

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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YOUNG WILD WEST'S TRIPLE CLAIM;

DR. SIMPLE SAM, THE "SUNDOWNER"

*By AN OLD SCOUT
AND THESE STORIES*



"I can't help it, Mr. West," said Simple Sam. "You've got to sign the paper. If you don't they'll kill you! I'm a sundowner, an' don't you forget it!" Wild could tell by their faces that the villains meant business.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

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Young Wild West's Triple Claim

—OR—

SIMPLE SAM, THE "SUNDOWNER"

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

YOUNG WILD WEST STOPS SOME "FUN."

Riding along over a rough mountain trail in the southern part of the famous gold-bearing region known as the Black Hills one morning in summer a few years ago was a man who would surely have been taken for what might be termed "a half-fool."

The expression of his homely, wrinkled visage was as dull as the outside of a squash, while the look in his gray eyes was utterly meaningless.

His long, thin hair hung down in a tangled mass and his sharp nose, that was inclined to turn up, made him appear ridiculous when a person came to take a good look at him. He was attired in a ragged costume such as is worn by miners, and looked as though he had roughed it considerably.

The horse this queer-looking personage was astride of was a much finer-looking steed than the rider was a man.

Presently the lone horseman came to a halt, and as he looked around him his eyes lighted up and a broad grin came over his face.

If he could have been seen just then it would certainly have been noticed that the dullness had vanished from his visage and an expression of craftiness was there, with just enough of that which was simple and comical to make a person smile and soon forget the craftiness.

"This are what I call mighty funny!" exclaimed the simple-looking fellow. "If I wasn't right in this same place about an hour ago my name ain't Simple Sam, an' I ain't a Sundowner!"

Then he laughed, just as though it was a great joke, when the fact was that he had become lost on the mountain and had not swallowed a morsel of food since noon the day before.

But it seems that people of his calibre can be in an excellent humor when others are sad.

Simple Sam, as he called himself, laughed long and loud. But suddenly the laughter ceased and the dull look came back.

The sounds made by a swiftly approaching horse had suddenly come to his ears.

The simpleton's face gradually took on an expression of expectancy, while just the vestige of a gleam of fright shone from his eyes.

Two seconds later a horseman rounded a sharp curve in the trail and halted within a few feet of him.

"The word 'Sundowner' in some part of the West means one who can 'down' the sun, like a modern Joshua. In other words, it signifies a 'terrace.'—Ed.

"Hello!" called out the newcomer, in surprise. "What's this I see? Come on, boys! A lunatic asylum has busted somewhere, an' one of their inmates has drifted to their Black Hill!"

Then four other horsemen rounded the curve and came to a halt near the speaker.

They were all a rather rough-looking lot.

They might have been anything from cow-punchers to mine-owners, from their general appearance, since they were attired after the style of the rough-and-ready riders of the West, and were armed with six-shooters and bowie knives. Simple Sam began to grit when he saw how astonished the men were at meeting him.

"Boy!" he said, innocently, "do you folks know where I am?"

"Don't you know where you are?" retorted the leader of the five.

"No, mister, I've lost, I reckon. I'm Simple Sam, the Sundowner, but I ain't no fool."

"You ain't, hey? Well, your looks is mighty decevin', then. Where do yer want to go?"

"I don't know."

"No, I'm lookin' fur work. I'd like to git a job some place where the grub is good an' the bed is soft. I don't care so much about their wages. I've worked in silver mines in Montana, an' I knows all about their work. I'm a Sundowner, I am!"

The five men laughed at this, and then the foolish-looking fellow joined in, showing that laughing was catching with him.

"What's your name?" asked the leader of the horsemen.

"Simple Sam is all their name I've got. I've had it ever bet I kin remember, an' I reckon it's good enough fur me. I'm a Sundowner, I am!"

"Do you know how to dance?" and the dark eyes of the man twinkled.

"No, not much."

"Well, git down off that nag an' I'll show you how."

"But I don't want to dance, stranger."

"That makes no difference; we want you to, don't we, boys?"

"Yes!" came the reply from his four companions.

"Well, if I can't dance, I can't!"

"But you can."

"No, I can't," and Simple Sam shook his head decisively.

"Git down off that horse!"

The leader of the five jerked out a revolver and leveled it at the simpleton.

Then it was that a look of terror shone from the gray eyes of Simple Sam, and his jaw dropped until it seemed in danger of falling upon his breast.

"Hurry up!" commanded the rough-looking man. "I mean business!"

"You ain't got!" to shoot me, are you?" came from the Sandowner's lips in trembling tones.

"If you don't do just as I tell you to I will!"

"Then I'll try to dance, mister!"

Down on the horse he got, and without any further urging started in upon a sort of double-shuffle on the gravel-covered track!

The simpleton's tormentor fired a shot and the bullet hit the ground close to his feet.

A yell left the lips of the dancing man, and then he went at it harder than before.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

The five horsemen laughed so heartily that the welkin fairly rang.

"I thought you couldn't dance," spoke up the leader, as the five danced in a circle.

"I didn't know I could, mister!" was the gasping retort.

"A fellow learns something, every day, don't he?"

This caused another laugh, after which Simple Sam was told to stop.

He did so, evidently very glad that he got the chance.

"Now, said the man who had been doing all the talking, how much money have you got about you?"

"I ain't got a cent, mister!"

"You ain't got the man steped regularly in the air, as though he was trying to think why he did not have a cent."

"Just turn your pockets inside out, so we kin see that you're telling us the truth."

Simple Sam was about to obey the command when a foot-fall called the attention of all hands, and, turning, they beheld a handsome young fellow of perhaps twenty standing a few yards from them.

He was attired in a neat-fitting hunting-suit of buckskin and a perfect combed-over mane of chestnut hair which hung down over his shoulders.

Of medium height and with the form of a trained athlete, the boy made quite an imposing picture.

"I guess you fellows have some about far enough!"

It was not a loud cry that the words were uttered in, but they came out clear and distinct, and the flash that emanated from the dark eyes of the handsome young stranger told only too well that he meant what he said.

"Who in thunder are you?" exclaimed the leader of the horsemen, looking in surprise at the intruder.

"Wild West," answered the boy, "was the calm reply.

"Anything more you want to know?"

"Then the boy walked up boldly and took his place by the side of Simple Sam.

The five men stared at him in silence for a moment.

Then the leader began playing with his revolver.

"You'd better put that back in your belt, stranger!"

Young Wild West nodded meaningly as he spoke.

"I had, eh?"

"Yes."

"You had 'em!"

"You don't you might get shot."

"Why, you think it might go off in my hands and shoot you though!"

As the words left his lips the horseman found himself starting into the muzzle of a six-shooter, which the boy had drawn so quickly that he had scarcely seen the act.

"Simple Sam, how!"

Simple Sam burst into a loud laugh and his sides fairly shook.

"Oh, oh!" he cried, when he had recovered his breath. "That is what I call pretty good! How do you like that, mister? How, ha, ha, ha, the face of the boy who had said he was Young Wild West, but he never took his eyes from the five men on horseback.

One of them slid his hand toward his belt, but when the boy pulled another shooter from his belt he desisted.

"Gentlemen," Young Wild West said, "I don't know what sort of fellows you are—whether you are good, bad or indifferent—but I do think you ought to let this man alone.

"What are you intererin' for?" asked the leader. "It's none of your business."

"Oh, yes, it is! My business is to see to it that the in-

nocent and unfortunate are not imposed upon. That ought to be the business of every honest man. I'll admit that I am only a boy, but I have got a way about me that makes the general run of people believe I am a man sometimes."

"Well, I don't want any trouble with you. We was only havin' a little fun with the simpleton, that's all."

"But you went too far. You were going to make him turn his pocket inside out. Hildgeworn have a notion of doing that sometimes and I don't know whether you are much less of a good sport than he is."

"I take a notion to shoot something will drop!"

"An' if we take a notion to get mad for your intererin' with us you might get filled with lead!" was the hot rejoinder.

"Is that so? Just take a notion, then, will you? I am just in the humor to have that tried on me. Go ahead and shoot! I'll bet your boys' eyes told the men that he was as earnest as he could be."

They did not feel like shooting just then.

On the contrary, they were really cowed by his cool and easy way.

The leader charged his tackle again.

"I don't want an enemy of nobody," he said. "But I reckon you've gone a little too far in this game. It seems funny that fellows can't have a little fun without havin' some one come along an' get their drop on 'em afore they know it, an' then bully 'em. You'll meet your match yet, young feller."

"If we take a notion to get mad for your intererin' with us, that's all right. If that's the way you take it I'll just put 'em shooters in my belt. Now let's see you get the drop on 'em."

He suited the action to the words and folded his arms across the full, manly chest that showed off his athletic form to perfection.

The five men remained silent.

Not one of them attempted to draw a weapon.

Simple Sam had been as quiet as a mouse since his last burst of merriment, and he now broke out again.

"An' you is that feller that made me dance?" he cried.

"I'd know you was such cowards I'd have got off my nag an' slapped your faces for you!" Oh, but ain't I glad that boy ain't along!"

"I reckon we'll be goin'," said the leader, suddenly. "You said 'reckon' what I said," answered the boy.

"Well, you an' me will meet again some day, an' then maybe you won't have it all your own way."

"If we do meet you had better look out and behave yourself. I never allow a man to do too much fooling with me."

The five men turned and rode away without another word.

CHAPTER II.

SIMPLE SAM FILLS UP.

The recently gang had no sooner disappeared when Young Wild West gave a low whistle.

The simpleton's sorrel stallion came trotting from the bushes close by.

The steed came right up to the boy, and rubbed his nose on his shoulder.

Simple Sam gazed with astonishment.

"That's a circus horse, ain't it, mister?" he asked.

"No," was the reply. "He is not a circus horse. He is simply my sorrel stallion, Splitters, and a good one he is, too."

"He must be trained awful good!"

"Well, I have managed to make him understand a few things, would any you had, mister. What did you say your name was?"

"Young Wild West is my name."

"Good! My name is Simple Sam, an' I'm a Sandowner, but I ain't no feller!"

"Yep. Say, do you know what I like best to eat?"

"What?"

"Johnny-cakes an' stoved prairie chicken."

"Well, that isn't bad," said the boy, smiling at the apparent earnestness of the simple-minded fellow.

"I do, far a fact. I ain't had nothin' to eat since dinner 'time yesterday. But that's all right, I've been playin' a joke on myself fur their last hour or so."

"Playin' a joke on yourself?"

"Yes, I've been ridin' around in a circle an' fetched up where I was once before. You took the fork to the left hand an' understand that, then you took the fork to the left hand an' rode above here, and then you took the fork to the left hand an' rode below here, an' all that fetched up here again. So you think that is a joke on you, eh?"

"Do I? Well, I should reckon so!" and then he burst into a fit of laughter which was nothing if not genuine.

"You are a peculiar fellow, Simple Sam," said Young Wild West, after a pause.

"That's what everybody says," was the quick reply. "I'm pooty smart, though, an' I kin tell when anybody's makin' a fool of me."

"Well, you must be pretty smart if you can do that. Where are you bound, anyhow?"

"I don't know."

"That is rather queer, isn't it?"

"But I don't know, mister."

"Where did you come from, then?"

"From a silver mine out in Montana."

"And you don't know where you got to go?"

"I don't know. All I want is to get somewhere an' get a job. I ain't had no money, an' I'm hungry."

"Well, Simple Sam, I guess, I can fix you up with a job, an' a soft bed to sleep on."

"Things are boomin' a little in Weston, an' help is rather scarce. You come with me."

The vacant look vanished from the simpleton's eyes for a moment, and one of delight took its place.

"I know all about workin' in their mines under their ground, Mister West," he declared. "I may be a 'Sundowner,' but I ain't no fool."

Well, mount your horse and come on!"

Young Wild West vaulted lightly upon the back of the steed an' departed alone the trail.

"Why, you ain't right their name was 'them fellers went,'" Simple Sam said.

"I know it. They must have gone to Weston, too, unless they took the left fork fur you did."

"They might lay fur you."

The boy looked at the queer passenger and noted that there was just the least bit of a worried look in his eyes.

"It is what might be called a simpleton with just some caution to know what danger means," was the quick conclusion the boy came to when he summed up the man's characteristics.

It so happened that the mining town of Weston was not more than a few miles from the spot where the five men had found up the ammunition.

Though he was but a boy, Young Wild West was the leader citizen of the town, being named for him.

The mine had made a pile of money there at the start, but things had taken a turn for the bad, and the result was that he had found himself the possessor of a lot of hard but very little cash.

But he had been working his way up the last two or three months, and was now in a fair way to become wealthy again.

His latest venture was the purchase of a piece of property near the town, and he had named it the Triple Claim, since it really consisted of three claims.

In partnership with him on this claim were Cheyenne Charlie, an ex-government scout, and Jim Dart, a boy about his own age.

These two were not only partners in business with Young Wild West, but were his true friends and partners in every sense of the word.

They always accompanied him on all his travels throughout the wild West, and they were brave and well-versed, splendid riders and sure shots with rifle and revolver.

Young Wild West bore the title of the Champion Dead-End Prince of the West, and he had been given the name of the Prince of the Saddle, because no one had ever found who could equal his horsemanship and the taming of wild horses.

He was as strong as a young lion, too, and quick as a cat.

With his wonderful coolness and courage, it was no wonder

that he was looked upon by those who knew him as one boy out of a thousand.

The way he had handled the five men who had been in the act of robbing Simple Sam when he had arrived on the scene was quite convincing that he was capable of running things the way he wanted them to go.

But as he always stuck out for the right and had never been guilty of a mean act in his life, he had a record that few could ever hope to gain.

"Simple Sam," he said to his companion, as they rode along, "I guess you thought you was surely going to lose all the money you had, didn't you?"

"No, Soper," was his reply. "I didn't have any to lose. Ha, ha, Soper!"

"Then when you told them you didn't have a cent you stole the truth?"

"Yep! Oh, I'm a 'Sundowner' I am!" and again he laughed as though it was very funny.

When they had been riding along about five minutes, Wild West and started along the trail.

"That is the way you must have gone," he said.

"Simple Sam nodded and grinned.

"If you had kept on this way you would have been in Weston long before this."

But see there! I would have missed!" and the fellow laughed again.

"I was rather funny, wasn't I?"

"I was rather funny."

Our hero saw that there was little use in trying to talk sense with him, so he put his horse to a faster gait and kept still.

Simple Sam kept close behind him, and they soon came in sight of the mining town.

Wild did not stop until they reached the little building that bore a sign denoting it to be the postoffice, which was just about the center of the mining town.

It was here that the five men who had been in the act of robbing Simple Sam were waiting to see what he would do.

As Wild dismounted the two dashing-looking fellows stepped down from the room and came over to him.

One was a tall man of perhaps thirty, with long black hair and a mustache of the same hue, and the other was a rather handsome boy of twenty or thereabouts.

They were Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, Young Wild West's partners on the Triple Claim.

"Hello, Wild!" called out the scout. "Who have you got with you?"

"Simple Sam, the 'Sundowner,'" was the reply.

"Who did Sam find him, Wild?"

"Oh, about five miles out on the trail. I wanted to give Sacrifice a little exercise, so I took a ride further out than I intended to when I started. It was a good thing I did, for I happened along in time to save Simple Sam from being roughly handled by five rascally-looking fellows."

"Simple Sam was so I thought I could offer him a job."

"He looks as though he can work, providing he has some-boddy to show him what to do, spoke up Jim Dart.

"Says" exclaimed the Simpleton just then, starting at nothing particular and talking his own sense at the same time.

"Oh, said Wild, "I forgot. The poor fellow hasn't had a mouthful to eat since yesterday noon. Come, boys! we'll take him over to the Gaseno and give him a feed."

The Gaseno was a hotel kept by a man named Brown, and was a very decent sort of a place, since it was not run for the sole benefit of card sharps and rascally gamblers.

Cheyenne Charlie grinned when he saw the expectant look that suddenly came into the dull eyes of Simple Sam.

"He's hungry as a bear, too, so get him something to eat, boys."

"That's all right," was the quick rejoinder. "What you says always goes here."

Leaving the horses standing in front of the postoffice, they walked over to the hotel, which was but a few yards further up the street.

"Brown," said Young Wild West, as he entered and found a bald-headed man reaching a newspaper that looked as though it had been read several times, "Here's Simple Sam, the 'Sundowner'!"

"That's all right," was the quick rejoinder. "What you says always goes here."

It was not time for dinner yet, but the hotel proprietor did not stop on that; he simply went to the kitchen and told his wife to get something simple to feed a hungry man. A few minutes later Simple Sam was led to a place where he could wash up a bit, and when he had done this he was ushered to a table that was well laden with good, wholesome food.

Brown watched him eat for a while and then came out in the bathroom shaking his head.

"What's the matter, Brown?" Wild asked.

"Well, if I was to do me right mind, I'd have to change my eat more than any two men I ever seen."

"Well, he has been without any grub for nearly twenty-four hours, you know."

"That may be, too. But I'll bet he kin eat more than any two men any time, whether he's been without grub twenty-four hours or whether he's been without it for six. I know a grutton when I sees one. Simple Sam, as you calls him, is a grutton, Wild!"

"Well, he doesn't know a great deal of anything else, so it is good if he kin Brown, you how to eat a square meal. I'll pay you'll pay for just what you ordered, an' nothin' more," was the reply. "A meal is a meal in this here hotel. If that foolish grutton eats up everything there is in their house you'll pay just a dollar, an' no more. But if you bring him around again, look out! I'll put up their price to ten dollars for a meal!"

Young Wild West and his two partners laughed heartily at this.

Cheyenne Charlie suggested that they go into the dining-room and see what was making out, so Brown led the way.

"How are you making out, Sam?" Wild asked.

"Fine!" was the reply. "Mr. West, they sartinly know how to live here!"

"That's right," spoke up the landlord. "Just let yourself go. Give him all he kin eat, Jane."

Jane, who was his wife, nodded and smiled.

"I don't know where he puts it," she observed.

But Simple Sam only laughed. "But Simple Sam, when he laughs, as he stuffed a whole salve of spurs in his mouth and then went at a piece of dry bread, he'll eat things come to an end, and the customer's dinner was 't' finished; it and then got up and went outside."

"I'm a Sandowyer, ain't I, Mr. West?" he said, looking at the ceiling and grinning like an ape.

"Something like that, I guess," was the reply. "Well, now that you have had something to eat you can take it easy for a couple of hours, and then I will take you over to our mine and put you to work."

"That'll jest suit me, Mr. West!" declared the simperton. "Wild and his partners were going out when in came two young men who looked as though they had not been in the West very long."

They appeared to be very much disturbed over something which appeared they had just dismounted from were covered with fawn.

"We were held up and robbed by two masked men just about a mile outside of the town," said one, as he stepped up to the bar. "My name is Harry Larsen, and this is my friend, Texas McArdle. We haven't got a dollar to our names now, and would like to find something to do."

CHAPTER III

WILD MAKES TWO TENNESSEERS FEEL HAPPY.

Young Wild west looked at the two young men and quickly came to the conclusion that they were honest fellows who had been hit by a run of hard luck.

"You say you were held up by two masked men?" he said, stepping over to them.

"Yes," answered the one who had spoken. "They took us by surprise, so we did not attempt to put up a fight or get away. We didn't have very much, 'o, a rubbed of," spoke the other. "But it might have lasted on if we found something

to do in this town. We heard over in a place they call Spindlers that there was a chance in Weston for anyone who wanted to work, so we thought we would try it."

"And you got robbed before you got here? Well, that is pretty hard luck, I should say. Well, you needn't look any further for work, then, I happen to be in a position to give you something to do just now. It up."

"The eyes of the young men lit up.

"Thank you," they both cried.

"You are Young Wild West, I guess," ventured the one who was Young Wild West's partner Harry Larsen.

"You have got that just right."

"I know it by the description we had of you."

"Yes," and Wild smiled.

