

GOLDEN ARGOSSY

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A MEETING AT THE SPRING.

By FRANK H. CONVERSE.

STEALING SOFTLY ALONG THROUGH THE TALL GRASS, NOT TWO YARDS
DISTANT, WAS A LITHE, CAT-LIKE FORM, SUGGESTIVE, AT
THE FIRST GLANCE, OF THE DREADED COUGAR.

THE word "tenderfoot," as applied by the Westerner to the newly arrived delegate from the East, was not originally used as a term of reproach. The newcomer as a general thing finds himself limping after a day or two of tramping over the hot, sunbaked ground, or the heated alkali dust of the plain. And until the soles of his pedal extremities get hardened a bit, he is literally tenderfooted.

There was not much danger that Lew Craig would ever deserve the epithet, either in its reproachful or its literal sense. His was one of those peculiar cases where a young fellow seems to unexpectedly drift into a calling for which he is peculiarly adapted.

Charley Craig, his older and only brother, and Lew were orphans. Mr. Craig speculated in stocks while Charles was in college and Lew fitting therefor.

The natural results followed. Craig, Sr., lost everything and committed suicide in his despair. Taking a small sum of money, which their deceased mother had left in trust for her two sons, Charles and Lew turned their backs on New England and emigrated to Texas.

It is quite a mistaken idea to suppose that every young man with plenty of brains but small capital can become a millionaire by raising cattle or sheep in the wild West. And quite as much so to think that the life itself is one of excitement or adventure. Speaking from a brief personal experience, I should say that unless one is specially adapted for hard work, continual exposure and the most monotonous existence imaginable, they had better remain in the *effete* East and learn a trade.

The two bought a small sheep ranch in Frio County. Charles, having plenty of pluck, adapted himself to the situation. But, as I have said, Lew seemed adapted beforehand.

As a boy he had been a proficient in out of door sports. Though let me remark in passing that he never neglected study or duty in his pursuit of said sports. Polo had made him a fairly good rider; base ball, a good runner. Both together, in connection with other athletic sports, had strengthened his muscles and quickened his energies. From the time Lew had conquered Paquita, a spirited bronco given him by his brother directly after they took up their residence in Texas, Lew Craig had spent by far the greater part of his time in the saddle.

So, as I have said, the term "tenderfoot" was in no sense applicable to the young fellow of whom I am speaking.

Then again, Lew had become a tolerably good shot with both rifle and revolver. It is true that in Frio County large game was comparatively scarce. But of smaller varieties—jack rabbit and prairie grouse on the plains, wild turkeys in the oak "opens," and wild fowl in the "slews," there was great abundance.

One thing, however, Lew had not been able to successfully accomplish in his new role of "cowboy,"—or more properly speaking in his case, "sheep herder"—this was the use of the lariat, that formed, with the Mexican saddle, snaffle and spurs, the outfit of Paquita, the bronco. Not that it mattered very much in sheep herding. But the year had brought the two a promise of success. They had bought stock low, had very few losses by any of the diseases fatal to sheep, and wool having taken a sudden rise, sold their shearing to excellent advantage.

In view of which, the brothers had decided to invest in a few head of cattle, as there was abundant grazing land at hand and grass was unusually good that year. And when it came to cattle herding, why a lariat and knowledge of its use was almost as necessary as a pony.

So on every possible occasion, Lew practiced throwing the lariat. Sometimes at a stray sheep, a stake stuck in the ground, or even at Charley himself, when occasion offered. And occasionally the loop slipped over the object aimed at—"more by chance than skill," as Lew's brother laughingly told him.

Morning in southwestern Texas. The sun is shooting the mists from the dew spangled grass through and through with arrows of golden light. Lew has brought Paquita round from the corral at the rear and is saddling up in front of the ranch.

If the reader has thought of a ranch house as a picturesque, vine clad structure or something of the kind, I must, however unwillingly, undeceive him. The home of these two well educated, gently nurtured young fellows was a one story structure of unhewn logs, chinked with clay and moss after the manner of those of the old time backwoodsman. A rude stone chimney projected through the roof of poles plastered with clay baked to the consistency of cement by the sun. When the substance cracks, as it continually does, it is filled up with more clay.

The interior was quite as primitive. There was a door, with a window at either end. A stone fireplace having an improvised "crane," to which two smoke grimed kettles were hung, was in the very middle of the one room. An open cupboard contained the few dishes—for the most part of tin,

At one side were two bunks with mattresses of wheat straw and a pair of gray blankets to each. There was a rough board table to which two empty boxes served as chairs. A few stores—bacon, flour, canned goods and the like, were piled under one of the windows. And from top to bottom the unsightly walls were hidden by pictorial journals pasted thereon very neatly. Some rough clothing, with a couple of guns and ammunition belts, depended from hooks. Under them lay a couple of saddles and some horse "gear."

But the place was tolerably clean, thanks to Lew's inborn sense of neatness, and the brothers had accustomed themselves to call it home. Till the day when with a tidy sum of money they hoped to return to a *real* home among the abodes of civilization.

But all this time I have left Lew saddling Paquita, while Charles was washing in a tin bowl on the end of a wooden bench near the door.

"It's a longish ride, Lew, and there's no water this side of the sink hole at Frio Forks. But I'm anxious to close the bargain with old Dutchy as soon as possible. Remember—thirteen dollars a head, and his ranchmen to drive them over."

Thus Charley, after vigorously toweling his sunburned face and neck, said to his younger brother, who sprang into the high Mexican saddle with the slightest perceptible effort.

"All right," was the cheery response. "I'll get back by dark easy. Say, would you take a gun along?"

"Why—no," returned his brother half hesitatingly, "that is, unless you'd rather. It'll only be in your way, and there's no such good news as a deer this side Frio range. No; better go flying light."

"Come, Paquita." And off went the bronco at a swift yet easy lope, which very soon left the ranch and its occupants in the distance.

Well, it was one of those mornings when given good health, buoyant spirits, a hopeful nature and picturesque surroundings, one couldn't well help feeling light hearted and happy. And all these were Lew Craig's as he rode on toward a distant cattle ranch, whose owner had agreed to sell the two young fellows the few head of cattle which—Providence permitting—were to be the nucleus of a future fortune—*quien sabe?*

So on sped Lew and Paquita over great patches of wild poppies and verbenas, of vetches and daisies and other blossoms by the acre. Occasionally he would meet a mounted herder followed by his dog, perhaps driving a great flock of sheep before them to better grazing lands where there was more grass and less floral display.

Once he encountered a half dozen Mexican *vagueros*, handsomely mounted, with an accompanying mule team drawing a big tilted cart or "prairie schooner." Very picturesque looking were these honest gentlemen in their velvet, silver button bespangled jackets, slashed trousers, tinkling spurs, and sombreros whose silver adornings threw the more useful if less ornamental one worn by Lew quite in the shade.

Any one of them would have cut the throat of an unarmed traveler for a couple of gold *pesos*, but they saluted Lew with a courteous "*buenos dias*," and passed on—considerably in his relief.

Higher and higher climbed the sun in a cloudless sky. It can be very hot in southwestern Texas, particularly in mid-summer, and this was one of the days. So when at nearly noon three quarters of the distance to Jose's ranch was covered, and the tall cottonwood, marking a "sink hole" where Lew had more than once stopped for water, hove in sight, his heart rejoiced, for both himself and Paquita were tremendously thirsty.

"Cheer up, old fellow," said Lew, patting his horse's neck, "the boiling spring—though they call it a 'sink hole,' which it isn't—is close at hand, five minutes more and—Great Scott!"

The sudden and seemingly irrelevant conclusion to his speech proceeded not so much from the effect of a tremendous sideways plunge on the part of Paquita, as from a sudden sight of the cause thereof.

Stealing softly along through the tall

grass, not two yards distant, was a lithe, cat-like form suggestive at the first glance of the dreaded cougar of North America, or its congener the puma of South America.

"It must be a wild cat; but, good gracious, what a big one!" muttered Lew, who began to wish most heartily that he had brought his gun; for the savage looking animal, instead of showing fear, looked more like showing fight, and taking the aggressive at that. It gave vent to a fierce snarl, and, as Lew with difficulty controlled his frightened steed by voice and touch, the wild cat, with ears laid back and flashing eyeballs fixed upon horse and rider, seemed meditating in what form to make attack.

Of course, Lew could put spurs to Paquita, and escape by superior speed. But in the first place, he hated to run from a wild cat, and in the second, both horse and rider were parched with thirst. The wild cat was evidently bound for the sink hole, and might remain there for an indefinite time. What should he do?

Some people think quick in emergencies, and all these considerations passed like a flash before Lew's mental vision as Paquita danced and snorted and otherwise misbehaved, while all the time the savage looking animal was creeping along like a tiger eying its prey.

Lew's hand touched the lariat coiled at his saddle bow.

"I can but try it," he said half aloud; "but if I should happen to miss—"

What the result would be was so purely conjectural that Lew did not finish the sentence. Instead, he slipped the lariat from its place, separated the coils with his fingers, glanced downward to see they were in order, and then, swinging the lariat above his head, let the looped end fly hurtling through the air.

Call it luck or call it Providence as you will, the noose settled as neatly down over the wild cat's head as though thrown by an expert.

And as, catching a turn of the lariat end about his saddle bows, Lew threw his horse backward on its haunches, the wild cat, uttering a fiercer snarl, struck at the loop with its huge paw, but to its own discomfort.

For the loop, in tightening, caught the paw itself in such a way that it was forcibly drawn up against the wild cat's neck, where it was held as in a vise.

But now Lew was reminded both of the man who caught a Tartar and the other one who drew an elephant in the lottery.

True, the animal was comparatively harmless in its present predicament. But the intervening paw prevented the slightest hopes of its choking to death. Nor did Lew want to lose the lariat—forty feet of eight strand buckskin, as soft and supple as silk.

All the while the wild cat was tugging and straining—shaking its ugly head and tearing the sod with its wicked, curving claws, and Lew was quite beside himself with perplexity.

For now neither horse nor rider could slake his burning thirst at the spring so close at hand. Except the cottonwood itself, there was not a bush or shrub for miles to which he could fasten the lariat while the two were drinking.

There was only one way out of it, and that was to press onward to Dutchy's ranch as fast as possible, taking the wild cat in tow.

If Lew had not been so tired and thirsty and worried withal, I think he would have laughed his sides sore; for on tore Paquita, while behind her—sometimes upon three legs, sometimes upon two—came the unwilling wild cat, uttering stifled screams and yells, varied by attempts at spitting and swearing, but all the time dragging back as heavily as possible on the taunted lariat, with its short tail swelled up to the size of a blood pudding!

Lew has since said that he thought the ride never would end, but it did. About four o'clock Paquita, Lew and the cat— which latter, though nearly exhausted and half choked, was mad with fury—dashed into old Donnerweitz's ranch yard.

"I've brought—in—a—wild cat!" gasped Lew; "get—another—lariat—over—him—some—of—you—fellows!"

Ten minutes later the animal was secured and safely housed by the assembled ranchers under a stout tobacco

hogshead. And let me add that the following week Lew sold him to one of Barnum's agents, who happened along, for fifty dollars cash.

Then, having duly refreshed himself and Paquita, Lew concluded his bargain with old Donnerweitz, who "threw in," as he said, two young steers as a tribute to Lew's pluck.

"For I tells you dot vos von fine por," he afterward remarked, "and you don't hear me talk no more of Eastern tenderfoots. Any young chap vot lasso a roarin' tiger and brings him life an' kicken' into der ranch und sells him for vivty dollar, is tougher'n we ol' settlers, und don't you forgit it too!"

ONWARD AND UPWARD.

BY LEON HERBERT.

LITTLE by little the world grows strong.

Fighting the battle of right and wrong.

Little by little the wrong gives way,

Little by little the right has sway.

Little by little all longing souls

Struggle to nearer the shining goals!

Little by little the good in men

Blossoms in beauty from human ken;

Little by little the angels see

Prophecies better of good to be;

Little by little the God of all

Lifts the world nearer his pleading call.

[This story commenced in No. 264.]

Luke Walton;

OR,

THE CHICAGO NEWSBOY.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

Author of "The Young Acrobat," "Bob Burton," "Ragged Dick," "Luck and Pluck," etc.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STRANGE VISITOR.

"DID YOU come here to rob me?" repeated Mr. Browning, as he stood facing the tramp whom he had brought to light from under the bed.

There was a strong contrast between the two men. One was a well dressed, prosperous looking gentleman, the other a man with a beard of a week's growth, disordered hair, and soiled garments.

There was an eager, questioning look on the face of the tramp, as he stared at the gentleman upon whose privacy he had intruded—not a look of fear, but a look of curiosity. Thomas Browning misinterpreted it. He thought the man was speechless from alarm, and rather enjoyed the thought that he had struck terror into the soul of a would be burglar.

"Have you nothing to say for yourself?" demanded Browning, sternly.

The answer considerably surprised him. "Why, pard, it's you, is it?" said the man with the air of one to whom a mystery was made plain.

"What do you mean by your impertinence?" asked the respectable Mr. Browning, angrily.

"Well, that's a good one! Who'd have thought that this ere mansion belonged to my old friend and pard?"

"What do you mean? Are you crazy, fellow?"

"No, I ain't crazy as I know of, but I'm flabbergasted—that's what I am."

"Have done with this trifling, and tell me why I shouldn't hand you over to the police!"

"I guess you won't do that, Tom Butler!" returned the burglar, coolly.

Browning started in surprise and dismay at hearing his old name pronounced by this unsavory specimen of humanity.

"Who are you?" he demanded quickly.

"Don't you know me?"

"No, I don't. I never saw you before. I don't associate with men of your class."

"Hear him now!" chuckled the tramp in an amazed tone. "Why, Tom Butler, you an' me used to be pards. Don't you remember Jack King? Why, we've bunked together and hunted for gold together, and almost starved together; but that was in the old days."

Browning looked the amazement he felt.

"Are you really Jack King?" he ejaculated, sinking back into an easy chair, and staring hard at his unexpected visitor.

"I'm the same old coon, Tom, but I'm down at the heel, while you—do you really own this fine house, and these elegant fixin's?"

"Yes," answered Browning, mechanically.

"Well, you've fared better than I. I've been goin' down, down, till I've got about as far down as I can get."

"And you've become a burglar?"

"Well, a man must live, you know."

"You could work."

"Who would give such a lookin' man as I am work?"

"How did you get in?"

"That's my secret! You mustn't expect me to give myself away."

"And you had no idea whose house you were in?"

"I was told it belonged to a Mr. Browning."

"I am Mr. Browning—Thomas Browning."

"You! What has become of Butler?"
 "I had good substantial reasons for changing my name—there was money in it, you understand."

"I'd like to change my own name on them terms. And now, Tom Butler, what are you going to do for me?"

Mr. Browning's face hardened. He felt no sympathy for the poor wretch with whom he had once been on terms of intimacy. He felt ashamed to think that they had ever been comrades, and he resented the tone of familiarity with which this outcast addressed him—a reputable citizen, a wealthy capitalist, a man whose name had been more than once mentioned in connection with the mayor's office.

"I'll tell you what I ought to do," he said, harshly.

"Well?"
 "I ought to call in a policeman, and give you in charge for entering my house as a burglar."

The tramp whistled, and eyed him keenly.
 "You'd better not do that," he said without betraying alarm.

"Why not? Why should I not treat you like any other burglar?"

"Because—I want to ask you a question," and the tramp unbidden sank into another easy chair facing that of the owner of the mansion.

"What did you do with that money Walton gave you on his death bed?"

A look of surprise and alarm overspread the countenance of Thomas Browning, as he noted that lost touch of the tramp, who drew his own conclusion therefrom.

"What do you mean?" he faltered.

"Just what I say. What did you do with Walton's money?"

"I am at a loss to understand your meaning."

"No, you are not. However, I am ready to explain. As his death bed Walton gave you ten thousand dollars to carry to his wife and family. Did you do it?"

"Who told you of this?"

