

# GOLDEN ARCADE

PREIGHTED WITH TREASURES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

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## FACING PERIL.

A TALE OF THE COAL MINES.

By G. A. HENRY.

### CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Merton listened to Jack's report of his plans in silence, and then after a long pause said:

"I have been for some time intending to talk seriously to you, Jack, about your future, and the present is a good time for broaching the subject. You see, my boy, you have worked very hard, and have thrown your whole strength into it for six years. You have given no time to the classics or modern languages, but have put your whole heart into mathematics; you have a natural talent for it, and you have had the advantage of a good teacher. I may say so," he said, "for I was third wrangler at Cambridge."

"Yes, sir," Jack exclaimed in astonishment.

"Yes, lad, you may well be surprised at seeing a third wrangler a village schoolmaster, but you might find, if you searched, many men who took as high a degree, even in more humble positions. I took a fellowship, and lived for many years quietly upon it; then I married, and forfeited my fellowship. I thought, like many other men, that because I had taken a good degree I could earn my living. There is no greater mistake. I had absolutely no knowledge that was useful that way. I tried to write; I tried to get pupils; I failed all round. Thirteen years ago, after two years of marriage, my wife died; and in despair of otherwise earning my bread, and sick of the struggle I had gone through, I applied for this little mastership, obtained it, and came down with Alice, then a baby of a year old. I chafed at first, but I am contented now, and no one knows that Mr. Merton is an ex-fellow of St. John's. I had still a little property remaining, just enough to have kept Alice always at a good school. I do not think I shall stay here much longer. I shall try to get a larger school, in some town where I may get a few young men to teach, an evening. I am content for myself, but Alice is growing up, and I should wish, for her sake, to get a step up in the world again. I need not say, my lad, that I don't want this mentioned. Alice and you alone know my story. So you see," he went on more lightly, "I may say you have had a good teacher. Now, Jack, you are very high up in mathematics. Far higher than I was at your age; and I have not the slightest doubt that you will in a couple of years be able to take the best open scholarship of the year at Cambridge, if you try for it. That would keep you at college, and you might hope confidently to come out at least as high as I did, and to secure a fellowship, which means three or four hundred a year, till you marry. But to go through the University, you must have a certain amount of Latin and Greek. You have a good two years before you have to go up, and if you devote yourself as steadily to classics as you have to mathematics, you may come out enough to scrape through with. Don't give me any answer now, Jack. The idea is, of course, new to you. Think it very quietly over, and we can talk about it next time you come over from Birmingham."

"Yes, sir, thank you very much," Jack said quietly; "only, please tell me, do you yourself recommend it?"

The schoolmaster was silent for awhile and then said:

"I do not recommend one way or the other, Jack. I would rather leave it entirely to you. You would be certain to do well in one way there. You are, I believe, equally certain to do well here, but your advance may be very much slower. And now, Jack, let us lay it aside for to-night, and just going to have tea; I hope you will take a cup with us."

Jack colored with pleasure; it was the first time that such an invitation had been given to him; and he felt it as the first recognition yet made, that he was something more than an ordinary pit-boy; but for all that he felt, when he followed his master into the next room, that he would have rather been anywhere else.

It was a tiny room, but daintily furnished—a room such as Jack had never seen before—and by the fire sat a girl reading. She put down her book as her father entered, with a bright smile; but her eyes opened a little wider in surprise as Jack followed him in.

"My dear Alice, this is my pupil, Jack Simpson, who is going to do me great credit,

and make a figure in the world some day. Jack, this is my daughter, Miss Merton."

"I have heard papa speak of you so often," she said, "and of course I have seen you come in and out sometimes when I have been home for the holidays."

"I have seen you in church," Jack said, making a tremendous effort to throw off his awkwardness.

"Jack Simpson will to the end of his life look back upon that hour as the most uncomfortable he ever spent. Then for the first time he discovered that his boots were very heavy and thick; then for the first time did

end of two months the enthusiasm which the strike excited elsewhere dies out, and the levies fall off, and the weekly money scarce enables life to be kept together.

It is distinctive of almost all strikes, that the women, beforehand averse to the movement, when it has once begun throw themselves heartily into the struggle. From the time it is fairly entered upon until its termination it is rare indeed to hear a collier's wife speak a word against it. When the hardest pinch comes, and the children's faces grow thin and white, and the rooms are stripped of furniture, much as the women may long for an end of it, they never pray their husbands to give in. This patient submission to their husbands' wills—this silent bearing of the greatest of suffering, namely, to see children suffer and to be unable to relieve them—is one of the most marked features of all great strikes in the coal districts.



THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DAUGHTER.

his hands and feet get in his way, and to require thought as to what was to be done with them; and at the same time he concluded, that white lace curtains, and a pretty carpet, and tea poured out by a chatty and decidedly pretty young lady, were by no means such a comfortable institution as might have been expected.

It was two months from the commencement of the strike before Jack Simpson returned from Birmingham, coming home to stay from Saturday till Monday. Nothing can be more discouraging than the appearance of a colliery village where the hands are on strike. For the first week or two there is much bravado, and anticipation of early victory; and as money is still plentiful, the public-houses do a great trade. But as the stern reality of the struggle becomes felt, a gloom falls over the place. The men hang about listlessly, and from time to time struggle down to the committee-room, to hear the latest news from the other places to which the strike extends, and to try to gather a little confidence therefrom. At first things always look well. Meetings are held in other centres, and promises of support flow in. For a time money arrives freely, and the Union committee make an allowance to each member, which, far below his regular pay as it is, is still amply sufficient for his absolute wants. But by the

"Well, mother, and how goes it?" asked Jack, cheerfully, after the first greetings.

"We be all right, Jack; if we ain't we ought to be, when we've got no children to keep, and get nigh as much as them as has."

"Eight shillings a week now, ain't it?" Mrs. Haden nodded. Jack looked round.

"Hello!" he said, "the clock has gone, and the new carpet!"

"Well, you see, my boy," Mrs. Haden said, hesitatingly, "Bill is down hearted sometimes, and he wants a drop of comfort."

"I understand," Jack said, significantly.

"Jack," and she again spoke hesitatingly—"I wish we'd carry off all they books out o' the little room. There's scores of 'em, and the smallest would fetch a glass o' beer. I've got the door locked, but it might tempt him, your boy—not when he's in his right senses, you know, he'd scorn to do such a thing; but when he gets half on, and has no more money, and credits stopped, the craving's too much for him, and he'd sell the bed from under him—anything he's got, I do believe, except the pigs;" and she pointed to some of June's grandchildren, which were, as usual, lying before the fire, a mere handful of coal now in comparison with past times.

"I'll pick out a parcel of them that will be useful to me," Jack said, "and take them

away. The rest may go. And now look here, mother. After paying you for my board, I have had for a long time now some five shillings a week over. I have spent some in books, but secondhand books are very cheap—as dad will find when he tries to sell them. So I've got some money put by. It don't matter how much, but plenty to keep the wolf away while the strike lasts. But I don't mean, mother, to have my savings drunk away. I'm getting sixteen bob a week, and I can live on ten or eleven, so I'll send you five shillings a week. But dad mustn't know it. I'll be home in a month again, and I'll leave you a pound, so that you can get food in. If he thinks about it at all, which ain't likely, you can make out you get it on tick. Well, dad, how are you?" he asked, as Bill Haden entered the cottage.

"Ah, Jack, lad, how be it with ee?"

"All right, dad; getting on well. And how are things here?"

"Bad Jack. Those scoundrels, the masters, they won't give in; but we're bound to beat 'em—bound to. If they don't come out our terms, we mean to call the engine men, and the hands they've got to keep the works clear, out of the pit. That'll bring 'em to their senses quick enough. I've been for it all along."

"Call off the engine hands!" Jack said, in tones of alarm; "you ain't going to do such a mad thing as that! Why, if the water gains, and the mines get flooded, it'll be weeks and maybe months, before the mines can be cleared and put in working order; and what will you be doing while that's being done?"

"It'll bring 'em to their senses, lad," Bill Haden said, bringing his hand down on the table with a thump. "They mean to starve us; we'll ruin them. There, let's have the price of a quart, Jack, I'm dazed."

Jack saw that argument against this mad scheme would be of no use, for his foster father was already half drunk, so he handed him a shilling, and with a shrug of his shoulders walked off to Mr. Merton's.

He had long since written to his master, saying that he preferred working his way up slowly in mining, to entering upon a new life, in which, however successful he might be at college, the after course was not clear to him; and his teacher had answered in a tone of approval of his choice.

On his way he stopped at the houses of many of his boy friends, and was shocked at the misery which already prevailed in some of them. His greatest friend was lad about his own age, but far less sturdy and strong than himself. This boy he had fought for and supported since their early school days, and the lad was devoted to him.