"We heard about you in Cheyenne," spoke up Texas McArdle.

"Is that so?"

"Yes, and your two partners, too. The two gentlemen with you must be Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart."

"Well, you have got that right, too."

"And you allow two fellows who have only been in the wild 'us you allow two partners to shake hands with you?"

"Certainly," Wild said.

Wild and his partners shook hands with them warmly, and the two young men were delighted.

"You say you have only been in this part of the country a month; how is it that one of you bears the name of Texas, then?"

"Oh, that is a nickname I have had ever since I was a small boy," replied McArdle. "I was always reading about Indians and cowboys, and when I was but twelve years old I gave it out to my playmates that when I got big enough I would be a cowboy, and I have been ever since."

Texas said I like the name so well that I go by it altogether."

"Well, Texas, I am glad you and your partner struck town in time to get a job with us. Brown, two more diners, please! Charge the bill to me."

"All right!" exclaimed the landlord.

The two tennesseers thanked our hero warmly.

"You will find us both ready and willing," they assured him.

"All right. You come over to the office of the Wild West Mining & Improvement Company in the bill of cost, and we can find it easy enough. You might have noticed the sign on the building when you came in town."

"We did!" Harry Larsen declared. "Thank you, Young Wild West, we will be there."

"And you come with them, Simple Sam," said Wild, turning to the "Sandowyer," who had squatted upon a stool and was picking his teeth in a meditative sort of way.

"All right, Mr. West; I'll come over with 'em. You kin bet I'll be on hand, 'cause I want work, so I kin get plenty to eat all a sort place to sleep when night comes. Oh, I'm a Sandowyer!"

He braced into a loud, foolish sort of a laugh, and then the "Wild" motioned for the "Sandowyer" to follow him.

"Wild, I reckon you'll be called 'Arfer when two masked men afore night, won't you?" looked out Brown, as our friends started to leave for the second time.

"Yes. Masked road agents are something new around Weston, and I guess we will have to see to it that they don't last very long."

"I thought so," and the landlord chuckled. "I kin jest imagine what their fellows that robbed you will git when Young Wild West hears on 'em."

Young Wild West motioned to the two tennesseers, as it was almost time for dinner. Brown did not take Texas and Larsen in until it was ready for all hands.

Then they had what they wanted.

It was about a quarter to one when they set out with Simple Sam for the office of the Wild West Mining & Improvement Company.

When they reached the building they found it was locked up.

At one time a rushing business had been done at the office, but for the past six months it had been closed, as the company had gone under.

Simple Sam examined the property, however, and he had opened up a sort of headquarters.

The three men who had been hired by Wild had not been here over a couple of minutes when they saw Cheyenne Charlie riding over.

Then they looked toward the neat little cottage that stood near the big building that had been the main office and saw Young Wild West and Jim Dart coming out.

"It was about two minutes to one when they got there. "You fellows were sure that you would be on time. I see," remarked Wild. "Well, there is nothing like being punctual."

"That's what I think," spoke up Simple Sam. "I always makes it a point to be in time for my meals."

"There was a laugh at this, and then our hero turned to him and said: "meal-time now, Sam, so just get that much of your mind."

"Yes, he, he," giggled the simpleton, "all right, Mr. West," Jim Dart unlocked the door of the office and then they all went inside.

There were plenty of chairs there, so the three seekers for work were invited to sit down.

"Now, then," said Young Wild West, "we will talk business. You all want work?"

"Yes, by any kind of work, so long as we can make an honest living," answered Texas McAlaid.

"Well, then," said Young Wild West, "Texas took the word that I had chosen in Harry Larsen. "Texas took the word that I had chosen in Harry Larsen. I kin work hard all day," nodded Simple Sam. "When I get done at night I want a good, solid bed to sleep on, an' I want three square meals a day." Harry, haw, haw!"

"Well, gentlemen, we have just begun work on a piece of property that we call the Triple Claim. The work of sinking a shaft has just begun, so we will take a run over there pretty soon and you can strike in. It won't take long to find out what particular branch of work you are best adapted to."

"I thank you," exclaimed the two venturers in a breath, while the Sandowner nodded his approval and laughed some more. "Before we go over," resumed Young Wild West, "I want to ask you two fellows about the holdup that occurred to you this morning. It was right out this way on the trail, you say?" and he jerked his thumb over toward the outskirts of the town.

"Yes! Not a great deal over half-a mile from here," was the reply.

"Well, it must have taken place somewhere in the neighborhood of the Triple Claim, then."

"I reckon so," nodded Cheyenne Charlie.

"Was there anything peculiar about the looks of the men, other than that they wore masks?" our hero went on.

"They were men of the average height and build. I should say, and there was nothing about their clothing that seemed any different from what miners usually wear," added Harry Larsen.

"How about their horses?"

"They had none with them at the time."

"Ah! they were on foot, eh?"

"Yes, they stepped from a clump of bushes as we rounded a slight bend in the trail and confronted us with leveled revolvers before we were hardly aware of it."

"Then they told you to give up what money and valuables you had, and then they held us as if we didn't hurry up and do it they would make us ready to be hanged!" said Larsen.

"And you gave us all you had?"

"Yes, we did not hesitate about it, either, you may be sure! A six-shooter in the hand of a masked man is apt to make a fellow hurry and do as he is told."

"Es, unless you are quick enough to pull your own shooter and drop him," answered our hero.

"Well, we will have to admit that we did not think we were hardly quick enough to do that," said Texas.

Cheyenne Charlie shrugged his shoulders, and with a grim smile remarked: "I could run across them two fellows! I'll bet they jestly corvies would think they had struck something!"

"As sure as you live they would," declared Jim Dart.

"I was just thinking," Wild said a moment later, "that

their men belong to the same gang that was going to rob simple Sam when I happened along this morning."

The simpleton looked up at this remark.

"Wasn't it fun when you made 'em do as you wanted 'em to?" he exclaimed, and then he laughed in his idiotic way.

"Were there two of them," asked Texas.

"No, but five."

"And they were masked?"

"No. They looked to be miners, or perhaps prospectors, if they were really anything else than ruffians. I took them for the latter, anyway, and I made them light out."

After a little further talk over the matter they arose to leave the office and go to the Triple Claim.

But just then two Chinamen came in.

They were Hop Wah and Wing Wah, two brothers, who were employed as cook and man-of-all-work by Young Wild West.

The Celestials seemed interested when they looked at the three seekers for work, and they were bound to attract the attention of anybody, and the Chinamen were pretty close observers.

The "Sandowner" took an interest in them, too.

He grinned and they did likewise.

"Mexican man must have sleeper in um moonlight," said Hop, "he was the most talkative of the two."

"He velly nice Mexican man," his brother vouchsafed.

Harry, haw, haw!" laughed Simple Sam.

"Hi, hi, hi!" giggled the three simpletons.

"I'll be glad to make all hands stop and see what Hop was more than shrewd."

Besides being an inveterate gambler and up to all tricks of the trade, he could read the character of a man pretty well.

"Mexican man gittee hit with um bar of soap?" he said to Wing.

"He been much, allee soap eat!"

"The "Sandowner," and then he

replied to the floor in a fit of mirth.

"You yaller gelotte had better let that feller 'alone," said the scout, grinning.

"It's a bad man when he's 'alone," said

the other, grinning when he said it, so that simply encour-

aged Hop Wah to roar.

He went up close to Simple Sam and then called out:

"Where Mexican man washroom?"

and then, by the way, the "Sandowner" had finished him with the guess and was pulling his around the room as though he had been a peebling bull-dog!

"How! I like him, ho!"

"How! I like him, ho!" yelled the Chinaman. "Ma no like him, ho!"

This was the funniest part of it all, and our friends just stood still and laughed.

Wing Wah rushed to the assistance of his brother, however, and by good luck managed to trip the simpleton, and send him sprawling on the floor.

Then they both fell upon him and began pounding him with their clenched fists.

Wild saw that and had gone a little too far now, so he promptly called a halt.

"You two almost-eyed, respale go ahead with your work of cleaning up the office," said Wild, turning to the Chinamen.

"Now, boys, we'll go over to the Triple Claim."

Our hero and Dart soon got their horses, and then all hands mounted and started down the trail.

The Triple Claim was one of the furthest ones out of the hill-country, and it was a pretty wild spot where it was located.

If one could have been dropped there all of a sudden, he would never have believed that he was anywhere within a hundred miles of civilization.

They were within a hundred yards of the place when Texas McAlaid exclaimed:

"Here's the exact place where the two masked men held

up, Mr. West!"

"The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the five men, who had been turned by Wild that morning came riding

around the bend.

CHAPTER IV.

A BROUZE ARRIVES.

A smile lit up this face of Young Wild West when he saw the crowd assembled about the leader had said they would meet again some day, and then hinted that something might happen.

"Well, we meet again, I see," our hero coolly remarked. "What's their use of bish'rin' up old sores?" retorted the man. "We ain't lookin' fur trouble."

"I am glad that you are not, then. It is much better to behave, I should think. By the way, have you seen anything of two passengers from here?"

"No, I haven't," didn't know you had such fellows as them kind around here."

"Well, two fellows with masks on their faces held us up and robbed us a little before noon," spoke up Harry Larsen. "Is that so?" and the five men all looked surprised, more or less.

Wild West realized that there was no use in bandying words with the men.

While he was of the opinion that they were within a stone's throw of the station, he was not sure that they were here as they behaved themselves he was not the one to bother.

The five rode on to Weston and our friends reached the place to turn to the Triple Claim, and did so.

Wild had employed as a foreman an old man called Dave-Eye Dave.

This man was really the first man who had ever pitched a camp on the ground that was now known as Weston—that is, to remain there as a resident.

Dave-Eye had employed a number of men working for him and the shaft being built and he had not been paid for some time. When Young Wild West rode up with his two partners and the three he had hired to work for him the old man gave a nod of approval.

"We're gittin' along pretty good, Wild," he said. "But I'm glad you've been here, you see."

"How deep are you now?" Wild asked.

"A little more'n thirty feet, I reckon. We're gittin' ready to start a gallery through now. First dirt we've been handling is a good one."

"That's good! Now then, here are five three men you want to work. Dave, you take them and find out where they will be the best advantage. This is Texas McArdie, and this other young fella is Harry Larsen. The other fellow is Simple Sam, the 'Sundance' man, who claims that he knows considerable about mining."

The simpleton laughed at this, and Dave Eye Dave looked at him in a way that told plainly that he was of the opinion that he did not amount to a great deal in any capacity.

"I suppose you all will be satisfied with the wages the foreman says you are worth?"

"Oh, yes," cried Texas and Larsen in a breath.

"All's I want is plenty of grub an' a soft place to sleep," said Simple Sam.

"Did yer ever try standin' on your head an' sleepin'?" queried Dave Eye, he took a chew of tobacco and looked at the "Sundowner" critically.

"No, I never did. Why, boss?"

"You hain't, only I was thinkin' that there was a pretty soft spot."

"Takin' a haw, haw!" and Simple Sam laughed so heartily that he fairly doubled up with mirth.

But it is hardly probable that he really knew what he was laughing at.

He saw the others smile at the old man's remark, so he took it for granted that he ought to laugh, and he did so for all he was worth.

But in less than an hour after Simple Sam started in to work for Dave Eye Dave found that he could do something better than work.

He really was an expert at the business of sinking a shaft. Young wild West and his partners reminded there wasn't well toback night.

Then they went back to Weston, well satisfied that the three new men they had hired were well up in their business and would suit.

After they had their supper they all went over to the Gaszoo.

Wild was much puzzled about the holding of the two young men, but he could not help thinking that the five men knew all about it.

Dave-Eye Dave had brought word from the Triple Claim that the three new hands were going to stay there with the rest of the men.

He came into the hotel soon after Wild and his partners got there.

"That Simple Sam is a 'Sundowner,' an' no mistake!" he declared, "but the other two are all right."

"Well, he's a little about mining, Wild," answered the man, "it seems strange that such a simple fellow would know anything, though."

"He's been brought up in it, maybe," suggested Cheyenne Charlie.

It was time for the stagecoach from Devil Creek to come in, and there was quite a crowd gathered at the Gaszoo, where the outfit always stopped.

The hands of the Overland Company were in the rear of the stage, soon the regulars of the depot.

Pretty soon the regulars of the depot were heard and then all hands went outside to see what passengers there were in the stagecoach.

The outfit came in three times a week, but the miners never lost interest in seeing it arrive.

Up to the front of the hotel the four horses pranced, and when they were brought to a halt only two passengers alighted.

One was a middle-aged man with piercing black eyes and a twenty-five cent beard and the other a young woman of perhaps thirty.

She was attired in a gown of purple velvet, and when she alighted a low exclamation of surprise went up from the lookers-on.

They were not used to seeing a woman dressed in such a style.

She was a rather pretty woman, too, but there was something about her looks that would indicate that she was a kind of her own, and was not one of the gaudy, romantic "Misses" who were so common in the country.

"That's right," retorted Wild. "She does look like one of 'em. The man with her has the appearance of being someone in that line, too."

Both the passengers paused long enough to take a look around the town as far as they could see in the gathering dusk, and then they stepped upon the stoop and went to the hotel entrance.

Proprietor Brown was there to open the door, and he did so very politely.

"Step right inside," he said. "You'll find that we've got as good accommodations here as can be had this side of Cheyenne. We aim to please, we do. Jest wait! I'll call the missus, an' she kin take care of their young lady." He called his wife, and the comfort of the guests was promptly looked after.

A few minutes after the passengers from the stagecoach went inside the hotel the five men Wild was suspicious of came from the Gaszoo, a few yards distant down the street.

They had all been patronizing the barber of the camp and looked quite slick.

They came in without paying the least attention to Wild and his partners.

Brown and his clerk were on hand in the barroom and quite a business was being done.

After he had eaten his supper the stranger with the pointed beard came out.

As soon as he saw the five men his face lighted up and he walked up to them.

"How are you, Spiggins?" he said, shaking hands with the leader of the party.

"I am glad to see you. When did you get to Weston?"

"We arrive yesterday. Mr. Alton 's the r'p'y. I reckon you come over in their stage from Devil Creek."

"Yes, we came over there from the Deadwood route. We found such good morning getting here, and I am glad we have found such good accommodations. Weston would be quite a town if things only got to booming. I have come here for the purpose of booming it, you know, and I expect things to

put on an entirely different aspect shortly. There is some of the best mining land in the Black Hills right here, and I will take the one to improve it and show results. To-morrow I will take a look around the camp and then I will start in to buy a few claims.

Young Wild West and his partners heard every word of this, and they could not help wondering what it all meant. As if to let the minds of all hands become at ease, the news had been called Mr. Alton by the leader of the gang of five, and he said:

"Landlord, I am a wealthy man and speculator, and I have come to your town to boom things and make some money. These men here are in my employ. They are experts at prospecting, and no doubt they have selected some property around here for me to buy. Let us all have a drink and be friendly."

Brown smiled and said he hoped the gentlemen would have a sheet of luck.

Then he put out the cigarettes, and the smoking beverages took cigars and ginger-beer. Wild and Jim both had a drink, and then they said:

"I have heard considerable of a young fellow named Young Wild West," said Alton, after he had settled the bill.

"He is, I understand, one of the leading spirits of the town, and quite a financier, as well. I don't suppose he is here, is he?"

"Oh, yes, he is here!" answered our hero. "I happen to be Young Wild West."

"Ah! I am very glad to meet you, Mr. West. I hope we will be better acquainted before long."

He put out his hand and the boy shook with him.

At this point the cowboy called Spring stepped up.

"Young Wild West does not seem to me to be any flash, Mr. Alton," he observed. "We was havin' some of my flash, a foolish feller, when he happened along an' took it that we meant ter rob him or somethin'. It was all a mistake, an' I wish you would jest tell him that we ain't nothin' but honest men, an' that we wouldn't harm a hair in their head of a foolish man, or anyone else."

Alton looked surprised.

Then he turned to Wild and exclaimed:

"Mr. West, Spring and his men are good fellows. I hope you won't have any hard feelings toward them."

"I don't think I can have any feelings toward anybody," Wild answered, "and as for the matter, I don't know of any point to take the part of a fellow who always makes it upon. That is all the trouble between these men, and I don't see self amounts to. They didn't like it when I interfered, and this fellow went so far as to make a threat. I'll tell you plainly that I haven't got a very good opinion of him, and, what is more, I don't want to have anything to do with him! If he bothers his time with me he is very apt to furnish a subject for the undertaker!"

Young Wild West spoke as calmly as though he was simply giving an opinion on some minor subject, and Alton's face assumed an expression of blank amazement.

"There is some thing," he stepped back and said nothing. "There is some thing of the nature of an affair as far as you recovered himself. "It ought to be straightened out, since you are liable to come in contact quite often."

"It isn't necessary to try to straighten anything out, my dear sir. When I once get a bad opinion of a man I never change it. If you are a friend of Spring, as you call him, just advise him to let me alone and behave himself."

What would you do in case a man did not behave himself after you had advised him to? queried Alton, with just a tinge of sarcasm in his voice.

"In that case I would make him behave."

"Well, sir! That is just as true as you are standing there. I always make it a point to do just as I say."

"Well, if that is the way it is, I suppose I will have to behave while I am in Weston."

"That's right, sir. You will either have to behave, get out, or go under!"

Wild smiled as he said this, but the tone of his voice indicated that he was not joking.

Alton laughed outright and stroked his beard thoughtfully. Suddenly he turned to the leader of the five, and said:

"I don't think I will have any more trouble between you two ought to be settled in some way. Spring, I guess you had better invite Young Wild West outside and show him how you can shoot."

Spring turned pale at this suggestion.

"I reckon I don't want ter shoot at him," he faltered. "If he only a boy, an' I'm old enough ter be his father."

"That don't make any difference," spoke up Wild, in his cool and easy way. "If you want to have a shot at me come on out, or if you feel like doing it right here, go ahead! Let your partners try it, too, if they want to!"

Alton was more amazed than ever.

"Say!" said Wild, looking him in the eye; "perhaps you want to have a shot at me!"

CHAPTER V.

FLOTING TO GET THE TRIPLE CLAIM.

Young Wild West was certainly right in the humor to fight the whole six men.

He had sized up Alton and put him down as a smooth-tongued rascal.

The fellow called Spring managed to catch the eye of the mine owner as the last remark came from the lips of the boy.

The villain gave him a warning look.

Then, for the first time, Alton seemed to realize that he had made a mistake.

It was quite evident that he had underestimated the boy and had been endeavoring to frighten him.

"I don't want to try a shot at you, Young Wild West," he said, after a rather lengthy pause. "You seem to be in a very bad humor to-day. Can't you take a joke?"

"Oh, yes, I can take a joke all right; but I don't mean to take a joke from any man who looks at me like this."

While he was watching Spring, as well as Alton all this time, the Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart had their eyes on the whole gang of rascals.

One had more from either of them would have proven disastrous to them.

But the five villains knew all about Young Wild West, if Alton did not quite yet!

They were not going to undertake to do anything against him, while he was in a joking, amiable mood.

At the same time, the miners gathered in the bar-room when the controversy began, and they all waited to see the end of it.

Something like a sigh of relief went up when Alton put out his hand and exclaimed:

"Shake, Young Wild West! You are the nerviest young fellow I ever met, and I like you."

Then there was more surprise.

Wild turned and walked away without accepting the proffered hand.

There was no hypocrisy about him.

He did not like the man, and he was not going to make hisself believe that he did, but he had told him when he did not.

Alton did more, but strolled calmly to the rear room, where there were some card tables.

The men he claimed to be in his employ followed him.

They set down at a big round table and the mine owner ordered drinks.

Young Wild West and his partners did not follow them in the room.

Every man of the six seemed to be relieved when they saw they had not followed him.