"It is unnecessary for me to say. It is enough that I know it. At the time you were poor enough. You might have had a few hundred dollars of your own, but certainly not much more. Now—it isn't so many years ago—I find you a rich man. Of course I have my own ideas of how this came about."

"Do you mean to accuse me of dishonesty?" demanded Browning, angrily.

"I don't accuse you of anything. I am only thinking of what would be natural under the circumstances. I'm not an angel myself, Tom Butler, and I can't say but the money might have miscarried, if it had been handed over to me instead of you. I wish it had! I wouldn't be the miserable looking wretch I am now."

"Walton handed me some money," said Browning, cautiously, "but certainly not much more. As I handed it to his family."

"Where did they live?"

"In a country town," he answered, glibly.

Jack King eyed him shrewdly. He was a man of penetration, and he understood perfectly that Browning had appropriated the money to his own use.

"I was thinking I might run across Mrs. Walton some day," he said, significantly. "She would be glad to see me, as I knew her late husband in California."

"She is dead!" said Browning, hastily.

"Dead! How long since?"

"She died some time ago. I heard of her husband's death. Died of grief, poor woman!"

"Were there no children?"

"Yes; there was a girl, but she was adopted by a relative in Massachusetts."

"I don't believe a word of it!" thought Jack King. "He wants to put me off the scent."

"Humph! And you gave the wife the money?"

"Of course."

"I may meet the girl some time; I might advise for any of the family."

"Do you think they would be glad to see you?"

"They might help me, and I stand in need of help."

"There is no need of that. You are an old comrade in distress. I haven't forgotten the fact, though I pretended to, to try you. Here's a five dollar bill. I'll let you out of the house myself. Considering how you entered it, you may count yourself lucky."

"That's all right, as far as it goes, Tom, but I want to remind you of a little debt you owe me. When you were out of luck at Murphy's diggings, I lent you twenty five dollars, which you have never paid back."

"I had forgotten it."

"I haven't. That money will come mighty convenient just now. It will buy me a better looking suit, second hand, and make a different man of me. With it I can get a place, and set up for a respectable human being."

"Here's the money," said Browning, reluctantly drawing the additional bills from his wallet. "Now that we are square, I hope you won't annoy me by further applications. I might have sent you out of the house under very different circumstances."

"You were always considerate, Tom," said the tramp, stowing away the bills in the pocket of his ragged vest. "May I refer to you if I apply for a situation?"

"Yes; but remember I am now Thomas Browning. I prefer not to have it known that my name was ever Butler."

"All right! Now, if you'll do me the favor of showing me to the door—I might scare a servant—I'll leave you to your slumbers."

"It's very awkward, that man's turning up,"

muttered Browning, as he returned from letting out his unsavory visitor. "How could he have heard about Walton's money?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW JACK KING FARED.

JACK KING left the house with the money Browning had unwillingly given him. He sought a cheap lodging, and the next morning proceeded to make himself respectable. When he had donned some clean linen, a suit of clothes which he bought cheap at a second hand store, taken a bath, and called upon requisition the services of a barber, it would have been hard to recognize him as the same man who had emerged from under the bed of the well known philanthropist, a typical tramp and would be burglar.

Jack King counted over the balance of his money, and found he had nine dollars and thirty-seven cents left.

"This won't support me forever," he reflected. "I must get something to do."

While sauntering along he fell in with an old acquaintance named Stone.

"What are you up to, King?" he asked.

"Looking for a job."

"You are my man, then. I am keeping a cigar store at the Prairie Hotel, but I have some business calling me away from the city for six weeks or two months. Will you take my place?"

"What are your inducements?"

"Looking for a job."

"You are my man, then. I am keeping a cigar store at the Prairie Hotel, but I have some business calling me away from the city for six weeks or two months. Will you take my place?"

"Board and lodging and five dollars a week."

"Agreed."

"Come over then, and I will show you the place."

The hotel was a cheap one, not far from the railway station, and though comfortable, was not of the class frequented by fastidious travelers. Jack King looked about him with satisfaction. "To one who had been only the day before outside the pale of respectability it afforded a welcome refuge from poverty and privation."

"When do you want me to take hold?" he asked.

"Tomorrow."

"All right."

"Come round at ten o'clock. I want to leave Milwaukee in the afternoon."

"There is great virtue in a respectable suit and appearance," thought Jack King. "If Stone had met me yesterday he would have steered clear of me. Now that I have got my foot on the ladder of respectability I will mount higher if I can."

King could not help reflecting upon the extraordinary prosperity of his old comrade Tom Butler, now Thomas Browning, Esq.

"What does it mean, and how has it come about?" he asked himself. "He seemed very uneasy when I asked him about Walton's money. I believe he kept it himself. I wish I knew. If I could prove it, it would be a gold mine to me. I must make inquiries, and, if possible, find out Walton's family."

"Do you know anything of Thomas Browning?" he asked Stone.

"The philanthropist? Yes. What of him?"

"I called on him last evening."

"Jack did not think it best to mention the circumstances of his visit."

"Indeed! How did you know him?"

"In California."

"You were he laid the foundation of his fortune there."

"Is he so rich then?"

"Yes, probably worth quarters of a million."

"This was an exaggeration, but rich men's wealth is generally overstated."

"How does he stand in the city?"

"First class. He has been mentioned for mayor. I shouldn't be surprised if he might get the office some day."

"He has certainly been very lucky," remarked King, quietly.

"I should say so. Was he rich in California?"

"I know. At one time there he had to borrow money of me. He paid me back last evening."

"He is on the top of the ladder now at any rate."

"His respectability would suffer a little," thought Jack King. "If I could prove that he had appropriated Walton's money. I must think the matter over, and secure some information if I can."

The next Sunday evening he called at the house of the philanthropist, and sent in his name.

Thomas Browning went himself to the door. He was afraid King might be wearing the same disreputable suit in which he had made his former visit. But to his relief his visitor looked quite respectable.

"Do you wish to see me?" he asked.

"Yes; but only for a social call. I am not acquainted in Milwaukee, and it does me good to see an old friend and comrade."

"I have not much time to spare, but come in!"

"They were into the philanthropist's library, formerly described."

"Have you found anything to do?" asked Browning.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

King answered the question.

"It is not much," he added, "but will do for the present."

"At any rate it is considerably better than entering a house at night, and hiding under the bed," said Browning, dryly.

"So it is," answered King, smiling. "You must make allowance for my destitute condition. I little thought that I was in the house of an old

friend. I have been asking about you, Tom Butler, I beg pardon, Mr. Browning, and I find that you stand very high in Milwaukee."

A shade of annoyance showed itself on the philanthropist's face when King referred to him under his former name, but when his high standing was referred to he smiled complacently.

"Yes," he said, "I have been fortunate enough to win the good opinion of my fellow citizens."

"Some one told me that you would probably run for mayor some day."

"It may be. I have been sounded on the subject."

"The worst of running for office is, that if a man has ever done anything discreditable, it is sure to be brought out against him."

"By hope you don't mean to imply that I have ever done anything discreditable," said Browning, sharply.

"Oh dear, no! How could I think such a thing? But sometimes false charges are brought. If you had ever betrayed a trust, or kept money belonging to another, of course it would hurt you."

"Certainly it would," said the philanthropist, his voice betraying some nervousness; "but I am glad to say that my conscience is clear on that point."

"I must conciliate this fellow, or he may do some harm," he thought. "I wonder whether he means anything."

"By no means," he said, "I will send for a bottle of wine," he added, aloud. "We'll drink to the memory of old times."

"With all my heart, Tom. I see you're the right sort. When you are nominated for office I will work for you."

Browning smiled graciously on his visitor, and the philanthropist closed pleasantly.

"He's afraid of me!" thought Jack, as he left the house. "There's something in that Walton affair that he wants to hush up. It will take more than a glass of wine to buy me off."

CHAPTER XIX.

A SENSATIONAL INCIDENT.

WHEN Luke brought home the dress pattern his mother was much pleased.

"I have needed a dress for a good while," she said, "but I never felt that I could spare the money to buy even a common one. This material is very nice."

"It cost seventy five cents a yard. I was with Mrs. Merton when she bought it."

"I hope you didn't hint to Mrs. Merton that I needed one."

"No, that isn't like me, mother, but I own that I was very glad that she thought of it."

"Please tell her how grateful I am."

"I will certainly do so. Now, mother, I want you to have it made up at once. I can spare the money necessary."

"It will cost very little. I will have it cut by a dressmaker, and make it up myself. I hope you will long retain the friendship of Mrs. Merton."

"It won't be my fault if I don't. But I can't help seeing that her niece, Mrs. Tracy, and Harold, a boy about my age, look upon me with dislike."

"Why should they? I don't see how any one can dislike you."

"You are my mother, and are prejudiced in my favor. But I am sure they have no reason to dislike me. I think, however, they are jealous, and fear the old lady will look upon me with too much favor. She is very rich, I hear, and they expect to inherit all her fortune."

"Money makes people mean and unjust."

"If I can only get hold of some, I'll run the risk of that," said Luke. "I should feel a good deal more comfortable if I hadn't two enemies in the house. I am afraid they will try to set the old lady against me."

"Do your duty, my son, and leave the rest to God. It isn't well to borrow trouble."

"No doubt you are right, mother. I will follow your advice."

The next morning Luke was at his usual stand near the Sherman House when a boy who was passing uttered a slight exclamation of surprise. Looking up, Luke recognized Harold Tracy.

"So it's you, is it?" said Harold, not over politely.

"Yes," answered Luke. "I hope you are well."

"I didn't know you were a newsboy."

"I spend a part of my time in selling papers."

"Does Mrs. Merton know you are a newsboy?"

"I think I have told her, but I am not certain."

"It must be inconvenient to you to come so far as our house every day."

"Of course it takes up some time, but Mrs. Merton does not allow me to work for nothing."

"How much does Aunt Eliza pay you?" asked Harold, his face showing the curiosity he felt.

"I would rather you would ask Mrs. Merton. I am not sure whether she would care to have me tell."

"You seem to forget that I am her nephew—that is, her grand nephew. It is hardly likely she would keep such a thing secret from me."

"That may be, but I would rather you would ask her."

"Does she pay you more than two dollars a week?"

"Again I must refer you to her."

"It is ridiculous to make a secret of such a trifle," said Harold, annoyed.

Luke did not feel bound to make any reply, and Harold's curiosity manifested itself in another way.

"How much do you make selling papers?" he asked.

"I averaged about seventy five cents a day before I began to work for Mrs. Merton. Now I don't make as much."

"Why don't you black boots too? Many of the newsboys do."

"I never cared to take up that business."

"If you should go into it, I would give you a job now and then."

"I am not likely to go into that business, but I shall be glad to sell you a paper whenever you need one."

"You are not too proud to black boots, are you?" persisted Harold.

"I don't think it necessary to answer that question. I have always got along without it so far."

Harold carried the news home to his mother that Luke was a newsboy, and Mrs. Tracy found an opportunity to mention it at the supper table.

Harold saw your paragon this morning, Aunt Eliza," she commenced.

"Have I a paragon? I really wasn't aware of it," returned the old lady.

"Your errand boy."

"Oh, Luke. Where did you see him, Harold?"

"He was selling papers near the Sherman House."

"I hope you bought one of him."

"I didn't have any change."

"Did you know he was a newsboy, Aunt Eliza?" asked Mrs. Tracy.

"Yes; he told me so. You speak of it as if it were something to his discredit."

"It is a low business, of course."

"Why is it a low business?"

"Oh, well, of course it is only poor street boys who engage in it."

"I am aware that Luke is poor, and that he has to contribute to the support of his mother and brother. I hope if you were poor that Harold would be willing to work for you."

"I wouldn't sell papers," put in Harold, decidedly.

"I don't suppose Luke sells papers from choice."

"Aunt Eliza, I don't see why you should so persistently compare Harold with that ragged errand boy of yours."

"Is he ragged? I am glad you noticed it. I must help him to a new suit."

This was far from a welcome suggestion to Mrs. Tracy, and she made haste to add: "I don't think he's ragged. He dresses well enough for his position in life."

"Still I think he needs some new clothes, and I thank you for suggesting it, Louisa."

"What a provoking woman Aunt Eliza is!" said Mrs. Tracy to herself. "Sometimes I wish I could slap her, she is so contrary and perverse."

The next day, Luke, to his surprise, was asked to accompany Mrs. Merton to a ready made clothing house on Clark Street, where he was presented with a fine suit, costing twenty dollars.

"How kind you are, Mrs. Merton!" said Luke.

"I didn't notice that you needed a new suit," returned the old lady, "but my niece, Mrs. Tracy, spoke of it, and I was glad to take the hint."

Luke was more astonished than ever. Was it possible that Mrs. Tracy, who, he supposed, disliked him, should so have interested herself in his behalf? It was hard to believe. There was a smile on Mrs. Merton's face that strengthened his incredulity, and he refrained from expressing his thanks to Mrs. Tracy when he met her.

It was in the afternoon of the same day that Luke, having an errand that carried him near the lake shore, strolled to the end of North Pier. He was fond of the water, but seldom had an opportunity to go out on it.

"How are you, Luke?" said a boy in a flat bottomed boat a few rods away.

In the boy who hailed him Luke recognized John Hagan, an acquaintance of about his own age.

"Won't you come aboard?" asked John.

"I don't mind, if you'll come near enough."

In five minutes Luke found himself on board the boat. He took the oars and relieved John, who was disposed to rest.

They rowed hither and thither, never very far from the pier. Not far away was a boat of the same build, occupied by a man of middle size, whose eccentric actions attracted their attention.

Now he would take the oars and row with feverish haste, nearly fifty strokes to a minute, then he would let his oars trail, and seemed wrapt in thought. Suddenly the boys were startled to see him spring to his feet, and flinging up his arms leap head first into the lake.

(To be continued.)

HE WOULD NOT DISAPPOINT THE PUBLIC.

WILSON, the celebrated violinist, was upset one day in his carriage near Edinburgh. A Scotch paper, after recording the accident, said: "We are happy to state he was able to appear the following evening in three pieces."

ONE FOR THE DOG.

TRAMP—"I haven't had a bite for two days." Motherly old lady—"Haven't had a bite in two days? Here, Tige, you haven't had one, either."

A COMPARISON.

BY DEAMONT AND FLETCHER.

AN honest soul is like a ship at sea,
That sleeps at anchor on the ocean's calm;
But when it rages, and the winds blow high,
She cuts her way with skill and majesty.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY OF GERMANY.

BY HENRY SCHOMBURG.

LARGE portion of the sympathy and interest of the world at large is turned just now toward the Crown Prince of Germany, who is struggling against the strange disease that threatens his life and completely puzzles the most skillful physicians of Europe. And our readers are no doubt aware, his fate still seems to hang in the balance. Contradictory bulletins are constantly issued from his winter residence at San Remo. One day the cable informs us that his symptoms are favorable, and a chance for recovery still remains; the next, we learn that the terrible malady of cancer has surely stricken the imperial sufferer, whose life must certainly end within a few months.

We cannot but be reminded of the sad end of another great soldier and honored leader of men upon the heights of Mount McGregor. But the interest with which the eyes of the world are turned to the Crown Prince is deeper yet than that with which Grant's last days were watched. Heir to a throne with nearly fifty millions of subjects, whose present incumbent has already passed twenty-one years beyond the allotted span of three score and ten. Should death overtake the aged Emperor William and the stricken Crown Prince, the headship of the great German Empire would descend to a young man but little known and of short experience, and the effect of the change upon the fate of the nations of Europe might indeed be momentous.

The history of the Hohenzollern family, the house to which the Kaiser and the Crown Prince belong, has always been an eventful one. It was in the fourteenth century that a Hohenzollern first became Elector of Brandenburg, to which Prussia was afterward added, Frederick I taking the title of King of Prussia in 1701. Historical details would be out of place here, and it is enough to add that the descendants of these old rulers gradually raised their dominion to a foremost place among the powers of continental Europe—an achievement due principally to Frederick the Great in the last century, and to the present Emperor William.

