As he reached the end of the passage he came to a stop, and took a good look.

Standing near a table at one side of the apartment were Bill Murray and Lon Hoke, and lying on the floor near them was Bub Sprague, bound hand and foot.

The poor fellow had a very white face, which Wild could not help noticing, for it was quite light in there, since there was an opening at the other side of the cave near the rocky ceiling.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MAN OF MYSTERY AGAIN.

Cheyenne Charlie brought up the rear as they all rode away in accordance with Wild's instructions.

In less than a minute he saw seven masked men running as fast as they could to overtake them.

They were scarcely two hundred feet behind, but the scout did not urge his horse to any faster pace, but rode along just fast enough to keep the same distance ahead of them.

The others, however, were going a little faster than that.

Charlie was simply trying to draw them on, so Wild would have a good chance to rescue Bub Sprague.

Then again, he was taking the chances of being shot at by them.

But he was willing to take a chance at two hundred feet and actually was hoping that they would fire upon him.

Then he would have an excuse to answer the firing, and he meant to do it with his rifle, which made it pretty sure that some of the masked scoundrels would go down.

Jim Dart locked back and he quickly guessed what Charlie was up to, so he slackened the pace of his horse.

Then Arietta did the same thing, though Anna and Emma kept right along with the cowboy and the two Chinamen.

Cool and clever as he was, Nat Havens, the leader of the outlaw gang, must have become exasperated, for he raised his revolver and fired a shot.

The bullet whistled through the air dangerously close to the scout's head, and then with great quickness he turned the saddle and threw the butt of his rifle to his shoulder.

Taking a quick aim, Charlie fired, and one of the masked men fell flat upon his face.

This caused them all to halt.

But three of them began firing as fast as they could.

Crang!

Charlie's rifle spoke again, and another went down.

That was quite different.

The rest ran for cover among the rocks that were right at hand.

Charlie gave a nod of satisfaction when he saw them go to the side of the pass that was opposite to the entrance of the cave.

Anyhow, they were quite a little distance from that place and he knew that they would hardly dare to expose themselves to view in an effort to get to it.

He brought his horse to a halt and waited until Jim came back to him.

"They started it," he said, as though to explain why he had shot two of the outlaws. "You seen it, didn't you, Jim?"

"Yes, I saw it, Charlie. I saw you duck as though you heard the hum of the bullet."

"I did hear it. It come mighty close. That was the leader what fired that shot. He kin shoot putty good, 'cause it was easy two hundred feet."

"But you didn't get the leader, Charlie. I saw him run to a rock the first thing."

"I could have got him all right, Jim, but I don't know what I was thinkin' of jest which one I wanted. It made no difference to me, an' I jest plugged the nearest one to me. It's all right, 'cause most likely Wild wants to take Nat Havens alive."

"Certainly he does. Now then, I suppose we had better stay right here and try and prevent the villains from going back to their cave. Wild must surely find Bub Sprague there, and when he comes out he'll have to be careful or they'll open fire on him."

Before anything further could be said a footstep sounded close at hand, and turning Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart saw a bearded man emerging from a cleft in the face of the cliff.

It was the man who had surprised Young Wild West by telling him that he was going to take the life of Nat Havens.

Charlie and Jim Dart had not seen him, but both thought right away that he was the fellow who called himself the Man of Mystery.

"I heard you shoot, and I came on through from my cave, the man said, just as if he was well acquainted with them. "Did you kill any one?"

"Only two of 'em," the scout answered, and then locking his arms square in the face, he added.

"Ain't you the Man of Mystery?"

"Yes, that's who I am."

"All right, then. I thought so. How in thunder did you get here so quick? I thought you was hangin' out on what they call the Death Trail."

"It's only about five hundred feet from where I am standing now—the Death Trail, you know. But say," he added, looking very serious, "did you shoot Nat Havens?"

"No, I didn't git him. It was two of the others I got."

"Ah! I'm glad of that," and the pale face of the Man of Mystery lighted up, while a bright glow shone from his eyes for a second.

"Listen," he said, as he came closer to the two. "Some one has named the route back there," pointing toward the other side of the cliffs, "the Death Trail. I'm going to tell you right now that there is a secret to the Death Trail. What it is will be discovered later on. But mark you well what I say. I must have Nat Havens. He is for me."

"You were telling Young Wild West that he did you some great wrong and that you meant to kill him but wanted to



him in a position so you could talk to him before you do." Jim spoke up, when he saw that Charlie had taken to the spot where the outlaws had been last seen.

"That is true. But I can't give you any further explanation. But if you will do as I say I'll obtain my revenge and satisfaction all the quicker, and you will then know the secret of the Death Trail."

"What do you wish us to do?"

"Lead the outlaws to follow you and ride on until you come to the Death Trail. Then keep on and watch sharply at the side until you see me. I'll tell you what to do then."

"Suppose they won't follow us?" Jim asked.

"They will surely ride after you if you have killed two of our number."

"Yes, I suppose they will be looking for revenge. All right, soon as Young Wild West shows up we'll probably do as you want us to."

"Where is Young Wild West?" the Man of Mystery asked.

"He's in the outlaws' cave."

"What!"

The fellow seemed greatly surprised.

"Yes; as soon as seven of the outlaws came out he slipped to rescue one of our men, who got in there in some way."

"There are only seven of them."

"There are nine now. Two more were taken in last night, you know."

The Man of Mystery shook his head as though he could not quite understand it.

He hesitated as though he was not sure whether he ought to go away just then or not, and as he opened his lips to speak again Jim suddenly caught sight of the outlaws running across the pass a considerable distance from the spot.

"There they go, Charlie!" he exclaimed, as he swung his rifle to his shoulder. "They've managed to sneak along the edge of the cliff without us seeing them, and they are making for the cave. Wild hasn't come out yet, either. We had better—"

"Crang!"

He was interrupted by the report of Charlie's rifle, for the scout had managed to draw a bead on one of the masked villains.

Down went his third victim, and taking off his hat, he waved over his head and shouted:

"Whoopee, whoopee! I've got another one."

"But Wild is in danger!" exclaimed Jim, his face paling slightly.

"That's all right, Jim. Don't you think he'll let 'em see Jim. He's most likely nailed the two what was in there, an' Bub kin take care of themselves till we kin git there. If this galoot wants to git Nat Havens he had better come right with us."

"Do as I've told you," the Man of Mystery suddenly called out, and then without another word he ran back into the cave and disappeared.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart hardly knew what to do.

Those who had gone ahead of them were out of sight, so Arietta was not there to give any advice.

They waited for the space of two or three minutes, and then suddenly the clatter of hoofs sounded, and they saw four of the outlaws riding furiously toward them.

"Hooray!" exclaimed the scout. "The sneakin' coyotes has got fooled again. They only went far enough to git their horses, an' they're after us now. Come on, Jim. I reckon we had better do as that Man of Mystery said. Wild will be along with Bub putty quick now. Here's where we clean up the outlaws of the Haunted Pass."

The scout swung himself into the saddle without waiting to find out whether Jim agreed with his proposition or not.

But Dart was thoroughly in accord with him now, for he knew as well as Charlie that there had been seven men to come out at the start, and as three of them had been shot down there could hardly be any more than four to come now, not counting the two new recruits, of course.

But Wild certainly had taken care of them, and he would appear in due time, as Charlie said.

He mounted and rode along after the scout, keeping his head turned and holding his rifle in readiness.

The four outlaws evidently meant business, for they came surging through the pass at a rattling gallop.

Charlie and Jim were forced to ride very fast, too, and as they neared the end of the pass they came in sight of the girls waiting with the cowboy and the two Chinamen.

Charlie motioned for them to go on and turn to the left, and they did so at once.

When the two reached the end of the pass they saw Arietta riding over the Death Trail alone.

"Go on," Jim called out, motioning for her to proceed. "Hurry and tell the others to keep a watch on the left side, and if that Man of Mystery calls out to you do exactly as he says."

This was rather mystifying to the girl, but she had experienced so much that nothing was very surprising to her now.

She urged her horse forward, and then Charlie and Jim rode on after her, watching for the outlaws to appear.

They were a good hundred yards in advance of them, anyhow, but just as they were turning a bend in the regular trail they saw them appear.

Neither of them had taken time to get a rifle, and this was encouraging to the two, for they could keep closer to them.

A hundred yards further on and they saw those who had gone ahead at a halt.

Charlie waved his hand for them to continue, but Arietta turned her horse and motioned for them to keep close to the left side of the cliff.

"I don't know what in thunder this means, Jim," the scout exclaimed, as he glanced at his partner for a moment. "It's the blamest piece of business I've ever struck. Jest see what's been happenin' ever since we first met that galoot yisterday afternoon."

Jim made no reply.

He had his rifle to his shoulder, and was watching the scoundrels behind.

They had gained slightly, and seemed bent on keeping up the pace, regardless of the fact that the two ahead of them were armed with rifles.

But Charlie and Jim, placing dependence upon what the Man of Mystery had told them, let their horses go at an easy canter now, and when they reached the spot where they had last seen Arietta and the rest they suddenly found themselves before a sort of cave.

No one was to be seen, however, but a voice called out from above:

"Into the cave. I can see Nat Havens coming."

Both recognized the voice as belonging to the self-styled Man of Mystery, and without any hesitation they swung their horses around and succeeded in getting them over the rocks into the cave.

It was only a narrow place they had to go in, but as it turned sharply to the right they found quite a large chamber.

In this were the rest of the party.

Knowing that they were safe for the present, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart dismounted, and rifles in hand, crept back so they might see the outlaws when they came back.

They hardly had time to get there before they came riding along.

But they were not riding so fast now, for evidently they were somewhat puzzled at no longer hearing the hoof-beats of those they had been pursuing.

As the outlaws passed beyond their range of vision, a rumbling, crashing sound was heard, and then there was a thud that fairly shook the ground.

Charlie and Jim promptly rushed outside, and after them came Arietta, who was bound to see what had happened.

What they saw was somewhat surprising.

A sort of cut ran between some high rocks, leaving a space barely wide enough for a wagon to pass.

Into this a big boulder weighing many tons had lodged, effectually blocking the way over the Death Trail.

If the heavy mass of stone had been sent crashing down for the purpose of wiping out the outlaws it had not succeeded, for there sat the four on their horses, acting very much as though they were dumfounded.

The mass of rock had simply blocked their way, that was all.

As the three stood watching, a whizzing sound came from above them, and then the snaky coils of a lariat circled in the air for an instant and the broad noose settled over the head and shoulders of one of the masked horsemen.

It was Nat Havens who had been caught!

## CHAPTER IX.

### WILD HAS AN EASY THING OF IT.

Young Wild West was as cool as he ever was in his whole life when he stood looking in at the prisoner and the two men who had no doubt been left there to guard him.

Knowing that it was possible that the rest of the outlaw gang would get back at any moment, he made up his mind to do his work swiftly.

He was holding a revolver in his right hand, but not satisfied with this he drew another, and then raising them both he stepped softly into the rocky chamber.

It happened that neither of the villains were looking that way, and Wild was able to get within ten feet of them before they became aware of his presence.

As Lon Hoke gave a violent start and was about to utter a cry, the young deadshot exclaimed:

"Silence! One word from you and you'll die. Hold up your hands, both of you!"

Bill Murray almost sank to the floor when he recognized the young deadshot.

"Up with your hands," repeated Wild, in a voice that told plainly that he meant what he said.

With something like a gasp Murray obeyed, and then his companion, realizing how hopeless the case was, followed his example.

"So you two fellows joined the outlaw band, after all, did you?" the boy said, in his cool and easy way, as he stepped toward them, taking care to keep them covered with his revolvers.

"There wasn't no way to git out of it, Young Wild West," answered Murray, in a faltering voice. "I didn't do it by my own likin'."

"Well, it's just the same. Now then, Murray, you can use your left hand to take the gun away from Hoke. Hurry up, for I can't waste any time here."

Hoke gave vent to an angry growl as his pard did as the young deadshot told him to.

"Throw that gun over here by my feet."

This was quickly done.

"Now then, let me have yours."

"You kin have it an' welcome, Young Wild West," Murray answered, quickly, and he promptly tossed it over.

"That's all right," the boy said, with a nod of his head. "You have got a knife there. Suppose you use it to cut the rope that is wound about the fellow on the floor."

The man did not have to be told a second time.