"Joyce," said Alton, in a low tone, "it seems that we have an actor, and I was in hopes of getting on friendly terms with Young Wild West, for he owns what is called the Triple Claim, and that is the property I want to get hold of. I got all the information concerning the property from a fellow who knows all about it over in Devil Creek. He gave me some specimens of the nuggets taken out of the ground at a depth of ten feet. Boys, I must have that claim!"

His hearers shrugged their shoulders.

It was quite evident that they were of the opinion that it would be a very hard thing for him to become the possessor of the Triple Claim.

Young Wild West cared to sell it he would want a fabulous price for it.

"Well, Mr. Alton, I don't know how you're going ter get it," said Spring, after a pause. "It ain't likely Young Wild West will sell it to you."

"He might be induced to sign a paper deciding it to me, though."

"Might be induced?" queried Spring.

"Yes, he might be induced. There are more ways of getting a person to do what you want them to than one, you know."

"That's so."

"In a couple of days I'll find out all about the 'Triple Claim, and get me all the fellows who go to do."

"Go ye gone an' get married since we seen yer hat, ain't yer, Mr. Alton?" spoke up one of the others.

"Yes, Mr. Leary, I married the most beautiful girl in Denver!"

"The man's chest swelled with pride as he said this. "I am going to honor you all by introducing you to her," he went on. "Come! It will be a good time to do it now, for I am in just the humor for it."

He arose and the five men followed out into the bathroom. Those in the place stared at them as they went through. The mine owner's wife, in a gorgeous gown that looked strikingly out of place in such surroundings, sat in the only rocker the hotel afforded, and when she saw her husband come in with some strangers at his back she arose rather haughty.

A questioning look shone from her eyes, but she did not say anything.

"I want to introduce you to some friends," mine Mr. Leary, Messrs. Spring, Leary, Gunn, Lewis and Bank."

Then they exchanged glances as the lady returned the salutation stiffly.

"That's the actress we seen in their theater in Denver?" Spring contrived to whisper to Leary, as the man was talking to his wife in a low tone.

"That's right, that's the actress."

"That woman will get their best of Alton, see if she don't," Spring said to his companions, after the mine owner had left them a few minutes later. "She's just married him for his money, an' as soon as she kin get hold of what she wants she'll ship."

"I've got that right," nodded Leary. "This ain't no kind of a wise bet a hed like her. The mine owner did not come out in the bathroom again, so they went out and washed over to the place where they had left their horses. After having a drink around they mounted and rode out of town."

When they arrived outside the Triple Claim, Spring nodded toward it and remarked:

"That's Young Wild West's place, boys. Alton wants it, but I don't know how he's going to get it."

"Answered one of the fellows, "Alton is a good one. If that woman don't make him lose the head he'll let Young Wild West up all right."

"Well, I'd her like ter get a sly shot at their young feller, that's all! They wouldn't be no need of getting him ter sell their claim then!"

They rode on about half a mile further and then they came to a cully that was full of rocks and bushes.

"But there was a sort of notch through it, and they did not hesitate to turn around the pile for perhaps a quarter of a mile and then they came to the face of a cliff that was hollowed out in the shape of a bowl by the hand of the sun.

There were so many scraggy pines and jagged rocks there that the hollow could hardly be seen in daylight, much less the night; but the men seemed to know exactly where they were going, for they dismounted and led their horses through the maze and were soon in comfortable quarters under the shelter of the overhanging cliff.

"I found this place, boys," observed Spring. "We couldn't have come across a better place for our purpose; an' if I jest comes in Alton, since it's so near Young Wild West's Triple Claim, Alton wants it's so near 'ery, an' if there's any way far us ter git it fur him well do it."

"An' while we're hangin' around 'er, fur Alton we kin run in a little business now an' then, like we done with the two Vanderfoots this mornin'." spoke up the fellow named Gunn.

"The leader chuckled.

"That was pretty good!" he exclaimed. "Them two fellows was pretty badly scared. They took us fur genuine highwaymen, all right, and they handed over what they had with their greatest of pleasure."

"But their pleasure wasn't for them, though," spoke up Leary. "Ours was their pleasure, Spring."

"Well, I didn't say just whose it was, did I?"

"No; but I thought you meant it was them that had their pleasure."

"I might have known better nor that. If it's pleasure fur a feller yer loss all he's got I'd like ter know of it!"

"If you learn to speak plain there won't be no chance fur arguments," said Leary, a little testily.

Though Spring was the acknowledged leader of the men, it was just probable that they would not have allowed him to go too far in ordering them what to do.

"Hold a lantern, s'rs, we kin see what we're about," Spring said, half a minute later.

They dismounted and quickly lit up it. The others proceeded to do the same, for by the lanterns they carried with them, so there would be able to get at the heavy growth of grass that fringed the brook that ran right through the cully.

The animals attended to, they began to arrange for their own comfort.

They had eaten something in the saloon at Weston, so there was no necessity of heating a fire. They had blankets with the rights of the institution of dry leavers they had secured up on their arrival at the place the day before made excellent bedding for them.

"Now," said Spring, when he had lighted his pipe for a smoke before retiring, "we have got a whole lot on our hands. I reckon, Alton is here ter get possession of the Triple Claim, an' what others he takes a notion to. We was hired to come ahead of him, an' first not what we could about things an' going ter get well paid fur it."

"I reckon we will be well paid fur it," spoke up Leary. "If that wife of Alton's don't git all their money he's got afore he sees ter pay us."

The villains talked in this strain for half an hour, and then they decided to turn in.

They were up quite early in the morning, but as they had no clock on hand for a couple of hours, they sat around and looked things over to come over to their quarters, and see them as soon as he had his breakfast at the hotel, but the villains figured that this would not be very early.

However, a little over an hour after they had eaten their own breakfast they heard a horse coming up the narrow, crooked gully.

"That's Alton!" exclaimed Spring. "You kin bet your boots on it!"

"That sure enough, it was too.

He was mounted on a shaggy pony he had hired of Brown, and he made a rather ridiculous picture, as he was about as awkward as a down.

The men grinned when they got a good look at him.

"Morning, Mr. Alton!" called out Spring. "I reckon you ain't used ter ridin' her back, are yer?"

"No, not much," was the reply, as the man dismounted with a show of reluctance.

"I've got a horse here for I fancy that I look like a cobbler seated on his bench when I'm ridin'."

The villains laughed at this, and Alton seemed to rather enjoy it than otherwise.

He took a seat on a convenient piece of rock that was under the ledge, and then calmly took an official-looking document from his pocket and unfolded it.

"Boys, the pros, here is a deed from Young Wild West to me for the property known as the Triple Claim, which was sold by Young Wild West to me, and sealed by a notary, but Young Wild West hasn't signed it yet!"

"Then what good is it, boss?" spoke up Leary.

"No good," was the reply. "But it must be signed by the boy. I understand that the courts have given him full power to transact his own business, in spite of the fact that he is under age. This only applies to this territory, though, so once I have his name to this document the Triple Claim

"I'm mine! I know more about that property than he does! I know there's millions in it! I must have the property, and the moment Young Wild West signs the deed he must die! Do you hear what I say, boys?"

The five villains nodded.

"I'd just like ter see Young Wild West die!" exclaimed the leader of them. "I jest hate him worse nor prize. It seems for me that he'll be their finish of us if he's let live, anyhow." "The now are we goin' ter git him ter sign that 'knowin' about it?"

"That won't be such a hard thing to do," replied Alton. "We must get somebody in his employ to work with us. Don't you know of any one he has who might be induced to carry this thing through, providin' he was well paid for it."

"By jingo!" exclaimed Spring suddenly; "boys, what's the fool's' notion about their fool 'ner do it?"

"Yes, Young Wild West has got an out-an'-out fool workin' for him. He's called Simple Sam, ther 'Sandowner.' I reckon he could be got ter do most anything if we could once git on ther right side of him."

"Good! I will manage to see the fellow before to-morrow mornin'."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROW IN THE POSTOFFICE.

"That fellow Alton acts as though he means business," observed Jim Dart, as he and Young Wild West were about to retire that night after getting back to their home. "He seems to know something about the property around here."

"Oh, I suppose he has had more around looking up things," replied our hero. "That is the way men of his kind do, you know. If they hear of any rich arthrop in the mining districts they generally investigate, and if they think it will pay to go to work they go to work. Alton is a very good hand and work if for all it is worth. Alton is one of those fellows. I feel certain. But he is a man with very little principle, too. The fact of his having those five rascals in his employ would be sufficient to make me condemn him. He is a schemer, you can bet, and one who would do anything to gain a point, so long as he thought he wouldn't be found out."

"That's right!" declared Jim. "Wild, you never make a mistake in making up a man. Young Wild West formally opened the office that had been organized for the Wild West Mining Improvement Company."

A man who could put very well had fixed up a big sign, which bore the words:

OFFICE OF THE TRIPLE CLAIM MINING CO. YOUNG WILD WEST, Manager.

By five o'clock the sign was put up as it covered the entry between the room of the building and our hero now felt that he was in business, once more.

Leaving Jim in charge of the office, Wild strolled over to the postoffice.

He had two reasons for going there. One was to get whatever mail there was there for him, and the other was to have a chat with his sweetheart, Arletta. Arletta, who sometimes assisted her grandfather with his duties as postmaster, a girl of seventeen, golden haired, and as pretty as a picture.

She was also a splendid shot with a rifle or revolver and was as brave as an ordinary man.

The couple had fallen in love with each other two years before, and when they were old enough they meant to marry.

Young Wild West slipped into the postoffice this morning with a letter to Arletta.

He had been working in good shape at the Triple Claim, and now that the office was in shape to transact business, he felt that he could take it easy.

It so happened that Arletta was alone in the office when he entered.

Her grandfather had gone over to the supply store to have a chat with the old man who kept it, and she was

simply arranging things neatly behind the counter and screen.

"Hello, Er!" Wild called out in his cheery way. "You seem to be awful busy this mornin', not to notice a fellow when he comes in."

"I didn't know it was you, Wild, or I certainly should have looked up, was the reply. "How are you making out with your work?"

"Fine! Everything is seemin' to be going along nicely. You must have just put up some time to-day and see the sign."

"I will, Wild. I suppose it looks all right. I saw it yesterday afternoon as the painter was putting the finishing touches to it. The sign must look nice up on the front of the building. He put your name in bold letters, and that is what I like to see."

"And you don't mean by that, Eh, that I am bold, do you?"

"You see bold 'nove and stinky. Wild, and you always stand up for the right. Such a person should have his name in bold letters, I think."

"Well, I thought he was putting it altogether too prominent. But I didn't tell the painter so. He said when he started in to paint the sign that he was going to do it in a regular size as far as done."

Arletta now came out from behind the screen and the painter, who had been waiting to get the sign to include in sometimes city, such as young lovers are apt to include in a love letter.

"But they had not fairly got started when the door opened and in came a woman with a trailing silk dress and a hat that looked like a fower garden."

It was Mrs. Alton, the wife of the mine owner, who had come to Weston for the purpose of booming things. Wild knew her at a glance, as he had seen her slight from the time she had first come to Weston.

But Arletta was almost speechless.

The woman looked almost like an apparition to her.

Silks, satins and high-priced millinery were not in vogue in the mining regions of the Black Hills!

Arletta was so surprised that she did not make a move right away to get behind the counter and wait on the woman.

"I desire to buy a postage stamp," said the woman who was Mrs. Alton.

Then she cast an insolent look at Wild and his sweetheart.

"Very well, madam, I am at your service," retorted Arletta, as she hastily got to her place behind the screen.

"Are you the clerk?" Mrs. Alton asked, putting on all sorts of airs.

"Just at present I am," replied Arletta, who did not like her "airs" at all.

"Now, as a rewarder you can find time to sit around and gossip when you ought to be attending to your duties. I am in the habit of being waited upon promptly."

"Oh, you are, eh?" and the deep blue eyes of the young postmistress flashed. "Well, I don't know who you are, but if you don't like the way we do here you don't have to do business here."

"You sassy vixen!" cried the woman angrily. "I will have my say at all."

"You may say what you please, but you will not be a clerk here any longer!" Washington. You will not be a clerk here any longer!"

"Did you say you wanted a postage stamp?" asked Arletta, keeping wonderfully cool.

"Yes," was the snapping rejoinder.

The stamp was pushed forward her and she passed the money through the wicket.

Then the fashionably dressed woman who had been an actress in Denver, according to the five villains in the employ of the mine owner, turned to the five villains in the employ of the mine owner with her tongue and placed it on the corner of the envelope.

"What do I do with the letter?" she asked, looking around for a place to drop it.

"You may hand it over here if you want it mailed," was the answer.

"Is that the way you has to do here?" and the woman arched her brows and put on a look of genuine surprise.

"Yes, that is the way we do here, and we don't run the postoffice like they do in the big cities."

"Tumh! I suppose you will be sure to read the address on the letter?"

"Certainly. That is part of my business."

"You may take a notion to open the envelope and see what is inside."

"No," was the cool rejoinder. "That is against the law. Besides, I would not be guilty of meddling with your business."

Young Wild West was delighted at the way his sweetheart was talking to the gorgeous but arrogant female. He knew that Arietta would not take the least thing from her that she was not compelled to in her line of duty. Arietta took the letter, calmly looked at the address and placed it in a pile she had arranged to be sent out with the next mail.

"Humph!" and Mrs. Alton cast a sneering look at the girl as she started to leave. "If I thought you would open that letter and read its contents I would slap your face open you!"

"You couldn't slap my face!" retorted Arietta, now quite angry at the way the woman was acting. "You may be mistaken like a lady, but you are far from being one, in my estimation."

"You hateful that you say!" screamed the mine owner's wife. "You're tired hussy, you! I will slap your face for that!" She tried her best to do it, but the screen prevented her. Then Arietta quickly came out from behind the screen. "You get out of the office!" she exclaimed. "If you don't I will put you out!"

"Put me out! Ha, ha, ha!" and the woman turned upon her heels and departed. "You will apologize to me for that, or else I'll sue you!"

She shook her fist in Arietta's face and then made another attempt to slap her.

It was then that the sweetheart of Young Wild West showed that she was not to be trifled with.

She caught the irate woman's wrist with her left hand, and, giving it a sudden twist, started her for the door.

"You scoundrel!" cried the woman, as she was being pushed out the door. "Open the door, Wild!" said Arietta, and our hero calmly arose and did so.

"Then out went Mrs. Alton, her feet catching in the trailing slip gown she wore and causing her to fall upon the stoop.

"That is the way I treat people who come in the postoffice and make a row," said Arietta. "The next time you come here you will know enough to keep a civil tongue in your head. You will have your life for this!" screamed the mine owner's wife, as she got up and drew her knife. "I am a demon when I get started, and your blood will be upon your own head!"

But Arietta was equal to the emergency. As quick as a flash she drew the handsome silver-mounted revolver she always carries, and, leveling it at the woman's breast, she exclaimed:

"Drop that knife, or I will shoot you!"

The screams of the woman had attracted the attention of the men in the postoffice, and now they were in the hotel, and they came running, just as Mrs. Alton dropped the knife and stood in terror before the muzzle of the revolver.

One of the men was her husband, and when she saw him the maddened creature threw herself toward him, crying: "Save me, Rob! She is going to kill me! Oh! I was never so insulted and attacked in my life!"

"What does this mean?" demanded the mine owner. "You are wild-cat! What are you trying to do to my wife?"

At this juncture Young Wild West stepped out of the office. "That will do, Mr. Alton!" he exclaimed. "Not another insulting word to the young lady! Your wife has been doing altogether too much of that, and she simply got what she deserved. Be careful what you say, now!"

"The bold hussy was going to shoot you, was she, pet?" went on Alton, ignoring what our hero said entirely. "Well, she will suffer for this as sure as—"

He did not finish what he was going to say, for at that moment Wild West stepped forward and struck him a blow in the stomach. "I told you to shut up!" cried the boy, his fist flashing dangerously. "Now, if you say another word about the young lady I'll trim your eyebrows with a bullet!"

Mrs. Alton did not faint, as one might have supposed she would do.

She rushed to her husband and caught him by the shoulder.

"Come to the hotel!" she cried, "or we will both be killed! There are nothing but outlaws here in this town." "Don't you want the knife you were going to pick up the young lady with, madam?" asked Wild, as he slipped the weapon and held it toward her.

"My knife!" she answered with affected surprise; "why, that is the knife this hussy threw at me before she pointed the finger at me, and I don't think you say I had a knife?" Every man among the thirty who had gathered in the woman drop the knife, including her husband, so a laugh went up.

The miners sided with Arietta, because they knew her too well to think she had imposed upon the mine owner's wife.

"What was it all about, Wild?" one of them asked our hero, as Alton and his wife hurried back to the hotel, somewhat ashamed of the disgraceful scene.

"Oh, the mine owner's wife," said Wild, "she wanted Arietta to lose her job as clerk because she did not happen to be behind the counter when she came in. She was very insulting, and they had some words. When the woman tried to slap Arietta in the face there was a sort of female fight, and the result was that the finely dressed woman got put out of the office. It was then that she drew a knife to stab Arietta, with, and had a shouter pulled on her. A policeman came along, and, of course, the woman was taken away."

That was all the explanation Wild gave of the affair.

But the miners were satisfied.

They took very little stock in either Alton or his wife. They regarded the woman as a curiosity more than anything else.

But our hero could not help thinking that both he and his sweetheart had two enemies, who would leave no stone unturned to get revenge upon them, and, therefore, when her grandfather came back, "just be on the lookout for that woman," he said. "She is a dangerous customer, and will try to get satisfaction for the rough handling you gave her."

"I'll be on the watch," was the reply.

CHAPTER VII.

SIMPLE SAM AGREES TO RETRY HIS BOSS.

If ever a man smacked with rage and humiliation, it was Simple Sam who, after his visit to the postoffice, but he managed to keep her fairly quiet until they got to their own room.

Then she started in to abuse him, using the most violent and unlady-like language.

He bore it quietly for a while, and then, when he got the opportunity to put in a few words, he looked at her and said:

"See you, and Daisy. There is no use in you going on in this way. I can't help it if you get into trouble over at the postoffice. I married you for your good looks and you married me for my money. I did not expect you would ever abuse me in this way, and I don't intend that you shall again. If things don't suit you here just pack up and leave. There is a train going out some time this afternoon, and you will be able to make connections at Spondonville for Denver. I will give you fifty thousand dollars and call it square."

She looked at him in silence for a moment and broke out again.

"I'll have more than fifty thousand dollars out of you before I leave this vile place!" she cried. "And I will have the life of that young hussy who threw me out of the postoffice, too! If there was the least bit of a man about you, you would shoot that boy who interfered with you on sight. You are not the man you ought to be, Alton!"

"And you are not the woman you ought to be," he sneered. "I have had enough of you, Daisy. You were all right when you took the title of my wife. Now, I have no further use for you, and I will give you fifty thousand dollars to get well-to-night to make up your mind what you are going to do about it. I came here to make money, and I am going to stay here for a couple of months at the least. You can go back to Denver if you don't intend to behave and do as I want you to. I have got things all planned out to get hold of the Triple Claim I was telling you about

without paying out more than a thousand dollars. And when the Triple Claim becomes my property Young Wild West will be dead!"

"Young Wild West?" she asked in surprise. "Yes, the boy who was in the portfolio when the vixen with red hair handed you so roughly. He is the owner of the Triple Claim—or rather the property is in his name. I have the deed all ready for him to sign conveying the property to me, and as soon as he has signed it he will die."

"I will let you know what I intend to do by to-night," she said.

"All right. But don't go and strain too much of a point. It matters not what conclusion you arrive at. I never thought you would act this way. If I had, you can bet that you would never have become my wife!"

With this threat at the scheming creature who bore the name of womanhood he left the room, his sigh that day. Mrs. Alton had felt the room's sigh that day.

She had her meals sent up to her, and more than one soothing drink went up, too.

The mine owner did not attempt to go near her. It seemed as though he was one of the sort of men who, when they make up a mind to a thing, to stick to it, no matter what the cost.