The last named was born March 22, 1797, and succeeded his brother Frederick William IV as King of Prussia on the 2nd of January, 1861. As he was already nearly sixty-four years old, few anticipated the wonderful career before the new monarch. Aided by his two great lieutenants, Moltke the soldier and Bismarck the statesman, his reign has been a series of triumphs. The first of these was over his small neighbor, Denmark, in 1864, and this quarrel led to the short and decisive struggle with Austria two years later. The victory of Prussia in the great battle of Koeniggratz caused that country to supersede Austria as the leading state of the German nation.

In 1870 Louis Napoleon, emperor of the French, declared war against Prussia. The South German states, Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Baden, cast in their lot with the latter, and the brilliant success of the German arms resulted in the coronation at Versailles, on January 18, 1871, of the Prussian king as Emperor of a reunited Germany. The Emperor's eldest son was born on Oct. 18, 1831, in the New Palace at Potsdam, and he is therefore in his 37th year. As a boy he was sickly, and his life was often despaired of, but he grew up to be strong and manly, and his life's story will be, when it is finally written, a record of worthy deeds and generous aspirations.

His death would be a sad blow to the hopes of non-military Germany. He seemed as if created to carry on the work of German unity to its completion, to inaugurate an era in German history that would be marked by a development of the higher capacities of her people, checked by the wars that were necessary to bring the empire to its present proud position in the world.

The first noteworthy event in the Crown Prince's life was his marriage to the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria, on the 25th of January, 1858. Her influence upon her husband has been very great, and always used for good. She has made him the noblest, gentlest and most high principled of the Hohenzollerns. They have now six children in life and two are dead. Prince Wilhelm was born Jan. 27, 1859. Princess Charlotte was born July 24, 1860—

Prince Heinrich (the future admiral of the German navy), Aug. 24, 1862; Princess Victoria, April 12, 1866; Princess Sophie, June 14, 1870; Princess Marguerita, April 22, 1872; Prince Waldemar, who was born Feb. 7, 1868, died in 1878, and Prince Sigismund died two years before. On the 25th of January, 1883, the Crown Prince pair celebrated their silver wedding in Berlin amid great festivities.

The Crown Prince has taken part in all the great wars waged during his father's reign. In the contest with Denmark he was only a spectator attached to the headquarters of Marshal Wrangel. His first leadership was given to him in the Austrian campaign.

In that war the main thing to do was to defeat the forces of South Germany joining with

battalions of Austria, but they kept their ground, and for a long time the scales of the battle hung evenly.

For a time it seemed, indeed, as if victory would rest on the standards of the Hapsburgs, and the Prussians looked for the coming of the Crown Prince as eagerly as Wellington had once looked for the coming of Blucher.

Suddenly Bismarck lowered his glasses and drew attention to certain lines in the distance. All telescopes were pointed thither. At first the lines were pronounced to be furrows. "They are not furrows," said Bismarck; "the spaces are not equal; they are advancing lines." It was the Crown Prince's army that had been delayed by the condition of the roads, which the rains had made all but impassable. Only twenty

has journeyed widely over Europe, besides visiting Asia and Africa. He has been in England and Scotland, France and Switzerland. He has seen Athens, Constantinople, Damascus and Jerusalem, and was present at the opening of the Suez Canal. His travels were extended to Cairo and the first cataract of the Nile.

He has been in Italy several times, and is very fond of that beautiful country. He has spent several summers at the village of Portosino, not far from Athens. On the whole, simple, contemplative life in the midst of his family, more like an artist than a prince. Among the simple fishermen he was a great favorite. They could hardly believe their senses, however, seeing this earnest, dignified man, the son of one of the greatest potentates of Europe, wandering around like a common mortal, smoking a short pipe, climbing over the rocks with his children on the seashore, rowing about on the water in a small boat, or taking moonlight walks in the garden of his house or under the trees that surrounded it. "Look you," the Crown Prince said to a German nobleman, who visited him there; "I have never felt better and happier than I do here. This solitariness soothes and strengthens me."

In 1883 he paid a memorable visit to Spain. King Alfonso, the Spanish monarch, had been created an honorary colonel in the German army. Passing through Paris directly afterward, he was received with a chorus of execrations and insults, and the excitement nearly caused a renewal of the Franco-German war. It was at once arranged that the Crown Prince should visit King Alfonso to show how highly Germany prized the Spanish friendship, and how deeply she resented the insult to Germany done to her through the Spanish king while in Paris. On the 9th of October the Crown Prince left Berlin, traveling first to Genoa in order to avoid French territory. From there he was conveyed by a German squadron to Valencia. He met with a magnificent reception at Madrid, and returned to Germany by way of Rome.

The prince's last journey southward has been a sad one. In September of last year he was sent by the advice of his physicians to Toblach in the romantic Fusterthal valley, in the Tyrol, where it was hoped that the balmy air of the pine forests would assist in his recovery. He was accompanied by the Crown Princess and the young princesses.

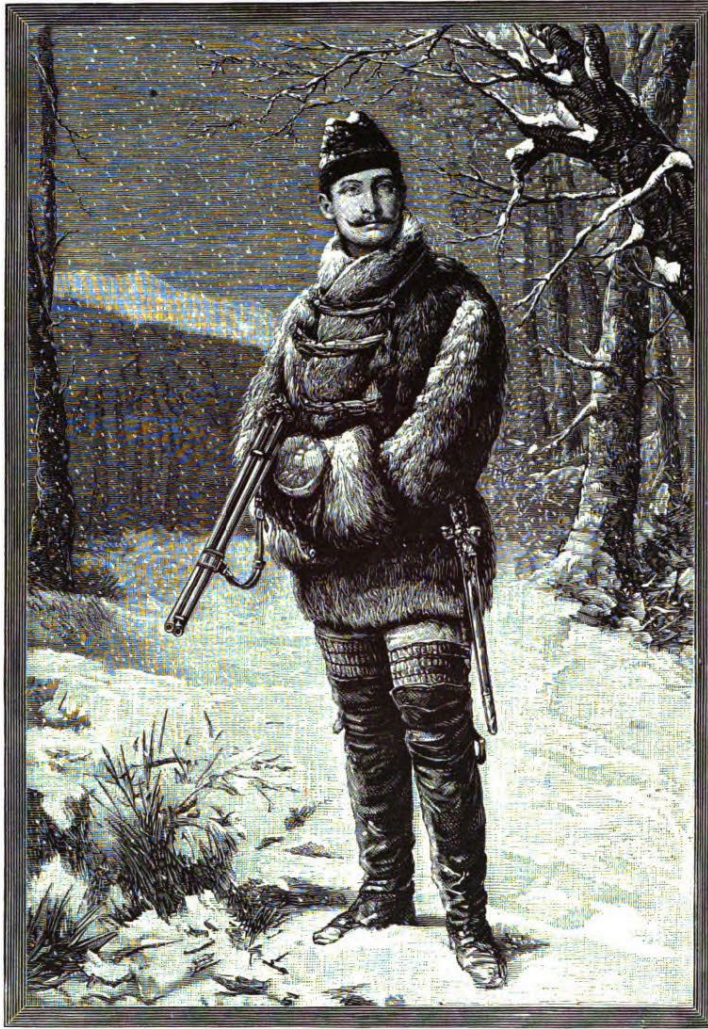
He seemed at first to improve. His days were spent in pleasant picnics and excursions in the mountains, and his mornings in his temporary cabinet looking out upon the fir clad valleys. He left Toblach on September 25 for San Remo, where it is now decided that he will stay, in the hope that the balmy winter breezes of the Mediterranean may be of benefit to him.

The Crown Prince has been termed the ideal of manly beauty, and his tall and stalwart frame has been inherited by his two surviving sons, of Prince William, the elder, and the heir presumptive to the imperial throne, we print a portrait as he appears in hunting costume.

The young prince has been preparing himself sedulously for the duties that lie before him. He has been employed for twelve months in the department of the Minister of the Interior, and is soon to enter upon a three months' experience in the Finance department. Subsequently he will master the details of the Foreign Office, occupying the position of head clerk. His military training has been thorough.

Nor is the Prince unfitted, unless by ill health, to earn his living in the humbler walks of life. It has long been the rule in the imperial family of Germany that each son should learn a trade. The Crown Prince himself passed an apprenticeship at cabinet making, and in the Emperor's room at Babelsberg is furniture of his manufacture. Prince William has followed his father's example, and should some strange vicissitude of fortune compel him to earn his living with his hands, he would be able to do so.

The second son of the Crown Prince, Heinrich, who is an officer in the German navy, is more popular with the nation at large than his brother. He has, however, very little chance of succeeding to the throne, as Prince William is already the father of a son and heir, a sturdy seven year old boy, also named William. He it is who is the central figure of a picture entitled "Hohenzollern Luck," which is at present very popular in Berlin, and represents him in the midst of a group composed of the Emperor, the Crown Prince and Prince William, endeavoring to grasp with one hand the iron cross upon his father's breast and with the other holding a toy, and glancing at his grandfather with a look which seems to say, "I shall be Emperor, too."



PRINCE WILLIAM, ELDEST SON OF THE GERMAN CROWN PRINCE.

those of Austria that had been gathered in Bohemia. King William led three separate armies, the first called the army of Bohemia, 100,000 men under Prince Frederick Charles; the second the army of Silesia, 116,000 men under the Crown Prince; the third the army of the Elbe, 40,000 men commanded by Von Bittenfeld. On the 23d of June Prince Frederick Charles crossed the Austrian frontier, and six days later he was joined by the army of the Elbe. On his left the Crown Prince with his army was at Koeniginhof, a day's march away, while the Austrians were drawn up at Koeniggratz ready for battle. The plan of attack was very simple. Prince Frederick Charles, with his three corps, was to assault the enemy's center; while Bittenfeld was to fall upon the left flank of the Austrians and the Crown Prince attack their right. But the Crown Prince was twenty-five miles away, and it was four o'clock in the morning before Colonel Von Frankenstein, after a terrible ride, arrived at the Crown Prince's headquarters with the King's command to join Prince Frederick Charles.

The battle began at eight, the King, Moltke and Bismarck being on the field. The needle gun worked terrible havoc among the devoted

five miles, but it took the army nine hours to do the distance, and the Crown Prince lost twenty-five per cent of his men through exhaustion, by the way.

The Prince lost not a moment in getting his forces into action. Violently assaulted on both flanks, and fiercely pressed in the center, the Austrians began to slacken their fire, to give way, and then retreat. The battle was won, and the honors of having decided it were the Crown Prince's.

In the war with France, too, the Crown Prince played a prominent part. He had the command of an army of two hundred thousand men, and the first blow of the campaign—the battle of Weissenburg—was struck by his troops. Later on he fought at Sedan, and with his father when the latter received Louis Napoleon's surrender. Then he moved forward to the siege of Paris. When peace was declared he returned with the Bavarian troops and took part in their triumphal entry into Munich, where he was received by the people with such tremendous enthusiasm that the Bavarian king, Ludwig, was deeply offended, and abruptly left the capital.

The Crown Prince is fond of traveling, and

TWO FRIENDS.

"I have two friends who are with me night and day,
True friends and constant, ever by my side;
Than mother and captivity, or young bride;
Yet when one comes the other steals away;
For jealous friends will no joint vigil keep;
The one's great name is Work, the other's Sleep.

[This story commenced in No. 267.]

Under Fire;

**OR,
FRED WORTHINGTON'S CAMPAIGN.**

By FRANK A. MUNSEY,

Author of "Afloat in a Great City," "The Boy Broker," etc., etc.

**CHAPTER VII.
SHORT'S DILEMMA.**

TIM SHORT made a very wretched attempt to obtain a night's sleep after escaping from captivity, both because the night was well spent before he reached home, and because matters of too great importance rested upon his mind to allow him to bury them in slumber.

He reported at the factory at the usual morning hour, and after working a little time, complained of being sick, and got released for the remainder of the day. If he was not physically ill, he was doubtless sick at heart, so he speedily sought Matthew, and told him, with more or less ill feeling, of his experience in the hands of Jacob Simmons, and of the latter's demands in settlement (as he called it) for his injuries.

"And you blowed upon me?" demanded De Vere, with ill suppressed anger.

"I told him who you were, to save him from choking me to death."

"Is that all you said?"

"He told me to tell the truth or—"

"So you gave him the whole story about Worthington—you fool, to tell everything you know!"

"I only wish you had been in my place."

"If I had I wouldn't have been an idiot!" retorted De Vere, sharply.

"Oh, you wouldn't? Some folks are very smart," replied Tom, getting angry.

"I'd have been smart enough for that."

"A lot you would. If he'd had you as he had me, you would have told more than I did, and promised anything he asked."

"I'm not a baby, I want you to understand, to cry if any one looks at me."

"No, you are very brave, to have to get some one to help you get square with Fred Worthington."

"I was a fool when I got you."

"And I was a fool for having anything to do with you in this business. You will be arrested and sent to prison, and so will I unless you pay Mr. Simmons the five hundred."

"Arrested! What do you mean?" asked Matthew, turning pale.

"I mean just what I said; if you don't pay him he will come down on us within three days."

"Did he say so?" gasped De Vere.

"Yes, he did. He was going to take me to the sheriff last night, and that's why I told everything."

"Five hundred dollars! I can't get it without asking my father for it."

"Well, ask him, then."

"He would find out everything, and would whip me almost to death."

"Better be whipped than to go to prison, and have every one know all about it."

"I won't do either."

"How can you avoid it?"

"Five hundred dollars is too much."

"You'd better see Mr. Simmons and fix it with him."

"I don't want to see him."

"You will have to see him or send the money."

"Would he be ugly?" asked Matthew, dreading to meet the man who gave young Short such well merited punishment.

"Probably not. He got all the revenge he wanted last night, and he's after money now."

The two boys finally called upon Jacob Simmons and entered into negotiations.

"I ought to have more than five hundred," said the latter.

"How can I give it to you if I haven't got it?" asked Matthew.

"Your father is rich, and could give me ten times as much and not miss it."

"Oh, don't tell him! I will pay you what I can."

"If you had the money I would take it and say nothing more to him or any one; but I must have it, or hand you over to the sheriff."

Matthew shuddered at this thought. He was in a dilemma, and hardly knew which way to turn.

After a good deal of parley, Mr. Simmons agreed to take three hundred dollars in the place of the five originally demanded. This act, however, was not inspired by liberality or a desire to make the penalty less for the boys, but with a feeling that he might get nothing if he were to take the matter to the elder De Vere, as he gathered from Matthew's conversation that he would run away from home rather than submit to the severe punishment his father would be sure to give him.

"Three hundred dollars," Jacob argued, "is much better than nothing."

Matthew gave him what cash he had with him—seventeen dollars—and his watch, and signed an agreement to pay the balance within six weeks. He also indorsed the statement that

The fumes of whisky readily indicated the cause of this unfortunate occurrence, but the doctor was at a loss to know why Fred should be in such a state. Was he not one of the most exemplary boys in town, and did he not belong to the Sabbath School, of which Dr. Dutton himself was superintendent?

Surely something must be wrong, thought the doctor, and he began to question the boy, who on going from the cool air to a warm room had grown so suddenly sick that he looked as if he would faint.

The kind physician laid him gently on a lounge, and gave him such professional treatment as the case demanded.

There is a vast difference between one who has become intoxicated by a single glass, and one who has been drinking for hours, and has thereby paralyzed his nerves and deadened his brain. In the former case the liquor can be thrown from the stomach, and the victim soon recovers the powers of his mind; while in the other event, it may take several days to restore his customary vigor.

This sickness of Fred's was the very best thing that could have happened to him, for he got rid of the vile poison before it had time to stupefy him to any great extent. Nevertheless the dose was so strong and the shock so great for his

place of all others in the world that he would wish to have avoided—he became sick at heart as well as in body, and his tumultuous feelings were only soothed by tears of honest repentance. However, Fred hurriedly dressed himself, went to the store as usual, and commenced his accustomed labors. He saw at once, by Mr. Rexford's appearance, that he did not know what had happened the previous night, and this afforded him a slight temporary relief; still, he knew it was only a question of time before his employer would learn the whole story.