"Why, Harry, I should scarce have known you," he said, as the lad came to the door when he opened it and called him. "You look bad, surely."

"We're a big family, Jack; and the extra children's allowance was dropped last week. There's eight of us, and food is scarce. Little Annie's going fast, I think. The doctor came this morning and said she wanted strengthening food. He might as well have ordered her a coach-and-four. Baby died last week, and mother's ailing. You were right, Jack; what fools we were to strike. I've been miles round, looking for a job, but it's no use: there's fifty asking for every place open."

The tears came into Jack's eyes as he looked at the pinched face of his friend.

"Why did you not write to me?" he asked, almost angrily. "I told you where a letter would find me; and here are you all clemming, and me know nought of it. It's too bad. Now, look here, Harry, I must lend you some money—you know I've got some put by, and you your father can pay me when good times come again. Your dad gets his eight shillings from the Union, I suppose?"

"Yes," the lad answered.

"Well, with fifteen shillings a week you could make a shift to get on. So I'll let you have ten shillings a week; that'll be seven shillings to add to the eight, and the other three will buy me to make broth for Annie. The strike can't last much over another month, and that won't hurt me one way or the other. Here's the first ten shillings; put it in your pocket, and then come round with me to the butcher, and I'll get a few pounds of meat just to start you all. There, don't cry, and don't say anything, else I'll lick you."

But when Jack himself entered the schoolmaster's house, and was alone with Mr. Mer-











FLITTING SWALLOW.

Into the den and mellow sky  
The playful swallow slip and dart;  
Now, in their reckless course, apart,  
And now in various groups they dight.

To-morrow, on the old gray shed,  
They gather, twitterless and mute;  
Another day will see them fled,  
But cannot tell where they have fled.

THE MOUNTAIN CAVE;

The Mystery of the Sierra Nevada.

By GEORGE H. COOMER.

CHAPTER X.

A CONVERSATION AND A TREETOP.

AFTER a while, Walter could not resist the temptation of going out to look at the dead bear.

The animal lay where it had fallen, a grtm looking object, surely, with its heavy body and stout legs. Walter looked at it for a moment. "To-morrow I will see if I can get off the skin," thought our young hero; "but I am too sore and lame to-day. I think that fellow would weigh more than five hundred pounds."

Examining the surroundings of the cave, he saw that its entrance was so hidden by trees and rocks that it was not likely to be detected by a stranger even when open, while it was rendered still more secret by a door so ingeniously contrived as to seem like Nature's own work.

Earth and rock were intermingled about the place, and vines and trees took root here and there in such a way that no one would have suspected the existence of a cave below them.

Walter, while within, had observed that the air and sunlight entered through a number of rents, and he now saw how easily these narrow crevices could be covered when necessary with bark or other material.

The spot was high above a neighboring gorge, and through this there coursed a rapid stream, which he imagined might be the very one into which he had leaped, though here it had so widened as to lose something of its force.

If I could only get word to my father, so as to prevent him from making any arrangement with the robbers, how I would love to remain here for a time," he said, "it is all so wild and strange."

True, his father might require that he should be provided with more putting the money in the robbers' hands; and thus the eighty thousand dollars might be saved—but at what an expense of feeling! He would be supposed to have died, and the sufferings of his parents would be dreadful.

Yet his present condition rendered a long travel out of the question, and even if perfectly well, how would he be able to find his way through a mountainous wilderness, so vast and difficult?

His most trying disability was a sprain in one of his ankles, for it acted as a merciless fetter to the slightest movement, to say nothing of a forty-mile tramp over the mountains. He saw that he must yield to the inevitable, and he did so with his usual decision.

He re-entered the cave, taking care to close the outlet behind him with the screen of woven twigs and moss which he had observed as serving for a door.

The wounded man asked him to sit down by the side of his cot, and said, "Walter," he said, "for you say that is your name, did you ever see a hermit?"

"No, sir, not that I am aware of."

Something it seemed easy and natural to use the "sir" as a handle to the "no."

"Well, you see one now," was the answer. "And have you lived here all alone for a long time?"

"Yes for a number of years."

"And you never go to the settlements?"

"No, never."

"But you have coffee, and flour, and sugar, and medicine and mechanical tools—and gas!"

"I don't see how you get them if you never leave the neighborhood."

The hermit smiled.

"No wonder," he include gas," he said, "for you must have observed that I use a great deal. Nature provides that. I get it from the earth itself. As to the other articles, perhaps you will learn before long how I get them."

"And do you never get tired of staying here?"