Dropping upon his knees, he quickly severed the rope, and then Bub Sprague got upon his feet and exclaimed:

"Thank yer, Wild! I sorter thought you would show up putty soon. When I seen yer comin' in here I didn't say a word, though I felt like givin' a yell. I knowed it wouldn't do for me to make any noise like that, 'cause it might fetch in the others."

"You were wise, Bub," the boy answered. "Now see if you can find enough of that rope to tie these fellows' hands."

"I reckon there's plenty of it," and Bob now got a hustle on himself, for his fear had left him entirely, it seemed.

Murray passively submitted to being bound, but Hoke made some objections.

However, a threat from Wild caused him to cool down a little, and he was soon rendered helpless, as far as doing any harm was concerned.

It was just then that Wild heard a commotion in the outer cave.

"The gang is coming back, Bub!" he exclaimed, in a low tone of voice. "Just hustle those two fellows in that dark corner over there, and grab up the guns you see on the ground."

Another threatening motion toward Hoke caused him to hurry along with his pard.

Sprague picked up the two revolvers, and standing before the prisoners, who had but a short time before been his guards, waited to see what the young deadshot would do next.

Wild took his station at one side of the natural doorway.

He could hear horses moving about, and it suddenly flashed upon him that the villains were not coming in, after all, but had merely come to get their horses to give pursuit to those who had been left outside.

When he heard them leaving the underground place he gave a nod, and turning to Sprague, said:

"It's all right, I reckon. They're not coming in here, but are going on out. I suppose they mean to try and catch Charlie and Jim and the rest. We'll wait a few seconds to make sure of it, and then if we hear nothing of them we'll go out and see what's going on."

"All right, Wild," Bub answered. "You kin depend on me to do anything you tell me to."

Wild waited for nearly a minute, and not hearing the least sound from the other part of the underground place, he nodded to Bub to fetch along the prisoners.

Taking each of them by the arm, the man did so.

Hoke was very sullen, but Murray seemed ready to cave at any moment.

"Brace up, you rascal," Wild said to him. "Don't act a part of a baby. You had a chance, but you didn't take it."

"I couldn't help it, Young Wild West," the man said, plainly. "We was comin' along here last night hopin' we was soon git to Lucky Spot. Jest as we got outside here Nat Havens an' another man met us, an' made us stop. Nat Havens found it was us he told us to come right on in an' join the band. I didn't want to do it very much, but when he insisted on it I give in. We both joined the band all right."

"Yes, I happen to know all about it, I was looking on at the time you took the oath of allegiance."

"Yer was?"

"Yes, that's a fact. So was Cheyenne Charlie and this man. We followed you when you came into the cave last night. Nat Havens considers himself a very bright man, but I reckon he didn't fool us any. We followed you two fellows and we know you within hearing nearly all the way from our camp. It was quite easy for us to do that, you know, since neither of you seemed to have sense enough to think that you would be followed."

"You have done a mighty smart thing, Young Wild West," Lon Hoke declared, half angrily. "But this ain't over yet. Wait till Nat Havens cleans up the rest of your gang. It will take him long to git you. Jest 'cause you follered us an' agreed to sneak in here don't say that you're goin' to win out."

"You're mistaken on that, Hoke. I consider that I have already won out. You heard the shooting outside, I suppose. If you didn't hear your ears are not very good. I heard four shots fired, and I happen to know that three of them were right at you? That means that there are only four of the gang left. You two fellows don't count any more, and you never will count, either. You can wager all you're worth on that."

Hoke kept his mouth shut then.

He was beginning to wilt, and Wild knew it.

Out into the stable part of the cavernous place they made their way, and seeing a few horses there, our hero told Bub to fetch along a couple of them.

But before Sprague could obey he changed his mind and added:

"Never mind. We can get them when we come back. Don't take a rope hanging there. I reckon we can use that. Jest take a few turns about these two fellows and see to it that they're fixed so they can't possibly get away. Then you can lead them along with the rope."

"I'll do that mighty quick, Wild," Bub answered, with a chuckle.

He showed that he knew how to make good knots, for he soon had the men secured just as Wild wanted them to be.

Then our hero led the way outside and they were soon in the pass.

Not a man was in sight, and after looking cautiously in both directions the young deadshot ventured out to the middle of the trail and looked in the direction he knew his companions must have gone.

But there were no signs of them.

"Come on," he said, nodding to Bub. "Just make these fellows do a little trotting."

Wild hurried on, leaving Bub and the prisoners slightly in the rear.

But he knew the man could be depended upon to take care of the two.

The boy kept a watch on either side as he ran, and the further he went the more convinced he became that Charlie and Jim had ridden from the spot with the outlaws in pursuit.

But he could not make himself believe that they would go very far without trying to catch the scoundrels.

However, when he had continued on until the end of the pass was reached he wondered what had become of them.

It was just then that two shots sounded, and then the clatter of hoofs came to his ears.

Locking down what was called the Death Trail he saw some dust, and the next minute two horsemen appeared.

They were riding as though for their lives, and with a nod of pleasure the young deadshot stepped aside and, revolver in hand, waited for them.

He knew very well that they were outlaws, and bent upon capturing them alive, he stood there until they came in full view around a bend.

At that very moment the two horsemen saw Bub coming with his two prisoners.

They stopped their horses suddenly and looked on both sides though they wanted to find an avenue of escape.

Wild promptly rushed out before them, and leveling his revolver called out:

"Hold! If you try to get away I'll shoot you both."

"Why!" cried one of them, throwing up his hands in alarm, while the other threw down his head close to his own neck.

"Reckon you fellows must have enough of it," the boy said, in a cool and easy way, as he walked toward them. "Hold your hands, you fellows!"

This was said to the cowering outlaw, who promptly brightened up and did as he was told.

Then the boy without the least hesitation took their weapons from them and bade them dismount.

"Where is Nat Havens and the other fellow?" the young deadshot asked.

"Nat was lassoed an' hauled up somewhere back there," one of the men answered, in a trembling tone of voice. "The other fellow got shot. Awful things has been happenin' since 'er night."

The answer was somewhat surprising to the young deadshot, who could not imagine who it was who had lassoed the leader of the outlaws.

But suddenly he thought of the Man of Mystery, and then it came quite plain to him.

"All right," he said. "You may as well submit quietly, for you have got you, anyhow. I don't want to shoot you if I can help it. What I want to do is to take you alive to the sheriff so some one else who is entitled to take charge of you."

Bub came up, and he had plenty of rope left to tie the two.

Neither had anything to say to Murray or Hoke, and hardly needed them, in fact.

"Now then," said our hero, with a smile, "I reckon we'll go and see what's happened since I last saw our friends, eh?"

"That's it, Wild," came the reply. "It sorter seems to me though the blamed gang has been cleaned out in great shape. It ain't likely there's one of 'em runnin' loose now, an' what one else who is entitled to take charge of you."

"That's quite likely the case. But we'll soon find out."

Then the boy started to walk rapidly along the Death Trail, following and handling the four prisoners with the greatest ease.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SECRET OF THE DEATH TRAIL REMAINS A SECRET.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart barely had time to see the leader of the outlaws being hauled up the steep face of the cliff when one of the three men who had been stopped by the fall of the big boulder fired a shot at them.

The bullet whizzed past Jim's head, and seeing that another shot was about to come he did not hesitate to fire himself. Jim's bullet went true to the mark, and as he was falling from the saddle the other two villains turned their horses and went galloping back over the trail.

They were behind a rocky obstruction before they could be stopped, and then Charlie ran fully thirty feet after them, but was unable to see anything of them, but could hear the clatter of their horses' hoofs.

"Come here, Charlie," Arietta called out just then, for the cave girl had come out of the cave and stood looking upward. "What's the matter, Arietta?" Charlie asked, as his eyes followed the direction she was gazing.

"Where did the man who was lassoed go?" she asked.

"I don't know," and the scout shook his head. "I know he was roped by some one above, but where he went to I can't say."

"He disappeared in that crevice up there," Jim Dart said. "I saw him just as he was pulled in. But we know who got him, all right."

"The Man of Mystery!" Young Wild West's sweetheart exclaimed.

"Yes."

"That bein' the case," and the scout shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, "I reckon we may as well wait until the feller comes an' lets us know what's happened. He said he was goin' to kill Nat Havens, so most likely he'll do it. I can't see no way to git up there, anyhow."

"There must be a way to get up there from inside the cave," Arietta declared.

"Maybe there is. But I reckon we had better wait till Wild

comes. He sartinly oughter show up putty soon. Most likely he's heard the shootin' we done jest now."

The rest now came out of the cave.

Hop Wah was the most curious of them all, it seemed, for he could not take his eyes from the crevice that was something like twenty feet above after it had been pointed out to him as the place where the leader of the outlaws had disappeared so suddenly.

"Velly strange," he said, shaking his head. "Me likee go uppee here."

"About the only way you kin git up there, heathen, is to wait for this here Man of Mystery as he calls himself to lower his rope. He might lasso yer, though, an' haul you up there mighty quick, jest the same as he did the other feller."

"Allee light, Mislter Charlie. Me no waitee."

"No, I reckon you had better not. That feller got the man he was after, so I s'pose it's all right, anyhow. It's a putty sure thing he'll show up putty soon, an' tell us all about it. But I think we're wastin' time here, so we had better go on an' try to git them other two, an' at the same time look for Wild and Bub Sprague."

This seemed to strike them all as being the proper thing to do, so the horses were quickly led out of the cave and then all hands mounted.

They turned back the way they had come, and had not gone more than a couple of hundred yards when they were delighted to see Young Wild West riding toward them.

"Hooray!" shouted Cheyenne Charlie, waving his hat. "Here comes Wild now."

Then he saw Bub Sprague leading the four prisoners.

"Great gimlets!" he added. "I reckon Wild got them two galoots, an' he's got the other two there, too. Bub has got 'em tied together with a rope, an' he's sartinly leadin' 'em along as if they was soldiers."

They all saw that this was true, and the next minute Wild had joined them and was telling them all about it.

As soon as he had briefly related what had happened after he went into the cave to look for Sprague he wanted to know what had become of the other two outlaws.

"One of them was roped by the Man of Mystery and pulled quickly up the cliff, Wild," Arietta told him. "The other Jim was forced to shoot."

"Is that so? Well, these fellows told the truth, then. I didn't know whether to believe them or not. After we caught them one of them said Nat Havens had been roped and pulled upward from his horse. He also said that the other had been shot by some one. Well, it's all right. Of course you can all guess who roped the leader of the gang."

"The Man of Mystery, Wild," his sweetheart said, quickly.

"That's right, Et. It could have been no one else. Suppose we ride back there and try and find him. I am anxious to see him again. I suppose he has finished the outlaw leader, though. He seemed to be very bitter against him."

They all rode back to the place where the boulder had tumbled between the narrow space through which the trail ran, but no signs could they see of the Man of Mystery.

Arietta told Wild it was her opinion that there was a way to get to the niche above from the inside of the cave, so he at once started to investigate.

But search about as he might, nothing in the way of a passage that led upward could be found, though they did find one that went on through in the direction of the haunted pass.

"It's a sort of puzzle," our hero said, with a shake of his head, after about twenty minutes had been spent in making a search. "We can't find the Man of Mystery or the outlaw he captured in such a wonderful way. But we have learned how it was that the man appeared in the pass at the other side. This passage will take us all through, I suppose, and I am sure there is room enough for the horses. I think the best thing we can do is to go through and then have a look into the outlaws' cave. I am anxious to discover how they worked the ghost trick, as they call it."

"So am I, Wild," the scout spoke up. "Jest lead the way. We kin git through here, all right."

Bidding the rest follow, and telling Jim to bring up the rear, so there would be no chance of the prisoners getting away, should they happen to become loosened from the rope, the young deadshot mounted his horse and started on through the passage, carrying a lighted lantern hanging to his arm.

It was not such a great distance that he had to go, and he found that in some places it was just about wide enough for a horse and rider to pass.

The worst part of it came when they reached the outlet, but he managed to get his horse through, and then it went along all right until the pack-horses came.

The packs had to be removed in order to let them squeeze through the narrow place.

But this did not take a great while, and soon they were all outside in the pass.

Then they rode back to the opening which formed the entrance to the big cave.

The prisoners had remained silent up to this time.

Then one of the last to be captured said:

"You can't find out anything by goin' in there, Young Wild West. If you want to know how the ghost trick was worked, I'll tell yer."

"Go ahead and tell us, then," was the reply.