The chances are that he was heartily sick of his bargain, and that this did not deter him in the least from making the effort to get possession of the Triple Claim.

During the afternoon he managed to purchase the claim that adjoined that piece of property that was called the Triple Claim, and, elated at his success, he walked to have a talk with Spring and the others.

He meant to have a good-sized shanty built on the claim right away and put them in it to make a pretext of working the claim.

It was a little before the time for the miners to quit that he was told that the mine owner was coming to town. He went right on the hills he searched the secluded spot in the gulch where the fire willows were camped.

He found them there playing cards and drinking. They were having a very good time on the money he had advanced them.

Alton was all business now.

"Spring," said he, "I want you to go and get the foolsh fellow you spoke about and bring him here."

"I will if I kin, Mr. Alton," was the reply.

"Go and fetch him. He'll never see his horse or his dog. You go and fetch him so he'll never see 'em till you fetch him."

Spring got up very reluctantly. But the look in the sharp eyes of his boss told him that there was no use in trying to argue against the proposition, so he started away on foot.

Spring made direct for the Triple Claim, which, as has been stated, was only a short distance away.

Young Wild West's men were quitting work, and when he reached some bushes that fringed the edge of the claims he passed and took a good look around.

"The old-time Dave ain't all the workmen started away but two, over by the mine."

One of them was the watchman who lived in the shanty

and the other was Simple Sam.

When the villain saw this he gave a grunt of satisfaction. Then he began to tinkle of a way to attract the attention of the simpleton.

Just as was with him, it seemed.

Presently Simple Sam thrust his hands in his pockets and pulled out a broken bottle that was not far from where Spring was concealed.

The watchman busied himself with getting supper ready. The villain worked his way around and got to the brook just as the "Sandowner" paused on the other side.

"Hello, Simple Sam!" said Spring, in a low voice, smiling and bowing. "You're lookin' fine to-day."

"Ye, he, he, he!" replied the simpleton. "Who are you?"

"I'm a good friend of yours, and then saying the first thing that came in his head, the scoundrel went on: "Your

lovin' friend, and sez to you, 'You kin hit the Sim'."

"What?" and started looking into the eyes of the

unfortunate man.

"That's right," said Spring, noticing that he had made an impression. "He's rich, too, and he wants to see you awful bad."

It so happened that the simpleton did remember of an

uncle who had disappeared some years before and in his yagere and innocent way he thought the man was telling the truth.

"It's my Uncle George," he reckoned, he remarked, slipping over the brook close to the side of Spring.

"That's just who it is. You didn't know he was rich, did you?"

"No!" and then the poor fellow laughed heartily, just as though it was all very funny.

"Spoken for, Simple Sam, walk over to give yer some money."

"Is it far?" and the dull eyes of Simple Sam lighted up a little.

"Only about three or four minutes' walk from here. I told him I would find that you, Sam, you over, but I was afraid the men of Young Wild West's might not let you come. Young Wild West thinks he owns a man when he owns a dog."

"Oh, yes, Sam, I know. You owns me! I'm simple Sam, and I'm a 'Sandowner!'"

"I know yer are. You ain't no fool."

This remark tickled the simpleton more than anything that could have been said.

He was now ready and willing to go with Spring, and he told him so.

The villain noticed him on his back and remarked: "You're a 'Sandowner,' an' you ain't no fool! It didn't take no long ter find that you, Sam, I know."

The Sandowner delivered as an age might have done say. Then he followed the rascally man through the bushes to the gulch.

When Alton and the others saw them coming they looked pleased, as well as surprised.

"George, I've found your nephew far yer," said Spring, looking at the mine owner and winking.

"Why, so you have," was the quick reply. "If it isn't Simple Sam, I'll never open mine."

Sam, I'll never open mine," said the simpleton, starting at Alton in a stupid way.

"Oh, I remember you now!" and he burst into one of his ridiculous laughs.

"Well, I'm rich now, Sam, and I am going to give you a thousand dollars."

"A thousand dollars!" and the man got down and acted as though he was crying to stand on his feet.

"The fire willains grined, but Alton never cracked a smile. He saw that he was gaining headway rapidly, and he wanted to finish up the business.

"Sam," said he, taking the simpleton by the hand and assisting him to his feet, "you always were good at keeping a secret. I know."

"You bet!" and there was another effluvia. "I never tell anything," Uncle George.

"Well, before I go any farther I want to tell you something. The Sandowner put on a frightened look, for he took it that you are working on the 'Triple Claim?'"

"Yes, Uncle."

"Well, that property belongs to me. Young Wild West took it by force and he won't give it up. Young Wild West kills all those who work for him after he finds out that they know the mine has got lots of gold in it."

Simple Sam now became very much frightened. He didn't know how to get out of the predicament, and he wanted to get possession of the Triple Claim.

"It belongs to me, but Young Wild West won't sign this paper."

He took the document he had drawn up from his pocket, and showed it to the poor fool.

"You think more of your uncle than you do of Young Wild West, don't you, Sam?" went on the plotting mine owner.

"Oh, yes!" and he flinched some more.

"Sam, I feel like hugging you. I am so glad to see you!"

"That's my uncle, and he's got a lot of money."

The man, who stepped up and then Alton went through the form of embrocher him, while the five rascally men looked on and grinned.

Simple Sam, poor fellow, seemed happier than he had been in many a day.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

Like a dog, he was pleased at a show of affection.

"Sam, you must make Young Wild West sign this paper!" An idiotic look was all the reply he got.

"Do you hear what I say, Sam? Young Wild West must sign this paper!"

"Yes! He, he, he! I'll catch him to-night an' make him sign it, Uncle George."

"Nope! I'm a Sundowner!"

Young Wild West was now, just tell us how you will make "He is coming to the mine to-night, Uncle. Two of the men has got some lickin' there, an' he knows it. He's comin' to the mine to-night alone to find the whisky; he told me so. I was the one who told him about the whisky."

"Ah! that is good, Sam; if that is the case it will be all right. Young Wild West will shoot the men who brought the whisky to the mine, and you know he will."

"Yes, Jim, afraid the will get just for that, do you?"

"No!" and the poor man shot his head.

Then they take some of my men and hide them in the mine so they will be there when Young Wild West comes. Take him right where they are, and then they will seize him and the him, all but one of his hands. He will sign the paper then and you will be as rich as I am. Here is a hundred dollars, Sam. When Young Wild West has signed the paper, give the other thousand to follow."

"All right, Uncle George," added the fellow.

Alton remained talking with Simple Sam for something like ten minutes longer.

Then he bade him go back to the camp and stay there until after it got dark, when he was to come for the men to take them to the mine and hide them there.

He had impressed it so strongly on the mind of the idiot that he felt certain the thing would go through.

Now, however, the mine owner said:

"Here is the deed, and here is a pen and a vital of ink. Young Wild West must sign the paper, and when he has done it I will leave it to you how to dispose of him."

"All right, Mr. Alton," they replied. "It's a funny piece of business an' a ticklish thing ter do, but if young Simple Sam says it true it will be easy enough."

Alton rode back to Weston, hardly daring to think that the plan he would prove a success, but hoping for all he was worth.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLOT THAT FAILED.

Wild and his two partners spent the biggest part of the day at the Triple Claim.

They found that the work was progressing rapidly and that the dirt that was dug out was panning out immensely.

"There's a mint in that mine, boys," said Wild. "I wouldn't sell out for two hundred thousand, and we haven't got half an acre on the ground yet."

"Well, I suppose Alton would buy if you made up your mind to sell immediately," said Jim.

"Alton has not enough money to buy the Triple Claim, for the reason that I would never agree to sell it to him. I don't like him, so there is all there is to it. The chances are that he will be watching for a chance to get square with me for what happened at the postoffice this morning. My! but you ought to have been there and seen how Artetta handled this fastidiously-dressed woman! It was worth a good deal."

"Artetta knows what's what, I reckon," chuckled the scout.

"She ain't goin' ter allow any one to bulldoze her any kind of fashion."

"That's right," and our hero smiled. "Say! I am going to take a little trip over to the mine after dark."

Sam told me this afternoon that a couple of the men have been smuggling whisky in the mine. I am not going to have anything to do with the one, but I don't care whether they are fit to do a day's work when the time comes; but as they are fit to do a day's work when the time comes, I'm not going to have whisky hidden on the premises. I'll just take a walk over there and see what there is in the story. The Sundowner isn't likely to tell a lie about the mine. I have given the whole crowd, except Sam and the

watchman, leave to come to town to-night, and the chances are that they will come, since I said them all off to-day."

"You don't want us to go along, then, I reckon," said Cheyenne Charlie questioninglly.

"No, it is hardly necessary. I can do more with the Sundowner alone, I think. If I do find whisky there I will give the men who have violated the rules a good talking to in the morning, and if they don't like it they will have to come back all."

"Well, I'll cover to their house, an' me an' Jim will play dominoes till you get back, then."

"It won't be gone very long."

It was only about a mile from where they lived, and Wild did not mind such a short walk as that.

It was just a little after dark when he set out for the Triple Claim.

It struck him that it was a good idea to take a trip to the mine that night, anyway.

He knew that Alton had come to town for the purpose of getting hold of what mining property that was of any value that he could, and he did not mind proposing that he or his agents should sneak around and find out anything.

When Wild reached the shanty that was on the property he found the watchman and Simple Sam there.

The former was smoking and the latter was seated on a stool in a meditative way.

"The beamen appearing surprised since he did not know that the beamen were here," the Sundowner thought. "One of his foolish laughs and showed every sign of being pleased."

He promptly got up and put on a hat that had a lamp attached to it.

"I'll show you, Mr. West," he said, and then he laughed harder than ever.

"All right," answered our hero, and then, after passing a glance at the watchman, he followed the foolish fellow to the shaft.

"It's lickin' sure enough, Mr. West," Simple Sam said, as he lighted the lamp on his hat and then pulled the pulley rope ready, so he could overcome the big bucket down when they got into it. "I smelted of it. He, he, he!"

The shaft was not very deep, but a gallery had been run out from it and a big pile of dirt and rock had been taken off.

The two were soon down at the bottom of the shaft.

"This way, Mr. West," said Simple Sam.

Wild could not help noticing that he showed a great deal of ease, though the expression of his face told nothing but extreme dullness.

Wild followed him to the end of the gallery.

"Where's the whisky, Sam?" our hero asked.

"Right under the ledge there, Mr. West," was the reply, and the Sundowner pointed under a part of the gallery that looked as though it might cave in at every minute.

Wild stooped to peer into the dark place when a startling thing took place.

He was pounced upon from behind and thrown to the ground.

He made a desperate struggle to free himself, but it was no use!

Four men had him, and they held him powerless.

A brawny hand was held tightly over his mouth, and then a shrill peal of laughter came from Simple Sam.

Much to the astonishment of our hero, the simpleton proceeded to assist the men, and in a very short space of time he was disarmed and bound and gagged.

Then he was pitched in a sitting posture under the ledge, his legs against the dirt and rock that formed the end of the gallery.

By aid of the light cast out by the miner's lamp in the bay of Simple Sam, Wild could see the men quite distinctly.

One glance sufficed to show him that they were four of the five who had been bothering the simpleton when he interfered and took the fellow's part.

They were very much elated, too, at having captured him; that could be seen readily.

The leader of the gang was standing farther back.

But Simple Sam was not to be seen.

"You needn't look around, Young Wild West," one of them, who was the fellow called Leary, observed. "There ain't nobody comin' ter help yer. We've got yer jest where we want yer, an' there's no mistakin' it! You've got one chance ter save yer life!"

Wild was now very cool, considering the position he was placed in. He cast a look at Simple Sam as though he expected to receive help from him.

But he might as well have appealed to one of the sides of the rough gallery.

There was nothing but extreme lunacy in the expression of the simple fellow's face, while his eyes twinkled with good humor.

He kept on strove to speak, but nothing but a smothered grunt came from his lips.

The Sundowner stood still for a moment, and then at a word from Leary produced a roll of paper, pen and ink from his pocket.

He unrolled the document in a business-like way and placed it on Wild's knees.

Then one of the villains knelt beside the boy and untied his right hand, while the rest kept him covered with their revolvers.

As if to make him see the better, one of them lighted a lantern and held it toward him.

Young Wild West, said Leary, "if you want to live free git 'em, 'n' sign 'em." "What's that?" asked the other, "that's on your lap." "It's a deed for this claim, which is called ther Triple. It might be worth a good deal of money to you but your life's worth more, I reckon."

Our hero shook his head and flashed a glance of defiance at the villains.

Then Simple Sam proceeded to have a hearty laugh, after which he said:

"You can't gun' ter kill me, Mr. West! I ain't no fool!"

"You can't shoot me, 'n' you can't hold the lantern close."

"Go ahead an' sign ther paper! Sam, hand him ther pen."

"I can't help it, Mr. West," said Simple Sam, "you've got to sign the paper. If you don't they'll kill you! I'm a Sundowner, an' don't you forget it!"

Wild could tell by their faces that the villains meant business.

He realized that a job had been put up by Alton to get possession of the Triple Claim.

But the boy suspected that if he signed the paper the villains would get his money.

If they did, what good would the signature be to them?

Young Wild West had no intention of signing the document.

He was doing an awful lot of thinking just then.

Knowing that he had to do something desperate, he brought all his wits to bear.

A plan of action flashed upon him instantly.

Reaching out, he took the pen from the grinning fool.

He held it up, holding the lantern close, and said:

"If you did, what good would the signature be to them? Young Wild West had no intention of signing the document.

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A plan of action flashed upon him instantly.

Reaching out, he took the pen from the grinning fool.

He held it up, holding the lantern close, and said:

It's pressed the trigger as he was in the act of drawing it out.

Crack!

Leary fell upon the boy, a bullet in his stomach.

Crack! Crack!

Wild fired two more shots in the dark, boying they would take effect.

A yell of mortal agony sounded, and he knew one of the boys had found its mark, and lay at his feet.

Then a yell of agony came from the villain who was lying partly upon him.

Then there was the sound of receding footsteps, and our hero knew that he had triumphed.

He pushed the body of the man from him and then quickly felt for the belt that was about it.

He found it and soon had the knife there.

Then two or three seconds later the bucket was gone.

While talking of the pulley told him that the bucket was going up.

Crack!

He fired another shot, but failed to hit anything.

A short interval of silence followed and then a voice from above called out:

"-What's ther trouble down there?"

It was the watchman, "come up?" Wild asked, speaking as boldly as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

"Yes, two jest come up. I thought they was you an' ther Sundowner, but when they run away I knowed it couldn't be you. What was ther yellin' an' shootin' about? I thought you was tryin' ter scare Simple Sam."

"Well, I guess he is scared pretty well if he is alive,"

"-niled Wild, and then he struck a match and looked around him.

On the ground almost at his feet lay the bodies of three men.

One of them was Simple Sam, the Sam-downer.

The other two were those of Leary and Grunt.

The latter were stone dead, but Wild soon saw that the simperton, who had proved to be a traitor to him, had fainted from sheer fright.

A smile came over the daring boy's face as he looked at the poor fool.

"I guess, you have turned out to be a pretty dangerous customer, Simple Sam," he observed, "I'll see 't it thid you won't do any further harm."

Just as he spoke, the watchman descended into the shaft and came forward with a lantern.

He could scarcely believe his senses when he saw the two dead villains and Simple Sam lying on the ground.

"They came mighty near getting me," said Wild, coolly, "just help me get the Sundowner out of here, will you?"

Five minutes later they were out of the mine and Simple Sam was carried into the shanty.

CHAPTER IX.

SIMPLE SAM IS LOCKED UP.

"What was it all about, anyhow, Wild?" the watchman asked, as Simple Sam was deposited on the floor of the shanty.

"Oh, four menials was hiding in the gallery at the foot of the shaft, and Simple Sam accoyed me down there so they could get away with all ther money."

"I would never get out of the mine alive. I didn't sign, but here I am!"

"An' ther's two dead ones down in ther mine," nodded the watchman, "if I'd only knowed that them two fellers what come up in sich a hurry was crooked I'd have let go them with my shaver. But they got away before I thought of it."

"Well, never mind; we'll catch them. I know who they are. But by jingo! there is something I forgot."

"What's that, Wild?"

"I want the paper the scoundrels were trying to make me sign. It must be at the bottom of the shaft, for it fell to the ground when I started in to beat them at their own game."

"Do you want me to go an' git it?" asked the man. "I ain't no more afraid to go down there than I am to walk fifty feet away from here an' back."

"Well, go ahead, then. But wait a minute! Simple Sam is coming in."

The foolish fellow opened his eyes just then.

Terror was depicted in them.

"I couldn't help it! I couldn't help it!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter, Sam?"

Then the dull gray eyes shifted and rested upon the face of her hero.

"I'm aw, aw, haw!"

"Sit down, then, into a good laugh."

"It is rather amusing, eh?" observed Wild. "Well, you certainly enjoy a joke. Just let his hands behind him, Tom."

I guess he had better not run at large any more."

"All right," retorted the watchman, and he quickly found a rope and came to the spot.

"Now, Sam, just sit up and hold your hands behind you. I am going to give you a chance to laugh some more."

He then found himself tied hard and fast he broke into a fit of crying.

Wild said no further attention to him that day.

"You stay here and watch him, Tom; I'll go and look for that paper," he said.

"Just as you say," was the reply.

Wild took the lantern and made his way to the mouth of the shaft.

The bucket was there just as they had left it when they came up.

He took the shaft west Young Wild West.

Into the dangerous-lit gallery, where the two dead villains lay, he went.

He held the lantern close to the ground and soon found the paper, which had partly rolled up of its own accord.

Wild picked it up and placed it in his pocket.

Then he saw the pen Simple Sam had handed him lying on the ground.

He possessed himself of that, too.

The yard of ink was necessary to be found.

Wild found it all right, muttered the daring young dealer, "This paper will make interesting reading; I have no doubt."

He had become possessed of his weapons when he left the mine before, so he was ready for any one, should they come along to interfere with him.

But he got to the surface of the ground easily and safely.

It was pretty certain that the two villains who had left the shaft in such a hurry would not come back very soon.

Wild got back to the mine and found the watchman standing before Simple Sam, who sat upon the floor grating his teeth with an abhorrent stare.

"You had better get out and take a walk around to see that everything is all right, and then come back."

"All right," was the reply, and the watchman went out.

When Wild sat down before the lantern that sat on a table in the stammy and unrolled the paper he had found in the mine, Simple Sam broke into a laugh.

"You don't sign it, Mr. West, do you?" he cried, when he caught his breath.

"I'll sign my Uncle George will be mad about it, but I can't help it. He, he, he!"

"Well, our Uncle George will be mad about it, eh?" queried Wild.

"No, it is your Uncle George, Sam! He gives me a hundred dollars, and he was going to give me a thousand when you signed that paper. Then they was going to kill you, so you couldn't shoot any of their men what work for you when you got tired of 'em. Uncle George is a very rich man, as I've wanted the Triple Claim awful bad."

"He did, eh?" and Wild smiled at the fool's confession.

There was not the least doubt in the mind of our hero that the Sundowner was telling the truth.

He turned his attention to him and proceeded to look over the document.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "A dead all accepted, eh? All that has been found was my signature, and then this thing would have stood law, providing they had done away with me! John King, notary public, Dendowood, eh? Well, if there is such a fellow as John King, which I have no doubt there is, since this paper would have been filed he had better not interfere in Dendowood long! As soon as I get things fixed up here I'll go over there and look for him!"

Young Wild West then looked at the man he had just taken.

"He looked like a hen," said Wild, "and when he was through folded it in his breast-pocket."

"Robert Anderson is the man to deal with first of all!" he exclaimed under his breath. "Then comes the three he hired to come here and help in this matter. There were five, but by good luck on any part there are only three now!"

Wild did not know exactly what to do with Simple Sam.

After thinking the matter over he came to the conclusion that the fellow was not altogether to blame for what had happened.