"Yes; but I can stay nowhere else."

"In what way did you find me?" asked Walter.

"Oh, I found you caught in a fallen treetop where you had been swept by the torrent. Then I made a raft of dry cedar limbs with my hatchet, large enough to hold us both, and so got you here; for the same stream runs close to this place. We floated for two or three miles, but I saw all the while that you were alive, though you did not realize anything."

"I can never repay you for your good deed, sir."

"You have repaid me already. You have done what not one boy in ten thousand would have had the courage to do. You must have thought me a very guff fellow at first, and I ask your pardon for having appeared so."

"But you thought it necessary."

"No, I did not think; I felt. We should not always follow our feelings," said Walter, "when he is shut up alone," and he thought with a shudder of his own feelings when shut in the cell of the robbers' cave.

"That elderly man you spoke of," said the hermit, "you heard no name given him?"

"I am not sure that I did," replied Walter. "While I was confined, I heard a name used that sounded like 'Old Eli,' and I now think that it was this man who was speaking, and that he was applying the name to himself."

How I should delight to navigate such a lake! Is the roof quite high?"

"Yes, and glittering with crystals. It is one of the most remarkable caves in the world."

"Some time," said Walter, "I will come here if you have no objection, and take a trip in your canoe."

"I shall be glad to have you. I wish you could remain and do so now, but of course your parents must not be left in suspense longer than necessary."

"No, sir," said Walter, "I am very anxious about them."

"It is as much as either of us can do to get about house at present," said the hermit, "but wait a few days and we will see what is to be done. You will come out right, I am sure."

"I shall come out right if I can be the means of breaking up this gang of robbers and recovering some of their plunder."

"Any party of men who will hunt them down shall have all the assistance I can give," said Mr. Percy. "I had no idea that—well, your story has set me to thinking."

Walter could hardly credit his senses as he looked upon the long-haired man during this discourse, and thought of his manner only a few hours previous. The society and sympathy of a mere boy had been to him what the rain is to the parched ground.

"Well, you see we have nothing to dispose of but the bones. This is the way they clean up my dooryard."

They re-entered the cave and commenced preparations for breakfast.

Presently, to Walter's surprise, he saw the curious door very gently removed, and a human figure make its appearance at the entrance. His first thought was of the robbers. Might they not have caught sight of him without, and thus discovered his retreat?"

Carefully closing the portal, the figure advanced with all the silence of a spirit. It was that of an athletic young man, with a remarkably grave face. Walter started and stood on the defensive.

"Good morning, sir," he said, by way of experiment.

There was no answer; but the man stepped forward in his noiseless moccasins, looking about him inquiringly, as if for the master of the place, the hermit happening just at that moment to be out of sight.

"Take a seat, sir," said Walter.

But the figure simply held up one finger, with the same inquiring look.

"O, I understand," said Walter, "I am Walter to himself, and he pointed to a nook of the cave. But just then the hermit hobbled into view, clapping both hands upon his breast as a sign of welcome."

CHAPTER XI.  
A PANTOMIME.

BETWEEN the master of the cavern and the silent stranger, there took place a sign-dialogue so rapid as to remind Walter of the play of "heat lightning." It seemed wonderful that either could understand the other, yet there seemed not to be the least difficulty in this respect.

Our hero was somewhat acquainted with the sign language, and in this pantomime he fancied that he could read, on the hermit's part, a complete history of the events of the past few days. There were the stage-coach and the robbers; there were the imprisonment and the escape; there were the leap from the cliff, the rescue from the stream, and the adventure with the bear.

A quick motion or two told the tale of the wounds received and the present inability to travel, and a rapid drawing of the right forefinger across the palm of the left hand, showed the desire to communicate with friends by letter.

The hermit at length turned to Walter, who had all the while stood an interested spectator. "You were wondering," he said, "how I obtained my flour, sugar, medicine and other articles. I thought it unnecessary to explain at the time—but you see the *how* before you. This deaf and dumb youth is the only person besides yourself who has the least knowledge of my whereabouts or even of my existence. He brings me whatever I desire. Sometimes he employs a horse, but to-day he has come on foot, as he had only a few light articles to bring."

"And has he never told any one of it?"

"Never, I am sure."

"He must be very faithful."

"He is faithful; he would give his life for mine, poor fellow!"

Walter regarded the mute figure with increased interest.

"Now," continued the hermit, "write what you will. He will be your mail carrier. You will have no difficulty in making known your safety, and can easily put your father upon his guard against any trick of the robbers. Let me introduce you to Ralph."