"Well, we had a couple of skeletons that Nat Havens rigged up with wires. He run wires to the cliff up there an' fastened 'em in sich a way that the skeletons could be pulled up an' down the cliff jest as was wanted. We had two or three white woman's dresses, too, which was fixed up with somethin' inside of 'em to look like ghosts. They was worked the same way with the wires. If anyone happened to come along in the nighttime, an' we knowed they was comin', we would work the ghosts. But in the daytime the skeletons was worked. That's why this place got to be called the Haunted Pass, I s'pose."

"That is quite a satisfactory explanation, I think," our hero said, nodding to his companions. "But if any of you would like to go in and see how it looks inside, come on."

They all wanted to see it with the exception of Bub and the cowboy.

The latter declared he did not care about going in there, while the former said he had been there twice now and that was quite enough for him.

They remained outside guarding the prisoners, while the rest made an inspection of the cave.

Wild found the wires that worked the ghosts, and he cut them all.

When they went out they took the horses in the outer cave with them.

Bub and the cowboy called out to them excitedly as they appeared.

"There's another skeleton an' three ghosts!" Sprague exclaimed. "They come tumblin' down the cliff there mighty sudden like a little while ago."

"All right, Bub. I found the wires and cut them, and that's why they tumbled down. I reckon we'll take those things and go on through to Lucky Spot. But we'll try and find the Man of Mystery first."

It was suggested by the scout that the horses belonging to the outlaws be loaded with what was worth while in the outlaws' cave and taken over, too.

Wild was willing to this, so while the rest were loading the horses he called Charlie and Arietta to ride back with him to the place where the outlaw leader had disappeared.

They were gone fully half an hour, and when they returned everything was in readiness to proceed.

"Find out anything, Wild?" Jim Dart asked.

"No," the young deadshot answered, with a shake of his head. "I reckon the secret of the Death Trail is going to remain a secret, as far as we are concerned. I honestly believe that we'll never see nor hear anything either of the Man of Mystery or Nat Havens again. We'll take a look when we come back, though; that is, if we happen to come back this way. Come on. Now we'll make for Lucky Spot Camp."

Five minutes later our friends were riding along with the prisoners.

When the population of the mining camp saw the party riding in with four prisoners it was not long before a crowd gathered.

Wild called a halt in front of the general store and hotel,

and then as it happened a man led the way to them, at the same time calling out that he was the sheriff of the county.

Wild sized him up quickly and took it for granted that was, though he asked him to show his authority.

The man quickly did so, and then wanted to know and what the prisoners were.

When he was told that they were all that was left of Havens' band of outlaws, he could scarcely believe it.

But Bill Murray, anxious to escape being hanged, made clean breast of it all, after which the four were taken into custody.

Not until after they had eaten dinner at the camp had pitched did Young Wild West again meet the sheriff.

Then he walked over to the shanty hotel and found the sheriff.

"Sheriff," said he, "I reckon there's a reward coming to you."

"Yes, five hundred dollars," was the reply. "But you remember it was for Nat Havens."

"I thought it was for the breaking up of Nat Havens' band."

"Well, it was somethin' like that."

"All right, then. Don't you think the band is broken up pretty well? I reckon you had better take some one to ride back there and pick up the dead ones. I hardly think you will find Nat Havens, though. I think his body fell in a deep crevice somewhere, and that it will be impossible to fish it out."

"All right, Young Wild West. I reckon I'll pay the reward. I've heard enough about you to know that you wouldn't be nothin' that ain't the truth. I'll pay it right now."

"Very well, sheriff. Come here, Bub."

Sprague, who had accompanied him, promptly stepped up.

The moment Wild received the five hundred dollars from the sheriff he handed it to the man who was so anxious to get home East.

"There you are, Bub," he said. "You take that. I don't want it, and I am quite sure that Charlie and Jim and the girls wouldn't touch a dollar of it. If you're going East, head out for the nearest railroad station at once. Don't do like you did once before. You know you got about one-third of the way and then changed your mind and came back."

"I know it, Wild," was the reply. "But this time I'm goin' to take it, 'cause I know you mean to give it to me."

That settled that part of it, and there was one man at Lucky Spot Camp at least who was very happy.

Our friends remained at the mining camp the remainder of the day.

The sheriff and some deputies he swore in went and found the cave and then brought the bodies of the outlaws back with them.

Wild recommended that the prisoner called Bill Murray be dealt leniently with, and the sheriff promised to do his best in the matter.

The next morning as they were ready to leave, Bub Sprague and Jerry Junk came running up to shake hands and bid them good-by.

"Jerry is goin' with me, Wild," Bub said. "I'm goin' to take him to New York an' let him see the sights."

"All right, good luck to you both," was the reply, and the waving an adieu, and with a ringing cheer sounding in their ears, Young Wild West and his friends rode on from the camp, deciding that it was hardly worth while to go back the way they had come and try to learn the secret of the Death Trail.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST SAVED BY A SIGNAL; OR, ARIETTA AND THE VANISHING LIGHT."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

## CURRENT NEWS

United States Secret Service men were rushed to Springfield, Ill., December 21, following the discovery of two filled mail sacks stolen from a Wabash train and found in a vacant lot there. One of the pouches had contained registered mail, and the officials say the loss will amount to more than \$10,000. The discovery was made by a five-year-old boy. Every letter had been opened, but scores of checks were found, showing that the robbers took only the cash.

Confronted by two masked highwaymen, each armed with a revolver, five girls were recently saved from being robbed shortly after 6 o'clock a mile beyond the end of the Manitou car line, Spokane, Idaho, when Miss Katherine Langelohs, aged 19, who was driving the buggy in which they were riding, slashed one of the outlaws across the face with her whip. The highwayman cringed under the blow and fled into the brush. His companion shouted to the girls to cease calling for help and then followed his pal into the brush.

George Bynom, who was out with a party of hunters a few days ago, roped a young grizzly bear. The party sighted the bear near the Yuba River, California, and fired several shots without effect. Seeing that the quarry was about to escape, Bynom, an experienced cowboy, unfurled his lasso and chased the animal with his trained range horse. Overtaking the bear after a mile chase through scrub brush, Bynom placed his line upon it and held it until his companions arrived. The grizzly was then securely tied and brought to Downieville.

After Tuesday, December 24, travelers on the Mojave Desert rubbed their eyes in wonderment and believed they were dreaming of geography book scenes of the great Sahara Desert, for two carloads of ostriches were on their way to Victorville, near which point an experimental ostrich farm is to be started. Because the Mojave Desert is more like the native haunts of the ostrich, it is believed that the big birds will thrive better there than at other points in Southern California. The government once experimented with camels on the desert. The experiment was unsuccessful.

Prof. Thomas T. Eyre of the mechanical engineering department at Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind., told his classes of a strange incident which occurred recently. A receipted bill, which he lost from his receipt book, was blown away by the wind from his home, No. 501 Dorge Street, West Lafayette, to St. Joseph, Ind., more than one hundred miles from Lafayette. It is believed the bill was carried into the air by a whirlwind and then blown far over the State to the point where it was picked up. A resident of St. Joseph found the stray bill, and returned it by mail to its former owner. The bill and envelope were posted on the bulletin board at the university as an instance of a strange freak of nature.

American firms are preparing catalogue and advertising matter in the Chinese language, with an end in view of reaching the demands and tastes of the Chinese trade. Sewing machines, phonographs, lamps, patent medicines, yeast and yeast powder, cigarettes, and condensed milk are among the articles extensively advertised by placards in Chinese posted about the streets of Chinese cities. One enterprising American baking powder firm has an illustrated booklet containing numerous recipes in Chinese issued and distributed among the Chinese people. An American university issues its catalogue in Chinese to attract Chinese students desirous of going abroad for a Western education. An American correspondence school advertises very extensively in Chinese throughout the cities of China and does considerable business with ambitious students. Many American patent medicines are advertised throughout China by literature in Chinese only. A leading American sewing machine company also attributes much of its success to the spreading of its Chinese advertising literature among the Chinese people. Recently a large wholesale American drug house secured an idea of an appropriate trade mark for its products in China from an American consul and is now issuing its labels and advertising matter in connection with this trade mark, the latter being particularly adapted to Chinese ideas.

Despite the fact that the Peruvian government allowed the four members of the scientific expedition sent out under the joint auspices of Yale university and the National Geographic Society only about four and a half months to explore the famed pre-Incan city of Machu Picchu, buried on the edge of a 2,000-foot canyon, the men, who reached here on the United Fruit liner Santa Marta, in from Colon December 19, brought with them stories of some remarkable discoveries. Those returning were Professor Hiram Bingham, head archæologist at Yale; Professor Herbert E. Gregory, head of the department of geology at Yale; Dr. George F. Eaton, of the Peabody Institute, and Professor Osgood Hardy. Smallpox and typhus plagued them, and their Indian guides deserted them, but the most disheartening thing of all was the opposition of President Billinghurst, a descendant of an old-time British settler. Professor Bingham brought back fifty skulls of a pre-Incan period and many skeletons, as well as thirty cases of wonderfully wrought bronze tablets and pieces of pottery. Dr. Eaton collected fifty cases of bones, which will arrive later. Among the fossils discovered were the bones of mastodons and those of the ancient equus, the forerunner of the horse. Dr. Eaton and Professor Gregory were both ill for a long time, and Professor Bingham nearly lost his life as he was exploring the heights of Palcol, in Southern Peru, 1,600 feet above sea level. Professor Bingham, who was in charge of the expedition, brought back with him Juan F. Leguit, the thirteen-year-old son of the former President, and will place the lad in school in Virginia.

# THE SUNKEN FLEET

OR,

## WORKING FOR MILLIONS

By **DICK ELLISON**

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XXI. "Continued)

What their thoughts or fears may have been during those minutes which to them must have seemed hours no one save themselves could have told.

Once Ella halted, and for an instant it seemed as if she must have fallen.

The supporting arm of her uncle gave her new courage, however, and they hurried on, following closely the path chosen by Charley and Tom, until at last Captain Hunter suddenly discerned the dark hull of a ship looming up ahead.

He looked again.

Yes, it was a ship, and there to the right of it lay another, and another still to the left.

Still hurrying forward he saw coming toward them a number of dusky figures similarly clothed to themselves.

They were divers; another moment put that beyond a doubt.

All carried axes, and presented a decidedly formidable appearance.

Were they friends or foes?

### CHAPTER XXII.

#### TOM CAPTURES THE TERROR.

"What had happened?

It was Tom's first thought and Charley's as well.

Instinctively the boys turned and faced each other; then Tom, grasping Charley's arm, pointed back in the direction from which they had come.

Fabulous wealth lay scattered all about them, for who could doubt that the contents of the other boxes were similar to the one into which they had broken? But what was all the wealth of the Indies compared with the welfare of those whom they had left behind?

Tom's first thought had been that it was an earthquake, but almost instantly the recollection of the torpedoes of the Terror came to mind.

"We must go back at once," he thought. "If anything has happened to the Cyclops——"

Poor fellow!

He was unable to complete the sentence, even in his thoughts.

Charley, offering no sign of objection, the boys hurriedly

scrambled over the heap of boxes and wreckage, gaining the sandy bottom of the bay.

Before they had advanced a dozen yards, Tom became aware that a mistake had been made, and that they had been going in the wrong direction.

The ledge had now assumed an unfamiliar shape, and instead of coming upon the wreck of the first galleon they had discovered, another of very different form seemed to have appeared in its place.

"We must go back and start over again," thought Tom, and he was about to communicate his thoughts to Charley when he suddenly felt the latter's hand upon his arm.

There was something long and black descending upon them from above, and Charley was pointing toward it—it was a boat built in the shape of a huge cigar.

Cyclops or Terror!

The question was most important, but how to decide?

One of the strangely constructed crafts it certainly was, but which one was more than Tom could tell.

Charley's thoughts were of a similar character, and both feeling that the chances were all in favor of its being the Cyclops, the boys stood and watched it.

Slowly it descended, maintaining at the same time a slow forward movement.

All at once Tom, whose eyes were fixed on the turret, caught sight of the ugly face of Dick Price at the wheel.

"Heaven help my father!" was the thought that flashed through his mind, "this means mischief and no mistake!"

Clutching Charley's arm, he drew him back into the shadow of the sunken ship.

Meanwhile the Terror had continued to descend, until at last she rested on the bottom.