When this took place, what would be the result? Would Fred lose his place in the store? He knew that Mr. Rexford was a stern man, having little charity for the faults of others. That his clerk should have been intoxicated the previous night would undoubtedly irritate him greatly.

Fred imagined that every one whom he saw knew of what he had done, and looked upon him with disgust. He felt tempted to leave the village, and never be seen there again, where he had so disgraced himself. Could he only go to some new place, among strangers, and commence life over again, he might go ahead and work his way upward; but here this same world would always hang, like a dark cloud, above him.

On reflection, however, he saw that it would be both unmanly and ungrateful to leave his parents alone to mourn his act and his absence.

No; he was the guilty party, and he must stay here, while the unfortunate occurrence had taken place, and here try, by the strictest discipline, and the most watchful care, to regain his former standing among his friends.

As Fred thought over the occurrences of the past few weeks—of Matthew's decided hostility, of his course at the party, and of his sudden friendship since that time—of his treachery and meanness the night before, in getting him to call at Dr. Dutton's while intoxicated, and his deception in so suddenly leaving him at the door—he saw clearly that he had been made the victim of De Vere's mean and cruel revenge.

Moreover, he did not believe that a single glass of beer would have produced such an effect upon him, and so he strongly suspected the truth—that he had been drugged with a stronger liquor.

Still, he decided to bear the blame himself, and not throw it upon another, though there might be justice in such a course. He felt confident the truth would at some time come to light, if he said nothing about it, whereas, should he bring forward his suspicion as an excuse for getting tipsy, the charge would be at once denied, and then he would be less liable to fix the guilt upon the young villain who had made him the plaything of his malice.

He knew, also, that he was to blame for having visited the iniquitous den at all, and so much more for allowing himself to be persuaded to indulge even in what is popularly considered a harmless drink.

He was so absent minded during the day, and showed so clearly that he was something to be troubled, that John Rexford observed it, and wondered what had happened to check the flow of the boy's spirits.

Rexford was a selfish man, and thought that possibly something pertaining to the store had gone wrong. Such a suspicion was enough to arouse his selfish interest, for he was wholly wrapped up in his business. He could not look beyond that, and had no feeling for other people, making an occasional show of it for the sake of policy.

A man who lives in such a way is not half living. He is not broad, intelligent, liberal, and sympathetic, but is narrowed down to a sordid, grasping existence.

I often pity such men, for though they may have wealth in abundance, they know not how to enjoy it. Neither do they possess the faculty of deriving pleasure from kindness and generosity to others.

They can see no beauty in art or nature, and when they become unfit for pursuing their vocation, they have no way forward to it. The life beyond is something to which they have given little thought. They have starved their nobler nature that thinks on higher things, until it is dwarfed and shriveled, while the reflection of its pale and sickly hue is manifest in their countenance.

Fred's most trying ordeal of the day was that of going to Dr. Dutton's house with goods; for if others did not know of what was on his mind, surely the doctor's family did. He knew that he had forfeited the good opinion they had had of him, and he wished to avoid meeting them.



FRED TELLS HIS FATHER AND MOTHER THE WHOLE STORY OF HIS DISGRACE.

Tom had signed about the assault as being true, and the careful Mr. Simmons replaced it in his large pocketbook for future use if it should at any time be needed.

**CHAPTER VIII.
FRED IN DISGRACE.**

WHEN Fred found that he was in Dr. Dutton's house and that Matthew had disappeared and deserted him, he was at a loss to know what to say or what move to make. His mind was far from clear, and his tongue so unwieldy that he could hardly manage it.

He stood silent for a moment, evidently trying to collect his thoughts and make out his situation; then, muttering some half intelligible words, he made a start as if to leave the house.

The doctor, who answered the summons of the bell, was struck nearly dumb by the sight that greeted his eyes. He closed the door, and taking the youth by the shoulder, supported his unsteady steps to his office.

stomach that for a time he was extremely sick and weak.

But after lying quietly on the lounge for an hour or so, he regained a little strength. The doctor ordered his carriage, helped Fred into it and carried him home. The latter was still so unnerved that he could hardly walk, but the cool air benefited him so much that when he reached home he managed to get into the house alone, and up to his room without disturbing his parents, who had retired some time before.

The next morning he awoke with a severe headache, and seemed generally out of tune.

The mere thought of what he had done—how he had disgraced himself by going to a public bar, and there drinking to intoxication—caused him the deepest sorrow and regret; but when he fully realized what a severe wound his conduct had inflicted upon his mother and father, and how they would grieve over it—when he thought what the people of the town would say, and remembered that he had actually called in this lamentable state at Dr. Dutton's house—the

To his surprise Mrs. Dutton greeted him pleasantly, and made no reference whatever to the affair of the previous night. Her motherly nature pitied him sincerely, for she saw plainly written in his face that he so recently felt. Bless the dear soul for her kind, sympathetic heart, and the cheerful, helpful look she gave the boy in the hour of his trial!

This unexpected charity helped Fred not a little; and the conspicuous absence of Miss Nellie, evidently due to a purpose of avoiding him, sent a chill to his heart that penetrated deep into his very nature, and left its cruel work so well defined that it was plainly reflected in his face and exhibited in his demeanor.

Fred's regard for Nellie was, I think we may safely infer, much stronger and of a finer type than the ordinary preferences shown by boys of his age; therefore we can understand why he was so deeply affected by her shunning him and turning away from him as if he were unfit for an associate.

Matthew De Vere made the most of his opportunity. He felt that he was being revenged now. He took great care to spread the report, and to inform a certain number of the facts concerning Fred. His version of them was a highly colored one; but of course he made no allusion to the adulteration of the liquor. He moreover claimed that he induced Fred to leave the bar room, and intimated that he must have drunk several times before he saw him, "for," he said, "one glass of beer certainly could not have made him tipsy."

By afternoon, the report had spread nearly through the town, for as Milton says:

"Evil rides post, while good news waits."

Dave Farrington and Tom Martin called to see Fred, and talk the matter over with him. The latter did not breathe his suspicions of the real cause of the occurrence, but simply told the facts. The boys quickly replied that they considered it a trick of De Vere's, and that this was the mean way that he had taken to carry out his threat of "getting the advantage of him."

This conversation confirmed Fred's opinion, and though he felt ashamed of himself, and was bound to suffer for his foolish act while the guilty party went free, yet he said to himself:

"I would rather be in my place than in Matthew's, for I shall learn by this experience not to be influenced by another to do anything without first counting the cost, and seeing whether it is right and best. If it is not, I won't do it for anybody's friend-ship. This will also teach me to keep away from suspicious places, and to avoid the temptations and corrupting influences of a bar room. De Vere's guilt work more injurious to him, in the long run, than my injured reputation will to me."

Towards the close of the day Mr. Rexford learned of the previous night's occurrence. He immediately called Fred into the counting room, and sternly, and in an excited manner, questioned him as to the truth of the report.

The latter acknowledged its correctness, and told his story, stating that he drank but one glass of beer, and that that was his first, and would also be his last.

The suspicious merchant was very angry, and disposed to doubt the boy's statement. He said that it was a mystery to him where Fred got the money to spend for such a purpose—intimating that perhaps it came from his own cash drawer. Then, after giving him a sharp lecture, he hinted at discharge, saying that he would have no drinking persons about him.

Mr. J. Rexford well knew the value of such a boy as Fred, and had the intention of securing him as a clerk. But he wished to make the most of his opportunity, and to impress the boy, and the public if possible, that in keeping him he was doing a very magnanimous act.

So he said that he would overlook this fault, though a grave one, and retain Fred for two present on probation; but he warned the boy, that he must keep a sharp lookout, as the first misdeed, or suspicious act on his part, would result in immediate discharge.

The turn of affairs was anything but pleasant to Fred, though better than he had expected. And it was far more satisfactory to him than the previous suspense, when he had not known what his employer would decide to do.

When the day's work was over, Fred went directly home, where he found his father and mother seated before the open fire.

The latter was somewhat worried about her son, for he looked pale and worn, and had eaten hardly anything since the night before; still she knew nothing of the cause of this. His father had received some intimation of what had happened, but had decided to say nothing to his wife about it for the present.

Fred had no intention, however, of keeping his parents in ignorance of his adventure; but taking his usual fears of what this was, but, where he could look both parents in the face, he told them the whole story, going minutely into all of the details.

He also told them of the conversation which had occurred between himself and Rexford.

Both parents listened intently to this statement. The mother feared that this was but a hearing from the lips of her own child—in whom her hopes and pride were centered—that he had been in such company and in such a condition.

The father doubtless felt the disgrace quite as keenly, for he was a sensitive, intelligent man, and naturally averse to anything of the kind of a dissipated life. Still, he could hardly look for that from a boy whom he had tried so hard to instruct in what is manly and

right, and who had always seemed to profit by the instruction.

But as Fred progressed in his narration, and showed how the lamentable result had been brought about, and that he had been made the victim of De Vere's revenge in consequence of the latter's jealousy, both parents looked upon the whole matter in a very different light. Mr. Worthington was extremely indignant, and expressed his determination to see De Vere Senior and demand redress for the despicable course the latter's son had taken. He also vowed that he would wage war against that bar tender, and drive him out of town.

Fred, however, urged his father not to do either, since he believed it would only make a bad matter worse; and he had decided that it would be better for him to say nothing about the affair, further than to mention that Matthew was with him. He requested his father to adopt the same course. Mrs. Worthington, too, thought this the better plan, so after some persuasion her husband agreed to accept the situation and wait for time to bring the truth to light.

The wisdom of such a course must be apparent to my readers when they stop to think upon the matter, as did Fred. For, had he charged De Vere with being the cause of his misfortune, and alleged that the bar tender had drugged him, both villains would have instantly denied it, and the parents, having no other reason than to burden the mind. Besides, the villagers would be disposed to believe them, as it is well known that every one guilty of a misdemeanor is sure to give some excuse for his action, though such excuses usually have but little weight.

On the other hand, a secret becomes burdensome to one after a time. If it is of a trivial nature, and its author finds he is not suspected, he will finally tell it in a joke, contrasting his cunning with the stupidity of his victim; while if it be of a graver sort, it will sooner or later be disclosed for no other reason than to burden the mind.

While both of Fred's parents regretted most seriously what had happened to their son, they felt proud to think that he told them the whole truth, without even waiting to be questioned upon the subject.

If all boys would follow Fred's example in this respect whenever they get into any trouble, they would not only retain the confidence of their parents, but would receive the compensation of a clear conscience and an unburdened heart.

CHAPTER IX.

A TERRIBLE ACCUSATION.

THERE is something rather peculiar about the fact that trouble of any sort never seems to come alone. This has been noticed by almost every person of wide experience, and the idea is crystallized in the proverb: "It never rains but it pours." This was certainly true in Fred's case.

Only a few days after the occurrence related in the preceding chapter, and when Fred had begun to feel a little more at ease in his mind, he was called up sharply one night by his employer, who said to him:

"Fred, what have you done with the twenty dollar bill that was in this drawer?"

"I have seen no such bill there today, sir," replied the clerk.

"You have seen no such bill, do you say? I took a new twenty dollar bill of James D. Atwood this afternoon, when he settled his account, and I put it in this drawer, pointing to the open cash drawer before him.

"It seems queer, sir; but I am sure that I have not paid it out or seen it. Didn't you give it to Woodman and Hardy's man when you paid him some money to day?"

"No," replied the merchant, nervously. "I was here when he came in the afternoon, before I took the bill. There has been no one to the cash drawer but you and myself—unless you neglected your business and allowed some scoundrel in behind the counter while I was at tea."

Fred flushed up at this intimation that he might have been false to his trust, and replied, with some show of injured feeling:

"Mr. Rexford, if any money has been lost, I am sorry for you; but as I said, I know nothing about it. You say you took in a twenty dollar bill, and that now it is gone. If a mistake has occurred in making change, I don't know why it should be laid to my hands, rather than to yourself, for I am as careful as I can be."

"Do you mean to say, young man, that I have made a mistake of this size in making change?"

"I simply say, there must be a mistake somewhere. Have you figured up your cash account to know just how it stands?"

"Mr. Rexford had not figured it up, but on discovering that the bill was missing, and noticing that there was little increase in the other money, he jumped to the conclusion that the drawer was just twenty dollars short. But on carefully going over his cash and sales accounts, and reckoning the money on hand, he found, to his surprise, that there were only eighteen dollars missing."

This discovery only added mystery to the already perplexing matter. It certainly looked, now, as though some cunning method had been employed to swindle him.

The merchant's brow contracted at the thought, and after a few moments he said, in an excited and angry manner:

"Worthington, you know about that bill, and are trying to deceive me. I can see no way but

that you took it during my absence, and in trying to cover up your act put two dollars in the drawer; but, young man, I'd have you know that such tricks can't be played on me!"

The flush that had appeared upon Fred's face was now gone, and in its stead appeared the paleness of anger. He stepped squarely up to his accuser, and said, in a determined tone:

"Do you mean to say that I stole your money? If you mean that, sir, you say what is false, and you shall pay for it."

"No, no; I don't—er—er—I won't say that—but—be calm and let me see!"

"Do you withdraw your accusation, then?" demanded the youth, whose manner was such that Rexford was glad, for the time being, to retract his statement, or make any admission whatever, for he saw that in the boy's eyes which warned him to adopt a more conciliatory policy and to do it speedily.

He consequently retreated from his position, and assured Fred that he had spoken too hastily in accusing him. He also moved cautiously backward to another part of the store, doubtless feeling that the air would circulate more freely between them if they were some distance apart; then he added:

"But the bill is gone, and as I have not paid it out, I want it accounted for."

"No doubt you do," said Fred. "I should like to know where it is myself. As long as you put it on that ground I will not object, but you shall not charge me squarely with committing a theft."

"No, I won't charge you directly with taking it, but I have my opinion as to where it is gone," said Rexford, with an insinuating air.

Fred well knew what that opinion was, but it was beyond him to challenge it while unexpressed, and he could not change it by proving his innocence, just then; so he replied:

"Very well, you can think as you like, if that gives you any satisfaction."

"Yes, yes; very good! But I will get my satisfaction, not in thinking, but in acting! You were hired to do my errands, and I am supposed to work for my interest, and look out for my interest in my absence. As this bill disappeared while under your charge, I shall hold you responsible for it," said the merchant, as he rubbed his thin, bony hands together.

This made the color again change in Fred's face, which, being noticed by J. Rexford, influenced him to move a few paces nearer to the door, as he possibly thought it still a little warm for his personal comfort, while young Worthington exclaimed:

"You will never get a cent of my money for this purpose! Now you just remember that! I got so fast, that I don't know where I owe you about fifteen dollars, and I'll keep that amount in partial payment for this loss. Don't think you are going to get ahead of me quite so easy!"

"I'm not trying to get ahead of you, but I want my rights and what is due me, and I will have them both. I don't more than half believe there was a twenty dollar bill here at all! It is one of your mean tricks to beat me out of my money. It is not much more, sir, than I have seen you do by customers—adulterating goods, giving short weight and measures, and—"

"Stop there! you vil—er—insulting rascal," yelled the proprietor, in a rage, his limbs and features twitching nervously. "Do you mean to say that I cheat my customers, and—"

"Yes, that is just what I mean," replied Fred, firmly.

"I'll have you arrested at once! I won't be insulted by such a scamp!"

"Be careful, whom you call a scamp!" said Fred, while Rexford again edged off. "I'd like to have you arrest me, for then I could tell things about you and your store that would make a stir in this village! What if some of the folks find out that the XXX St. Louis brand of flour for which they pay you ten dollars a barrel, is a cheap grade that you bought in plain barrels and stamped yourself? Now do you want to arrest me? If you do there are many other things I can tell, and I wouldn't pass your accounts by either. I know something of what has been going on here—more than you think, perhaps."