"So Ralph is a deaf and dumb man," said Walter, after shaking hands with that individual.

"Yes," replied the hermit, "and I like him all the better for it, though, of course, he could reveal my secret if he would, as surely as if he could speak."

"You feel as if he would not let it out by accident, I suppose, seeing that he cannot talk."

"Yes, there is something in that. I see that you will have to tell your folks of me—that is unavoidable."

"But I can ask them not to inform others."

"I should choose that you would do so, by all means."

"I will remember. But if we are to bring the robbers to justice—"

"I know what you mean—it may be difficult to assist justice and remain unknown at the same time."

"Perhaps it might be managed, though," said Walter.

"Perhaps—but we will see."



"THE ROBBERS!"

The hermit's face took on a fierce, vindictive look, as if he made the case his own. "The scoundrel!" he exclaimed, and then for some minutes remained silently thinking.

"Walter," he said at length, "if these villains could be brought to justice, there might be more than money recovered. Gold is of small consequence."

"But Mr. Mercer would not think so."

"Certainly not. Mr. Mercer has lost gold—I—but was the girl you met in the stage interesting?"

"Very. And she was the prettiest girl I ever saw. I am sure all the passengers must have been taken with her appearance."

"She probably looks as well, a good and pretty girl is a beautiful object in a boy's eyes. Did you learn her first name?"

"Yes; it was Maud."

"That is one of the best names in the world."

"I think so, too," said Walter.

"No doubt. But those robbers—I wonder what hole they are hiding in? No one knows how many unexplored caverns there are among the mountains."

"Does this cave reach in much farther than I can see?" asked Walter.

"Yes, it reaches, perhaps, for miles. But I have lived here until very lately without any suspicion of the fact. A short time since I pried away a flat stone and saw an opening behind it. Then I removed a quantity of earth, and discovered that I had been living in the mere vestibule of a cavern instead of the cavern itself."

"And did you explore it?"

"I did so as far as possible with the means at hand, but I came to a large subterranean lake and was obliged to stop."

"We will hope for the best," added the hermit, "but it will be a difficult undertaking. Your affair, however, will have done good—it will take something from the mystery. You will be able to furnish a better clue than any one else. I should be glad to have you report to that pretty girl of the stage coach, in just the manner you would like."

"Thank you, sir," said Walter.

"That evening, though in pain and limping awkwardly, he insisted upon cooking the simple supper, and was tolerably successful. It consisted of venison, "short-cakes," and tea.

Both felt invigorated by the repast, for their disabilities were chiefly in their limbs.

At night they slept on separate couches made of dry moss, over which bear skins were spread, making the beds all that could be desired.

"Did you hear the snarling outside of the cave last night?" asked the hermit, as they awoke in the morning.

"No, sir, I slept very sound; what was it?"

"Only a pack of wolves. They were at work on that dead bear. Probably they have saved us the trouble of disposing of the carcass."

"I was thinking I would like to try my hand at skinning it," said Walter.

"Well, you will find nothing but the larger bones, you may be sure. The skin is gone with the rest, and I would wager something that there is not so much as a toe nail left on the ground."

Both hobbled out to the scene of the wolfish revel, and, sure enough, only a few bones remained as relics of poor Bruin. They were picked so clean and had been so polished by the hungry teeth, that they fairly glistened. No two of them remained together, but all were widely distributed.

"Wolves are great scavengers," said the hermit.

"Yes," replied Walter, "I was wondering what we were to do with the bear's body."



"I wish to get hold of that old villain who was so good to me in the stage. Wouldn't it be glorious if we could recover Mr. Mercer's gold? Only to think of it, that they should have taken everything he had, and left me a poor man. I'm glad now that they took me, for I should know some of them by sight—two of them, at least—and perhaps this might help a little."

"His letter was a long one, for he had much to say; and after remarking that he would have to remain with the hermit until better able to travel, he concluded by describing Ralph, who would deposit the missive in the nearest post office, as the only person capable of being a guide to the place in case of necessity."

"This duty performed, he felt much relieved. Mr. Percy and himself had now only to get well at their leisure, and as the former was already considerably better, while his own ankle was less troublesome than the day before, he believed that there was no longer any grave cause for anxiety."

"After resting a few hours, Ralph started on his return, making a grave gesture of good-by at the door."

"What a walker he must be," said Walter. "Yes, he could easily out-travel a horse on a long journey," replied the hermit.

"He has walked forty miles," remarked Walter, "and now he is to walk back."