Moments passed and the door of the water-tight chamber opening, four men clothed in diving armor sallied forth and started for the sunken ship.

What was Tom about?

The instant he saw them coming he drew Charley around on the other side and pointing toward the Terror in the most animated manner, hurriedly pushed ahead.

There was no danger of discovery on the part of the divers, for they had already passed into the shadow. A few moments later, and the boys stood abreast of the door communicating with the water-tight compartment, and Tom had boldly seized the knob.

"Great Scott!" thought Charley, "is he going to attempt to capture the Terror? One—two—three—four—that means Price and three others. Tom is taking big chances, but——"

But he never once thought of drawing back, and they were inside the door now.

Tom's helmet was off the instant the retreating water had passed his shoulders.

"They've blown up the Cyclops, Charley," he whispered. "They've done it—I feel—it—I know it! Dick Price, or Captain Terrible, I'm going to have revenge!"

"But think of the risk we run!" answered Charley. "How do we know how many of the scoundrels are still on board. For Heaven's sake, don't be rash."

"I don't care. If they've killed father and Ella I don't care to live any longer. Here goes, Charley. If worse comes to worse I'll die fighting to the last."

As the inner door flew back a dark figure rose suddenly before them.

It was Cæsar.

"Glory, Massa Tom Hunter! Massa Brown! Oh, Lawd, where youse escaped?"

"Hush! not a loud word, or I'll beat your brains out! The Cyclops—tell me what have they done?"

"Blowed her up wif torpedoes!"

Tom staggered back.

"And were all killed on board?" he faltered.

"Golly, I 'spees so. Don't see how they could 'scape—don't see however youse done got away, but now youse is here I gib de Terror to youse, and welcome. Boys, dere isn't a blessed soul on board but me and Captain Terrible's sure gone to feed the sharks."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CONCLUSION.

Captain Hunter drew Ella closer to his side, at the same time giving the signal previously arranged upon to command a halt.

It was entirely useless to attempt to conceal themselves from the approaching party. The only thing to do therefore was to stand and face them, be they friend or foe.

There were four of the divers all told; their dress was out of the same peculiar sort worn by the refugees from the Cyclops, and it was this which made Captain Hunter's heart sink within him, for he felt that they must have come from off the Terror and nowhere else.

Each man had the diver's ax attached to the suit in the usual position; in each helmet blazed lights similar to their own, and there were the very duplicates of his own patent air knapsacks strapped across their back.

Two of the divers walked in advance, while the other two seemed to be carrying something heavy between them, which a second glance showed to be a box of tremendous weight seemingly, and even this point was speedily proved. As they drew nearer it was easy to see, for the box had no lid, that it was filled with gold coins, for the most part as big as a Mexican dollar and few smaller than a dime!

Now all these things were comprehended by Captain Hunter in a few seconds.

He had scarcely thrown his protesting arm about Ella when he saw that they were discovered.

The two divers who carried the chest dropped their bur-

den—all four were seen to grasp their axes and start toward the little party with a rush.

A mist passed before Captain Hunter's eyes; for the moment he felt that he must suffocate; there was a terrible ringing in his ears.

These were no friends, but foes!

Scarce realizing what he did, the master of the Cyclops seized Ed's arm and flung it round Ella's waist, indicating by a peremptory gesture that the steward was to look to her safety.

Already the foremost of the enemy had aimed a crushing blow at Joe Haggerty's helmet, which the engineer skillfully dodged.

There was but one ax between them, and that was in the possession of Captain Hunter himself.

Darting forward, he struck out, missed, dodged a blow, struck again, and this time successfully cutting through the helmet of his opponent at the side.

The diver sunk like a log, but at the same instant the others were upon him, and a desperate conflict began.

Could he hope to conquer?

It seemed impossible.

Dodging and striking, striking and dodging, the brave man leaped from side to side, keeping up the fight.

Another fell before his ax, then another.

But no—what was this?

There had been four at the start; three had fallen, and still three remained.

He had struck but two—they were fighting among themselves!

What now?

Was he going mad?

Surely there lay the Cyclops upon the bottom, not ten feet away.

Wildly he struck again—another fell.

His brain was reeling; he staggered forward, fell himself, and knew no more until—

Not until he found himself lying stretched upon a cushioned couch in a comfortable cabin, with Tom bending over him and Ella's soft hand bathing his head, while a few feet away stood Charley Brown and Joe Haggerty, with Ed grinning at the door.

Was he dreaming? Had it been all a dream? Was this the cabin of the Cyclops? Had he never left it at all?

Hark!

Tom was speaking.

"He is all right now. Our enemies are all dead, father. We've got a better boat than the one we lost, and the millions of the sunken fleet are ours!"

\* \* \* \* \*

They were just in time.

We refer to Tom and Charley, of course, who had run the Terror forward, arriving at the scene of the conflict by the permission of a merciful Providence in season to hurry out and lend them air.

Tom had spoken truly.

They had captured a craft superior in every particular to the Cyclops, and before they left the bay, which was weeks later, gold in coin and ingots to a fabulous amount had been taken on board from the treasure boxes of the sunken fleet.

(To be Continued)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### GETS SPANISH PRISON LETTER.

Captain John Gulley, a retired seaman, 76 years old, of 694 Third avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y., received a letter recently, bearing the postmark of a small town in Spain. The contents told him of a fortune, which would be partly his should he come to the aid of the writer. A short time ago he visited his lawyer, Harry E. Shirk, in the Temple Bar Building. "It is the same old Spanish fraud game and you are the 'goat,'" said the attorney. The letter received by Gulley is almost the same as the many Spanish prison letters which arrive in every part of the United States about this time of the year. The reward in this case, however, is not concealed in a secret pocket of a wallet, which is hidden away in a coat that is in a trunk, alleged to be held by the authorities, but is to be found in a valise.

### HIGH PRICES FOR AUTOGRAPHS.

The sum of \$780, which was paid for an autographed letter of Martha Washington, was the highest price realized in the sale of Danforth autographs, which was concluded in Philadelphia, December 7, at Freeman's. Although the collection embraced many fine letters of Gen. Nathaniel Greene, Col. Henry Lee, John Paul Jones, John Adams, Ralph Izard, George Washington and Martha Washington, and the correspondence of Edmond Charles Genet, Minister from France to the United States, and James Campbell, Postmaster-General, the sale was marked by spirited bidding, and about \$4,000 was realized. A communication from Commodore John Paul Jones to Genet realized the next highest price, bringing \$725. Two letters by John Quincy Adams written at The Hague denying that Gen. Washington expressed the desire to resign as President of the United States because of the ingratitude of its people realized \$170 and \$160, respectively. A letter of Gen. Washington dated Philadelphia, 1782, directed to Major-Gen. Greene, brought \$300, and two others, communications dated a few days later, realized \$295 and \$105.

### 900 HUMMING BIRDS SEIZED.

The largest seizure of plumage made since the millinery law went into effect eighteen months ago was made recently by representatives of the State Conservation Commission and the National Association of Audubon Societies in A. Hirsh & Co.'s factory, No. 20 East Thirty-first street, New York.

Members of the Audubon Society discovered recently that a department store had sold a woman seven humming birds. B. L. Bowdish, chief clerk of the societies, traced the birds to Hirsh & Co. The store paid a fine of \$60.

Accompanied by Warden Edgar Hicks, of the State Conservation Commission, Bowdish went to Hirsh & Co.'s factory and there discovered great quantities of plumage. The raid followed. They seized 900 humming birds and

the plumage of many gulls, herons, grebes and swifs ready for women's hats and worth a large sum of money.

T. Gilbert Pearson, Secretary of the Audubon Society, said the other evening at the offices of the society, 1974 Broadway:

"The millinery law gave the tradespeople more than a year in which to dispose of stock, and since eighteen months have elapsed we can see no reason why further leniency should be shown.

"There is an abundance of material that can be used for hat trimming to which there is no legal objection, and manufacturers and stores will find it to their advantage to adhere strictly to the law."

### GERMANY AGAINST FOREIGN MARRIAGES.

Hereafter any member of Germany's diplomatic service who becomes betrothed to a woman who is not a German will be dropped, the very fact of engaging himself to marry a foreigner being interpreted as a desire to leave the service and being promptly followed by notice that the same is granted. This revival of Bismarck's stern decree, based on his dictum that "a foreign wife cannot possibly help a German diplomat," has been revived in consequence, it is said, of German diplomacy in a certain European capital having been very unfavorably affected by the influence of a certain foreign grand dame who is the wife of a member of the German diplomatic service. International alliances of German diplomats have always been looked on unfavorably in certain quarters, and latterly the tendency of German statesmen and royalty has been to look with equal suspicion on international royal marriages as tending to put Germany's hands in crises. Bismarck's prohibition was allowed to lapse into disregard when Prince Bernhard von Buelow became Chancellor. He married an Italian, Princess Maria Beccadelli di Bologna, and headed a series of marriages which has been liberally represented by American women among them Lillian May Langham, of Louisville, Ky., wife of the late Ambassador Baron Speck von Sternburg; Jeanne Luckemeyer, of New York, wife of the present German Ambassador at Washington, Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff; a great granddaughter of John Jay, the wife of Gen. Hans Lothar von Schweinitz, who was an eminent soldier as well as Ambassador at several capitals; Helen Moulton, of Albany, who married Count Paul von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg, once Ambassador to England and afterward Foreign Minister; Maud Cass Ledyard, of Detroit, whose husband, Baron von Ketteler, was assassinated in Peking by Boxers while he was Minister to China, and Constance Hoyt of Washington, who wedded Baron Ferdinand von Stumm, who was second secretary to the German Embassy in America. This list might be largely extended if it were made to include former and minor members of embassies and legations. It is worthy of note that Count Paul von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg and Gen. von Schweinitz, both of whom had American wives, were in the German diplomatic service during Bismarck's time.



# THE KING OF CRIPPLE CREEK

OR,

## THE BOY WITH A BARREL OF GOLD

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

## CHAPTER XIX. (Continued)

The arm had been well set, for Joe Duffett was, in his own way, something of a surgeon, as Colonel Wilfer had no occasion to know.

"We shall now leave you, my men," said the colonel. "As soon as we can, men will be sent up here to take you down to Cripple Creek. If you think you can escape, why try it; but all I can say is that if you succeed, I shall immediately organize a force and hunt you down. There will be no jailing done then. You will simply be lynched, so if you will take my advice you will remain just where you are."

Having said this, Col. Wilfer led the way back into the cave, Terry and Ethel following him.

Their way took them through the ridge to a broad entrance on the other side, where there was a fire and Col. Wilfer's horse was found.

"Jack," said the colonel, "sit down and make yourself comfortable. We have got to stay here all night and may as well take it easy until the storm lets up. My dear boy, how can I ever thank you for what you have done for Ethel? When her horse carried her over the cliff I never expected to see my darling again; but your prompt action saved her and—and——"

The colonel broke down here and seemed too much affected to proceed.

"Why, really I did nothing," replied Jack. "I caught the horse's bridle, it is true, but——"

"That's all right. You got there," broke in the colonel. "Ethel declares that the horse would certainly have gone over the cliff with her if you had not been just as quick to take hold as you were. We won't talk about it any more. I have got something of the highest importance to say to you and Terry. Do you know why Bill Beers put up that job on you? Why it was that you and Terry were enticed up to Stillman's hut?"

"Why, to blackmail us," replied Jack. "They made me order Terry to draw a hundred dollars, and——"

"And that is only part of it. Let me tell you the rest. It is part of a scheme to ruin you. There has been a regular syndicate of toughs formed against you both; friends of Matamoros Mat, whom you captured and sent up to the penitentiary where he belongs."

"Why, I know that," said Jack. "Beers told me that. I understand it all."

"Do you know that this morning an injunction was taken out prohibiting you from working your mine? That Judge Dillon granted it on the ground that the sale at

which you bought the claim was illegal because the proper notice had not been given?"

"Impossible!" cried Jack. "Judge Dillon is supposed to be an honorable man; he would never do such a thing."

"Judge Dillon is, to my certain knowledge, one of the greatest scoundrels who ever went unhung," replied Col. Wilfer. "There is great jealousy against the firm of Hudson & Tolliver, as you know. A new sale is to take place to-morrow at noon by the order of this most unrighteous judge. It has been advertised for two weeks in an obscure paper up the county. The idea is to wipe you out. There's more to it which I will explain later. All I need add now is that if they could have held you prisoner twenty-four hours you would have found yourself minus a mine when you got free, if, indeed, they did not kill you in the end."