His very weak mind had been responsible in it.

"Sam," said he, looking the simpleton in the eyes, "you always say you are no fool, I believe?"

"That's right! I'm a Sundowner, but I ain't no fool!" was the quick reply.

"Well, I must tell you that you allowed this man who says he is your Uncle George to fool you pretty good. He made a regular fool of you, Sam."

A sad look came over the imbecile's blank countenance.

"Do you think you are going to be satisfied with that?"

"Do you think you are going to be right when you were helping to rob and kill me?"

"Uncle George said the Triple Claim belonged to him by rights, ar' that, you wouldn't give it up to him."

"Oh, paw!" exclaimed Wild, impatiently. "There is no sense in talking to you! Let it drop! I'll take you to Weston with me and put you in the lockup until this thing is settled. Get up, you poor fool! And I want no simpleton hanging either!"

Simple Sam got up in a frightened manner.

He shrunk from the gaze of our hero as a dog might have done from the man who was going to beat it with a club.

Wild took the fellow by the arm and led him out of the stammy.

He walked him around until he found the watchman, and then, informing the latter that he would send some of the men right over, he started off with his captive.

Wild carried a revolver in his hand, for he did not know but that the villains might be lying around to waylay him.

He could scarcely understand that it was best for him to obey.

He did not utter a word all the way over.

When he got to the office of the Triple Claim Mining Company it occurred to the boy that it would be a good idea to lock his prisoner in the office.

There was a storeroom in one corner that was without a window, and there was nothing in it but some empty sacks and similar rubbish.

This would allow to lock the fellow in, for it was hardly likely that he would attempt to break out, anyway.

Wild had a key to the office, and without any further delay he unlocked the door and conducted his prisoner inside.

"Simple Sam," said he, "I am going to leave you in here for a while. If you value your life you won't attempt to get away. I am going to see the man you call your Uncle George, and settle this business. I am going to prove to him that he has no claim on the Triple Claim whatever."

"That's good, Mr. West. I'll stay right where you put me."

"All right, Sam. You may as well make up your mind to be here, but you'll have a nice hard bed to sleep on."

"The bed will help you out somewhat, though."

"He, he, he!"

The fool gazed for the first time since they had started from the mine.

"Right here, Sam!" exclaimed Wild, as he lighted a match and led the way to the storeroom.

Two minutes later Simple Sam, the Sundowner, was locked in the little dark room, and from our hero left the office.

He went to the house and found Charlie and Jim playing dominoes.

"Well, boys, I got back!" he remarked.

"Did you find her wicked?" he queried the scout.

"No, but I found something else."

"What did you find?" spoke up Jim.

"I found that I had run into a trap."

"Yes, a trap, and Simple Sam was playing the part of the bait,"

exclaimed Charlie and Jim. Dart were very much aston-

'But when Wild told them all that had happened they felt like getting out after some one.

"What are you going" to do with their measly coppers, Wild?" asked the scout.

"Well, I haven't made up my mind just yet. I think it will be a good idea to keep Alton guessing a while, and then when he finds out what happened in the mine give him two hours to get out of the town.

"You these of his head would be better for him," Charlie remarked. "Well, there is no need of giving him that, unless he insists upon it."

"He put up a job to kill you, so all's you've got to do is to let their gang know about it, an' they'll soon make short work of him."

"You fellows come an over to Brown's Gasco, and just leave it to me to fix things up right," their hats.

Then all three walked over to the hotel.

It so happened that Alton had just effected a reconciliation with his wife, and he had just entered the bar-room for the purpose of treating everybody, when Wild and his partners stepped in.

The mine owner gave a start when he saw our hero.

But he quickly realized that the plot had failed to work. He decided to be friendly with the boy he was so anxious to kill.

"You are just in time, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "I am in just the humor to treat every one I see! Step up and call for what you want."

Wild promptly met him at the same frame.

"All right, Mr. Alton," he retorted; "I'll have a cigar for mine."

Of course Charlie and Jim took something, after they saw the mine owner.

Everybody drank and toasted the mine owner, who really began to feel that he was quite an important personage, after all that had happened.

"Mr. West, I am very sorry that anything disagreeable should have taken place between us," he said, stepping over to Wild. "Will you shake hands with me?"

There was nothing left to do but to shake with him, if he meant to carry out the plan he had started to work, so Wild shook hands with the mine owner.

"How much will you give me for the Triple Claim, Mr. Alton?" our hero asked, suddenly. "I hear that you are very anxious to get hold of it?"

"Why, I—er—don't know. Let me have a chance to think."

CHAPTER X.

HOP WA!'S BIG TIME IN THE OFFICE.

Wild and his two partners had scarcely left the house to go over to the Garco Hotel when there was a lively chattering in the kitchen and a clattering of dishes.

Charlie and Jim had been waiting for an opportunity to get out, for they had planned a little party that night.

It was to be held in the office of the company, too, but the board shutters were tight, and they knew that no light would shine through.

Hop and Wing were not the only Chinamen in Weston. There were something like fifteen, all told.

Wild, Wilding, Jim and his partner had kindly arranged to give him a party in honor of the event.

Being laid wanted to ask the permission of Young Wild West, but Hop had urged him not to do it, as he felt that it would be objected to.

The two had been listening to the talk going on in the adjoining room, and when they found that Wild and Jim were going out with Charlie they felt highly elated.

They thought they would have to wait until they went to bed before starting up their party the house, taking with them all the best drinking vessels there were there.

Hop was really the janitor of the office, so he had a key to get into it.

"You go and tell the people to come," he said to Wing in his own peculiar language. "I will get things ready."

Wing knew just where to find the waiting crowd that had been invited to the party.

They were to gather in the shanty that was occupied jointly by a Chinese laundry and a shoemaker shop.

The latter was run by a big ducky, who was so black that he shined, and who bore the name of Ike.

This fellow had formerly been in the employ of Wild, but he had made an effort to better himself by working at the trade he had picked up in the South.

Wing found something like twenty-five waiting around the shanty for the drinks they got when the laundry-man or shoemaker felt thirsty and sent out for something.

"Allee lighter" cried Wild. "Comee ovel to office; make no too much noise, allee same."

So the party set out for the office, carrying with them eatables and drinkables in plenty.

They also had several musical instruments, and when Hop saw Jim coming in he began to think for the first time that it would be utterly impossible to keep the party a secret very long.

But he was one of the sort who never let trouble come until it lank.

They would have a good time until they were interrupted, anyhow.

The twenty-five noisy characters rushed into the office regardless of wiping their feet, and then Hop closed and locked the door.

The lamps and lamps they had were lighted and hung around so there would be plenty of light.

The tables and drinkables were placed on the office desks and the chairs were arranged around the sides so the guests would have room for dancing.

Then the musicians, four in number, proceeded to tune up. There were two accordions, a dilapidated banjo and a violin that had seen better days, but which still had a good deal of music in it.

"Hip! Hip!" cried Hop Wah. "Evelody have goodse time! Puttine out some whick, allee samee party quick!"

That opened the party in earnest.

There was liquor there in plenty, and soon all hands were trying to see how fast they could make it disappear.

The next thing on the programme was the congratulating of Young Wild, in whose honor the party was being given.

It was so loud and pronounced that the dukes and the two white men could scarcely be heard.

As might be supposed, Hop was general manager of the affair.

But in order to run things right he felt that he must have on a full head of steam.

He patronized one of the jugs as often as he could without straining himself for the music to start up, and then such a din as the Chinese had never been subjected to before began.

Nearly all the Chinese had on native shoes, and through they could not dance anything like the darker members of the party could, they made a great deal more noise on the board floor.

For twenty minutes this great opening dance in honor of Young's birthday kept up.

Then they had more drinking was indulged in. It is about this time that sounds other than those made by the revelers were heard.

Queer sounds they were, too.

Hop happened to be standing near the little storeroom at the time, and he paused and listened in astonishment.

"I'm a Sundowner, but this beats anything I ever seen! Ain't I glad there's a crack here for me to see enough!"

There was a loud, coarse laugh, and the Chinaman stepped up boldly and unlocked the door.

Then out stepped Simple Sam, his hands still tied behind him.

"Gosh!" exclaimed the simpleton, frowning at the assembly. "I don't know whether I ought to come out or not. But I reckon I'll be all right, so long as I don't go out of

building. Haw, haw, haw!" And he laughed so heartily that he dropped to the floor and rolled over. Laughing is catching, especially with those of the colored race.

In less than five seconds all hands were enjoying a good laugh, and the noise was terrific.

Then Hop stepped over to the simpleton and said:

"Mc into my hands and you make some fun for party, allee same 'sirens clown. But you no go out; if you do me an' let's me out."

"No! I'm goin' to stay here till Young Wild West comes a-goods me out."

"Good! Allee samee have a circus!" Simple Sam liked to drink when he got the chance. He took whisky gladly when it was tendered him.

Then he proceeded to entertain the crowd.

He tried to make a fool of himself.

But he had a sure mate accompanied he could not add to.

But he had the mixed party in a roar of laughter for the next half hour.

Then he sat down to get his breath and have some more liquor.

It was just about two hours from the time the party began when another interruption took place.

The fun was at its height when there came a pounding on the door of the office.

Hop and Wing looked at each other and turned a sickly green.

"They know what was the trouble."

Young Wild West had not back!

But they knew there was only one thing to do.

That was to answer the knock and open the door.

Wing pushed Hop forward to do this, and, plucking up sufficient courage, he did so.

Who and Jim stepped inside.

They had been on the way back when they heard the sounds of the revelry, hastened to the office door and listened.

It soon flashed upon them that Wing and Hop were having some sort of a lollifaction.

Then they listened a little longer, and finally came to the conclusion that they had better go in and see just what was taking place.

Hop bowed low when they stepped in.

Misler Wild and Misler Jim yelled muckee welcome!" he exclaimed, smiling blandly. "Settle righty down and watch 'em fun."

Then he had the extreme audacity to attempt to lead them to couple of chairs.

Wild and Jim, however, after Alton had assured them that he would come around in the morning and make them an offer for the Triple Claim.

The mine owner had taken things very easy, no doubt thinking that our hero had failed to go to the mine, as had been expected.

A deep silence followed the arrival of Wild and Jim.

"Go ahead and have some more fun," our hero said, looking at Hop. "You seem to be the floor manager. Make everybody dance, and hurry up about it!"

But they all knew the young deathead, and they were afraid of him.

None attempted to dance.

"I guess this will make you start up the fun," he observed, coolly. "Now, just get in for all you are worth!"

That was enough!

Every man of them, including Simple Sam, began dancing.

The musicians played as they had not played before.

It seemed as if pandemonium had broken loose.

Wild let them go for about five minutes, and then the fired a shot at the floor.

As the report rang out the dancing and music ceased as if by magic.

"Now, everybody but Simple Sam has just got two musens to get out of here!"

The room was cleared in less than the allotted time, however, and then our two friends walked over to Simple Sam and invited him back to the storeroom.

He snickered a little and obeyed, as though he was glad to do so.

Wild put the key in his pocket when he locked the door.

This time.

"I don't know exactly what to do with Simple Sam, Jim," he said, as they put out the lights and went out.

"I think he is a harmless sort of a fellow," Jim ventured.

"It would be a good idea to send him away after you have settled accounts with Alton and the other three villains."

"I guess that will be a good idea. One thing, I would never trust the fool again."

"No, of course not. There is no telling what he might take a notion to do."

"Well, I believe I will take him up in the house with us and make the two Chinamen sit up and watch him as a punishment for having that drunken party in the office."

"Yes, that's so!"

They went back and brought the simpleton out, and then the programme was put in effect.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST OF THE FEMALE FRIEND.

Alton had been making a little remark when he found that the fool was gone.

When he left the hotel room after giving it out that he was going to retire, he had no intention of doing so just then.

He wanted to see Spring and the other villains he had in his employ before he went to sleep.

His wife was waiting for him when he went upstairs.

Though he had made up with her in the early part of the evening, she had become in an ugly mood again.

"You're going back to Denver to-morrow," was the salute he received.

"Yes, what's the matter, Daisy?" he asked, in surprise.

"Well, I have just made up my mind that I have got to commit murder in this town, and then leave it."

"Don't do better be careful, dear."

"You'd call me dear! I hate you, Alton—I hate you! You have got to give me the fifty thousand dollars you promised me, or I will make it so warm for you when I get to Denver that you will wish you had never seen me."

The mine owner's eyes flashed dangerously when he heard this.

But he held his temper by a great effort.

"All right!" he said. "It may as well be now as any other time."

Then he sat down and wrote out an order on a Denver bank for the amount she demanded.

"Here!" he exclaimed, handing it to her. "I never want to eyes on you again. I will send the clerk."

My mind may stay there until you have gone. Please be kind enough to leave what belongs to me in the room."

"All right!" she answered, with a scornful laugh, as she made sure that the draft was without a flaw. "Forget that you ever met me, Alton. You are rich, but you are not the one to give me the life I want to lead. Goodby."

The mine owner left the room without a word.

Then the woman sat down and pondered for perhaps half an hour.

"I wish I was out of this place!" she exclaimed. "But I have sworn to have the life of that girl who treated me so roughly in the post-office! I must fix her to-night! But how will I do it, so that I may escape punishment? Ah, I know. I will not on a suit of Alton's clothing and wear a mask."

Then I will be able to kill the bossy and make my escape. There is nothing too daring for me to attempt."

She packed up what she did not intend to wear on the morrow in a suit of her husband's.

She took her time about it and made a good job of it, being careful to fasten up her hair so it would not betray her.

When she was all ready she put a black mask in her pocket along with a revolver and a big knife.

Then she walked to the front window and looked out.

There was no chance of leaving the hotel by that way.

The scheming adventuress walked to the rear window.

There was just the chance she was looking for.

She stepped down to within seven feet of the ground.

As luck would have it, there was a tree right there for her to descend, so she did not hesitate very long in going out.

That the woman possessed plenty of nerve was evident, for she got out of the window and made her way down the slanting roof to the tree without any trouble.

Once in the trap it was easy enough to get to the ground, and when she had jumped to the side of that no one had seen her, she started around the rear of the hotel, and came out upon the street a few yards from the post-office. Making sure that her weapons were ready for instant use, the wife who had abandoned her husband walked to the post-office.

It was about nine o'clock, but the office was closed at seven, so there was no light in it.

"I shall make out that she wanted to get in the worst way, especially if she is a woman," said the constable, looking at his watch. "You can't get in there post-office hours, but I'll tell the drunken man, manster and standing himself. If you can't wait till morning you'd better go over to Murdock's house."

"The woman is Murdock's house, then?"

"I'll print it out ter yer. There it is right over there. It's the biggest house in the town, outside of her hotel and empty store."

"Thank you!" said, leaving the minor staring at her retreating figure, and then she went on her way to the house.

There were few people in the room at Murdock's residence, and soon Mrs. Alton was in front of the Murdock residence, and

But now the question arose as to how she was going to commit the crime she had come here to do. A light suddenly appeared in one of the upper windows of the house, and then the woman saw a female figure glide past it.

It was Arletta!

Her wide-brimmed purlover recognized her instantly.

"Ah! she exclaimed. "Jezebel is at hand. It will get up there, but with my knife in my hand! Why, there is a ladder just within by above order."

Momentarily Arletta was bustling about the room, putting things in order.

Suddenly she heard a slight noise.

Then it was that she turned and beheld what she took to be a man stepping through the window in the room. A black mask was over the face and a gleaming knife shone in the right hand of the intruder.

Arletta was so astonished that she was unable to speak for a second.

But she was not the one to faint or run screaming from her bed, for she had seen to her bosom intimately and out came her "standard" revolver.

"Stand right where you are!" she exclaimed. "The disguised woman had not anticipated meeting with such a reception as this.

She was thunderstruck. "Drop that knife, or I will drop you!" exclaimed Arletta, now as cool as though she was simply rehearsing for a play.

Down went the knife on the carpeted floor.

Then the faithful wife of the mine owner began backing to the door, shouting: "I will go out!" she faltered, her nerve leaving her entirely.

Arletta gave a start.

As quick as a flash she stepped forward and tore the mask from the intruder's face.

"Ah! she exclaimed, "so it is you, is it?"

"Yes, it is the lady you had the trouble with at the post-office, was the faint reply. "But I am going away. Let it drop, won't you, please?"

"But there is something to be dropped it is you," said the calm but determined woman to her partner. "I know it! I won't be satisfied until I have seen the man who has had the opportunity to do such a thing again! Now, you just hold up your hands, or I will shoot you dead in your tracks!"

The woman did not obey, nor did Arletta keep her word. She could not bring herself to shoot the woman down in cold blood.

Out of the window went Alton's misguided wife and then down the ladder she slid to the ground.

But brave Arletta was bound that she should not escape. Armed as she was, and revolver in hand, she went after her.

Very little noise was made, too, and the girl reached the foot of the ladder in time to catch sight of the disguised woman running down the street.

Straight for the town saloon the fugitive ran, knowing

that it would be impossible to turn the other way and reach the hotel.

The horses of some cowboy stood outside the saloon, and with a desperate resolve to escape, the woman dashed up to one of them.

She could ride horseback quite well, and by a mighty effort, she managed to mount one of the waiting steeds.

Arletta could have no doubt shot her as she rode away, but she did not do so.

She quickly mounted one of the other horses and started off.

The cowboys were making so much noise inside the saloon that the departure of the two steeds was not noticed.

Mrs. Alton was a good rider, but not nearly as good as brave Arletta.

Across an open lot went the fugitive, and after her came Arletta.

The trail leading to the Triple Claim was the first one they struck, and down it they went.

It was a rough trail, but the woman crept up, and when half a mile out of the town she was within twenty feet of the fugitive.

Then the woman did something she had not thought of before.

She drew the revolver she had in her pocket and fired at her pursuer.

But she was a poor shot!

The bullet went wide of the mark.

Arletta was not horse-shy at all, and in order to catch herself and keep from falling, the vicious woman dropped the revolver.

Arletta laughed.

"Now it will soon be over!" she said.

Suddenly Arletta noticed that they had reached the path that turned to the Triple Claim.

Then, much to her surprise, the horse of the fugitive dashed up the path.

This was rather disappointing to the girl, for the path was rather desolate, and she could not get alongside the woman as she had intended.

"Halt!" she shouted, "Stop, or I will shoot!"

A peal of laughter was all the reply she had got, for it seemed that Alton's wife had suddenly gone mad.

The derick and snarl of the Triple Claim could be seen right ahead of them now, and Arletta knew that the end of the race was at hand.

Suddenly she heard excited voices ahead.

The watchman and Texas McAville and Harry Larsen came running out of the saloon, by the faithful woman arrived and she was thrown to the ground.

But before Arletta could rein in her steed and dismount the desperate woman got up and started to run.

It was a fatal move for her!

Straight into the mouth of the shaft she dashed, and with a despairing shriek she went down to her death!

That ended the outcome of it all, Arletta related to the men who were with her, and she was buried in the same grave.

Texas McAville offered to go back with her, so they set

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Young Wild West and Jim Dart were just going to turn in for the night, after looking Simple Sam and the woman Chansman in the kitchen of the house, when there was a commotion outside.

There came a sharp knock upon the front door, and then a voice called out:

"Wild! Wild! Open the door!"

"That's Arletta!" cried Wild, hastening to answer the summons. Jim followed him to the door, and as it was opened they saw Arletta and a man on the step.

"What's the matter, Ed?" our hero asked, as the man up to him rather excitedly.

"I have had a great time, Wild," she answered.

Then she told all that had happened, while her hearers looked on with interest.

"I would in all my life," said our hero, "that looks anything yet!" So the elegantly-dressed lady had such a good

against you that she disguised herself as a man and came to the house to kill you, did she?"

"It seems strange that a woman could be so wicked as all that, don't it, Will?" Arietta answered.