These rapid and earnest utterances from young Worthington wrought a complete change in the merchant. They alarmed him, for he saw that the boy had the advantage, and out of policy he must stop matters before they became any worse. So he said in a humble and subdued tone:

"If you're no use for us to quarrel about this, you know it is not proper for you to go outside, and tell your employer's business, and—"

"I know it is not, and I would only do so to defend myself; but when you threaten to keep my money, and to have me arrested, then I will show what kind of a man is trying to take advantage of me."

"Very well, then, if I pay you your money, you will say nothing about the business of this store, I suppose?"

"No, I will say nothing about what I have just mentioned, unless I should be obliged to testify; then, of course, I should be obliged to testify."

"You won't be put on trial. I take you at your word—your word of honor," added the merchant, impressively.

"Yes, my word of honor!" repeated Fred, "and that means that your secrets are safe."

The wily Rexford had now gained his point—Fred's promise—and he quickly changed front and said:

"Well, there's your money—fifteen dollars—now consider yourself discharged from my employ!"

"Discharged," did you say, sir?" ejaculated Fred, utterly taken aback at this sudden turn of events.

"I said 'discharged,'" repeated the merchant, fidgeting about; "you know what the word means, I presume?"

Fred did know what it meant. It meant more than Rexford's narrow spirit could even comprehend. It meant disgrace, perhaps ruin.

Fred took the money, the few bills, the last he would care to have in his hands, and stood turning them over listlessly—evidently not counting them, but as if to aid him in solving the problem that rested heavily upon his mind.

The merchant noticed this and grew still more fidgety—almost alarmed. "What can the boy be contemplating so earnestly?" he said to himself, as he ran over in his mind the possible subjects of Fred's thoughts, and wondered if it was one that threatened his business and himself.

(To be continued.)

Ask your newsdealer for THE GOLDEN ARGOSY. He can get you any number you may want.

[This story commenced in No. 258.]

THE Young Ranger;

OR,

PERILS OF THE FRONTIER.

By EDWARD S. ELLIS.

Author of "The Camp in the Mountains," "The Haunted Engine," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ONWARD MARCH.

MEANWHILE, as may be supposed, the rangers and fugitives at the rear were wondering at the cause of the halt which they had lasted fully ten minutes.

The first surprise came when Henry Hurst appeared among them with the news that young Captain Roslyn had captured Kit Wilton, the Tory leader, the man who was held in greater detestation by the settlers and patriots than the most sanguinary Indian chieftain that had ever desolated the border.

The expressions of wonder had not yet subsided, when sure enough the brave youth came forward with the hated captive, who doubtless would have given everything he ever expected to own in the world for a single chance of freedom.

But for the need of haste, it is doubtful whether Kit Wilton would have escaped violence at the hands of the rangers, several of whom felt so aggrieved that it was hard for them to restrain themselves.

The best course to pursue was manifest to all. The party must make a circuit around the spot where the Iroquois were in waiting. It would seem that this ought not to be a difficult task, but every minute counted, and Kit Wilton need not be absent very long to bring out some of the Iroquois on a little investigating tour of their own.

The Tory was placed among the rangers, where, as far as possible, they were on every hand, and, as usual, Elmer Roslyn led the detour to the right of the ambush. Had he possessed the means he would have bound Kit Wilton's arms behind his back, but that precaution was hardly necessary.

The question which the leader debated with himself, while carefully conducting the party through the wood at the base of the ledge, was whether he should attempt to return to the trail some distance beyond the spot where the Iroquois were waiting in ambush, or whether he should lead the way through the unbroken wilderness to Oakland.

Strong reasons could be adduced for each of these two courses. Traveling was so much more easy along the main trail that the task of walking a few miles was not a severe one, even for children and elderly persons. The fugitives could be pushed so hard that they ought to reach Fort Defiance before midnight.

But there was the inevitable risk. Should the Iroquois suspect anything of the kind, they would come bounding along the trail before it was possible to get beyond their reach, and the very danger which they had managed to escape thus far would be precipitated.

Familiar as he was with the face of the country, Elmer Roslyn could lead them to the block house as surely, where there was no path, as he could along the well marked trail; but the course through the shrubbery, undergrowth, interlacing limbs and running vines would render the labor tenfold more difficult to those for whom all this trouble and risk was taken.

The conclusion of the matter, as is generally the case, was a compromise. Elmer decided to keep away from the trail until a long way beyond the perilous spot. Then, when he came back, he hoped to be able to press on so rapidly that the risk of being overtaken would be reduced to a minimum.

Sooner than most of the company anticipated, they arrived at the second stream which it was necessary to cross on their way to Oakland. It was no more than a mere brook, brawling among the rocks and gnarled reeds, and over the gravel and sand, so narrow that a man could easily leap across, and so shallow that he would hardly take the trouble to do so.

The reflection which came to every adult was

that the party had but to turn and follow the course of the little stream for a short distance to place themselves among the fierce Iroquois, who were eager to bury their tomahawks in the skull of every man, woman and child in the party.

It was a fearful truth, and more than one ranger shuddered, while all hurried forward as though they detected the shadowy figures lurking in the wood around them.

Keeping to the course he had decided upon for himself, young Roslyn showed no mercy for the fugitives until they had forced their way fully a mile behind the little stream. It was his intention to continue this further, but he found it impossible.

The work was harder than even he anticipated. The surface was sloping, while bow-langers, rocks, hollows, ridges, vines, wilds, and their limbs, dense vegetation and undergrowth were so abundant that the rangers leading the way found it tiresome even for their hardy frames, though they were able to break the path to a slight extent for those who came behind them.

The fugitives could not have driven harder, but their strength was taxed to the utmost and Mrs. Hawley, who had carried little Eva a part of the way, told Elmer that a brief rest must be given those around her.

"We cannot be very far from the fort," said she, "and most of the night is still before us." "It is, and most of the night is still before us," replied Captain Elmer.

"That will do after a short rest. You must not forget that not one of the party has eaten a mouthful since early morning. Let them pause for a while, and we can continue through the wood where there is no path, though it will be a tedious relief if they can have the easy walking of the regular trail."

The halt was made, and the much needed rest obtained. Many of the company opposed returning to the trail, believing the risk was too great; but Elmer began to feel nervous through fear that the night was further along than was generally believed, and that the morning would find them still tramping through the forest, with such a distance between them and the fort that the Iroquois would be able to overtake them before they could reach it.

Provided the Senecas were not already hurrying over the path, so as to be near at hand, he hoped that he and his friends would arrive at the block house long before daylight.

"I believe, too," said he, "that they will wait a longer time for the return of Kit Wilton than most of you think."

"You must take extra precautions," suggested Mrs. Hawley, who was not altogether free from solicitude; "and be especially on your guard. It would be difficult to criticise the young officer, when everything is taken into consideration. The larger part of the rangers were placed in the rear, two of their number being sent back for fully an eighth of a mile. It was from that direction that there was every reason to apprehend that the fugitives would find them, as the wife of Colonel Hawley declared, the slightest carelessness or neglect of vigilance was likely to prove fatal.

These rangers were directed to discharge both their guns on the instant they saw or heard the Iroquois. This would give those in front time to apprehend that the fugitives could hurry into the shelter of the wood, while the rangers made ready to ambush, or at least to give battle to their enemies.

There was a possibility, though it was remote, that the peril would come from the front. To be prepared for that Elmer once more placed himself far in advance, with Benny Hurst some distance behind.

In all these arrangements Kit Wilton, the captured Tory, was not forgotten. He was "located" with such care that he saw any attempt to part company with his captors would be fatal to him; and, weakly hoping in their mercy, he decided to keep company with the rangers, so long as it was their desire that he should do so.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

AM sure you have hardly thought of the scarcity of watches a hundred years ago. Today, nearly every boy carries his time piece, and thinks little of it; such excellent ones can be had for a trifling sum; but at the date about which I am telling you, the owner of a watch was considered highly favored. Indeed, an institution as a watch-making establishment did not exist in this country. The big, clumsy articles—generally known as "bull's eyes," some of which, perhaps, you have seen in the possession of your grandfathers—were imported from Europe, at an expense which prevented most people from buying them.

Thus it was that among all the rangers and fugitives there was not one who owned a watch. Many of them could guess quite correctly the hour of the day or night; but just at this time the conditions were so exceptional that there was a wide variance of opinion. Most of them believed that the turn of night had not yet come, but Captain Roslyn feared that it had passed, and, as I have told you, that the morning sun would find them still beyond sight of Fort Defence. If, unfortunately, such should prove the fact, the situation of our friends would be disastrous in the extreme.

In his impatience, the stops and delays seemed far longer than was the case, while he was sure

their progress was like that of the snail. This belief was shared fully by Ferguson, and in a less degree by Benny Hurst, while Mrs. Hawley and most of the rest insisted that more time than they needed was at their command.

Be that as it may, the advance of the fugitives after their new start was all that Elmer could ask, and once more he felt the thrill of hope. It looked at last as though the Iroquois had been fairly flanked, and that before they awakened to the truth of the situation, the whites would be beyond reach of harm.

But at the very moment when he was in such cheerful spirits, he received a shock that fairly took away his breath.

He was walking in his elastic fashion when he observed that the ground under his feet was soft and damp. The thought instantly came to him that the Senecas had been along that way recently, in the manner so familiar to him.

"And it is easy enough to find out," he muttered, giving the signal to Benny Hurst to stop the procession.

Drawing his flint and tinder from his pocket, he walked back to where the ground was dry, and gathered a handful of dead leaves, which he arranged in the manner so familiar to him. Before igniting them, he passed his hand over the soft earth. He was disturbed to find numerous depressions, but he hoped they had been made by wild animals in passing back and forth.

In a few minutes he had a tiny but bright flame burning, which lit up several feet of the surrounding surface. But the ultimate result was afforded, he scrutinized the surrounding earth.

They were there! It looked as if a hundred moccasins had pressed the ground, leaving impressions almost as plain as if a drove of cattle had tramped over the spot.

Traveling at night, the Iroquois had their eyes open to the manner so familiar to him. Before having done in the daytime, but they had hastened forward, still keeping between the whites and the block house, as they were at that very moment.

"That beats everything!" mused the astonished young captain, blowing out the little flame by his hand. "I expected everything we could do, Red Thunder and the Senecas have again thrown themselves between us and the fort; they have set an ambush into which I would have led the whole company if it hadn't been for this spongy piece of ground. They may be lying in wait for us within a few rods of this spot, and trying to pierce that deep gloom."

As if in answer to his thought, a low, trilling sound reached his ears, coming from a point almost at his elbow. It was instantly answered by a similar call from a spot between him and his friends.

"How cautious!" he gasped, "I have entered the ambush myself!"

Instinctively he crouched low, and began moving swiftly and silently over the back trail.

The stooping motion saved his life, for at the moment of doing so, fully a half dozen rifles were discharged at the spot where the little trifle of flame had appeared. The fire must have been seen by the serpent-like eyes.

Had Elmer been standing upright, nothing could have saved him from being pierced by as many bullets; but as it was, all passed over his head.

"The Iroquois! The Iroquois!" he shouted. "Be ready! They are along the trail in front of us!"

There was no need of the shout of warning, for the discharge of the Indian guns told the rangers and fugitives the fearful truth.

As agreed upon, the latter were hurried into the cover of the wood at the side of the path. There they sat or lay down, the ground, hidden by either, silent, and praying that Heaven would not desert them in the crisis that had come.

The rangers at the rear hastened forward to the help of their comrades, who faced the danger with the coolness of veterans. They had fought the red men so often that they knew how to do it. Instead of taking position in the path, where they would have afforded the best of targets, even though invisible except by the flash of their own guns, they sprang among the trees on the right and left.

It will be understood that the fighting was of a blind, savage, and frequently aimless nature, for only now and then could a glimpse be caught of a figure dodging to and fro. Each combatant guided himself by the little jets of flame of his opponent's rifle. After all, the utmost skill was of little service, since all parties took the same precautions.

Having fired his gun, a ranger drew his head back behind the trunk of his tree and began reloading, while the bullet that his antagonist sent in search of him either chipped off the bark or whistled harmlessly by; and the same was true of the Iroquois.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BATTLE IN THE FOREST.

NOTHING could have been more providential than the impulse which came to Elmer Roslyn to examine the spongy spot of earth upon which he stepped, for, as I have shown you, he had actually entered the ambush which Red Thunder and his warriors had laid for the rangers and fugitives.

The little twist of flame which flashed out in the gloom puzzled the peering red men just long enough to give the youth time enough to extricate himself from one of the most perilous situations that can be conceived.

The result of this singular complication was that when the firing opened, the dusky insurgents and the patriots were almost mingled together. The flashes of the guns came from every portion of the wood, and numerous personal encounters took place.

In this species of fighting, the rangers for a time held their own. They knew the fierce Iroquois were striving to get among the helpless fugitives, and that if any advantage was given them, they would make sad havoc among the women and children.

Consequently, where under other conditions they would have yielded ground as a matter of strategy, they at first stood firm and strove to force the Senecas back. The latter, having made more than one attempt to ambush the whites without success, and aware that it could not be repeated, since they were so close to the fort, they then every effort toward cutting them off where the advantages were the same on both sides.

I suppose that you learned long ago that the most powerful confederation of Indian tribes ever known on this continent was the Iroquois or Five Nations, afterwards known as the Six Nations, when joined by the Tuscaroras of the South.

All of those Indian races were brave and numerous, and among them the Seneca tribe was prominent. You may have noticed that I sometimes call these Indians "Iroquois," and sometimes "Five Nations," and sometimes "Six Nations." All of the Six Nations were known as Iroquois, so that you will admit the appropriateness of the appellations.

The Senecas displayed an energy and aggressiveness which surprised the rangers, and caused no little alarm, for despite the utmost that the whites could do, they were forced to yield ground. It required the strongest fighting of which they were capable to save the women and children, who, lying flat on the earth, were untouched by the bullets that were cutting the twigs overhead and whistling all about them.

The gun flashes showed that the Senecas had either discovered the location of the whites, or suspected it, for they continued pushing their way toward the spot, branching out so that they threatened to surround the defenders. The fighting was without any distinct plan, each man doing all he could to beat off his assailants.

"Keep down! Don't raise your heads!" commanded Captain Roslyn. Hurst, Ferguson and several of the others, to the fugitives, who could not have hugged the ground closer.

"All right!" muttered Ferguson, closing in with a sinewy warrior who fairly stumbled against him, before either suspected the proximity of the other; "I'm agreeable."

The ranger had just enough notice to gain the advantage. His enemy was a powerful, active warrior—that is, he was for an exceedingly brief while, after which he ceased to be a warrior at all.

Unconsciously to themselves, the white men gradually assumed the shape of a circle or ring of fire, in the middle of which were gathered those for whom they were fighting with such desperation.

Young Elmer Roslyn felt that if he could gather a dozen men, break through the Iroquois and assail them in the rear, it would decide the conflict. But in the confusion and incessant fighting, that was impossible, he and his comrades could only hold back the redskins and keep up the struggle until their assailants should give up and withdraw.

"I've had pretty good luck," muttered Benny Hurst, as he hastily rammed home a charge in his gun, from his position behind the trunk of an oak. The chances are that he was not somebody, while I have not a match. It may be that I'm going to pull through this scrimmage without anything of account happening."

At that instant Benny thought a large tree had taken a sudden notion to fall upon him. He went down to the ground, stunned, gasping and holding out his hands for a moment or two, who, seeing the flash of his gun, had crept stealthily forward and bounded upon his shoulders.

If Benny was unfortunate in some respects there were others in which he was extremely fortunate, for a friend was at his elbow in the shape of one of the rangers, who was upon the dusky assailant before he could do his victim harm.

Suffice it to say, respecting this active warrior, after the space of a few very minutes, the "subsequent proceedings interested him no more."

One cause of the frequent personal collisions between the enemies was the constant shifting of places. Whenever a ranger discharged his gun from behind a tree, he knew that the spot was marked, and that one or two warriors would steal toward him. Consequently, he would dodge to another tree to reload and fire his weapon.