Jack was amazed. Bad as he knew many of the claim shysters of Cripple Creek to be, he had never anticipated that their rascality could extend so far as this.

"Who told you all this, colonel?" he exclaimed. "The whole thing must have been very secretly managed, for no breath of it ever got to my ears."

"Who told me? Why, One-eyed Ike told me," replied the colonel. "One of your men came and confessed it all to him shortly after you and Terry started out, and what does Ike do but jump right into the steam launch and run down to the mill and tell me."

"Blessings on Ike!" cried Jack. "And yet he is what they call a bad man."

"'Jack Hudson saved my life and I'd give it cheerfully to save his,' was the way Ike put it; but he did not know where you had gone and the informer could not tell him, so he started at once for Cripple Creek to see what he could learn. Meanwhile I had business in Breakneck Canyon, and something seemed to tell me to go right ahead and perhaps I would find you. There's my story, Jack. They are trying to rob you of your mine and the next move will be to sue you for an accounting and to claim all the money you have ever taken out of it. Ruin stares you in the face, my boy, unless we can get to Cripple Creek to-morrow morning; but can we do it? Look out there and see the snow banking up against the mouth of the cave, and we only have one horse among us all."

## CHAPTER XX.

## GETTING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

Jack sat for a long time in silence. It was a hard blow to him. He could not bear to think of all he had worked so hard for being swept away in a day by a gang of

swindlers, and he held a prisoner here, not five miles from Cripple Creek as the crow flies, but as good as a hundred, the way matters stood.

If it had been a clear day he could have walked out of the cave and looked right down into Cripple Creek, and by the aid of a good glass actually watched the people as they walked about the street; but, as it was, he might just as well have been at the other end of the earth.

At least so Col. Wilfer thought, and most people would have agreed with him; but Jack was thinking while he sat there silent, and the more he thought about the matter the more inclined he was to take an altogether different view of the affair.

"Terry, you knew all about this before?" he said at last. The colonel had drawn Ethel to one side and they were discussing their own affairs.

"Oh, yes!" replied Terry. "He told me all about it while we were riding along the ridge, Jack."

"What do you think of it?"

"Why, I don't know what to think. Whatever you say goes."

"I only wish I could say go," murmured Jack. "If I could only once get into Cripple Creek I'd make those fellows sick, and don't you forget it."

"You never could get there alive in this storm!" cried Terry. "And in the nighttime, too."

"I think I could. It's not cold, but can I leave the rest of you here?"

"Yes, you can, Jack," broke in Col. Wilfer. "You can leave us all here. If you think there is any chance of getting there, take the horse and go along. Terry and I can stick it out until you can send help to us, and as for those toughs, we shall be good for them in case they should, by any chance, get free—never you fear."

"What do you say, Ethel?" demanded Jack. "I'm sure I only want to do the right thing."

"I say, go!" declared Ethel. "Don't suppose for a minute that I want to see you lose your mine after all you have done for me."

"Go, Jack," said Col. Wilfer, seeing that the boy still hesitated. "I would, if I stood in your shoes. I would not give the matter another moment's thought. I am well able to take care of myself and my daughter, and there is always Terry to help."

Jack needed no further urging, for he had already made up his mind that it was the only thing to be done.

A few moments later he found himself astride the horse, riding along the top of the ridge, with the wind blowing against his side with a force of eighty miles an hour, whirling the snow all about him.

It was all the horse could do to hold his own, and this was not the worst; for how was Jack ever to find the trail, and after he found it, how was he ever to face this terrible wind in going down the mountain side?

If it had continued as it was then, it is doubtful if he could have done it; but as luck would have it just about the time Jack reached the spot where the hut had been the wind began to die down and at the same time the temperature rose several degrees.

No less snow fell, but what came down was much softer and everything seemed to indicate that it was soon going to turn to rain.

Jack now halted and made a careful study of the rounding cliffs.

At last feeling certain that he had located the trail started down the mountain, the horse slipping and sliding in the most dangerous fashion.

It was now getting on toward night, and, of course, was of the utmost importance that Jack should get into Cripple Creek before darkness came.

He had not gone a great way before it seemed to him that he could see horses ahead, toiling up the slope; the wind whirled the snow about so that he could not be sure. It might be only the moving treetops, and for a while he thought it was; when all at once he saw his own horse take.

There was a band of ten mounted men toiling up the trail within a stone's throw of him.

Were they enemies or friends?

Jack reined in immediately and rising in his saddle shouted:

"Hello, there! Hello! Who are you. Pull out a little and leave room for me to pass!"

"Hello, boss! That's you, I know by your voice!" called the leader, and to Jack's great joy he also recognized the voice.

"That you, Ike?" he shouted back, and so it was Ike eyed Ike himself, with nine men all heavily armed behind him, coming up to Stillman's to rescue Jack and Terry. For Ike had gone straight to town and by moving about among his old pals in the gambling saloons soon found a friend who knew all about the plot against the King of Cripple Creek.

For Jack and Ike to compare notes took but a few moments, of course, and a plan of action was immediately decided upon.

Eight of the men went on to the cave to the assistance of Col. Wilfer, Ethel and Terry, while Ike and one other turned back down the trail, with Jack between them.

It had now begun to rain, for Jack had reached a low level and it came down as though the flood gates of heaven were opened and meant to stay so for some time to come.

"Do you think we can make it, Ike?" asked Jack. "It seems to me if it gets much softer the horses will lose their footing altogether and that it will be a slide for the rest of the way."

"I'm hoping for the best," replied Ike. "We must get on there, boss. I tell you it's a mighty serious matter; and what's more, I've bet a thousand dollars to one hundred that the King of Cripple Creek will jump into this slide with both feet and knock his enemies out to the last man."

"Yes, and I want to see you win that bet, Ike," replied Jack; "but say, we must be pretty near the mouth of Webb Canyon. What if we should run into a mule-train going down, loaded with ore?"

"We are right into it now," replied Ike. "Don't worry about mule-trains to me, that would be the last straw; them mules would tramp the slush down so that our horses could never stand on their feet. Still, it might be well to better hurry and get by the mouth of Webb Canyon while we have the chance."

(To be Continued)

## TIMELY TOPICS

Four thousand one hundred and fifty bales of raw silk, valued at \$2,075,000, the largest and most valuable silk cargo ever brought across the Pacific to the Puget Sound, arrived at Tacoma, Wash., December 21, on the steamer *Terophon* from the Orient. The moment the steamer tied up, gangs of longshoremen under rush orders began transferring the silk to a special train, which carried the valuable cargo to New York.

The first report of the commission appointed under the auspices of the Rockefeller Fund to devise means for the extermination of the hookworm in the mountain districts of Kentucky was made at Lexington, Ky., December 21. The report is for Breathitt County, and shows that out of 100 persons examined 1,263 were affected. If that rate of infection prevails in the other mountain counties, Kentucky has 20,000 cases of hookworm, it is estimated. In Breathitt County schools every pupil was found to be a sufferer.

Thirty days in the city jail is the punishment imposed on Mrs. Maude White for smoking a cigarette in the Park, Vancouver, Wash., December 28, while sitting on one of the benches there, by Police Judge Shaw. Mrs. White was sitting on the bench puffing away at a cigarette she had made apparently, when Officers Jack Smith and Harry Burgy passed and arrested her. At the City Hall she said that she was sick, but the judge took a different view and passed sentence. This is the first time that a woman in this city has been arrested for such offense.

Tradition and sentiment have saved a giant tree, known as the Creek Council Tree, which stands in the centre of North Cheyenne Street in Tulsa, Okla. An ordinance to close the street was adopted recently and some citizens wanted the tree destroyed but a decision to spare it has been reached. Beneath the tree, according to tradition, were buried the ashes of the Cherokees brought from the council ground in Georgia, when the Creeks came to the Indian Territory more than seventy-five years ago. It is said the tree stands the first important meetings of the tribe were held.

Silverware to the value of \$200 disappeared from the home of Mrs. J. W. Barrows, at 113 East Seventy-second street, New York City, recently, the loss being discovered only after the departure of a woman who represented herself as a book agent. The woman, according to the maid, asked that the volumes she carried be taken to the address of the house. The maid complied with the request, and after Mrs. Barrows had scanned the volumes and discussed their merits with the agent. It was agreed that the agent should call again and learn Mrs. Barrows' opinion. A few minutes after the woman left the maid discovered the loss of the silverware, all engraved with the name of Mrs. Barrows.

Uncle Sam's newest and most formidable battleship of the air, equipped with a death-dealing, rapid-fire gun, the heaviest to be mounted on an aeroplane, 44 feet wide and weighing a ton, propelled by a 70 horse-power motive plant, adaptable to land, sea and air, is nearing completion at the W. Stirling Burgess Aerodrome, Marblehead, Mass. This latest war eagle is a radical departure from the former Burgess-Wright type of biplane, several of the latter having already been furnished to the War Department. In that the new war aeroplane is a biplane, it is similar to the former type of aerial battlecraft. But the new machine is four feet wider than the old type. Its powerful motive plant is capable of driving it through the heavens at more than a mile-a-minute clip. For sea landings the machine will be equipped with a large single pontoon instead of two, as hitherto. From the front center of the lower plane an outrigger has been erected, upon which the rapid-fire gun will be mounted. There will also be a seat for the gunner in the forestructure. Immediately in the rear of the gunner will be the pilot's station. He will use the standard Wright dual control, one lever for elevation and the other for warping, to maintain lateral stability or balance. It is planned to equip the war aeroplane with wireless.

Among the remarkable antiquarian finds at Pompeii some of those recently made possess the greatest of interest. Instead of showing signs of exhaustion the wonderful mine of antiquities beneath Vesuvius retains its richness unabated. The street of Abundance, once the rich Roman's paradise, has recently been investigated in part of its extent upon a new system of excavation. The street of Abundance, only recently laid open, has perhaps not more than begun to yield its spoil. The ground there is being subjected to a newly devised system of excavation and restoration. By means of his methods Prof. Spinazzola, the originator of the new system, hopes to reproduce parts, seemingly destroyed, of the line of houses on the old street in their entirety. Nothing is thrown away in the new style of excavation. The effort is made to locate the exact place and definite purpose of each nameless fragment. The fragments of the roofs and upper parts of houses have made it possible to reconstruct sometimes in great detail the top stories of the houses, the ceneula windows and even balconies. One of the most imposing of these house front frescoes is that representing the Pompeian Venus. She is pictured a noble figure divinely tall and slender, standing with her offspring Cupid in a glistening chariot drawn by lithe and swaying elephants. On the one side of her stands the Genius of Fortune, beloved of the prosperous Pompeians, and on the other a tutelary genius. The elephants, with their well-poised bulk of muscle, look as if drawn from life. It must have demanded no small skill to sketch them in the rapid medium of fresco.

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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

When the Rev. R. F. Kirkpatrick, a Presbyterian minister of Memphis, Tenn., discovered that a negro burglar was attempting to get into his home early the other day, he telephoned the police, armed himself with a revolver and took up a position at the head of a stairway. Before the police arrived the negro gained entrance and the minister fired, killing him instantly.

An ingenious automatic parachute for aeroplanes was demonstrated from the Eiffel Tower, Paris, December 22. The contrivance, which consists of a vast umbrella, forty feet in diameter, is spread by a system of springs, operating instantaneously and automatically directly the fall begins. The parachute was dropped to-day from the first platform of the tower, with a sandbag to represent an aviator. The apparatus opened fully before it had fallen sixty feet. It landed gently, taking sixteen seconds to drop 190 feet.

The piling for the great dike which is being built on the easterly side of the Panama entrance on the Pacific, extending from the main land for three and one-third miles, is nearing completion, and before long all of the rockwork will have been filled in. There has been much settlement necessitating large additional dumping of rock. The total vertical settlement in one section during the period July 1, 1911, to June 30, 1912, aggregated 125 feet, and in some cases the movement of the mud has carried the trestle laterally as much as 300 feet, but the fill is now stable, and a carriage way will be built along its surface giving access to Naos Island. This dike prevents the carrying of sediment by the current which sets across the axis of the canal entrance from the east.