"But he takes it leisurely," said Mr. Percy. "He will make a camp for himself to-night, and reach the post-office to-morrow forenoon."

"It seems to me I should like to travel just in that way," said Walter. "Yes, there is a charm in such a hardy life."

"Last winter I read 'Walden,' and I can't help thinking how Mr. Thoreau would have enjoyed being here."

"Oh, you have read Henry D. Thoreau, then?" "Yes, sir."

"Then you have read the works of a true thinker. No doubt you and I shall agree very well together."

"Mr. Thoreau seemed to make company of his hermit's."

"Yes; he believed in making the most of simple things."

"And he would have loved these mountains."

"Oh, yes; but he made mountains for himself, and took them home with him."

"I suppose he had never suffered any great wrong," said Walter, suggestively.

"No; he could have his hermitage very near mankind; he was a happy man. And the hermit's face darkened as he relapsed into thought."

CHAPTER XII.

A SUGGESTIVE SPECTACLE.

WALTER knew very well that his father would come in search of him, as the hermit had given Ralph permission to guide Mr. Percy to the spot in case the request should be made.

"I am sorry," he thought, "that I shall not be able to remain here long enough to explore the cave, but then if the robbers are ever hunted out, and the hermitage is made better, I will never rest while there is a chance of finding them, if I have to rouse up all the police of California."

"His ankle continued to improve, and Mr. Percy's injuries also were much better, so that in a day or two both were able to move with no great discomfort. The cave contained a variety of books, which our hero found very entertaining, and the hermit, though at intervals sad and moody, was upon the whole an interesting companion."

"His long hair still gave him an odd, wild look, but his face, though stern, was far from being a disagreeable one."

"Times he would suddenly return to the 'internal machine' upon which Walter had at first seen him at work, and perplex himself with its complications. But now it seemed no longer domestic in the boy's eyes."

"It is of no consequence," said his eccentric friend, "but it gives employment to thought, I love to see what I can invent upon it. It is not an mechanic enough to have the least idea of its use."

"It will never have any use. It is the work of a man in the bowels of the earth."

"A number of other queer inventions were bestowed here and there in the recesses of the room, showing that the hermit-workman had busied himself much with the possibilities of invention."

"He may be just the least bit insane on this point," thought Walter. "I have heard of such people."

"But it was the subterranean lake—the underground world, with its mysteries—that most occupied his thoughts, and for the turning of a hat stone, Mr. Percy had prepared, contributed still further to inflame his imagination and increase the impatience he felt to recover his usual condition of limb."

"Now," said the hermit, "it is about time, I think, to change our fare."

"And do you catch fish in the stream?" asked Walter.

"O yes; a plenty of them—pike and perch and pickerel. I have baited always at least an amount of worms to be laid for the turning of a hat stone."

"The proposition delighted Walter exceedingly. The preparations were soon made, and the hermit led the way to the turning of a hat stone, where the fishes gathered in an eddy as they swept around a projecting rock which broke the force of the current."

"I suppose were the houghs of a gigantic oak, from which depended huge curtains of moss that almost touched the rock beyond, though they did not interfere with the free use of the line in the calm tide pool."

"Yes," said Mr. Percy, "the fish come to rest. This place is very deep, and as still as a well. Walter dropped his hook a little below the sur-

face, and almost instantly detected a gleaming scale darting toward it.

"There was no nibbling, no toying with the bait. The sensation communicated through the line, was as if a stroke delivered—and then what a pull!"

"The line sped out, swerving to right and left, and cutting the water like a knife. What a solid, substantial strength was taking it over the reel. "Well, well," murmured Mr. Percy, "be careful now, and do nothing hastily."

"Walter felt all the excitement of a whaleman fast to a sun-dial—'square-head.' The fish was 'game' to perfection. A dozen times it went to the bottom, and as often threw itself sheer out of the water. Sometimes it came to the angler's very foot, but only to shoot away till it passed almost beyond the rock."

"At length, however, it yielded, lying still at the surface of the water, and was lifted in upon the bank."

"What is it?" asked Walter. "A pickerel," said Mr. Percy, "but a much larger one than I ever saw before—a real giant of the stream."

"He drew from his pocket an apparatus of his own construction, hooked it under the gills of the fish, and lifted the scaly prize from the ground."

"Let's see," he said; "seven—eight—nine—ten eleven—twelve—yes—twelve pounds and two ounces!"