"Well," observed Texas, shrugging his shoulders, "I guess the woman will never try to kill any one else. She went headfirst down the shaft. I was close enough to see it all. I thought it was a man until the young lady told us differently."

"You can go back to the mine," said Wild to the young man. "I will see to it that the two horses got back where they were taken from. Come, Arietta! I guess you will be glad to get in the house."

They mounted the two horses and rode over to the saloon. Evidently they had not been missed, so they simply left them with the reat.

Then they walked over to the Murdock house and found things in a great state of excitement there.

It had just been discovered that Arietta was not in the house, and that there was a ladder to the front window.

"I reckon I'd better take that ladder where it won't be so handy," said old man Murdock, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, when the story had been told and commented upon by the entire household. "I took it out there this mornin' ter look at ther roof of ther house what was a-jackin'. I oughter took it back, but I didn't. I don't know what won't happen next in this town, hanged if I do!"

It was after midnight when Wild returned to his residence.

The next morning they got up early and found the Sundowner and the two Chinamen sound asleep on the floor of the kitchen.

After they had breakfast and were about to take a walk over to the hotel, Cheyenne Charlie showed up.

He had heard about Arietta's adventure of the night before, and he was very much interested in it all.

"I wonder what has become of ther woman's husband?" he remarked. "I wonder if he's goin' ter stay here, after what he done about that feed business?"

"No, he isn't going to stay here, Charlie," answered Wild. "He is going to leave Weston, if he has not already done so, and he is going to have just about two hours to do it, too!"

"Are you goin' over to ther Gazon to see if he is there?"

"Yes, we were just going to start when you came."

"Good! I'll go with you."

When they walked into the bar-room of the hotel they found Proprietor Brown walking around in a perturbed state of mind.

"Good-morning, Brown!" said Wild, as he walked in. "Anything new?"

"Yes, Alton an' his wife is both misain' from ther house. We can't find either of 'em."

"Is that so? Well, we can enlighten you a little as far as ther woman is concerned. She is dead!"

Our hero told him briefly what had happened and the landlord was so much surprised that he could hardly get his breath.

While they were talking over the remarkable occurrence Charlie caught sight of four horsemen approaching.

They were Alton, Spring and the other two villains! Alton had told his three confederates of his wife's determination to leave him, and then he decided to stay with them until morning.

He was not a little worried over the outcome of the plot to get possession of the Triple Claim and kill Young Wild West, though.

But after sleeping it over he came to the conclusion that it would be best to put on a bold front and deny the story and try to throw it all upon Young Wild West.

"We will face the music, boys!" he exclaimed. "We will go over to the hotel and give it out that Young Wild West tried to sell me the property, and that while you fellows were down having a look at it the foul called Simple Sam started a row and two of our men were shot by Young Wild West when they shouldn't have been. My word is as good as his any day! All you have got to do is to swear to just what I say. No one will believe Simple Sam, anyhow, if Jim attempts to tell a straight story."

They walked in with Alton in the lead.

Wild, Charlie and Jim were the only inmates of the room besides the proprietor.

Our hero smiled and bade them a pleasant good-morning.

"Have you made up your mind what you can afford to offer for the Triple Claim, Mr. Alton?" he asked.

"What is the use of offering you anything different?" was the quick reply.

"Different, you say?"

"Yes, you refused to sign the deed last night, and then shot two of my men in a cold-blooded way. I guess I don't want any further dealings with you, Young Wild West."

Wild was staggered by the audacity of the man.

"So I refused to sign last night, eh?" he remarked. Well, I guess I was acting all right when I did it. I hardly believe you would refuse to sign a paper if you were bound and gagged and five men were standing over you threatening to kill you if you did not sign, would you?"

"That is all nonsense! What has that got to do with this case?"

"Mr. Alton, you are the most bare-faced liar I have ever met! Now, then, is that paper a fraudulent one or not?"

As the words left our hero's lips he pulled a revolver from his belt and pressed it against the man's nose.

As this happened Spring jerked a shooter from the holster that was attached to his belt and raised it to fire at Wild.

Crack!

Cheyenne Charlie had been too quick for him, and the villain's prement that death was near was verified.

"I'll admit that the paper is a fraudulent one," the mine owner gasped.

"As I just shows you are coming back to your senses," and Wild took the revolver away from his head. "Now, just let those fellows tell what happened last night."

"There ain't no use in our tellin' it," spoke up one of them. "You knows all about it. We tried ter make you sign ther paper, but you got ther best of us. Ther two what got shot went down because they meant ter kill you. That's all there is to it, Young Wild West!"

"We didn't want ter come back up'n," spoke up the other. "It was all Alton's don't. He said we'd face ther music, an' I reckon we have faced it."

"Yes, you have faced it," retorted our hero, with a laugh. "And now I am going to tell you two fellows what you have got to do! Go and get the undertaker to take care of the fellow on the floor there, and then send him over to the Triple Claim for the other two. If there isn't money enough on them to pay for the burial, see to it that the undertaker gets enough. Do you understand?"

"All right," said the two in a breath, and then they lost no time in going for the undertaker.

Wild now turned to the mine owner again.

"Alton," said he, "there is a body over in the mine that you have got to look after. It is that of your wife!"

The man turned pale and staggered back against the bar.

"I am telling the truth," went on our hero. "Your wife tried to kill my sweetheart last night, but, failing, fled on horseback and landed at the bottom of the shaft at the Triple Claim with a broken neck. You have got just two hours to attend the burial and get out of town. If you are not out at that time I'll shoot you, just as sure as I have possession of the Triple Claim!"

Alton called for a drink, and when he had swallowed it he sought the undertaker.

He gave him a thousand dollars and told him what to do. Then he took his belongings and went to the depot to wait the departure of the next train, which was in less than an hour.

Right here we will state that was the last ever seen of Alton, or any of his hirelings in Weston.

After the villains had left town Wild and his partners went over to the office of the company and had Simple Sam brought before them.

"Simple Sam," said Wild, looking him in the eyes, "you are not so foolish that you can't understand what I am saying to you, are you?"

"No, sir," was the reply.

"Well, then, you have a hundred dollars which the man called your uncle paid you last night, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, I will see you through, I guess. Just saddle that horse, throw your light out! Don't never come back to Weston, for if you do there may be a dead Sundowner here!"

"He, he, he!" giggled the simpiton.

Then he went away.

Young Wild West's Triple Claim proved to be a great paying one.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S CURIOUS COMPACT; OR, ARIETTA AS AN AVENGER."

HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

"The foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality."—George Washington's First Inaugural Address.

"The man who does not give his fullest cooperation to his country in this hour will die unhappy."—Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

"This flag which we honor and under which we serve is an emblem of our unity, our power, our thought and purpose as a nation. It has no other character than that which we give it from generation to generation. The choices are ours. It floats in majestic silence above the hosts that execute those choices whether in peace or in war."—Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

"The liberty loan should be first in the mind of every citizen now as the most pressing step toward victory and the establishment of a lasting peace. The obligation to subscribe rests especially upon the members of the League to Enforce Peace. Victory means in their view something more than even the success of the United States and our allies. Service to the league is inseparable from service to our country, and the way to serve our country just at this time is to buy her bonds."—William H. Taft, ex-President of the United States.

"Wars can not be fought without money. The very first step in this war, the most effective step that we could take, is to provide money for its conduct."

"This money is not going to be taken out of the country. All of this financing is a matter of shifting credits; it is not going to involve any loss of gold; it is not going to involve any loss of values. These moneys are going to be paid back into circulation, paid back properly into the channels of business and circulated and recirculated to take care of the abnormal prosperity of the country, a prosperity that will be greater in the present year than ever before in our history."—Secretary McAdoo in a speech at Des Moines in June.

DUTY AND INTEREST

Every holder of a Liberty Loan Bond and every prospective purchaser in the next issue of the Liberty Loan Bonds should bear in mind that the purchase of a Liberty Loan Bond helps the Government

of the United States, helps the citizens of the United States and helps the purchaser as a citizen as well as being at the same time a splendid private investment.

Moreover every purchaser of a Liberty Loan Bond serves humanity itself.

One can not serve his country or serve his fellow citizens without serving himself, his family, and posterity. The purpose of the Liberty Loan Bond is to make the world safe for Democracy, and every purchaser of a bond does something to that great end by which not only the present but future generations are benefited.

AIR CORPS OF 150,000 MEN NEEDED.

Mr. Howard E. Coffin, of the advisory commission of the Council of National Defense and chairman of the aircraft production board, has issued the following statement:

Dominance of the air has become vital to the success of any and all military operations. Both batteries and troops are under the modern conditions of war, wholly dependent for effective direction upon the eyes of the air service looking down upon the field of operations from thousands of feet up in the clouds. This dominance of the air is vital, but may be achieved only through the presence of aircraft of all kinds and in overwhelming numbers. This dominance may be achieved only when pilots are available of proper quality and in sufficient numbers. Moreover, manufacturing equipment for quantity production of machines must be available.

America is the last great reservoir in the world, not only for men of the right quality but for the materials and the equipments for quantity production as well. The permanent supremacy of the air must be America's greatest single contribution to the cause.

Whatever we do must be done quickly. All world's records for industrial development in a new art must be broken. Whatever of crimes there may be later laid at the door of the aircraft production board, that of inaction must not be one of them. Minor mistakes here and there because of speed may be forgiven, but lost time through inaction, never.

One hundred and fifty thousand officers and enlisted men, an army of the air great as our standing army of only a few months ago, will be needed. The task before us is a stupendous one. It is a task which appeals to our American people. All problems to be solved are industrial ones. The resources to be called into play are not such as will be used to any great extent in other lines of war work. American industry can make no greater contribution to the cause than through the establishment of the supremacy of the air.

STARTING AT THE BOTTOM

—OR—

THE BOY WHO WON OUT

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EXCURSION.

The next moment down shot the great car with a rush and roar; and the crash of breaking glass in windows nearby, and a great, gasping cry escaped the lips of the spectators as one person.

The sensation as the car dropped the seven stories was a peculiar one. The blood seemed to all try to rush to the head at once; there was a singing noise in the ears; then the car struck the air-chamber and was brought to a stop before reaching the bottom.

There was a slight jar as the bottom of the car struck the air-chamber, but nothing to speak of, and not a drop of water was spilled by Mr. Braithwaite, who held a glassful in his hand; nor was an egg broken, he having a bag of eggs in his other hand. The sound of breaking glass had come from a salesman in the basement dropping a glass water pitcher on the floor.

The car was lifted back up even with the first floor after the cable had been re-attached, and the four got out.

The people, when they saw that the occupants of the car were uninjured, gave utterance to wild cheers, which were taken up on the floor above and on up to the top floor.

The test had been a complete success. The safety device had been proven to be what its name implied.

Mr. Braithwaite was happy, and the proprietors of the store were satisfied.

The spectators were well satisfied, too, for they felt that they had witnessed something out of the ordinary, something to talk about.

Joe and Dave went back to their stations in the inspection department, and were soon hard at work. In a breathing spell, Dave said:

"How did you feel when we went shooting down the shaft, Joe?"

Joe shook his head and smiled.

"I hardly know, Dave," he replied.

"My heart was in my mouth."

"Well, so was mine."

"We couldn't have been more than two or three seconds in dropping, but it seemed to me more like an hour."

"That's the way it seemed to me."

"I believe, though, that the hardest time for me was just after Mr. Braithwaite gave the order to cut loose."

"So it was with me."

"If the door hadn't been shut then, I think I would have leaped out."

Joe laughed and acknowledged that he had had much the same feeling.

"Well, I'm glad that I was in the car that time," said Dave; "but I don't think I would care to try it again."

"Nor I," coincided Joe.

"There might be an accident next time."

"Yes, you never can tell."

That evening, just before closing time, Dave said to Joe:

"Let's take a ride on the lake to-morrow, Joe."

"Where to?"

"Why, across the lake to Michigan City."

"Is there an excursion?"

"Yes, one of the finest steamers on the lake makes the trip to-morrow."

"What's the fare?"

"One dollar for the round trip."

"Say, that's cheap, isn't it?"

"Yes; you'll go?"

"I believe I will."

"All right; be at the pier at nine o'clock sharp."

"I will, if I decide to go."

"Oh, you must go. I shall expect you. I want to go, and it isn't much fun for a fellow to go alone."

"So it isn't. Oh, I guess I'll be on hand."

"Don't fail!"

When Joe went home that evening, he told his mother and sister that Dave Wiegs wanted him to go on an excursion to Michigan City on the morrow.

"It's only a dollar for the round trip," said Joe.

His mother and sister saw that Joe wanted to go, and they urged him to do so.

"You have been working hard, and the outing will do you good," said Mrs. Barton.

"Yes, indeed!" from Anna.

"But an outing would do you two good, too," said Joe. "I'll go if you will."

"Oh, we don't need the outing as bad as you do," said his mother, but there was an eager look in her eyes that did not escape Joe, and he exclaimed:

"I'll go if you and Anna will go, but not other-

wise."

"But that would cost three dollars, Joe!" protested Mrs. Barton.

"It would cost five," said Joe, calmly, "for we would have to have something to eat, you know; but what of that? You know, we are one hundred dollars to the good that was given to me as a reward for my share in capturing those robbers."

"That's so!" exclaimed Anna; "oh, mother, let's go!"

"Do you really want us to go, Joe?" his mother asked.

"Do I really want you to go?" with a laugh. "Well, I should just remark that I do! I shall enjoy myself with you along; otherwise I should not, for I would be thinking about you, stuck here in these two little rooms, and it would spoil my enjoyment."

"Then we'll go!" his mother declared.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Anna, clapping her hands. "I've always wanted to take a ride on the lake!"

The three were up early next morning, and had breakfast over by seven o'clock.

Then they began making preparations for their trip.

They were ready by eight o'clock, and at once set out. They met the woman who lived across the hall from them as they were starting downstairs, and told her where they were going.

"Well, that'll be just fine!" she said. "You'll have a splendid time, I know."

"We hope so," said Mrs. Burton.

"I wish I could go with you."

"We wish so, too."

"But it's out of the question," with a shake of the head. "My husband works days, you know, and is home in the daytime only on Sunday, and I couldn't think of going away and leaving him."

"True," agreed Mrs. Barton. "Well, good-by."

"Good-by."

They went on down the street and set out for the pier. It was a quarter to nine when they got there, and Dave was already on hand. When he saw a woman and a girl with Joe, his jaw dropped, and there was a look of disappointment on his face. It cleared away, however, when he was introduced to Mrs. Barton and Anna. The girl was so sweet, pretty and winsome that Dave began to think the trip would not have been at all enjoyable if she hadn't come.

"Jove, but she's a fine girl!" was his mental comment. "I didn't even know Joe had a sister."

Dave was a good-looking youth, and was bright and quick, and Anna took a liking to him right away.

Joe noted this, and was not sorry, for he had taken a liking to Dave himself, and felt sure that his friend was the right kind of a boy.

"Dave," he said, "if it won't be too much trouble, I wish you would kind of look after sister a bit, while I take care of mother."

"With pleasure!" said Dave, promptly, and there was such decided earnestness and good will in his

tones that Anna blushed slightly, and Joe could hardly keep from grinning.

Mrs. Barton gave Dave a keen, appraising glance, and seemed to be satisfied.

"The first thing to do is to get our tickets," said Joe; "you stay here with mother and sis, Dave, and I'll go and get them."

"All right."

Joe made his way to the ticket office and bought four tickets, Dave having handed him a dollar to buy his with, and then the four went on board the steamer.

They got four seats not far from the stern, as it would be steadier here, and they would not be so likely to get seasick.

Promptly at nine-thirty the steamer started, and it moved majestically out into the lake, the band playing one of Sousa's liveliest and most inspiring marches.

"We're off!" exclaimed Joe, his eyes sparkling with delight.

"How do you like it, Anna?" asked Dave. He had progressed to that extent that he was calling her by her first name.

"It is fine—glorious!" was her reply, and as he gazed at her pretty, animated face and sparkling eyes, he thought that he had never seen a lovelier girl in all his life.

"Jove, I'm glad that Joe brought his mother and sister along!" was Dave's fervent mental comment.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOE SAVES A CHILD FROM DROWNING.

It was a lovely day, and everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The steamer was loaded with humanity, and among the passengers were many children, who were enjoying themselves hugely.

Sitting near the rail, and not far from where Joe and his mother and sister and Dave were stationed, were a young man of perhaps twenty-seven or twenty-eight years, a handsome young woman of twenty-two or twenty-three, and a little girl of about four years. The little girl was standing on the seat that ran alongside the rail, and had hold of the rail, which struck her about the chest. Her mother had hold of the child's dress.

Presently another young man and woman appeared, and they were evidently friends of the two with the child, for they exchanged joyous greetings. In doing so the mother unthinkingly let go of the little one's dress, and a sudden lurch of the steamer came at the same instant, and the little girl was thrown over the rail, and went flying through the air to the water, fifteen feet below.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

Mrs. John Lusk, who lives near Shelbyville, Ind., was running from a large blacksnake which had attacked her, when she fell, dislocating her left elbow and shattering the bones in the arm. Mrs. Lusk saw the snake making a raid on her poultry. Arming herself with a hoe she started after the reptile, but when it turned to strike at her she fled.

A hundred years ago a Rocky River farmer dumped a wagon load of potatoes into the Cuyahoga River because tight-fisted Clevelanders would not pay him more than 3 cents a bushel for them. Tom Kelly got wildly excited the other day because retail grocers, deluged by an immense increase in carlot receipts from the Dixie potato belt, cut the price from a mere \$1.40 a bushel to \$3.60.

"My son is with the American boys in France and I have no one to support me," pleaded Mrs. John M. Grant, who is blind, before the City Council, Columbus, O., while seeking permission to sing on the street for the pennies that may be given her. The Council had just accepted a new anti-begging ordinance. As a result of Mrs. Grant's appeal, which moved several of the Councilmen to tears, the ordinance may be modified so blind persons may seek alms.

By taking medicine without protest during a recent illness, J. B. Fox, of Endis, Okla., the two-year-old lineal descendant of Betsy Ross, designer of the American flag, earned money with which he paid for a Red Cross membership. His brother, Bernell, aged eleven, earned his membership by carrying papers. The third brother, Dick, seven years old, got his money by selling garden truck. The mother of the boys, before her marriage, was Miss Jessie Pearl Ross, fourth in line from Betsy Ross.

Metal obtained from the two bells stolen from the Catholic church at Fingal, Barnes County, N. D., one night recently and from the church at Saunders, four miles south of Fargo, the following evening, will net the thieves about \$1,500, according to State Architect Sam Crabbe. Bell metal is made of copper, brass, bronze and aluminum and some tin, which have soared in price since the war. Bell metal now should bring between 60 and 75 cents a pound, Mr. Crabbe said. It is believed the thieves are making Fargo their headquarters, and that after robbing the church at Fingal they worked their way east to Saunders and then into this city.

A machine that indicates the amount due in every man's pay envelope the instant it is wanted is among the latest office devices. This machine, it is said, gives the products of payrolls and distributes job

costs in far less time than the most expert clerk can deduct them by pencil and pad. A twist of the wrist gives the product of the most involved payroll fractions—whatever the rate per hour or the hours worked may be. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the fact that the machine does not compute products; instead, it has 18,340 computed products which cover all conventional payroll figures. The machine occupies little space and is compact and portable.

In the addressing of envelopes on a typewriter a considerable amount of time and labor is expended in feeding the envelopes into the machine. This ordinarily requires three operations: Picking up an envelope from a pile, placing it in the machine, and straightening it. Fitting all machines and sold at a reasonable price, there has of late been introduced a machine which automatically feeds envelopes into a typewriter, one by one, and each in perfect alignment. The machine takes one hundred or more envelopes at a time, and feeds them automatically so that there is always an envelope in position.