Clothes without shearing the sheep or plucking the cotton plant are now ready for us whenever we get ready for them. Stone, iron, glass and paper supply the materials, soft and pliable as woollens, cottons and silks, some of them washable by putting them in the fire, some of them unwearetable and others so cheap they may be thrown away when soiled. Glass makes beautiful dress goods, colors to please and sheen and sparkle all their own. The Russians are manufacturing a fabric of "a filamentous stone from the Siberian mines," flexible as any product of

the mills, practically indestructible, for which the furnace is the laundry. Iron cloth is in common use, that hair-looking material used in stiffening coat collar. "Limestone wool" is made in the electric furnace. Cloth of this material cannot be damaged by fire or grease and is as flexible as clothing made of sheep's wool. An English manufacturer is making a fabric of old ropes. Japanese troops, during the war with Russia, proved that paper clothes are serviceable and warmer than those of cloth. English, French and German manufacturers are turning out paper dressing gowns and bathrobes. Even gloves which may be cleaned many times, are made of paper.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"What is your idea of a silent partner?" "He's the fellow that puts his money into a firm and keeps his mouth shut while it is being spent."

Tom—Did Maud tell you the truth when you asked her age? Dick—Yes. Tom—What did she say? Dick—She said it was none of my business.

She—Take care, Alfred; that isn't the remedy for my sickness. Don't you see the bottle is marked "poison"? He (groaning)—That's the one I want.

Mabel—I would never marry a man I did not love. Maudie—But suppose a really wealthy man should propose? Mabel—I should love him, of course.

Small Boy (leading in a tramp)—Oh, mother, this old gentleman says he hasn't had a thing to eat for six months, so I've just invited him home with me to lunch with us.

Daughter—Oh, papa, I've just got the most lovely costume you ever saw. Papa (busily)—I'm glad you like it. Daughter—It's too sweet for anything. Now all we need is a yacht.

Dorothy—I do wish we were rich, father. Her father—How rich would you like to be? Dorothy—Oh, awfully rich; rich enough to snub other people and still be called agreeable.

"So this is your dull season, eh?" observed the visitor. "When is the busiest period of your factory?" "When the whistle blows for the men to quit work," answered the manufacturer.

Mother—Now, if you take three from ten, how many will remain? (No answer.) Mother—Well, suppose I take away three of your fingers, what would you have then? Johnnie—No music lessons.

Angry Wife—It seems to me we've been married a century. I can't even remember when or where we first met. Husband (emphatically)—I can. It was at a dinner party where there were thirteen at table.

## CAPTURED BY PIRATES.

By Kit Clyde.

In the morning of September 16, 1738, with the sun high in the sky and the wind blowing from the northward, the trim schooner *Dolphin* sailed southward. A gentle southerly breeze rippled the water in the Caribbean waters, and St. Thomas, her port, lay twenty-four hours' sail away. Here she was to discharge and load cargo, and thence shape her homeward course toward Boston.

Captain Archibald Knowlton walked his quarter deck bravely, for he was beginning to enjoy the relief from anxiety felt on nearing port safe from disaster by storm or war. Tornados and hurricanes were less to be dreaded than the fierce outlaws that in those days haunted the seas wherever merchant vessels sailed. "Dead men tell no tales" was their maxim with prisoners, and every merchant captain knew well that the capture of his ship by pirates meant that those of his company taken alive would be made to "walk the plank."

The Yankee skipper whistled cheerfully as he looked seaward, where a long, sharp rigged schooner which the morning had brought into view was sailing in the same direction as the *Dolphin*. From her course and appearance he took her to be a trader from some American port. The stranger was larger and faster than his own craft, and slowly crept up on her weather quarter.

Another more distant sail was in view—a brig off the bow—coming on with a fair breeze.

Both schooners were close hauled on the starboard tack, and the strange schooner was now nearly abeam of the *Dolphin*. Five or six sailors and an officer in plain dress were on view upon her decks.

"What do you make her out to be, Abel?" said Captain Knowlton.

He spoke to his first mate, with whom he had sailed since they were boys.

"A slaver, makin' for the west coast, more'n likely," answered Abel Forbes. "She's a good one; pulls ahead of us on the wind, and not many craft can do that."

The breeze, which came and went fitfully, was dying away, and the stranger, which had come very near, fell off a little, keeping on the same tack, as if trying to make the most of what wind there was left.

"If that fellow doesn't mind what he's a-doing he'll run us down of us," said Captain Knowlton. "I'll hail him."

Lifting his speaking trumpet, he shouted:

"Schooner ahoy! What's your name and where are you bound?"

"The *Piroqua* of Havana," called back the officer, then he gave a command in Spanish to his helmsman, who suddenly threw up the wheel; the stranger shot ahead and ran her port bow on the starboard quarter of the *Dolphin*.

As the vessels pitched and ground together, the *Piroqua's* men, pretending to help in clearing them, passed a line over the *Dolphin's* main shrouds, fastening the two vessels together. A gorgeously dressed man appeared, with a cut-throat razor in hand, on the stranger's deck, shouting commands. About her lee rail rose a crowd of desperate-looking fellows, who, in a moment more, with flashing weapons

and ferocious yells, were swarming upon the *Dolphin's* decks. Before an attack so sudden the merchantman's company were easily overpowered and made prisoners.

The pirates ransacked the cabin and fore-castle, and then gathered with their booty and prisoners in the *Dolphin's* waist. Upon the poop stood their captain, a tall, black-bearded man, with a fierce eye and resolute, cruel, thin lips. He put some questions to Captain Knowlton concerning his cargo, the sailing of other vessels from Boston, and the measures that the British authorities were taking against the West Indian pirates. Then he turned to his lieutenant.

"We're wasting time," he said. "Run a plank out at the lee gangway and walk them overboard."

The pirate captain, looking off impatiently toward the brig, saw that with the tail of the breeze puffing her upper sails, she would pass them two miles away. At the same time a ripple coming from the west promised wind for his own vessel.

"Avast there!" he shouted to his men. "It's no time to drown prisoners with that prize slipping past us. Four of you stay with the schooner and work her down in our wake while we give chase."

The pirates, except four men whom he designated, hastily returned to their own deck, and, casting loose from the Yankee schooner, the *Piroqua* spread her wings to the rising breeze and swept like a gull to the brig. The *Dolphin's* crew dejectedly watched the pirate vessel swoop down upon its prey, which, seeming to realize the danger, had turned its course so as to give the schooner a stern chase. At this move the black flag came up to the *Piroqua's* peak, and in her true colors she crowded on sail in pursuit.

The pirates left in charge of the *Dolphin*, in ill-temper at being left behind, drove the officers and crew, nine in number, into the fore-castle and fastened the door. They shaped the schooner's course into the wake of the pirate craft, and then, while one of them handled the wheel, the others began a search for liquor. A bottle partly filled with rum, found in the cook's locker, only whetted their appetites. They came to the fore-castle and asked the prisoners where the liquor—in those days a regular part of a vessel's stores—was kept. The mate informed them that there was a cask of rum among the stores in the fore-hold. They opened the fore-castle door.

"Come out of there, two of you," they called; whereat Abel Forbes and Jack Dutton, the ship's boy, climbed the ladder to the deck. The pirates pointed to the fore hatch-way.

"Get down and break out that cask of rum, and be quick about it," they commanded.

Abel and Jack went below and tried to pull aside the barrels of beef and pork stowed about the cask. The pirates rigged a fall and by the aid of this some barrels were hoisted out and others swung aside until the head of the coveted cask was in sight. But so much stuff was still wedged about it that the thirsty ruffians became impatient. At their order Jack Dutton brought an auger from the carpenter's room, and seizing it one of the pirates jumped below. A hole was quickly bored into the cask and with a long reed pipestem he was able to reach the liquor, which

he sucked up greedily until his eager companions clamored that he come on deck and allow them their turn.

Once started to drinking the pirates continued it at a lively rate. The man at the wheel, missing his comrades, gruffly called Jack aft.

"What are my mates doing forward?" he inquired.

"They tapped the barrel of rum in the forehold," said Jack.

"That's pretty work for 'em to be at, with the craft to sail and prisoners to guard," growled the pirate. "Here, you, catch hold of the wheel and watch your steering!"

With cutlass in hand he ran forward to the hatchway and shouted to his comrades to come on deck; but, recklessly drunken, they replied only by inviting him to join their carousal or go to a place warmer than Havana.

While they exchanged threats and curses, Abel, standing by the foresheet, saw that the vessel, through lack of skillful handling, had fallen fully a mile behind the pirate craft. He perceived a chance to make a bold stroke for the lives of himself and his comrades, and knowing that as matters stood, their doom was sealed in any event, he acted promptly and resolutely.

As the ruffian standing at the hatchway alternately cursed his comrades and implored them to come on deck, Abel, under pretense of pulling in the slack of the jib sheet, contrived to get near him. The pirate heard his movement, turned, and instantly raised his cutlass.

"So you were trying to steal on me," he snarled. "I'll put you out of the way."

The steel flashed down as he spoke. Abel instinctively dodged back at the motion, but that would not have saved him had it not been for the dangling tackle that had been used in moving the barrels in the hold. It swung in the way of the falling blade, catching and turning the blow, so that the edge of the cutlass sank deep into the wooden block.

Before his enemy could disengage it the mate sprang forward, and with his heavy fist landing squarely upon the jaw, knocked the pirate backward into the hold.

With a strength and quickness he could not have shown in a lesser emergency, he flung the hatch down into place.

He forced the clamp on the staple and secured it, then sprang to the forecastle and opened the door.

"Come out, come out, Captain Knowlton. I've got the pirates under hatches."

"Steady," he shouted to the imprisoned crew, eager to rush out. "One at a time, and only two of you. If too many of us are about the deck we'll arouse the suspicions of that fellow ahead, and if we do we're worse off than ever."

Captain Knowlton with two men handled the ropes, and with Abel at the wheel, still keeping the Dolphin headed for the pirate craft, they contrived to spill so much wind and so to steer that the vessel should make the least headway possible. The distance between the two schooners steadily increased until they were two miles apart. Then the wind fell, leaving the Dolphin rolling on the swell with flapping sails. The last puff dying away to leeward, carried the Piroqua along some distance further, and the three vessels lay becalmed at equal distances apart.

In anxious suspense the Dolphin's crew waited for the next rise of wind, for upon its direction would depend

their fate. At four bells in the afternoon the captain his mate still stood anxiously at the wheel, their gaze ranging from the pirate on the east to the western horizon smooth and glassy, to the horizon line.

At last a little cat's-paw from the west ruffled the face and coming after it, growing and deepening, a ripple showed that there was wind behind. The mate swelled out and there came beneath the bows the glow of water cut by the Dolphin's prow.

"All hands on deck!" cried Captain Knowlton. "Aft the sheets. Head her southwest by south, Abel."

The schooner rounded up into the breeze and the calmed pirates saw their prize drawing off with gathering headway. Would the Piroqua leave her chase of the Dolphin to pursue her when the wind came? This was soon revealed. With his spyglass Captain Knowlton could see commotion on her decks, and as the breeze reached the pirate and gave her steerage way, she headed close-hauled toward the escaping schooner. But the Dolphin had first pull of the freshening wind, and drew farther and farther away from her pursuer.

The merchant schooner had gained a fine start, but when the wind became steady the Piroqua, hanging on the quarter, held her own and began to creep closer, and a change or failing of the wind might again throw the schooner into her cruel enemy's clutches.

As the pirate, crawling up into the wind, drew nearer, a sail far ahead gradually lifting into view revealed a great spread of canvas, a Union Jack flying from the peak and the black and white portholes of a British man-of-war. The pirate quickly recognized the character of the coming vessel and wanted no closer acquaintance. Tacking, she spread her sails free and went off like a hawk abeam of the wind and was soon hull down in the distance.

At Captain Knowlton's signal of distress there came to him from his majesty's cruiser Terror a boat manned by a dozen bluejackets in command of a lieutenant.

The situation was quickly explained, the hatch was opened, and the pirates, at the sight of the man-of-war's flag, surrendered without a struggle.

Justice in those days was swift for freebooters at sea, and before the Dolphin left St. Thomas the captured pirates lay under sentence in prison, awaiting the day of their execution.

The Rev. G. G. Rupert, aged sixty-five, a minister of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Oklahoma City, had had his vision restored after twenty-eight years of blindness. In 1884, while conducting service at Birmingham, O., Rupert suddenly became blind. Oculists pronounced his affliction incurable. Rupert came to Oklahoma, where his wife died, leaving him with three small daughters, who have grown to womanhood and two married. Rupert himself married again, and until three weeks ago had not seen his second wife. November 4, his little grandson fully flipped a piece of tin foil from a rubber band, which struck Rupert on one of his eyeballs. Warm applications were applied to draw the pain and when removed the afflicted man realized his eyesight had partially returned and it continued to improve until to-day he can read primer type.