Perhaps in making the change he found that one of his friends was ahead of him, and some confusion resulted, which interfered with the effective work of the defenders.

Captain Elmer Roslyn's unwillingness to yield ground placed him more than once in great peril. Red Thunder himself located him by the flash of his gun at the opening of the fight, and, crouching down like the rest of his warriors, ran rapidly toward the spot. It is not to be supposed that he suspected the identity of the youth, for that was hardly possible.

It took the Seneca chieftain but a few seconds to reach the tree, and, on the other hand, Elmer was equally prompt in leaving it for another shelter a few paces away. The two almost grazed each other in the passage, but it hap-

pened that none of the rangers, having discharged his own rifle, fixed upon the tree the youth had just left, and he hastened thither unaware that his leader had just abandoned it.

The arrival of the ranger and Red Thunder was simultaneous, and they flew at each other like a couple of tigers. This time it was the white man who succumbed, for the Seneca chieftain was a terrific fighter, and he made short work of his opponent.

A somewhat similar occurrence was repeated within the next three minutes with the difference that excepting Elmer, no other parties were the actors. Just as he dashed from his tree to another, a comrade plunged toward it, the two colliding with such force that both were knocked to the ground. Before they could rise, a Seneca, making for the same shelter, stumbled over both and instantly closed with the young captain's friend. Elmer was prompt enough to catch his comrade help that saved him and extinguished his assailant.

At this critical stage of the fight, when the situation looked most serious for the rangers, a tremendous tumult was heard, so different from anything that had yet taken place that it was evident to all that something extraordinary and decisive was on the way or other hand on.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

We are always glad to oblige our readers to the extent of our abilities, but in justice to all only such questions as will give our staff a reasonable amount of time to answer them in their turn as soon as space permits.

ADMIRER OF ARGOSY, Paducah, Ky. See reply to Van.

J. Z., New York City. No premium on the cent of 1817.

H. Y., New York City. No premium on any of your coins.

W. L. W., Franklin, Pa. Consult our advertising columns.

H. A. R., Troy, N. Y. In fine condition the half cent of 1835 will bring one cent.

A. B. C., Newark, N. J. If in good condition, the half cent of 1856 is worth two cents.

W. H. P., Brooklyn, N. Y. We could not possibly undertake to comply with your request.

H. M., Chicago, Ill. We refer you to *Forest and Stream*, published in New York, this city.

W. E. S., Warwick, N. Y. Buff was the color of the Brattleboro, Vermont, stamp issued in 1846.

J. S. P., Grand Rapids, Mich. "The Young Rangers" would be a good name for your camping club.

W. S., Baltimore, Md. 1. Your coin is a Spanish piece of no special value. 2. See answer to second query of A. W. W., last week.

M. O. H., Tarrytown, N. Y. Vol. I is out of print. No, you cannot obtain the first ten numbers. 2. See answer to O. K., last week.

H. D. M., New York City. We cannot print business addresses. Inquire for what you want at dry goods and stationery stores in your town.

LUKE, Brooklyn, N. Y. If in a good state of preservation, each of the coins mentioned—half cent of 1803, cents of 1802 and 1804—is worth two cents.

J. J. B. Your description of your fractional note is too meager for us to be positive as to its value. We should assume, however, that it bears no premium.

H. H., Charlotte, Mich. In good condition, your coins are worth as follows: half cents of 1805 and 1812, two cents each; three cent piece of 1865, 25 cents.

J. M. D., Toledo, O. 1. Your query as to the average "muscle out" capacity of boys of sixteen is too obscure to admit of cogitation, much less of answer. 2. No.

C. M. S., Pittsburgh, Pa. For information concerning future stories by Mr. Munsey, see editorial, "To My Readers," in No. 266. 2. It is possible that there will be a sequel to "Van."

W. H. S. and C. N., Wilmington, Del. How do you like the name "Garfield Cadets"? We would recommend you to get Lieutenant Hamilton's book, mentioned in editorial, "The New Cadet Corps," in No. 250.

M. J. I., Wilmington, Del. Submit your coin to some dealer. You will find advertisements of such nearly every number of the ARGOSY. We scarcely think, however, that your specimen would command a premium.

B. P. S., Baltimore, Md. 1. There is no special food that is warranted to produce strength in the eater. 2. Yes, fencing with foils is a healthful exercise. 3. The average height of a boy of 13 is 4 ft. 9 in.; weight, 76 pounds.

M. E., New York City. 1. If you keep your bird out of the draft, the feathers may come back. 2. A white cloth thrown over the cage at night will attract to itself all the insects, which may then be easily disposed of in the morning.

C. R., Fremont. 1. If in good condition, your coins are worth as follows: Half cent of 1835, one cent; cent of 1823, two cents; cent of 1865 five cents. No premium on other coins. 2. Yes, there was a large copper cent issued in 1857.

M. B. C., Rochester, N. Y. 1. If in good condition, the half cent of 1838 is worth one cent. To ascertain the value of your foreign coins, send the rubbings to a dealer. The ARGOSY almost constantly contains the advertisement of one or more of such.

WALTER GRIFFITH, New York City. 1. The age for the admission of cadets to West Point is between 17 and 22; to Annapolis, between 14 and 18. 2. The examinations in both cases are very rigid, physical and mental, and certainly comprise questions in the common English branches.

STAGE STRUCK, Binghanton, N. Y. We would advise you to give up all idea of becoming an actor. The profession is a most laborious one, as fascinating as it may seem to the spectator, who does not take into account the wearying round of rehearsals that must be gone through in order to prepare a play for the stage. Then the rewards are very uncertain and by no means enduring.



The subscription price of the ARGOSY is \$2.00 per year, payable in advance.

Club rates.—For \$1.00 we will send two copies for one year to separate addresses.

All communications for the ARGOSY should be addressed to the publisher.

Subscriptions to the ARGOSY can commence at any time. As a rule we start them with the beginning of some social story, unless otherwise ordered.

The number (whole number) with which one's subscription expires appears on the printed slip with the name. Renewals.—Two weeks are required after receipt of money by us before the number opposite your name on the printed slip can be changed.

Every Subscriber is notified three weeks before the expiration of his subscription, and, if he does not renew at once, his paper is stopped at the end of the time paid for. In ordering back numbers include 6 cents for each copy. No rejected manuscript will be returned unless stamps accompany it for that purpose.

FRANK A. MUNSEY, PUBLISHER,
81 WARREN STREET, NEW YORK.

The subject of next week's biographical sketch will be Rev. Edward Everett Hale, of the South Congregational Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

In our next number will be begun a new serial, entitled

MR. HALGROVE'S WARD; OR, LIVING IT DOWN.

BY TALBOT BAINES REED,

Author of "Reginald Cruden," etc., etc.

This story, the scene of which is laid in England, is by a favorite writer, and will be found to be of absorbing interest. The hero is drawn on a new model, but will, we are sure, none the less excite the reader's sympathy for his misfortunes and admiration for his pluck. And if anything else were needed to make this story a particularly attractive one, that want would be supplied in the character of Percy Rimbolt, who is just such a rollicking, fun loving, large hearted boy as everybody likes to meet.

A WONDERFUL WOMAN.

A RECEPTION of a very peculiar nature was held the other day in Boston. The lady who gave it can neither see, speak nor hear, yet she conversed with those about her, and manifested by smiles and hand clapping the pleasure which the various exercises gave her.

The place was the Perkins Institution for the Blind, the hostess Miss Laura Bridgman, and the occasion the fiftieth anniversary of her sojourn in the asylum. Many of Boston's prominent men were present and made addresses, among them being Phillips Brooks and Edward Everett Hale.

Their remarks were interpreted to Miss Bridgman by ladies who placed their hands in hers and talked to her by means of the finger language.

The singing, by a chorus of blind children, and the performance of an overture by a blind boys' brass band, she was enabled to appreciate by the sound vibrations on the floor.

Miss Bridgman is very intelligent, having received a good education in all the usual branches through her finger tips, which are, as may be imagined, sensitive to the highest degree. She has written a great deal, including dramas, autobiographical sketches and poems, and numbers among her friends some of the most distinguished men and women in the land.

Her life is surely a bright lodestar of hope in the possibilities which it proves to remain to those who are so unfortunate as to be deprived of any of their senses.

A WINTER SUGGESTION.

A DAKOTA cold wave is tearing its way through the streets. The turning of a corner is a ticklish operation for a man with a high hat on his head or eye glasses on his nose. Regard for one's personal appearance is thrown to the winds in a concentrated endeavor to ward off this particular wind by means of cumbersome wrappings and unpicturesque ear muffs.

How the fingers tingle, the feet ache, and the breath congeals! Nobody lingers by the way, except it may be for an instant to glance at a thermometer and ascertain the exact degree of his sufferings. Just why man should take pleasure in thus gloating, so to speak, over his misery, is an unsolved problem.

Why should he not rather forcibly turn his

thoughts into just the opposite channels, and while his body may be tingling with the frost, send his mind back on memory's pinions to genial spring and gentle summer? Let him recall the glorious beauty of the rose, the delicate fragrance of the heliotrope, the impressive stateliness of the lily; recollect the joy afforded him by woodland walks, with an orchestra of birds to serenade him, and the splash of limped waters tinkling music in his ears.

A NEW cure for toothache has been discovered in the office of the New York *World*, where it was successfully practiced upon an office boy. We cannot truthfully assert that it is painless, but there is no doubt about its being sure.

The only articles needed are a string and an elevator. One end of the string is tied to the offending tooth, the other to the wire netting of the shaft. The sufferer then steps into the elevator and causes the latter to ascend or descend, according as the doomed molar is in the lower or upper jaw. If a speedy extraction is desired, we would suggest that the patient should not control the elevator himself.

We will give any four of the first six numbers of MUNSEY'S POPULAR SERIES to any reader who will obtain for us a new yearly subscriber to THE GOLDEN ARGOSY. By a new subscriber we mean one who has not previously been a subscriber to or weekly purchaser of the ARGOSY.

"JACK WHEELER,"

The New Number of Munsey's Popular Series. "Jack Wheeler; a Story of the Wild West," by Captain David Southwick, is the title of this month's number of MUNSEY'S POPULAR SERIES. It is perhaps the most dramatic and interesting story of all those issued up to the present time.

It is a tale of the early days of the far West, when the fertile plains of Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas were prairies trodden only by the express messenger, the adventurous pioneer, and roving bands of hostile Pawnees or Sioux.

One of the stations of the pony express was kept by Mr. Wheeler, the father of the hero of the story, which opens during a great Indian uprising. A stage is attacked by a band of warriors, the passengers' lives being saved by the heroism of the driver, who sticks to his post when mortally wounded. Then comes a fierce assault upon the station, which is bravely defended by Jack Wheeler and his father, aided by Senator Power and his pretty daughter Bella, who had been traveling westward in the stage. A third passenger, Mr. Runman, a director of the express company, displays great cowardice, but by the skill and bravery of the others, and especially of Jack, the Indians are beaten off.

The enemies, however, are reinforced by fresh arrivals, and the situation becomes so hopeless that Jack undertakes the perilous task of summoning the aid of a regiment of United States soldiers, whom he believes to be encamped some distance away. On his way he meets a party of trappers, and is dismayed to learn that the troops have left their camp. As a last resource, he returns with the trappers to the station, and they make a diversion by falling on the Indian camp, which was left almost unguarded, and setting fire to the tepees. The warriors, who were on the point of attacking the station, are recalled by the sight of the flames, and again the little garrison is saved.

All this leads to Jack Wheeler's visiting the city of St. Louis in company with Senator Power, while his father is sent to California as an inspector of the express company. After a while Jack starts westward, in company with his cousin Alfred, to join his parents, and the journey is marked by exciting adventures.

Jack had heard many legends about a mountain of gold, which the Indians believed to exist in a wild and inaccessible valley among the Rocky Mountains; and this he resolves to discover. The undertaking leads the two cousins into the most perilous situations, where their courage and endurance is tested to the utmost.

The further the narrative proceeds, the more thrillingly interesting does it become, and few readers will be willing to lay down the book till they have reached its last page. We predict a great popularity for "Jack Wheeler," which can be obtained at any book store or newsdealer's, or will be sent post paid by mail from this office on receipt of the price—25 cents.

CHARLES H. EATON, D.D.,

Pastor of the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York City.

THE Fourth Universalist Church of New York, now known by the name printed above, has been particularly fortunate in its choice of a successor to the famous Dr. E. H. Chapin, who died some seven or eight years ago. Where a man has endeared himself to the hearts of his people as did this late pastor, the next occupant of his pulpit must needs be possessed of well nigh superhuman qualities to meet the expectations of what might not unfitly be termed a "spoiled" congregation. That Dr. Eaton has succeeded in satisfying these extraordinary requirements, the present flourishing condition of his church abundantly testifies.

He is a native of Massachusetts, and was but twenty eight years of age when he received his flattering call to the metropolis. Being the son of a Universalist clergyman, his choice of a profession came about quite naturally. We may add, however, that not all sons who adopt their father's vocations evince such special aptitude for them as in the case before us.

But not long did the boy have the benefit of the parental example and advice. When a mere child he was left an orphan, both father and mother being removed by death.

Friends were raised up, however, and at fourteen young Eaton was adopted by Mr. E. D. Draper, of Roxbury, Massachusetts, in the vicinity of which town the elder Eaton had at various times been stationed. The son's studies, preparatory to his college course, were pursued at two Vermont schools, Dean Academy, at Franklin, and Goddard Seminary, in Barre; Tuft's College and Divinity School at Somerville, Massachusetts, were the next factors in his education. His record as a student in both was very high.

During his last year at the theological seminary he preached in two Universalist churches deprived of their regular pastors, doing a vast amount of traveling to do it, as one of the congregations was in Palmer, Massachusetts, the other in South Berwick, Maine. He officiated on alternate Sundays in each place, and so acceptably that on his graduation both parishes sought eagerly to obtain him as permanent pastor.

The circumstances that influenced Dr. Eaton in deciding between the two entitle him to the highest respect.

The South Berwick congregation had so prospered that a new house of worship had been built and freed from debt. The church at Palmer was still comparatively feeble, and it was this fact, and the feeling that they needed a pastor more, that caused the young preacher to give them the benefit of his services.

He was ordained to this, his first regular charge, in June, 1877, and such was the stimulus given to the congregation by his preaching and pastoral work that it was not long before a new building, costing over twenty thousand dollars, was erected, and very soon thereafter the congregation had paid off all the obligations incurred in putting up this structure.

Six calls to other pulpits were tendered him during his stay at Palmer, but all were declined. When the Church of the Divine Paternity in New York was left pastorless by the death of Dr. Chapin, Dr. Eaton, among others, was invited to preach there on an appointed Sunday.

So well pleased was the congregation with his sermons that the trustees took action on the matter, with the result that a formal call was made and accepted.

As has already been stated, a most successful pastorate was thus inaugurated. The audiences that flock to hear the brilliant preacher are not only large in numbers, but cultured in character.

Dr. Eaton very seldom writes his sermons, and even when he does so, delivers them with little reference to the manuscript.

As an orator he is unusually gifted. He is an earnest advocate of the best music for churches, and during the past few months his evening sermons have been devoted to discourses on hymnology. Boy voices have been added to the choir, and special choral services given.

Soon after Dr. Eaton's installation, the church, which stands at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty Fifth Street, was placed in the hands of Louis C. Tiffany & Co., the famous decorative artists, who beautified the interior with most novel and pleasing effect. Painting, tapestry, stained glass and stucco work have all been brought in to requisition, while a bronze bas relief of Dr. Chapin, executed by the well known sculptor Saint-Gaudens, and presented by the ladies of the church, crowns the transformation, the whole of which has been wrought as a memorial to the deceased pastor.

Dr. Eaton has light hair and mustache, and is very cordial in his manner. He is married, and lives in a pretty little home on West Seventy Fourth Street, near the Boulevard and Riverside Drive, which afford him convenient opportunity to indulge in his favorite exercise, that of horseback riding.

MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

THE TRUEST FRIENDS.

BY T. GRAY.

Wisdom, in sable garb arrayed,
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
And melancholy, silent maid,
With laden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend;
Warm Charity, the general friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, drooping soft the sadly pleasing tear.

GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

To wait and be patient soothes many a pang.
THERE is no life of a man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed.—Carlyle.

THE characters of men placed in lower stations of life are more useful as being imitable by greater numbers.—Athenry.

To secure a contented spirit, measure your desires by your fortunes, not your fortunes by your desires.—Jeremy Taylor.

No age is content with his own estate, and the age of children is the happiest if they only had the wisdom to understand it.

IRRESOLUTION is a worse vice than rashness. He that shoots best may sometimes miss the mark; but he that shoots not at all, can never hit it.—Edham.

THE man who has no anything to boast of but his illustrious ancestors is like a potato—the only good belonging to him is under ground.—Sir T. Overbury.

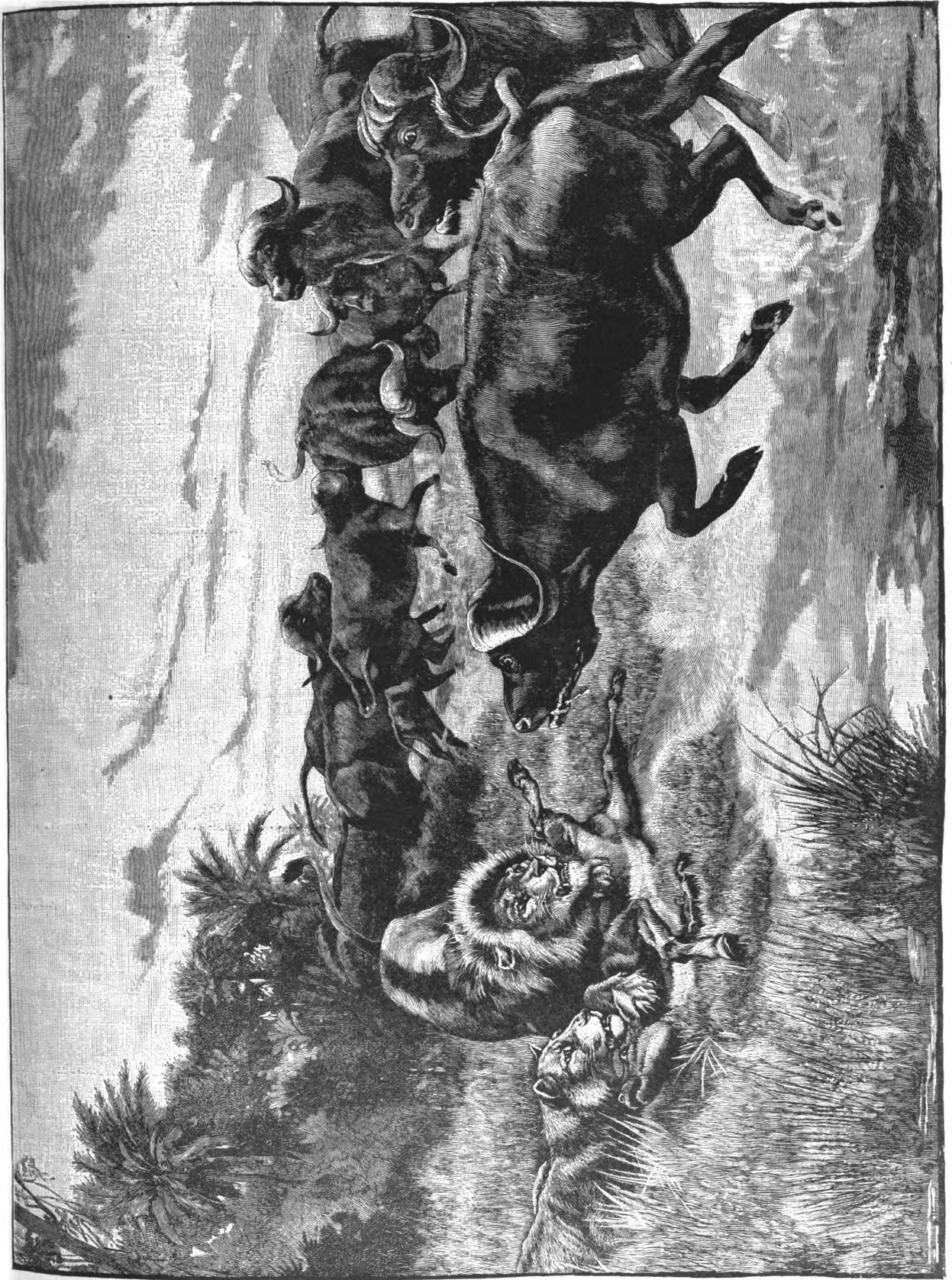
TALKING is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hands on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

MANY examples may be put of the force of custom, both upon mind and body; therefore, since custom is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men by all means endeavor to obtain good customs.—Lord Bacon.

I HOLD every man a debtor to his profession; from the which as men of course do seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavor themselves, by way of amends, to be a help and ornament thereunto.—Lord Bacon.



CHARLES H. EATON, D. D.
From a photograph by Hargrave & Gubelman.



THE RIVAL MONARCHS OF THE AFRICAN WILDS.—See Story by Captain Henry F. Harrison, page 138.

SERVICE.

BY THE LATE E. R. SILL.

Fear not that the day is gone,
And thy task is still undone.
'Twas not thine, it seems, at all
Near to thee it chanced to fall,
Somewhere, in a nook forlorn,
Yesterday a babe was born;
He shall do thy waiting task;
All thy questing is at naught,
And the answers will be given,
Whispered lightly out of Heaven.
Day shall nerve his arm with light;
Slumber soothe his brain at night;
Summer's peace and winter's storm
Help him all his will perform.
'Tis enough of joy for thee
His high service to receive.

The Rival Monarchs.

BY CAPTAIN HENRY F. HARRISON.

TOLD the readers of the ARGOSY not very long ago how in my younger days I happened to accompany Mr. Singleton, a wealthy Englishman of sporting proclivities, a short distance into the mean interior in pursuit of the large game which abounds in the Kalbebe and Cazenibe districts.

They will perhaps remember Mr. Singleton's experience with the lion and how near he came to death at the time.

We were on our way back to the trading post at the mouth of the Congo River, after the experience to which I have referred.

For my own part I had seen quite enough of African hunting, for as I have before hinted, I was cut out for a sailor, not a hunter. And one evening, as we lay smoking by the camp fire on the bank of the Mamezibi, I frankly spoke of my distaste for a life which exposed one to such dangers, to which I had but a short time been a witness.

"One such experience would last me a lifetime," I said, with an involuntary shudder.

I have mentioned that Mr. Singleton was a remarkably reticent man. Of his private or personal history I know nothing. And unlike the majority of sportsmen, he seldom made reference to such adventures as one might naturally suppose a man of his long experience in hunting in India, Africa and Ceylon would meet with.

"I have had a narrower escape than the one which seems so terrifying to you, Harry," he returned, rather to my surprise. For thus far I had been doing all the talking.

Mr. Singleton shook the ashes from his pipe, kicked away a blazing brand that had fallen near his foot, and cleared his throat:

"It was three years ago," he began, in the short, disjointed sentences peculiar to himself. "I was hunting in the Bambo range with some native Kaffirs. They were in pursuit of the gray monkey, whose skin is quite valuable. The coast traders pay liberally for them, though I could never find out what they are used for.

"I myself was after larger game, as a matter of course. In fact, I regretted having joined the party at all. I thought perhaps what is called a tender hearted man in one sense, but monkey killing is to me too much like slaying human beings. Indeed, I could never quite reconcile myself to it.

"The game I principally sought was a species of buffalo, peculiar to the Bambo districts. I had shot the ordinary buffaloes of the interior, which are themselves by no means pleasant to encounter. But these that frequent the Bombo valleys are of a reddish tinge. They have the reputation of being peculiarly savage and dangerous. And I wanted a pair of perfect horns to add to my collection. A Kaffir of considerable intelligence, was the chief huntsman. He assured me after our arrival among the hills, that on the following day, if I followed the watercourse near which we had camped, I should without doubt find the spoor of the game I sought.

"And it may be, oh my master," he said, 'you shall meet with the lion whose roaring makes the hearts of the people like water. Yet, as the threats of a boastful man, they break no bones. Bah,' exclaimed Mutu, solacing himself with snuff, 'why do the white men call him the king of beasts? The elephant has more wisdom, the tiger more courage, and the black rhinoceros is far more dangerous.'

"All the same, Mutu," I replied, in his own dialect, which, as you know, I speak fairly well, 'I would rather take my chances with any of the three you mention. I fear a lion, especially one whose hunger is whetted by long abstinence.'

Mutu, like some Europeans I know, loved him to hear his own voice.

"My master," he returned, lightly, 'it is among lions as among men. Some are brave, others cowards. Some will spring upon the hunter, from behind, others will be cowed by his look. But in my country here, the man of brave heart has only to show the lion that he fears him not—he will indeed he may pull his tail and not come to harm.'

"Of course I laughed at what I considered, if not a Kaffir boast, a strong illustration of Kaffir exaggeration. Yet on the whole I think Mutu to an extent is right. Though I should prefer to let some one else do the tail pulling.

"Next morning the Kaffirs were away with the first day dawn. After it grew light enough, I started out with the big rifle I use so much. You remember how difficult we found travel through the jungle in the Kalbebe districts. It is far worse in the Bambo. The mimosas are closer together. Cactus grows everywhere.

Thorn trees impede the way, and the monkey ropes, as the natives call a species of woody vine, make the thickets almost impenetrable. Worse than all is the 'bamba' or 'mpalla.' Little thorns, carved like a fishhook, extend in every direction from its thick branches. The stoutest cloth cannot resist them. But my hunting suit, at that time, was soft, untanned leather, so I managed to get through the thickets. But oh how hot that leather suit was!

"Well, after a while I struck the watercourse at a point where reeds took the place of other vegetation. And here the walking was comparatively easy, though the soil itself was soft and boggy. But different animals coming down to drink had made regular beaten paths running in every direction.

"Very soon I discovered the spoor of the game I was seeking. It was evidently a large herd, and one that had visited the watercourse hat very morning. And with high expectations, I started on in pursuit.

"I don't think that I am easily startled as a general thing. But as crashing through the reeds I came face to face with the largest lioness I have ever seen, my heart suddenly stood still. So, too, did my feet.

"She was stretched at full length in the shade of a small, solitary mimosa shrub, with three cubs, the size of big cats, frisking about. And you can—no you can't, either—perhaps imagine my feelings as one of the cubs, without the slightest show of fear, ran up and rubbed against my leg, making a purring noise like an oven's kick.

"I thought it was all over with me then, as the lioness sprang to her feet. Especially when, among the reeds close at hand, I heard the low, rumbling growl of the father of the family upon which I had unfortunately stumbled.

"Directly enough the lioness turned her attention to the playful cub rather than myself. She jumped uneasily from side to side, never moving her eyes from the baby lion, all the time uttering a sort of whining cry to call the little one to her side.

"To be honest, I was for the moment quite paralyzed with fear. I felt rather than knew that the slightest movement of raising my rifle would insure my destruction in any event. Every moment I expected the male lion would spring upon me from his place of concealment.

"Suddenly the cub, leaving my side, ran to the lioness. And oh joy—the immense beast at once turned and disappeared among the reeds, followed by its playful progeny.

"I myself stood not on the order of my going. I made a leap in the opposite direction, with my hair almost standing on end. I forgot for the moment that I had a loaded rifle and knew how to use it.

"And if you'll believe me, it was out of the frying pan into the fire. For I stumbled squarely upon the herd of buffalo I had been in search of.

"Directly before me was a *nullah* of soft mud left by the drying up of a branch of the watercourse. An enormous bull bison and the cows with the calves stood knee deep in the pasty compound, while others were browsing at short distance away. They were plastered with mud, where they had wallowed in the *nullah* to rid themselves of the enormous gnats which torment them as mosquitoes do human beings.

"The bull gave a low bellow and lowered his head accordingly. Now the horns of the African buffaloes are a solid mass extending on either side, back of the eyes downward in a curve to the neck. A steel pointed ball aimed successfully at the half inch space between the junction of the two will go crashing into the brain.

"It was touch and go. I threw the rifle to my right with a hasty aim and fired. But simultaneous with the report a tawny mass shot fairly over my head from behind. It was the male lion, as I saw at a glance, and its goal was the nearest buffalo calf, which it struck down in a second. Flinging the beating animal over its shoulder, the lion sprang past me without the slightest notice. And at the same moment the bull bison, with a tremendous bellow, charged, as I thought, at myself, my ball having glanced off its horns.

"I turned to run. Directly ahead of me the lion and his mate, that had joined him, were crouched over the body of the buffalo calf. The male lion erected his mane and uttered a snarl like that of an enormous mastiff whom some one would deprive of a bone, but I did not stay to see whether the snarl was intended for myself or not.

"I made a sudden bolt one side, conscious that the mother buffalo and the rest of the herd were coming in my direction full tilt. But before I had gone three yards my foot slipped and down I went in a mud hole.

"The hoofs of the great bison trampled my cap into the soft clay, so near did he pass to my head.

"And if you'll credit me, the herd with lowered horns charged furiously and fearlessly at the lion and lioness, and actually drove them from their bleeding prey. This I saw with my own eyes. Of course the poor calf was dying, and as I picked myself and my rifle out of the mud, I saw the cow lapping the body, moaning piteously, while the bull stood by with wrathful muttering, pawing the soft earth with his huge hoof.

"I got a cartridge into my rifle and brought the monster down with a ball behind the shoulder. I have the horns at home—the largest I ever saw. And now, with Mutu; I think the African lion is not always the terrible animal travelers would have us believe."

OPPORTUNITY.

BY E. R. SILL.

Thus I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: There spread a cloud of dust along a plain; And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by A craven hung along the battle's edge, And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener steel— That blue blade that the King's son bears—but this Blunt thing!'—He snapt and flung it from his hand.

And lowering crept away and left the field. Then came the King's son, wounded, sore bestead, And weaponless, and saw the broken sword, Hilt buried in the dry and trodden sand, And ran with snatched countenance and shout Lilted afresh he leaved his enemy down, And saved a great cause that heroic day.

[This story commenced in No. 266.]

THE Lost Gold Mine.

By FRANK H. CONVERSE, Author of "Van," "In Southern Seas," "The Mystery of a Diamond," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

AT BRAGG CITY.

POSSIBLY Bunyap was as curious regarding his two young fellow passengers as they were about Bunyap himself.

Yet, while he had no reason for distrusting his new acquaintance, Rob was not disposed to be communicative with a stranger. He had not forgotten his recent experience with Professor Donner.

The hours dragged wearily by as the train sped along with occasional stoppages, yet no one seemed inclined to sleep. The excitement of the recent tragedy kept every one wakeful, and afforded a never failing topic of conversation.

That is, for all but Bunyap. Leaning back against the window frame, he pulled the brim of his greasy sombrero a little further over his face, and fell into a doze.

Chip got out the precious pocket map, and the two boys began counting the stations between Colton and Bragg City.

The sound of suppressed breathing in his ear caused Rob to look up suddenly. Bunyap, whom they supposed to be napping, was on the contrary wide awake. More than that, he had laid his hat on the seat beside him, and was leaning over the seat, with his eyes fixed on the open car through his knees with eyes that projected like bullets.

But Bunyap was not in the least abashed at being detected in this rudeness.

"Well," he remarked, without, however, taking his eyes from the map, which Chip at once folded up, concerning something about the "check" of some folks.

"You seem to be interested in our affairs," said Rob.

Bunyap did not answer at once. Resuming his former attitude, he tugged nervously at his beard for several minutes.

"I am interested," he said, finally, "but may I be everlastingly busted if I wouldn't like to know where you two young chaps got hold of the map that's got Bill Travers's trail to the lost El Dorado placer marked out on it!"