To meet any possible coal shortage in the West next winter, more extensive use of fuel wood from the National forests is urged by the Government's foresters. The supervisors of the 152 National forests will afford all possible facilities to local residents wishing to obtain cord wood, which settlers may obtain free for their home use, and which is sold at low rates to persons cutting and hauling in order to sell to others. During the last fiscal year more than 30,000 permits for the free use of National forest timber, mainly in the form of fuel wood, were taken out by local residents. The amount of timber involved approximated 250,000 cords.

Arrangements have been completed by a fish corporation for the erection of a number of cold storage plants at various places on the coast of Newfoundland. The principal plant will be erected in the city of St. John and will occupy ground space of about 245 feet by 90 feet. The plan calls for a six-story building, but only three stories will be erected at present. The basement will be of concrete, and above this the walls will be constructed of local brick, of which about 725,000 will be required. The lower flat will contain the freezing apparatus, having a refrigerating capacity of 150 tons, where fresh fish will be frozen in about two hours. The ammonia plant for making artificial ice for preserving bait and for use on cars and steamers will be on the same floor. The second and third stories will be used for storage purposes. The entire building will have a capacity of about 10,000,000 pounds of frozen fish.

GOING IT BLIND

OR

UNDER SEALED ORDERS

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER V (Continued).

Then they began talking of the trip to Tangier, and all were eager and interested.

"When does the steamer sail, Bob?" asked Charlie.

"The day after to-morrow."

"In the evening?"

"Yes."

"Then we have less than two days in London."

"Oh well, we can see a great deal in that time," said Elsie.

"True," agreed Lucy.

"And I guess you want to get to Fez as quickly as possible, eh, Lucy?" grinned Bob.

"That will do," she said warningly, but with a blush.

"Oh, Charlie knows about you and Fred," Bob chuckled. "I told him."

Lucy gave him a slap.

"You talk too much, Bob," she said, as severely as she could.

He laughed easily.

"I know it," he agreed. "I always did talk too much. I guess I'll never get over it, and just let me get within talking distance of old Kaisuli and I'll talk him out of his prisoners, or know the reason why."

"Is there more than one prisoner?" queried Lucy.

"Yes, Mr. Perdicaris' stepson, Cromwell Varley; he is an English subject."

"And you will rescue them both, if possible; of course."

"Yes, but of course I am interested more in Perdicaris, because he is an American citizen."

"I see," was the reply.

They talked on till dinner time, and then Charlie and Bob went into their room to get ready to take the girls down to the dining-room.

A surprise awaited Charlie, for when he looked for his sealed orders they were gone!

He stared blankly at the table on which he had placed the letter when he ran out to see what the disturbance was about in the hall. Bob noted the action on the part of his companion, and asked:

"What is it, old man?"

"My sealed orders! They're gone!"

"What!"

"Yes, I laid them right here," and he placed his hand on the table.

"They may have blown off onto the floor."

They looked all around, but the letter was nowhere to be found.

It had disappeared, completely and mysteriously.

"Somebody must have taken it," said Charlie, and then he stopped suddenly and looked quickly at Bob. "I'll wager that's it!" he exclaimed.

"What?" queried Bob.

"Julian Felix—that fellow you had the struggle with! He took my sealed orders, and I'll wager anything on it!"

"Likely you are right. Let's go to his room and make him hand them back!"

"All right."

They hastened out and along the hall, and opened the door of Felix's room, and entered.

It was vacant.

Felix was not there. More, his luggage was missing!

"He's skipped out!" cried Bob.

"I guess you're right," agreed Charlie.

"Come on down, and we'll ask the clerk."

They hastened down to the lobby, and the clerk nodded assent in answer to their question.

Yes, the bushy-whiskered gentleman had departed a few minutes ago, without explaining why he was going so suddenly.

"Of course, he didn't say where he was going," said Charlie.

"No."

"Maybe we can find him," said Bob.

"Well, we won't try, at present, anyhow. Let's go up and bring the girls down to dinner."

"Just as you say."

CHAPTER VI.

A COUPLE OF CABLEGRAMS.

When the girls learned of the theft of Charlie's sealed orders they were very indignant.

"Will it harm you much, Charlie?" asked Elsie.

"No, not much, for I guess Felix knew what I intended to do, anyway, through listening at the

keyhole; but of course, having the orders gives him full knowledge of what work I am expected to do."

"If it isn't necessary for you to have the orders, I wouldn't bother any more about it," said Bob. "You remember them, don't you?"

"Yes, every word."

"Then that is all that you need. And it would do no good to get them away from Felix now, for he has read them, and knows every word by heart."

"True; I'll just let him keep them—unless we should accidentally bump up against each other, in which case I shall demand the letter or satisfaction."

"Likely he will be aboard the steamer that we are to take for Tangier," said Bob.

"It will be about like him," agreed Charlie. "He has plenty of nerve, and that's a fact."

"I suppose he will doff his whiskers and appear in his own proper person."

"Probably. The necessity for disguise no longer exists, since he has discovered all that he needs to know, anyway."

"I'd feel like chucking him overboard if I were in your shoes, Charlie."

"He almost deserves to be treated that way."

"What do you think he intends to do?" asked Elsie.

"It is my belief that he was angry because I was given this assignment, and that he went to the editor-in-chief of a rival paper, and offered to follow me and learn where I was going, and for what purpose, and he no doubt promised that he would go in and beat me at my own game; so I will have to look out for Julian Felix all the time, as well as to be on my guard against capture by Raisuli."

"Surely he would not do you personal harm, Charlie?" from Elsie, with rather an anxious air.

"Oh, I don't think so, Elsie."

After dinner was over the four went out on the streets and walked around a while, and Charlie went into a cable office and cabled to Mr. Wilson, editor-in-chief of the Monitor:

"Have read orders. Sail for Tangier on Thursday. Will do my best. CHARLIE FORD"

"There," he said to his companion, "now I am ready to give myself up to enjoyment for two days, and then we will be off for Morocco to storm the Sultan in his palace, and the Riflian outlaw Raisuli in his mountain fastnesses."

"You will stay in Fez a few days, won't you?" asked Elsie.

"Yes, Elsie. I want to have a talk with the Sultan, and get him to assist me in every way possible."

They made their way slowly back to the hotel, and went to their rooms, and were soon in bed and asleep.

Charlie Ford was correct in his suspicions—Julian Felix had indeed stolen the letter.

Julian, immediately after having retreated to his

room, after his struggle with Bob Haynes, had decided that he must leave the hotel, as it would be impossible to spy on Charlie, now that his presence was known. He picked up the wig and false beard, from where they had been thrown by Bob, and placed them on a stand. Then he stepped to the door, opened it a trifle, and looked out. He was just in time to see the four disappearing in the little parlor.

The thought occurred to him: Might he not enter Charlie's room and secure the sealed orders?

"I'll wager he threw them down on the stand, or somewhere, when he rushed out a few minutes ago," was his thought. "Jove, I'll go and see, at any rate. It's a good chance, and if I can get the sealed orders then I will know exactly what he is expected to do, and can strike out to defeat his plans."

He stepped softly out in the hall, and stole to Charlie's room and opened the door gently and entered. Closing the door, he glanced around him eagerly.

Sure enough, lying on the stand at one side of the room was a letter.

"The sealed orders!" breathed Julian, eagerly, and then he stepped across and seized the letter. A glance was sufficient to tell him that he was right, that it was the letter he wanted, and thrusting it in his pocket, he quickly but silently left the room and returned to his own.

He donned his wig and false beard, took up his grip and suitcase, and then left the room and made his way softly along the hall and down to the office.

"I am going to private quarters," he told the clerk. And then he took his leave.

But he went to another hotel, not to private quarters, for he knew no one in the great city, and he was soon installed in a room on the second floor.

Here he drew the letter from his pocket and read it carefully from beginning to end.

"Good enough," he murmured. "Now I know just what Charlie is going to try to do, and I can shape my plans accordingly. I shall first try to spoil his plans, and later I shall try to make a success of them, myself. If I can rescue Perdicaris and his stepson my paper will get the credit, and my fortune will be made, for I can have a paying position on the staff as long as I want it. And I'll do it! Yes, I must and will do it!"

Then he placed the letter in his pocket and went downstairs to the clerk's desk, and inquired the way to a cable office. He was given the directions, and was soon in the office. Here he sent this message to the editor-in-chief of the Daily Scimitar:

"The rescue of Perdicaris and his stepson from the hands of the Riflian outlaw, Raisuli, is the purpose of the Monitor reporter's 'sealed orders' assignment. I shall do my part, as I promised, and the Scimitar shall score a big beat sure. Start for Tangier Thursday.

"Signed,

Julian Felix."

(To be continued.)

NEWS OF THE DAY

SIMPLE DIET MAKES LONGEVITY.

Mrs. Marion Sparks Banister of No. 5917 Maple Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., celebrated her 100th birthday the other day. She attributes her longevity to the fact that she has subsisted upon a simple diet, she has been cheerful and unworried in the face of adversity. She is an inveterate tea drinker, and her favorite dessert is old English plum pudding from a recipe said to have been made famous by Queen Victoria. She drinks tea for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

RUBBER BOOTS SAVED HIM.

The fine new large barn on the C. B. Lamb farm west of Charlotte, Mich., in Carmel Township, which is occupied by Grant Kiplinger, was struck by lightning and the siding was torn off from top to bottom on both gables, the barn being about 50 feet in height.

Mr. Kiplinger was standing in the barn at the time, and the stable doors within two feet of him, were shivered and he was stunned but not hurt by the shock. The fact that he was wearing rubber boots probably saved him from instant death.

The barn fortunately did not catch fire. It is 40 by 80 feet in size, cost \$3,000 and is being built to replace the large barn destroyed by fire last autumn.

HOW TO TEST DIAMONDS.

The public is frequently deceived in regard to the sale of jewelry and precious stones, and the authorities have issued a statement upon the accurate testing of diamonds.

When a diamond is quite clean and dry, the following experiment should be tried. Place on the surface a tiny drop of water and then take a needle or pin and try to move the drop about. If the diamond is genuine, the drop can be rolled about intact. On the other hand, where the gem is an imitation the water spreads directly it is touched with the needle-point.

Another very good test may be carried out with a tumbler of water. Into this put the suspected article and examine its appearance. A real diamond will show up in the water with a startling clearness, and it can never be confounded with the water. On the other hand, the imitation looks indefinite and it is sometimes difficult to see it at all.

CAMELS DESPISE BULLETS

The Camel Transport Corps, although not exactly a fighting force, has been in action and received its baptism of fire, says a correspondent of "The Manchester Guardian." No shell or bullet can excite the stolid, contemplative animal; but it might have been

expected that the camel drivers, unarmed and untrained for war, would have run for it at the first sign of attack. Yet, in fact, most of them responded admirably to the call of their British officers and stuck to their animals while bullets whizzed around. With characteristic simplicity, or it may be obstinacy, they insisted on bringing their camels to shelter they insisted on taking with them the blankets which are issued to every man, lest they should be stolen in their absence. Some wanted to mount a hill under fire to get their money from their tents.

The contempt which a Soudanese stalwart feels for the modern long-range fighting was expressed by one head-man—the more warlike Soudanese regularly act as head-men over the Egyptian fellahen—who remarked, as the shells burst, that in his country they "fought it out with knives."

COILS OF SMUGGLED COPPER IN OIL TANK.

A sharp-nosed, sinister-looking, gray craft, lean as a greyhound, raced down the harbor recently and brought up alongside the Norwegian tanker Conrad Mohr just as the latter was starting to breast the long rollers of the ocean on her way to Norway. The gray boat was a United States torpedo destroyer, and when she had stopped the Conrad Mohr a young man with a business-like and alert manner clambered swiftly up the companion-way ladder.

The man was Acting Deputy Collector Gass, and he and other Government agents made a careful search of the Norwegian. She had dropped down toward the open sea from her Bayonne pier, and in a few minutes would have been outside Sandy Hook.

Gass and the revenue officers probed the oil tanks while the ship's officers looked on. With a boat-hook Gass got a grip on a copper cable and hauled it forth. Investigation showed that there was 10,000 feet of heavily insulated cable, neatly coiled. Copper is contraband of war, and the cable did not appear on the ship's manifest. Copper is at a premium in Germany now, and government agents are wondering if they have uncovered a big plot to smuggle copper into Germany. For a long time their attention has been closely occupied with Scandinavian boats certain of which are known to have carried mail which was not delivered through the customary channels. Only last week a Swede was detained for slipping a packet of letters to a steward on a Scandinavian boat.

Gass ordered the ship back to Bayonne and informed her captain, Peter Einarsen, and the chief engineer, John Larsen, that they would have to appear before a United States Commissioner, charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States by filing a false manifest. They were held under bail of \$25,000 each for examination.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, AUGUST 31, 1917.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher,
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Good Current News Articles

George Rimsky, an assistant section foreman for the Jersey Central Railroad, is the most successful trout fisherman in the Lehigh Valley this season. Almost daily he catches the limit allowed per day, which is forty.

Miss Dagne Drathen, a member of the 1917 graduating class of the Hayward High School, has a perfect mark for regular school attendance, as she did not miss a day, nor was tardy, from September in 1905, when she entered the kindergarten of the local schools, until this year, when she received a high school diploma.

When E. B. Griswold started to recruit his employees recently to reopen his pencil factory here he discovered that all the girls who had formerly worked for him were married. He will have to find an entirely new force. During the three years that he has operated the factory twenty-six girls who worked for him have married.

Michael Schiller of Freedom, Mich., is in receipt of a postal card, mailed to him for the second time from Imlay City. Schiller first received the card the day before the cyclone struck his farm recently. The wind carried the card northward, till it finally landed sixty miles away in the yard of an Imlay City man, who considerately mailed it back to Mr. Schiller.

J. D. Gwin of Sharon, S. C., has a "grandfather" clock. He is able to trace its age back 127 years, and is of the opinion that it is much older. The works were brought over from England and the frame of black walnut, inlaid with maple, was made in this country by a cabinetmaker named Samuel Gill. The clock has never ceased to keep accurate time, not a penny has been spent on it for repairs of any sort, and its present condition is excellent.

The wheat harvest in Australia for the present season of 1916-1917 is the largest on record. One result of such favorable conditions is that the European field mice in this colony have increased to such an extent that they are doing enormous damage throughout the states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Their attacks upon the wheat lying stacked in bags awaiting shipment alone threaten loss to the extent of millions of dollars. To save this wheat all the stacks are being surrounded with mouse-proof fences of galvanized iron with openings left every 16 feet, in which are placed kerosene tins, sunk in the ground with 6 inches of water in the bottom. The mice already in the stacks when this miniature fortification is put in place must go out for water, and when they try to do so they fall into the tins. At one country railroad station nearly ten thousand mice were caught in this way in a single night. The experiment of driving the pests out of a stack by using the fumes of carbon bisulfide has also been tried with some success. In some districts the mice are dying in large numbers from skin diseases.

Grins and Chuckles

"Harry is employed by a railroad company now, I understand?" "Yes; he has charge of the puzzle department." "The what?" "He makes out the time-tables."

"What are you going to bring your boy up as, Ezekiel?" "Think I'll fit him for a position in the Weather Bureau." "Why so?" "Oh, he's always complaining about his coins hurting him when a storm's coming."

"Does the man drink," asked a prospective employer of the solid citizen who had recommended a friend for a position. "He drinks like a fish." "Why do you recommend him, then?" "That's why—a fish drinks only water."

Physician (looking into his ante-room, where a number of patients are waiting)—Who has been waiting longest? Tailor (who has called to present a bill)—I have, doctor. I delivered the clothes to you three years ago.

"When that bad boy threw stones at you why didn't you come and tell me instead of throwing back at him?" said the good little boy's pious mother. "Tell you?" said the good little boy. "Why, you couldn't hit a barn door."

"Who gave the bride away?" asked Mrs. Jones of her daughter, who had just returned from the wedding. "Her little brother," replied the daughter; "he stood up in the middle of the ceremony and yelled, 'Hurrah, Blanche, you've got him at last.'"

NED DUMFREY

By Col. Ralph Fenton

Mike Dumfrey was a longshoreman. Finding it difficult to get steady employment, he shipped as a green hand for a whaling voyage on the Walrus.

When Mike sailed, he left behind him in New York a wife and three children, one an infant.

He gave his wife the greater part of his advance pay, and for some time she managed to live comfortably, for she was a hearty, industrious woman.

Her two oldest children were of considerable service to her. Bridget, her daughter, was a careful, intelligent girl, large enough to take care of the baby, and Ned, though he was only ten years old, full of mischief and fond of play, was made useful in various ways.

For a while after the Walrus sailed, she was heard of from time to time. Then vessel after vessel came from the South Pacific Ocean, where she was supposed to be cruising, but brought no news of her.

The winter set in, and to make matters worse, Mrs. Dumfrey slipped and fell upon the icy pavement, injuring herself so severely that she was confined to her bed for several months.

Ned behaved like a hero. Procuring a brush and blacking, he made himself a box, and was out early and late in all kinds of weather, shining boots and shoes.

He was so industrious that he overworked himself, and that, with exposure, made him sick.

Mrs. Dumfrey's little savings melted away, and before spring came she had to sell most of her furniture, and part of the clothes of herself and children to get food.

Being unable to pay for apartments in a tenement house, she moved into a shanty on the rocks near Ninety-sixth street.

The shanty was a miserable affair, built of old goods boxes, and covered with pieces of sheet iron.

The fireplace was made of pieces of unhewn rock, and the top of the chimney was a barrel plastered on the inside with mud. Mrs. Dumfrey rented it for a dollar a month.

Thankful that Ned and herself had recovered their health, she cheerfully went to work taking in washing and occasionally going out to do a day's house-cleaning. She left her new address at the office of the owners of the Walrus.

Ned continued blacking boots and shoes, but found time to become quite an expert at pitching pennies. Early one morning, about six months after they went to live in the shanty, Mrs. Dumfrey shook him to awaken him.

Ned got up, and after breakfast took his box and went down-town, but he could scarcely get anything to do. At five o'clock in the afternoon he had only made twenty-five cents.

He was standing on Broadway, in front of a hotel, when Jim Stanton, a well-known sporting man, ac-

companied by two companions, came out, got into a carriage, and drove off.

Just after they left, Ned saw something sparkling in the gutter. It was a breastpin.

He put it in his pocket and resumed his lookout for customers.

In the meantime, Jim Stanton had not proceeded but a short distance when he suddenly discovered his loss.

Stanton was very much worried, and when he got to the hotel, said to several persons that were lounging around the door:

"I've lost a breastpin, either in the hotel, or as I was getting in the hack, and I'll give five hundred dollars to any one who will return it to me."

Ned was standing near by and heard the remark. Taking the diamond out of his pocket, he held it up and asked:

"Is this yer breastpin?"

"Yes, said Staton, eagerly, taking the pin. "I'm in luck this time sure. Where did you get it?"

"It was layin' in ther street, an' I picked it up."

"Well, you are a made boy. I offered five hundred dollars for the recovery of the pin, and you get it."

Telling Ned to follow him, Stanton went into the hotel, procured paper and pen, asked Ned what his name was and where he lived, and then wrote a statement about the finding of the diamond.

Having affixed his name and address to the paper, Stanton enclosed it with five hundred dollars in an envelope, and handed it to Ned.

Ned thanked him, and left the hotel.

Alf Sims, a heavy-set man with a villainous countenance, paid close attention to what was said and done.

So, when Ned left the hotel, Sims followed and kept him in sight. Sims lived on Fortieth street, and, as Ned went in that direction, he was in no hurry to overtake the unsuspecting boy.

Ned struck into Third avenue, and at the corner of Fortieth street was overtaken by Sims, who said:

"Hello, bub! Would you like to make a quarter?"

"What do you want me to do for it?" asked Ned.

"I want you to carry a letter up to Eighty-fifth street and Third avenue. All you will have to do will be to leave it, and I will pay you in advance."

"Where's ther letter? I'm goin' that way."

Sims led the way to a dilapidated-looking house, opened the door with a latch-key, and bade Ned come in.