## NEWS OF THE DAY

A private bank which advertised to pay 100 per cent. interest a year "on all deposits from one cent to \$15,000,-\$20,000," was closed in Chicago, December 21, with the arrest of F. B. Carson, its promotor, on a charge of using the mails to defraud. Circulars were sent to principals of schools throughout the country asking for deposits, and Carson is said to have obtained many thousands of dollars.

Heavy outer garments and a suspender button in the path of a bullet protected Joseph M. Dey, a farmer, from death at Flanders, N. J., December 21, when he was shot from behind as he drove from the Du Pont powder mill to Succasunna, where he lived. The bullet went through a heavy fur coat he wore and drove the suspender button into the small of his back, inflicting only a superficial wound. Dey's assailant fled when he found his shot had not taken effect. Dey told the authorities he thought the man was negro. Robbery was supposed to have been the motive for the attack.

Farmers brought into Kingfisher, Okla., recently four golden eagles of a flock of seven that have their eyries in the Gyp hills, thirty-five miles northwest of this place. The eagles had carried off so much small stock that the farmers finally organized to exterminate them. Four of the birds were captured and one was killed. They carried away lambs and pigs, and it is now believed the eagles, instead of gypsies, carried away an infant child from that community several months ago. One of the captured eagles weighs sixteen pounds and has a sweep of wings of nearly eight feet.

An exciting battle between a Bengal tiger and an African lion took place in the municipal menagerie of Birmenbergh, December 21. The lion and tiger occupied cages and were separated by strong though widely spaced iron bars. "Othello," the lion, spied a watering-trough in the tiger's cage, close to the bars. The big beast succeeded in passing its head through the bars, right above the trough, but at that moment the tiger sprang upon him and seized his terrible claws in the lion's head. The lion could not extricate himself and was held down in the water by the other animal until he was dead.

Paul Smith and his sons, Paul, Jr., and Phelps Smith, owned and operated the Paul Smith Hotel Company, the summer resort plant at Franklin Falls, nine miles from Paul Smith's, and the railway which connects the hotel property with the New York Central, six miles away. From his humble beginnings Paul Smith developed his business of attracting pleasure seekers to the woods until he had acquired more than 30,000 acres of land, within the confines of which were ten lakes, and had become a capitalist. Several of the millionaires who have elaborate "lodges" and mansions in the Adirondacks bought their land from the hard but kindly Vermonter.

Robert Taft, son of the President, is one of nearly one hundred students of Harvard who have been robbed by a supposed "Raffles" for whom diligent search is being made by private detectives. Nearly every room in Craigie Hall, the dormitory in which Robert Taft lives, has been ransacked in the last two months. The thief evidently had false keys, and it is thought he entered the rooms while occupants were at their classes. Believing the thief was some person enrolled as a student, the university authorities sought to keep the robberies secret, but students failed to keep the secret after detectives had been put at work. It is said the President's son lost scarf pins, cuff links and clothing valued at \$250. Among other victims were W. C. Striebling, of St. Louis, and Paul M. Hollister, of Grand Rapids. Altogether the losses of the students are said to aggregate \$10,000.

On September 13, 1911, there was picked up on the beach at Cullivoe, Papastour, in the north of Scotland, a life buoy, battered and stained, bearing the inscription, "Passed by J. Guthrie, San Francisco, California, June 1, 1905." The vessel Stanley Dollar was wrecked off the west coast of Japan in August, 1905, and the buoy, whose history is bound up with that of the ship, must have been floating in the ocean currents for six years until it landed in Scotland. Whether it went around the Horn or through the Northwest Passage or down by Australasia and around the Cape of Good Hope into the Atlantic will, of course, always remain a matter of doubt and conjecture. This buoy is said to hold the "world's record" for drifting the longest distance. It was six years on the way from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, and must have been washed into many a strange port before it was picked up on the Scotch island.

The death of Princess Agnes Salm-Salm at Karlsruhe, Germany, December 21, brought to an end a most romantic career. She was the daughter of an American colonial named Leclercq, and was born in Baltimore, Md., on Christmas Day, 1840. In her youth she gained some renown as an actress, and then she married Prince Felix Salm-Salm, in 1862. The prince was a soldier of fortune. He served first in the German and then in the Austrian army, on leaving which he went to the United States and joined the Union Army, during the Civil War, rising to the rank of brigadier general. After the conclusion of the war he went to Mexico and became aide de camp to the Emperor, Maximilian, but went back to Germany and joined the Prussian army on the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, in 1870. He was killed at the battle of Gravelotte. The Princess accompanied her husband through all his campaigns, and in the Franco-Prussian War served as a hospital nurse and was decorated with the Iron Cross for bravery. After the war she married Charles Hencage, in 1876.

## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### THE UNION PACIFIC TO INSTALL WIRELESS.

The Union Pacific Railway made application recently to the Department of Commerce and Labor at Washington for a license to operate and maintain a wireless telegraph system along its lines. The company asks permission to install a technical experiment station, which, it is stated, will be the second of the kind in the country. Several wireless stations, it is announced, will be constructed when the license is issued.

### LONG DRIFT FOR A BOTTLE.

A bottle containing a message purporting to have been cast overboard in mid-Atlantic by a passenger on the Hamburg liner *Rugia* twenty-three years ago was picked up a few days ago near the mouth of Quilla Yute River, thirty miles south of Cape Flattery, by G. B. Hobucket of Mora, Wash. The note, which was yellow with age, said: "Tossed overboard on the Hamburg-American line steamship *Rugia* on the sixteenth of October on the way from Hamburg to New York. Whoever picks this up please report to the nearest newspaper and oblige the writer. October 15, 10 A. M., 1899." The note was unsigned. Mr. Hobucket sent the message to a Seattle newspaper.

### A QUEER WITNESS.

Detectives in Denver began a vigil the other night around the cloth draped cage of a parrot, in the hope that the bird would testify as the sole witness to the supposed murder and suicide of Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Johnson, whose bodies were found in a hotel room on December 10. The bird was found walking restlessly along the footboard of the bed, muttering to the bodies. It had belonged to the Johnsons for years. The police, believing there was a quarrel before the tragedy, called in an aviculturist to cross-examine the parrot. The bird refused to answer, and as a final resort it was suggested that the cage be covered and watched, as the bird might then croon some sharp ejaculations and exclamations that would have impressed it had a quarrel occurred before the tragedy.

### A VICIOUS HORSE.

When Meyer Freedman, a farmer and tobacco raiser, entered the stall of one of his horses at Rockville, Conn., December 19, the animal attacked him with teeth and hoofs. Freedman was barely able to cry out for help before he became unconscious from his wounds. Jacob Cor, a neighbor, heard Freedman's shrieks and attempted to overpower the horse. Breaking loose from its halter, the animal left Freedman and turned on Cor, who fought for his life in a corner of the barn. Cor finally contrived to get a slip noose about the horse's neck, and after he made the animal fast, summoned aid to take Freedman to St. Francis' Hospital, in Hartford. Cor's skull was fractured and one of his shoulders broken. It was said in reports from the hospital that Cor, though terribly injured, would probably recover, but no hope was held out for Freedman.

### FROM TUNIS TO SICILY BY AEROPLANE.

Roland G. Garros, the French aviator, made a splendid flight December 18 over the Mediterranean Sea from Tunis, Africa, to Sicily. He landed near Trapani, having covered a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles over water. This establishes an oversea record surpassing that of Lieutenant Bague, who, on March 5, 1911, flew over the Mediterranean from Antibes, France, to the island of Gorgona, off the Italian coast, a distance of 100 miles. In making the landing the gasoline tank of Garros' aeroplane was damaged. Garros sent for his mechanic, who arrived from Tunis to repair the tank. The aviator then continued his flight to Naples and Rome. Garros recently established an altitude record of 14,000 feet at Tunis. Describing his flight, Garros said: "As soon as I left Tunis I caught sight of the French torpedo boats from Bizerta. They were cruising at equal distances across my path. That it was impossible for me to lose my way on the trip was agreeable. Although somewhat fatigued I was obliged to rise to a great height to avoid the air currents, and I was glad when I sighted the coast of Sicily. I found that all the population of Marsala (a little to the south of Trapani) had come out to welcome me. The boats dotted the roadstead and furnished a picturesque spectacle. The occupants cheered and waved to me as I flashed past overhead. I landed a little inshore and continued here."

### TO AID AMERICAN FARMERS.

The International Institute of Agriculture, which has been in existence seven years in Rome, Italy, is now thoroughly organized and in working order, and is constantly demonstrating its usefulness to the world in general and America in particular.

The institute has collected and collated an immense quantity of facts and statistics in regard to the important question of the adaptability of the European co-operative credit systems to meet the needs of the American farmer, and the subject is arousing widespread interest throughout America since President Taft's message.

The co-operative rural banks in Italy have been a mighty agency for good and have contributed in no small measure to the present prosperity of the country. A committee has been formed here, having as its members many pioneers of the movement in Italy. Prof. Luigi Lazzatti, Commandatore Wellenberg, and other experts, who are already ranging a program which will give the greatest amount of information of interest to the commission of farmers and others interested in agriculture, who will leave New York next April to study the different European systems of co-operative rural credit.

When it is realized that the average interest paid by American farmers is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. as against  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in Germany and Italy, it is evidently desirable, through co-operation, that the same advantages be obtained in America.



**ELECTRIC PUSH BUTTON.**—The base is made of maple, and the center piece 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 edge of the vest pocket. Expose to view your New Electric Bell, when your friend will expect to hear it ring. As he touches it, you will see some of the wildest 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.

**MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.**

Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 ins. Price, 25c., postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

**THE GERMAN OCARINO.**

A handsome metal instrument, made in Germany, from which peculiar but sweet music can be produced. Its odd shape, which resembles a torpedo boat, will attract much attention. We send instructions with each instrument, by the aid of which anyone can in a few minutes play any tune and produce very realistic music on this odd-looking instrument. Price, 10c., by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

**THE GREAT FIRE EATER.**

A great Sensational Trick of the Day! Will the Fire Eater in his possession any person can become a perfect salamander, apparently breathing fire and ejecting thousands of brilliant sparks from his mouth, to the horror and consternation of all beholders. Harmless fun for all times, seasons and places. If you wish to produce a decided sensation in your neighborhood don't fail to procure one. We send the Fire Eater with all the materials, in a handsome box, the cover of which is highly ornamented with illustrations in various colors. Price of all complete only 15c., or 4 for 50c., mailed postpaid; one dozen by express \$1.20.

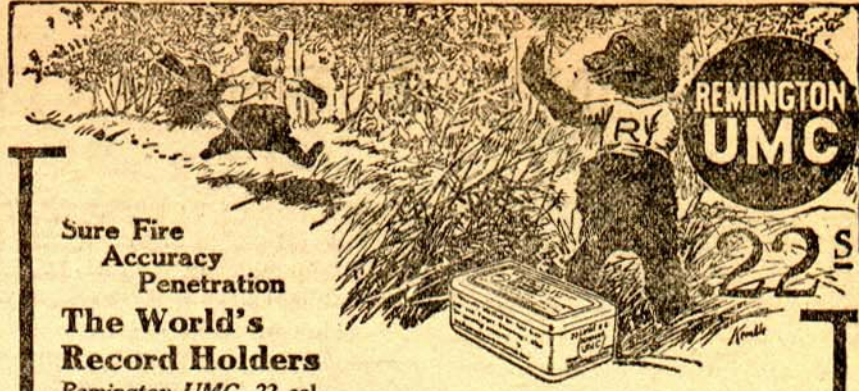
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

**ITCH POWDER.**

Geo 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 grimace. 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 are 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.

**SNAKES IN THE GRASS.**

Something entirely new, consisting of six large cones, each one nearly one inch in height. Upon lighting one of these cones with a match, you see something similar to the 4th of July exhibition fireworks. Sparks fly in every direction and as the cone burns down it throws out a great quantity of sparks, at the same time a large snake crawls himself from the burning cone and stretches out in the grass, which at once turns to ashes but the snake remains as completely unharmed. They are not at all poisonous and can be set off in the parlor or on some metal surface that will not burn. An ordinary dust pan answers the purpose. Price of the six cones, packed in a strong wooden box, only 10c., or 1 dozen boxes 75c., sent by mail, postpaid. W. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.