"It was a fish worthy of a Sierra Nevada stream, where, for aught Walter knew, the bed of the torrent might be paved with gold."

"Now I will try my luck against yours," said Mr. Percy, as he dipped his line.

"The result was a trout weighing two pounds. It was scarcely landed when Walter lifted another pickerel and swung it gracefully to the bank. It weighed four pounds and a half."

"The spirit of old Enak Walton seemed to be guiding your rod. However, I am very glad of your success. Now for another trial."

"As they were about to throw off their lines, their attention was arrested by a trampling sound on the opposite bank, and stooping so as to look under the curtain of moss, they saw a cavalcade of eight horsemen approaching the stream."

"The bank was here so low that the water was nearly on a level with it, so that the horses without difficulty waded in and drank. They were out of a dry cove."

"The robbers!" whispered Walter, "the very men and horses!"

"Are you sure?" asked the hermit. "Yes," said Walter, "quite sure. Number One is among them, and so is the old villain of the stage come to this wild place to get his revenge."

"Old—where? Point him out to me." "He is the farthest out on their right, as they stand," answered the boy under his breath, "and the next to him is Number One."

"I see," said the hermit; "yes, yes; I see. Ah, if I had but the power to follow them straight from this spot, to follow them right up!"

"They shall be followed up," Walter whispered, "if not from here."

"The horsemen talked with each other, and pointed up and down the stream. Their evident intention to cross it, but did not like the strong current. On the calm morning air every word they spoke could be distinctly heard by the two secret listeners."

"It is a very important one, was a great deal," said Number One, "to cross here."

"Yes," said the elderly man, "and it's the best place for miles. There is no other place where I could do this old mossy tree, and then we can follow the gorge vander and go straight on."

"The same voice that pleaded with the robbers not to take 'the poor boy' away, did not do such a cruel wrong," whispered Walter to his companion.

"They will be very near us," said the hermit, "but we are perfectly secure. They will not see us. But to think of hiding from such wretches! To be helpless, and those villains at large!"

"His manner showed strong excitement. "Be careful, father," called Number One, apparently speaking to the elderly man, "there's power in that word."

"Father!" repeated Walter in astonishment. "he calls him 'father'!"

"Yes," replied the hermit, without the least appearance of surprise.

"Never fear for me," answered the elderly man. "Oh! I can ride with the best of you, if I see mountains level."

"That's the name I heard!" whispered Walter; "I was right."

"O yes," said the hermit, "no doubt of it. They are a fine pair—father and son!"

"Have you ever seen them before? Do you know them?" questioned the boy eagerly.

"Yes, Walter; but no matter now. Ask nothing. From this moment we go hand in hand. Poor Mercer! I had no idea of the real condition of things."

"Our time will come," said Walter fiercely—"just as sure as we live! I am so glad you intend to join me in the work!"

"The men walked their horses into the stream in a line abreast of each other, and then the snoring animals, getting beyond their depth, swam desperately for the bank ahead of them."

"The first was Escherich, by the rank of the horse. The man lost his hat, and came near losing himself, but recovered his balance and followed his associates. The horses jostled against each other, and whinnied in their impatience to get ashore."

"Oh, that old bald pate!" said the hermit. "It has haunted me for—, but he passed and watched the dripping cavalcade scurry on to land."

"It was above here that we lost the boy," said Number One. "I don't wonder that he couldn't get ashore, for the current is sufficient to carry him."

"The horses' feet clattered upon the stony earth, and in a few minutes the robbers were out of sight in the deep gorge."

"To be continued."

Ask your warbler for THE GOLDEN ARGOSY. He can get any number you want read.

A JAPANESE INVITATION TO DINNER. "I beg pardon for this insulting you in begging your company at my house to dinner. The house is very small and dirty. Our habits are rude and you may not get anything fit to eat, and yet I hope that you will condescend to be present with us at 6 o'clock the 9th of December." On arriving at the house you find a spotlessly clean, tasty arrangement and the host and hostess in white. The bill of fare consists of ten or fifteen courses, the best market can afford. All the self humiliation of the host is the method adopted to do you honor.

AMERICA ECLIPSED.

"Here are the extremes of plant life," said a botanist, holding a microscopic alga in one hand, and a picture of a great tree in the other. "This is a distom, one of the smallest vegetable organisms, invisible to the naked eye, while this, flourishing the picture, is the largest tree as to height in the world."