The moment Ned stepped into the corridor Sims locked the door.

Ned followed him to a back room upon the second floor, upon entering which his conductor was asked by a woman with:

"Well, Alf, did you make a raise?"

"Yes," he replied, "a splendid one. What do you think of this boy? He is worth five hundred dollars to us."

"Pooh! that little beggar? I would not give a penny for him; and if you are going to try the Charley Ross game, you'll get sick of it before long."

"I'm not a beggar," replied Ned, indignantly. "I work for my livin'."

"No, you are not, my boy," assented Sims. "You've got plenty of money, so I'll trouble you for that five hundred dollars."

He grabbed Ned by the shoulder and took the envelope containing the money.

Turning to the table, Sims tore open the envelope, spread the bills upon the table, and asked his wife what she thought of that.

"It's a windfall, indeed," she replied. "But what will you do with the boy?"

"Lock him in the cellar, when we are ready to leave, which will be in a few hours."

On hearing this, Ned, who had been completely dumfounded by the expeditious manner in which he was robbed, slipped out of the room, intending to get into the street and run for the police.

But he had scarcely moved before Sims uttered an oath and rushed after him.

In the confusion of the moment Ned turned to the left, on the landing, and did not discover his mistake until he found himself at the foot of the flight of stairs leading to the story above, instead of at the top of those that extended from the lower floor.

Without reflecting where he was going, he darted up the steps closely pursued by Sims.

After ascending two flights of stairs, Ned found himself at the scuttle opening on to the roof.

He raised it, stepped out on the top of the house, and found he could go no further, as the house was isolated from those adjoining it.

Ned had scarcely made this unwelcome discovery, when Sims made his appearance on the roof, closed the scuttle, and tried to catch him.

"Now, you little villain," said Sims, who was puffing and blowing, seizing him by the collar, "I guess your running days are over."

Then the pursuit commenced again, and continued until Ned, seeing no other way of escape, jumped into the top of a chimney, and commenced to descend.

For a short distance he got on very well, then coming to where the flue widened, he slipped and went tumbling down, until he struck in the fireplace of the room where Mrs. Sims was.

She had just got through counting the money and replaced it in the envelope, when Ned, black as charcoal from head to foot, bounced out of the chimney in a cloud of soot.

He darted toward the door, and seeing the envelope with the money in it on the table, instinctively grabbed it as he passed.

He fairly flew downstairs, threw open the front door, jumped into the street, and never paused until he got home.

His mother was overjoyed, when she saw the money, heard the story, and read the letter.

She then went to bed and dropped off to sleep. An hour passed; she was sleeping peacefully, and

the water in the kettle was boiling and bubbling, when the door of the shanty was cautiously opened and Alf Sims entered with a dark lantern in his hand.

Putting the lantern on the table, he drew a knife, and awakened Mrs. Dumfrey.

About this time, Ned, who slept on a pallet in one corner of the room, waked up, and saw what was going on.

Slipping to the stove, he got a large dipper full of boiling water, and swish it went on the back of Sims' neck, making him yell and wheel around.

He jumped at Ned and seized him, but before he could do anything more Mrs. Dumfrey was combing his hair with a three-legged stool.

Sims tried to beat a retreat, but he was met at the door by a man in sailor's garb, who tripped him up and secured him.

The newcomer was Mike Dumfrey, who had arrived in port that evening, and had just found his way home.

The Walrus was caught in the ice, but finally got out safe, and returned with a full cargo of oil.

Sims was tried and sent to the penitentiary. With his own savings and Ned's five hundred dollars Mike Dumfrey went into business and prospered.

SPECULATORS HOLDING ALASKA FARM LANDS.

Several real estate speculators are arranging to establish offices or connections in Eastern cities of the United States with a view to selling Alaska farm lands. A decent regard for the best interests of this Territory justifies the publication of the fact that the only Alaska farm lands for sale are the homesteads which have been patented, many of which have passed into the hands of speculators for merely nominal considerations, and are to be offered to the outside public at prices of \$50 to \$100 per acre.

Of course there is not a chance on earth to sell Alaska farm lands to anybody but a sucker, for the simple reason that any man can get 160 acres absolutely free by merely going to a land office and signing his name to an application, and the land thus acquired will be fully as good and often better than any land the speculators have for sale at any price.

Any number of cases could be specifically named where newcomers have bought land in Alaska, paying from \$10 to \$75 an acre only to discover later that the land across the road was free to anybody for the asking.

The man who contemplates coming to Alaska to farm would better keep his money for improvements and take a piece of free land from the United States Government rather than make a present of it to some agreeable gentleman who has nothing better to offer for cash than the Government gladly supplies free.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

CAUGHT BABY IN MIDAIR.

Mrs. Mary Lopiccola, of Stony Road, Cal., and her two babies were saved when Joseph Stinger, a liveryman, checked a runaway horse. The horse struggled a moment and then came to a sudden halt, the impact of the stop hurling the six-months-old child of Mrs. Lopiccola into the air. At this moment Jack Greggs stepped into the scene, catching the baby in mid-air as it fell.

CAMEL IN BIG DEMAND.

Along the banks of the Suez Canal and thence along the old coast road to the east you will find to-day between the endless series of British encampments caravans of camels passing to and fro with their burdens or lying patiently at their managers and chewing the cud with that tranquil expression of the beast, which no stress of war can disturb.

There are more camels gathered here than ever were assembled in the bazaars of Cairo or Damascus. Though the defence of Egypt has been carried forward from the canal itself to the hills and dunes of the Sinai desert and to the Land of Promise beyond, the canal is still an integral part of the defensive scheme. Roads and railways, it is true, run out here and there eastward from the bank, but there remains a vast hinterland unreclaimed from the desert waste, in which our troops continually move.

FISHING FOR SHARK, NEW HAWAIIAN SPORT.

Hawaiian waters teem with fishes in infinite variety of form and color, and there is splendid fishing in the island waters. There is a constantly increasing number of enthusiasts who are finding great sport with rod and line from boats along the reefs or from rocky points in the swirling surf.

The Hawaii Tuna Fishing Club of Honolulu offers exceptional facilities to the angler in reaching the famous game fishing grounds, and under its direction it has brought the sport into national prominence.

The world's record for tuna catches was made in Hawaiian waters by mainland sportsmen. The Tuna Club now has a well equipped rendezvous at Kihei, Maui, while similar fishing is accessible from Honolulu, Halaweia, Hilo, Kailua and Waimea as bases.

The mainland game fishermen now rendezvous in the "winter" season at Honolulu, bringing their fishing boats with them. Among the game fishes are the yellow and blue fin tuna, ono, ulua and swordfish.

Another sport which is coming to be much in vogue is that of shark fishing. Generally these monsters of the deep can be lured in large numbers by

trolling an animal carcass a mile or two offshore the day before.

Almost daily in the tourist seasons parties of hotel guests are made up for this most exciting sport. A power launch is used for the purpose. Cautiously approaching the quarry, a harpoon is thrown into the back of one of the monsters or he is induced to snap a baited hook.

In either case the excitement begins at once, and the boat is often towed for a long time by the powerful fish before it is killed. The spice of adventure adds to the fascination of this sport.

URGE RAISING OF RABBITS FOR MEAT.

Rabbits, which have proved a valuable source of food in Europe during the present war, may well be raised more extensively in America by way of reducing the drain on the ordinary meat supply, according to biologists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The business of growing rabbits, the specialists point out, can be carried on by youths and adults not engaged in military or other national service, or in regular industrial employment. The animals may be raised in back yards of cities and towns as well as on farms.

The Belgian hare, says a statement by the United States Department of Agriculture, breeds rapidly, matures quickly, and produces a palatable and highly nutritious meat. The cost of production is less than that of any other meat, not excepting poultry. The supply can be greatly increased within a few months, without requiring space that may be needed for the production of crops. Practical experience has demonstrated that rabbit meat can be produced in unlimited quantities at a cost of about six cents a pound; and by utilizing lawn cuttings and other vegetation that would otherwise be wasted, the cost can be made even lower.

The Belgian and Flemish giant rabbits are recommended for meat production, as the ordinary lame rabbit is smaller and develops more slowly. Stock of Belgian hares may be bought from breeders in nearly all the States at \$1 to \$3 each. They may occasionally be had from pet stock dealers. Fancy pedigreed stock is not required for meat production.

Rabbits are easily kept, say the experts. They eat hay, grass, lawn cuttings and green vegetation of many kinds. Females should be allowed to breed when eight or ten months old, and during the year should raise four litters of about six young each. Well fed, the young reach marketable size, when three to four months old and average from five to six pounds live weight.

The Department of Agriculture has published a bulletin on raising rabbits, which will be helpful to those who wish to engage in this pursuit.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

VIOLATED BONE DRY LAW.

A local shoemaker of Independence, Kan., was brought into Police Court one day charged with violation of the Bone Dry Law. He was accused of slipping small bottles of whisky into the shoes of favored customers. "The drinks are on me," he said when confronted with the evidence and witnesses.

FISH HAD FOUR FEET.

While fishing in the Iowa River Raymond Peterson caught a strange thing. Local scientists have pronounced it a "hiciperotisbygoshaway," but some of our best nested Nimrods say it is a mud puppy. Anyway, it was a strange looking critter with a body shaped like an eel. It was 24 1/2 inches long. It had a head like a fish with the exception that instead of gills it had a collar of fur just back of the head. It had four legs and in some respects resembled a baby alligator. The little animal put up a pretty zame fight for a while, but it soon died when exposed to the air. It will be sent to a New York museum.

COWBELLS SAVES CHERRIES.

W. A. Bull of Igo, Cal., saved his big cherry crop with cowbells operated by a water wheel.

Bull has an orchard on South Fork Creek. His cherries ripened, but as fast as they matured birds picked them off. Bull rigged up some ordinary scarecrows. They did well enough for a day or so, or until the wise birds detected the fraud.

As a last resort Bull tied several cowbells in the treetops, and to the tinklers attached strings, which he jerked from his front porch. The cowbells' jangling scared the birds away all right and bid fair to save the cherry crop, but Bull got tired of jerking the strings all day long.

Now he has a water wheel that runs his wife's churn. So Bull attached the strings to the churn dasher. As the water wheel went its rounds the churn dasher bobbed up and down and the cowbells kept up their jangling in the treetops all day long. The birds were scared away effectually and Bull saved his cherry crop.

CHINA HAS THE BIGGEST BELL.

Moscow claims the distinction of possessing the largest bell in Christendom to be in actual use. Its weight is 128 tons. The qualifying phrase "in Christendom" is used because China claims to have at least two bells, also in actual use, which are even larger.

The larger of these may be seen in the great Buddhist monastery not far from Canton. It is eighteen feet high and has a circumference of forty-five feet, being cast in solid bronze. It is one of eight monastery bells that were cast toward the

end of the fourteenth century by command of the Emperor Yung-lo. During the process of casting eight men lost their lives.

On both sides it is covered with an inscription in embossed Chinese characters about half an inch in length, covering even the top piece from which it swings, the total number being 84,000. The second bell, which is three feet shorter than its rival at Canton, hangs in a temple of its own to the north of Peking, almost on the way to the Great Wall of China.

HOW WAR IS USING UP TONS OF OUR METAL.

Up to date the warring Allies of Europe have placed orders for 35,000,000 shells in the United States. This means a lot of valuable metal going to waste, for these orders require a total of 101,000,000 pounds of copper, 46,750,000 pounds of spelter and 173,250 pounds of lead.

A British 18-pound, or 3.3-inch shrapnel, requires 5 pounds 9 1/8 ounces of brass, containing 66 to 70 per cent of copper, or nearly 3 3/4 pounds.

A small copper band around the shell adds 4 3/4 ounces, making the total copper 4.04 pounds. Spelter consumption per shell of this size is about 1.87 pounds. Lead bullets weighing 7.92 pounds constitute the metal load of the projectile.

One pound of copper is used in making 24 Lebel rifle cartridges. Every 125 of these cartridges consume 1 pound of spelter and a small amount of nickel. Steel consumption per shell varies more widely with the different types.

SOMETHING ABOUT POWDER AND GUNS.

Just 33 complete chemical and mechanical operations have to be gone through with great accuracy, precision and carefulness, before white cotton, mixed with sulphuric and nitric acids, becomes smokeless powder.

And after, with elaborate processes, the powder is made at the Picatinny Arsenal, it must travel from Dover, N. J., to the Frankford Arsenal, outside Philadelphia, there to be put an element in the 40 complete manufacturing and assembling operations that are required to make an American rifle cartridge.

A rifle is a more or less simple-looking mechanism, but to make this rifle 1,223 separate manufacturing operations must be executed.

One round of 3-inch shrapnel means 355 operations; to make an automatic pistol, 614; and for the terrible little mitrailleuse or machine gun, 1,990. The lightest 3-inch field gun costs \$1,400.

The 14-inch coast-defense gun is made at Watervliet Arsenal near Albany, weighing when finished 138,000 pounds and costing \$55,000 and wound about with 37,000 pounds of wire. Its disappearing carriage involves as many as 3,000 separate parts.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.

Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and indicator at other. Places it over table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously 40 inches high. Price 25c, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

GREAT BERGLAND PUZZLE.



The latest and most fascinating puzzle ever placed on the market. Patented May 30. It consists of four revolving dials, each dial containing 10 figures, in each of the 16 columns added together total 40. The puzzle is made on the large iron safes that open on a combination of figures. Persons have been interested here because trying to get each column to total 40 in this fascinating puzzle. The puzzle has a key which we send with each puzzle the figures can be set in a few minutes so as to total 40 in each column.

Price 15 cents; mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE BALANCING BIRD.



It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger. Made on the point of a lead pencil, or on any other kind of instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on.

Price 10 cents, mailed postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

SHERIFF BADGE.



With this badge attached to your coat or vest you can show the boys that you are a sheriff, and if they don't behave themselves you might look them up. It is a beautiful nickel-plated badge, 2 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches in size, with the words "Sheriff 23, By Heck" in nickel letters on the face of it.

Price 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents; sent by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE EYE HAD PUZZLE.



Just out and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the pictures and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the toughest puzzle you have ever seen. You cannot leave it alone.

Made of silvered metal. Price 12c; 3 for 35c, sent by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

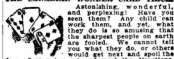
THE SPIDER WEB PUZZLE.



A very interesting little puzzle. It consists of a heavily nickel-plated and brass ring. The object is to get all of the small pieces into the center and back. This is a very hard, but very interesting puzzle, making it easy. Price 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 485 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.



Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing. Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what success like this? It is amazing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. They cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get the directions. The results will astound your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing you wish to have no end of amusement. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

RUBBER SUCKER.



The latest novelty out! Dishes and plates will stick to the table, cups to the glass and then try to lift it. You can't. Lots of fun. Always put it on a smooth surface and wet the rubber. Many other tricks can be accomplished with this novelty. Price 12 cts. each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

GOOD LUCK GUN FOB.

The real western article carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather with a highly nickelled buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

SECOND SPARKLER.



Hold discs in each hand and twist the strings by swinging the toy around and around about 20 times. Then small cords hang apart, pulling on the discs and causing the strings to untwist. This will rotate the wheel and cause the sparks to fly. The continued rotation of the wheel will again twist the strings. When this twisting commences slacken the strings slightly until they are full twisted, then pull.

Price 25 cts. each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.

Give and amuse. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye joke ever seen. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so that the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be sought every time. Absolutely harmless. Price 5c each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

2 to \$500 EACH paid for hundreds of old Coins. Keep ALL money dated before 1860 and send it to us for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7 1/2. It may mean you a fortune. FRANK COIN Co., Box 85, Le Roy, N. Y.



STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.

The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without touching a piece. Price 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.



MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very interesting and necessary. Price, 15c.

FRANK SMITH, 283 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

LUCKY PENNY POCKET PIECE.

This handsome pocket piece is made of aluminum, resembling somewhat in size and appearance a silver dollar. In the center of the pocket piece is a new one-cent U. S. coin, inserted in such a way that it cannot be removed. The laws prevent our showing this coin in our engraving. On one side of the pocket piece are the words, "Lucky penny pocket piece; 4 bring good luck, and the design of a horseshoe. On the opposite side, "I am your mascot." Keep me and never go broke, and two sprigs of four-leaved clover. These handsome pocket pieces are believed by many to be harbingers of good luck. Price 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents; by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.

Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can solve it very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shanks of this puzzle are always in the way, but one can learn how to take the ring off. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ELECTRIC CIGAR CASE.



This handsome cigar case appears to be filled with fine cigars. If you try to draw a cigar, it will reach out for one of the cigars, like a snake, and instantly disappear into the case. As real tobacco is used, the smoke is just as good as any. It is one of the best practical jokes of the season. A novelty with which you can have lots of fun. Price 35 cents, sent by parcel post, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., N. Y.



THE SIMPLEST TRICK OUT.
All you have to do is to get the cigarette into Charlie's mouth. Ah, but what can you do if? We doubt it. Anyhow, you might try. It's a safe bet your friends can't work it. The trick is a stationary head and a loose cigarette in a metal box if you don't get one you'll regret it. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 42d St., New York City.

JITNEY BUS GAME.



A circular metal box with a glass top. Inside is a tiny garage fixed at one side and a loose traveling tinny Ford. It requires an expert to get the swiftly moving auto into the garage. This one grabs your interest, holds it, and almost makes you wish you had a tinny Ford. It requires an expert to do the trick. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOL.



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/2 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each shot. Price, 5c, each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

FORTUNE TELLING CARDS.

The most comical fortune telling cards ever issued. Every one a joke that will arouse screams of laughter. They are shuffled, and one is drawn for ladies, with for gentlemen. On the drawn card is a mirth-provoking picture, and a few words revealing your fortune. Price 5c, sent by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 42d Street, N. Y.



THE KAZOO.

Made in the exact shape of a submarine. With this unusual little instrument you can wobble a bride and groom one of the loudest serenades they ever received. Or, if you wish to use it as a ventriloquist, you will so completely change your voice that your best friend will not recognize it. Price, 25c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

MAGIC LINK PUZZLE.

A number of rings. The scheme is to link them together just exactly the same way suspicious link their loops. It looks dead easy. But we defy anybody to do it unless they know the secret. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE LUNG TESTER.

We have here one of the greatest little novelties ever produced. With this instrument you can absolutely test the strength of your lungs. It has an indicator which clearly shows you the number of pounds you can blow. Lots of fun testing your lungs. Get one and see what a good blower you are. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE RUBBER DAGGER.

On account of the war we have substituted this novelty for the Magic Dagger. It is six inches in length, made to look exactly like a steel weapon and would deceive almost anybody at whom you might thrust it. But as the blade is made of rubber, it can do no injury. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre Street, Brooklyn, New York.

TRICK CIGARETTE BOX.

This one is a corker! Get a box right away, if you want to have a burst of fun. Here's the secret: It looks like an ordinary red box of Turkish cigarettes. But it contains a trigger, under which you place a paper cup. Offer your friend a smoke and he raises the lid of the box. That explodes the cup, and if you are wise you will get out of sight with the box before he gets over thinking he was shot. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE MODERN DANCERS.

These dancers are set in a gilt frame, the size of our cigarette. By lighting a match and moving it in circular form at the neck they can be made to dance furiously, the best from the match wafting them up. If you want to see an appropriate tango dance send for this pretty charm.

Price 15 cents, or \$ for 40 cents, sent by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE QUESTION PUZZLE.

Two links in the form of question marks, fastened together at the top. The object is to disentangle one link from the other. It cannot be done without the directions. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE WAR FOUNTAIN PEN.

A very handsome fountain pen case to which is attached a pocket holder neatly made of metal and nicely nickel-plated. When your friend desires the use of your pen and gets it, he is very much astonished when he moves the cap by the saddle and lo and behold the expansion of the nib occurs, and yet a little paper cup does it all. Price, 35c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

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