**Sure Fire Accuracy Penetration**

**The World's Record Holders**

Remington-UMC .22 cal. cartridges have broken two records in two years.

The Remington-UMC cabs make a fias

The present world's 100-shot gallery record, 2484 ex 2500, held by Arthur Hubalek was made with these hard hitting .22's.

They will help you, too, to break your best shooting records. Remington-UMC .22's are made, too, with hollow point bullets. This increases their shocking and killing power.

Remington-UMC—the perfect shooting combination

REMINGTON ARMS-UNION METALLIC CARTRIDGE CO. 299 Broadway, New York City



**THE SPRINGER.**

Don't miss this brand new novelty. It is a little figure made in various shapes, perched on a spring and pedestal. You push down the spring, set it where you please, and in a few moments it leaps up into the air, scaring the cat, and sending every one in the room into convulsions of laughter.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

**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 handsomest cards issued. Price 15c. for 25 cards by mail. 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 flue 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.

**RAPID CIGARETTE MAKER.**

This little article should be in the pocket of every smoker. With it a perfect cigarette can be made in ten seconds. You will find them equal in appearance and far superior in quality to commercial ones, at less than a quarter of the cost. With our cigarette maker in your possession, you can smoke a pipe or cigarette at pleasure, as it's just as easy to roll a cigarette as to fill a pipe. Every part of the cigarette maker is handsomely nickel-plated. Price, 15c., or 3 for 40c. by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

75 COMPLETE STORIES, by Popular Authors, for 10c. CHAS. UNGER, Dept. 9, 316 Union St., Jersey City, N. J.

**"RANGER" BICYCLES**  
Have imported roller chains, sprockets and pedals; New Departure Coaster-Brakes and Hubs; Pneumatic Proof Tires; Highest grade equipment and many advanced features possessed by no other wheels. Guaranteed 5 yrs. direct to you. **FACTORY PRICES** are less than others ask for cheap wheels. Other reliable models from \$12 up. A few good second-hand machines \$3 to \$8. **10 DAYS' FREE TRIAL** on a new bicycle. **TIRES** Coaster Brake Rear Wheels, lamps, parts, and sundries **half usual price.** Rider Agents everywhere are coinng money selling our bicycles, tires and sundries. Write today. **MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. 1188, CHICAGO**

**STAGE MONEY.**—This money is the same as used on the stage of different theaters; one side is GREEN, the other YELLOW, and at a little distance looks like U. S. greenbacks or gold certificates. In packages of 20 bills, each 10c. a package, or 5 packages for 40c. postpaid. Address CHAS. UNGER, Dept. 9, 316 Union St., Jersey City, N. J.

**LOTS OF FUN FOR A DIME**

**Ventriloquist Double Throat**  
Fits roof of mouth; always invisible; greatest thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary, and imitate birds and beasts of the field and forest. Loads of fun. Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Price: only 10 cents; 4 for 25 cents, or 12 for 50 cents. Double Throat Co. Dept. K Franchtown, N. J.

**PROF. REGNUS' TRICK AGE CARDS.** Tell the age of any person without asking them; in colors, with full directions, 14c. by mail, post-paid. Address CHAS. UNGER, Dept. 9, 316 Union Street, Jersey City, N. J.

**8-OLD COINS WANTED—8**  
\$7.75 Paid for RARE date 1833 Quarters and 5c without arrows. CASH premiums paid on hundreds of old coins. Keep all money dated before 1896 and send T. R. N. cents at once for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. 6c. Postpaid and make money easy. C. F. CLARKE & CO., Coin Dealers, Box 21, Le Roy, N. Y.

**MYSTERY, MAGIC AND FUN.**  
250 Jokes and Riddles, 75 Toasts, 67 Parlor Tricks, 8 Fortune Telling Secrets, 32 Money Making Secrets, 22 Funny Headings. All 10c. Postpaid. CHAS. UNGER, 316 Union Street, Dept. 9 Jersey City, N. J.

**TEN BOOKS FOR 10 CENTS**  
1—Big Joke Book, 2—Book on Magic, 3—Book on Toy Making, 4—Book on Courtship, 5—Base Ball Book, 6—Dream Book & Fortune Teller, 7—Book Letter Writer, 8—Cook Book, 9—Home Entertainer, 10—White Slave Story Book. All the above by mail for 10 cents. Address B. E. KING CO., Andover, Ohio

**IMITATION GOLD TEETH.**



Gold plated teeth, shape made so that it will fit any tooth. Price, 5c., postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**MICROSCOPE.**



By use of this wonderful little microscope you can magnify a drop of stagnant water until you see dozens of crawling insects; is also useful for inspecting grain, pork, linen, and numerous other articles. This little instrument does equally as good work as the best microscopes and is invaluable to the household. Is made of best finished brass; size when closed 1x2 1/4 inches. Price, 30c.

**L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.**

**GET A LOCUST.**



Clicks like a telegraph sounder. The best rooster made, for Baseball Games, Meetings, and Sporting Events. Just the thing to make a big noise. So small you can carry it in your vest pocket, but it is as good as a brass band, made of lacquered metal, and stamped to look exactly like a locust. It is as ornamental as it is useful. Suitable for young and old. Price, 12c. each, by mail.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

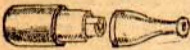
**THE JOKER'S CIGAR.**



The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction, to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; 1 dozen, 90c., mailed, postpaid.

**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**THE CAMERA CIGAR HOLDER.**



A beautiful etched cigar holder that takes pictures. Every smoker who loves fun will want one to entertain his friends. We furnish with each holder material, all prepared, for making six different photographs, and guarantee every paper to produce a completely finished photograph if directions are followed. Directions—Take holder apart at the joints, roll up one of the small blank papers (six furnished with each holder) and insert it in the holder. Put the holder together and smoke a cigar for one minute. A beautiful finished photograph will appear on the paper, which can be taken out and preserved for years. Price of holder, with six blank pictures, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid; extra blanks, 5c. per dozen.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

**KANGAROO PADLOCK.**



A handsome padlock stamped out of polished steel. It locks itself when the hasp is pressed down into the lock, but the puzzle is to unlock it. You can instantly unlock it with the key, but no one not in the secret can unlock it. You can slip the hasp through a friend's buttonhole and force him to wear it until you release it, although he may have the key to the lock; or a boy and girl can be locked together by slipping the hasp through a buttonhole of their clothing. Many other innocent and amusing jokes can be perpetrated with it upon your friends and acquaintances. It is not only a strong, useful padlock, but one of the best puzzles ever invented. Full printed instructions sent with each lock. They are a bonanza for agents, as they can be readily sold for 25 cents each. Our price, 15c.; 2 for 25c.; one dozen, \$1.20, sent by mail, postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**FALSE NOSES.**



Change your face! Have a barrel of fun! They are life-like reproductions of funny noses, made of shaped cloth, waxed, and colored. When placed over your nose, they remain on securely, and only a close inspection reveals their false character. All shapes, such as pugs, hooks, short-horn lemons, and rum blossoms. Better than a false face. Can be carried in the vest pocket.  
 Price, by mail, 16c. each.

**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

**SURPRISE KINEMATOGRAPH.**



The greatest hit of the season! It consists of a small metal, nicked tube, with a lens eye view, which shows a pretty ballet girl in tights. Hand it to a friend, who will be delighted with the first picture; tell him to turn the screw in center of instrument to change the views, when a stream of water squirts into his face, much to his disgust. Anyone who has not seen this kinematograph in operation is sure to be caught every time. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, ready for the next customer. Price 25c. by mail, postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**CHINESE RING PUZZLE.**



Here is a genuine "corker." The object is to remove the handle from the rings. Made of polished brass and each one in a box. Less than five minutes without bending the rings or bar, when you know how to do the trick. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

**DEVILINE'S WHISTLE.**



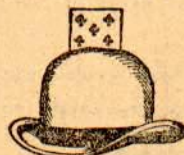
Nickel plated and polished; it produces a near-piercing sound; large seller; illustration actual size. Price, 12c. by mail.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**HAPPY HOOLIGAN JOKER.**



With this joker in the lapel of your coat, you can make a dead shot every time. Complete with rubber ball and tubing. Price, 15c. by mail, postpaid.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

**CARD THROUGH THE HAT TRICK**



With this trick you barrow a hat, and apparently shove a card up through the crown, without injuring the card or hat. The operation can be reversed, the performer seemingly pushing the card down through the crown into the hat again. It is a trick which will puzzle and interest the closest observer and detection is almost impossible. It is so simple that a child can learn how to perform it in a few minutes.  
 Price 10 cents each, by mail, post-paid  
**M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.**

**GOOD LUCK BANKS.**



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nicked 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.**

**LAUGHING CAMERA.**



Everybody grotesquely photographed; stout people look thin, and vice versa.  
 Price, 25c. postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**THE HELLO PUZZLE**



Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to discover the trick, unless you know how it is done. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.  
**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

**FALSE MUSTACHE AND BEARD.**



This is a novelty whereby you can make a great number of changes; in fact, you can so disguise yourself that your best friend won't know you. This mustache and beard are so made that you can fix the same to your face and they will stay on. They are a very valuable acquisition to your make-up when you mask or when you take part in some amateur theatrical.  
 Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. a set; 3 for 25c.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER**



The greatest fun-chem all. A small amount of this powder, when in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze who anyone knowing who comes from. It is very light, will float in air for some time, and penetrate every corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles and bottle contains enough to be used from 15 times. Price, by mail, 16c. each; 3 for 45c.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**TRICK PUZZLE PURSE.**



The first attempt usually to open it, is to press down little knob in the center of purse, which causes them to shut out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. Can open it before their eyes and still will be unable to open it.  
 Price, 25c. each by mail, postpaid.  
**H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

**SURPRISE LETTER**



Stung! That was you! The joke? Yes, your friend a letter. He opens and that releases the paper begins to bang thump furiously, with a ping, tearing sound, anticipated to make a man with iron nerves most jump out of his skin. You can see the sharpest wisenheimer with this one miss getting a few.  
 Price, 6c. each by mail, postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**THE SURPRISE BOUQUET.**



The best practical bouquet of the season. This buttonhole bouquet is made of artificial flowers and which so closely resemble natural flowers that no person in a thousand can detect the difference. Placing the bouquet in buttonhole you call the attention of all to its beauty and fragrance. He will naturally step forward and smell it, to his utter astonishment, a fine stream of water will be thrown into his face. The water comes from is a mystery, as you have your hands at your side or behind and not touch the bouquet in any way. You can give one dozen or more persons a shower bath without removing the bouquet from your buttonhole, and after the water exhausted it can be immediately refilled out removing it from your coat. Colored be used in place of water when desired. We have many funny things in our stock, nothing that excels this. Price, complete a beautiful box, with full printed instructions, 25c., or 3 for 40c. by mail, postpaid.  
**C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

**MANY TOOL KEY RING.**



The wonder of the age. The best small tool in the world. This little instrument you have in operation seven useful tools: embrauser, Ring, Pencil Sharpener, Nail Clipper and Cleaner, Watch Opener, Driver, Letter Opener and more. It is not a toy, but a useful article, made of cutlery steel, hardened and highly nicked. They will carry an edge the same as a piece of cutlery. As a useful tool, we have ever been offered to the public to equal. Price, 15c., mailed, postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

**ROUGH AND READY TUMBLER.**



These lively tumblers are handsomely decorated with the flag and with gold silver stars and stripes. Upon placing them on any flat surface and tilting it they begin a most wonderful performance, dis and tumbling over each other and in each other in every direction, as if the spirit was after them, causing roars of laughter from the spectators. They actually appear imbued with life. What causes them to do up such antics is a secret that may be known even to the owner of the subjects. If you want some genuine fun for a set of our tumblers.  
 Price per set, 10c. mailed, postpaid.  
**A. A. WARFORD, 16 Har' St., Brooklyn, N. Y.**

**THE BUCULO CIGAR.**



The most remarkable trick-cigar in the world. It smokes without tobacco, and gets smaller. Anyone can have a great fun with it, especially if you smoke in the presence of a person who dislikes the taste of tobacco. It looks exactly like a real cigar, and the smoke is so real that you are bound to deceive the closest observer.  
 Price, 12c. each, by mail, postpaid.  
**WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**