"One of the sequoias?" "No," was the reply. "Uncle Sam has done pretty well with trees, but when it comes to height the British lion takes the belt, as the loftiest trees are found in the Australian dominion. This picture is a photograph of one found by a traveler in the Black Range of Berwick, and it is estimated at 500 feet from the ground to the topmost branch. Think of it a moment," continued the speaker. "Five hundred feet means a good deal. It would dwarf the Bartholdi statue. Thirty work out like a telegraph pole compared to it; the Brooklyn bridge would be nowhere; Strasburg Cathedral would be fifty-four feet below the birds' nests on the top branches, and if the giant were called, are a comparative Cheops, the leaves of the eucalyptus would still be twenty-five feet above it. That's the kind of trees they have in Australia, and they are undoubtedly the largest on the globe, though it is claimed the California specimens are more impressive from their greater bulk. The gum trees, as Australian giants are called, are a comparatively modern discovery, and for a long time it was impossible to approach them, but now roads are broken, and travelers can ride directly to the foot of several. One of the most interesting of the Kauri eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus collosa*) of botanists, was discovered in a glen of the Warren River, western Australia, and if the giant were called, it would be protruding upon the ground, and four riders abreast entered the trunk, that was estimated at four hundred feet in length. Another species, *E. amadalinia*, measured by Boyle in the same forest of Queensland, was found to be 420 feet long, while another, now growing on the Black Spur, ten miles from Heidelberg, is 490 feet high. These measurements, you see, are far ahead of the California trees, one of the largest, that I think is known as the 'Father of the Forest,' only measuring 435 feet, and being 110 feet in circumference at the base of ninety feet. With that, they tell the famous 'Traveler' of 1853, and by the way, ever since that time, it has in it ought to have been sent to Dry Tortugas; it took five or six men nearly a month to bring it to the pier, and the wood was so hard that to work with, pump augers, wedges, and everything you could think of."

"The smallest watch in the world." A small gold penholder, resting in a rich velvet case, lay on a New York jeweler's showcase. The end of the holder was shaped like an elongated cube, and was an inch long. A faint, musical ticking that issued from it attracted a customer's attention. The jeweler lifted the holder from its case, with a smile, and exhibited a tiny watch-dial, 1/16th of an inch in diameter, set in the side between two other dials almost as small. One indicated the day, and the other the month of the year. The center dial ticked off seconds, minutes and hours.

"This is the smallest watch ever made," the jeweler said, "and the only one of its kind in the world. It took a Geneva watchmaker the better part of two years to fit the parts together so that they would work accurately. It has been exhibited in London and Paris."

"The works of the watch were so that they fitted lengthwise in the holder. The main spring was an elongated coil steel fitted to the wheels by a tiny chain, and worked like an old-fashioned clock weight. The works were wound by a little screw of gold on the under side of the dial. A good jewel was fitted in the holder, and the jewels were set with it without disturbing the operations of the fairy watch."

"What's the price?" the customer asked. "A round \$500," replied the jeweler laughing.

THE SUN NEVER SETS IN OUR COUNTRY. Webster's eloquent description of the British empire is very readable, but we doubt whether it is generally realized that we, too, have a dominion on which the sun never sets. It will hardly be believed, perhaps, without an examination of the maps, that San Francisco, instead of being the west line of this dominion, is only about midway between our eastern and western limits; and yet it is a fact that the farthest Aleutian isle acquired in our purchase of Russian America, is as far to the east of the city as Escherich is to the west of it. Between the northwest limit of Washington Territory and the southern limit of Alaska there is a break of a few degrees, but, with the slightest deviation of territory extending from no less than 170 degrees of longitude, or 17 degrees more than half way round the globe. Hence, when the sun is giving its rays to the hills of our Maine, it is already flooding the fields and forests of Maine with its morning light, and in the eastern part of the state is more than an hour in the rear. At the very moment when the Aleutian fisherman, warned by the approaching shades of night, is pulling his canoe toward the shore, the woodchopper of Maine is beginning to shake the forest echoes with his stirring music of the ax.

OUR FAMILIES. During eight centuries ago, a correspondent of Nature, "one's direct ancestors amount to a far greater number than would at first be contemplated. Taking three generations to a century, one has father and mother (2), grandparents (4), great-grandparents (8). At the end of the second century the number of ancestors springs to 64. Following the calculation, you will find that at the end of eight centuries, one is descended from no less than 16,000,000 ancestors. Inter-marriage, of course, would reduce this estimate, and there is no doubt it must have largely done so. The number, however, are so enormous that, in spite of all, I venture to suggest that the words, 'All ye are brethren' are literally true."

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