"How do you know we have?" asked Chip, with a very red face.

"By puttin' of two an' two together—that's how," he replied. "First place, 'James Dare, Dyer Creek Gulch, Nevada,' is writ in black ink across the top of the map. Isn't it?"

Unfortunately, such was the case.

"Exactly. Well, ten years ago I was a prospectin' outer Dyer Creek Gulch myself. I knowed Dare, whilst him and a feller that called hisself 'Miggles' was tradin' there. They had a kid in the camp with 'em."

"That was I," quietly interrupted Rob.

Bunyap stared, whistled softly, and scratched his head.

"That accounts for it, then," he said slowly. "And you're the little 'pindlin' lookin' white feller chap a-had jest got up from 'fever or somethin' when I member of seein' you playin' round—well, well!"

To Rob's surprise, he learned that the story of Travers's wonderful discovery, and how he had revealed the location of the El Dorado to Dare, whether the truth of the foregoing explanation or not, had been an open secret in the mining camp.

Every one knew that the route lay through Death Valley, from the fact that the bones of Travers's three companions, together with a quantity of the placer gold they had found, were discovered by a party of hunters.

But whether the trail led from the valley to McLary's Range on the west, or the Coyote Hills on the east, was only known to Jim Dare himself.

"His Spanish or Mexican pardner—Miggles, I think he were called—give it away about the trail bein' marked onto Dare's pocket map," Bunyap continued, after the foregoing explanation. "Big money was offered. Dare, but he kep' his own secret. Every one thought he'd start for the place, but for some reason he never did. Next thing we knowed, he lit out for the Eastern kentry, and that's the last of 'im."

Rob did not enlighten Bunyap as to Mr. Dare's subsequent movements, for obvious reasons.

"I suppose there's no doubt about the reality of this El Dorado placer?" he asked.

"I'd like to be as sure of goin' to heaven," was the emphatic answer. "Bill Travers was once a pardner of mine, and he were a man that never made no mistake in such things."

"Where can I see you in Bragg City?" asked Rob, abruptly.

"Any one'll show you where I live," was the response. "It's the next bldin' to Kelly's undertakin' rooms." Bunyap went on gravely, 'an' if you should call when I wasn't there don't wait for the servant to answer no bell, but step into the front parlor an' make yourself to home till I get back."

Cordially thanking Bunyap for his proffered hospitality, the two promised that they would faithfully follow his instructions.

In point of fact," continued Bunyap, after a little reflection, "it would be safer for you, if you'd stop over my instid of goin' to Stage's, which, bein' the only hotel in Bragg City, is generally crowded."

But to this neither Rob nor Chip would agree. They had made up their minds that they must accommodate themselves to such circumstances as the new life they had entered on should develop. And so they naturally thought that the discomfort of a Bragg City hotel could easily be endured for a short time.

After a little further casual conversation, both fell fast asleep in the uneasy attitudes peculiar to the occupants of a passenger car. Tired out by the long journey they had entered on, both slumbered soundly till awakened by the brakeman's hoarse cry—

"Bragg City!"

Today, the extension of the railroad has left Bragg City stranded—so to speak—beside the track, a forlorn little settlement populated by a few lazy Mexicans and indolent Chinamen.

But at the time when I write, Bragg City was the terminus of the line, and contained between four and five thousand souls.

On every side the village was hemmed in by forests of pine reaching upward as far as the eye could follow the western slope of the lofty mountain range, near whose base the settlement nestled.

To Rob, with his dim remembrances of Western mining towns, Bragg City was not the surprise that it was to Chip, misled by the term "city."

Standing at the head of the street he looked wonderingly up and down.

There were four two story structures—one of brick and the others of wood—in sight. On either side of First Street, which ascended the mountain slope, were several hundred one story dwellings, a few being built entirely of logs, while most were whitewashed board shanties with canvas awnings over the porches.

"Well," exclaimed Chip, drawing a long breath, "if they call this a city—"

But this was all he said, while Rob, less impressed yet curiously interested at the novelty of the surroundings, turned to read a coarsely printed placard posted up the side of the saloon near which they were standing.

The San Luis Division will run an extra train to Madrick Valley next Tuesday, on the occasion of

THE HANGING OF

ED RUNFORTH AND LO WING

For the murder of Al Smith, Jan. 3, 1876. Tickets 25c.

"This is one of the customs of the country, probably," muttered Rob, as he turned away. And Rob was right.

Acting on a hint from Bunyap, the two had discarded coats and vests on arrival, substituting colored flannel shirts in place of their whites, and donning soft wide brimmed felt hats. This in deference to public opinion, which in Bragg City was peculiar on the question of personal apparel.

Thus attired, Rob and Chip made their way along the unpaved and comparatively deserted street in the direction of Stage's, above which famous hostelry a tattered American flag snapped and fluttered in the strong mountain breezes. Rob carried the double gun taken from the slain train robber, thrown carelessly in the hollow of his left arm.

Stage's was something remarkable in the way of a house of entertainment. It was a long, low structure, roughly boarded and battened to the height of twelve feet above the ground, where it was finished out with a canvas roof, after the manner of the mining camp architecture of '49.

Half a dozen of Stage's regular guests stood outside on the rude board platform as Rob and Chip approached.

"Tenderfoot kids—eh, Brockey?" said one of them with a laugh, turning as he spoke to a tall, pockmarked man, whose sandy whiskers did not wholly hide the cruel lines about his mouth.

For in Bragg City every newcomer appearing as a perfect stranger was expected to undergo a regular ordeal, more or less unpleasant according to the way it was received.

"Brockey" allowed a pair of bloodshot eyes to glance from Rob's face to the double barrel in the hollow of his arm. As he sharply regarded the latter, he stepped suddenly forward.

"Tenderfoot or not, this chap's got Joe Black's gun—I'd swear to them cross marks cut on the stock anywhere!"

Thus saying, the speaker gripped the barrels of the weapon, as though to wrench it from Rob, who himself had no idea of yielding the weapon without further explanation.

Twisting it from Brockey's grasp with a strength and suddenness entirely unexpected, Rob stopped back, pushing Chip behind him.

"Hand over that gun—I want to look at it," exclaimed Brockey.

The sharp double click of both hammers followed.

"Take it now, if you dare!" said Rob, defiantly.

A coked, double barreled gun held in readiness to throw to the shoulder in an instant is an awkward weapon for another to gain possession of.

The man called Brockey made a step to the rear, and threw his sinewy hand back to the butt of his revolver.

"Now then, what's the racket out here *this mornin'*?" demanded an imperative voice from the door. And with the words a tremendously large man, with bloated visage and unkempt hair, stepped outside and looked scowlingly from one belligerent to another.

The young, bright eyed Joe Black's double barrel—so Brockey says—'an' 'n't give no 'count of himself or how he came by the weapon, Stage', called out one of the woolen shirted group.

"Looks as though you hadn't give him much chance," dryly interposed a new voice, and to the great inward relief of Rob and Chip, Bunyap stepped round the corner of the structure, with either hand thrust suggestively beneath the skirts of his old blanket coat.

"It's Wild Bunyap!" chorused two or three, and the announcement created a decided diversion. Stage, who had been on the point of speaking, checked himself with surprising suddenness. Brockey's hand relaxed its grasp on the butt of his pistol, while his companions subsided into respectful silence.

"I can tell you how the young chap, which I'm proud to say is a friend o' mine, got hold of that there gun," said Bunyap, bending his keen eyes on Brockey.

"In this Bunyap did in the terrest possible manner, while Rob and Chip stood in embarrassed silence.

"Jack Vance headed the gang," concluded Bunyap, without removing his gaze from Brockey's scowling face, "an' that there gun, according to *your* swearin', belonged to Joe Black, which was the man I plucked. Presum'in' he never a friend of your'n, *mebbe you can tell who the rest of the gang were.*"

No one could fail to understand Bunyap's meaning. That the man thus addressed comprehended it, was more than apparent.

"He wasn't no friend—only an acquaintance—'an' mebbe at that time I got after 'im," muttered Brockey, as suspicious glances were cast in his direction by one and another who had come crowding out on the platform during the discussion.

"Mebbe not," was the caustic response, "but that's for the city marshal to say—he's hustlin' round mighty lively committin' 'em, 'an' he heard the news of the train bein' held up!"

"Let him hustle—it's none of my funeral," was the surly response. But Rob n-ticed that the speaker gradually edged away from those standing near him, and a little later suddenly disappeared.

CHAPTER XII.

A VALUABLE ALLY.

BUNYAP, nodding to Rob and Chip to follow, led the way inside the building known as Stage's Hotel.

A long board table, with a billow of covering, extended down the middle of the large room in front. Against either side were tiers of bunks containing scores of sleepers rolled in gray blankets.

A huge cylinder stove filled part of the space between the further end of the dining table and the bar at the extreme end. A board and can, which was annexed to the rear of the kitchen, from whence came the odor of frying bacon and boiling coffee to mingle with the smell of stale tobacco smoke and bad whisky in the main apartment.

"Wait here a bit, whilst I see whether Stage has got any chance for you," said Bunyap, as Rob and Chip stood looking about them in something very much like dismay. Both were prepared for roughing it to a greater or less extent. But to spend perhaps a week amidst such surroundings and in such company—this was something neither had anticipated.

"Let's get outside, where there's air to breathe," gasped Rob and Rob was not sorry to follow the suggestion.

Bragg City was beginning to wake up. Mounted cowboys, in attire much less picturesque than that worn on the stage, rode up and down the street. A half naked Ute Indian sat motionless on a spirited looking mustang, that was quenching its thirst at a stone watering trough before the hotel. Shutters were being taken down from store windows, and various articles of traffic placed just outside the door.

The platform loungers had disappeared with the solitary exception of a slouchy looking man with a cob pipe in his mouth.

"They've gone gunnin' after that 'ere Brockey," he drawled, though answering Rob's inquiring look. "Seem' he give himself away so about the gun, the fellers began to mistrust that he might be one of Jack Vance's gang, so they're after him."

"Bunyap seems very well known here in Bragg City," said Rob, seating himself on one of the wooden benches in the door.

The slouchy man looked very hard at Rob.

"He's knowed here," he answered, with considerable emphasis, "an' knowed for the whitest man that ever drawed in the mountain air."

It was not long before Rob had learned from his loquacious informant all that he wanted to know concerning Bunyap's merits; for his personal history he cared nothing.

A man whose honesty of purpose was respected even in such an ungodly locality was rarely indeed. A skilled hunter and guide, an experienced prospector, an unequalled shot, and possessing indomitable pluck and courage, Wild Bunyap's reputation had extended beyond the Rockies.

He were Custer's own private scout for high three year, an' what Wild Bunyap don't know about Injun fighting ain't wuth knowin'!" was the concluding eulogy, completed just as the subject of such high praise emerged from the door of Stage's.

"Stage can't make room for you two noways possible," he said, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "unless, 'n' you want'er go furder an' fare wuss, you'll have 'o take up with the offer I made aboard the cars."

"It would be pretty hard to fare much worse," remarked Chip, shrugging his shoulders. The lodging house in New Orleans had not been remarkable for style, but as compared with Stage's it was almost palatial.

Bunyap smiled grimly.

"Well, what'd ye say?"

"Only too glad to go with you, if it don't inconvenience you," heartily responded Rob, and the matter was settled.

Bunyap's house was a small, one story building, having two shuttered windows, and a door which was a hatchway to a few shelves, after the manner of the old time. But boasting itself of a shingled roof and whitewashed exterior, Bunyap's dwelling made some pretensions to style.

The interior was one of primitive simplicity. From the ridgepole to the floor it was papered with such a jumble of old newspapers, old magazines, and Ganned provision boxes served as seats at the rough board table. There were shelves for a few dishes, and a small cook-stove stood in one corner. A bunk containing two Navajo blankets occupied one end. Beneath this was a pile of dressed deer and buffalo skins.

"There ain't much style about my shanty," Bunyap remarked, after he had made his two visitors heartily welcome; "but for all that it's clean and comfortable, which Stage's ain't—'n' I'd rather live here than along of Jay Gouge's—'an' I think that you're the one man in the whole Western country who will be satisfied."

It was not till after a hearty breakfast of antelope steak and tortillas, which Bunyap prepared in true Mexican style, that Rob began talking business. Without unnecessary delay he communicated to Bunyap his intention of going in search of the El Dorado placer, provided a suitable and experienced guide could be hired or induced to accompany them by a promise of a share in the enterprise.

"And without beating round the bush, Bunyap," he continued, in concluding his talk, "I want to know if I think that you're the one man in the whole Western country who will be satisfied."

"Fill the bill," interposed Chip, whose tongue had been itching to put in a word.

"It's a big contract you two have undertook," said Bunyap, who had sat smoking in silence while Rob was speaking, "Bigger'n either of you have any idee of. If you're two of them reckless young chaps from East that their heads turned round' dime novels, and thinks it's a big thing to run away from home searchin' for adventures out here in the Western country, I'd tell you plain up and down to git back home quick's the cars would carry you. 'But you don't jist seem to be thinkin' that way."

Bunyap paused and rubbed his bristly chin thoughtfully.

"It's a cur's coincidence," he went on, as Rob and Chip eyed him anxiously, "but I've always had that El Dorado placer in my mind ever sense I first knowed about Travers' findin' it. One thing and another has kep' me from startin' out and takin' chances of runnin' across the location. But this season I've been kind of gettin' ready for a prospectin' trip towards McLary's Range. And seeing you two chaps has the regular route marked out—why, if you say so, I'm your man, provided the terms is share and share alike."

"I agreed," was the brief response, sealed by a hearty handshake all round.

To say that Chip was delighted at the prospect is to put it very mildly. Unlike his companion, who had some conception of the dangers and hardships of the undertaking before them, Chip saw everything in a rose colored atmosphere. And such was the respectful silence while Rob and Bunyap began discussing the question of ways and means, his eyes danced and his thin face flushed with pleasure.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT DUTCH CHARLIE'S.

LET me briefly describe the "outfit," which a week later had been purchased with the assistance of Bunyap, whose advice had been invaluable to our two young friends.

First came the three sturdy ponies of the true mustang breed, and warranted not to "back" Chip, who called his own "Moses," had lost no time in making his first essay as a horseman.

Unluckily he would insist on bucking on a big pair of Mexican spurs. And ten minutes later Bragg City was somewhat astonished at the sight of a mustang tearing down First Street at full gallop with a bareheaded youth clinging for dear life to the cante of the Mexican saddle, yelling, "Whoa—Moses—whoa!"

A meek looking burro, or mountain jackass, was the burden bearer of the party. So far as possible the prospector goes "flying light." Blankets and prospecting tools, bacon, flour, salt, beans, onions and baking powder in separate bags packed in one large canvas sack, and a few cooking utensils, made up the burro's load.

Each had procured a Mexican saddle, with its multiplicity of rings and thongs for securing the various articles—water canteen, "haversack," "grub bag," and the like. And each was provided with the regulation sombrero, high boots and jean riding overalls.

Bunyap and Rob were armed with Winchester and revolvers, and to his extreme delight Rob was supplied with one of the latter in addition to his double gun. A change of underclothing for each, an abundant supply of ammunition, a field glass, compass, and a few other necessities, completed the outfit. Their preparations and purchases had taken a full week.

On the evening previous to their departure, Rob and Chip sallied out to buy two or three necessaries requested by Bunyap, who remained behind to get things ready for an early morning start. It was about nine o'clock, and the riotous revelry of the rough settlement was just beginning.

"Twixt what I've seen to home—when I had one—and what I'm going on here," remarked Chip, "I'm sure I'll never need to go to hear any temperance lectures."

Rob did not reply. They had come to a halt in front of "Dutch Charlie's"—the most popular dance hall in Bragg City. The greasy bazaar doors were swung wide open. At the further end of the gaudily painted interior, a dozen or more couples were dancing to the music of a violin skillfully played by a pale, thin faced man, who seemed in the last stages of consumption, to judge by his terrible cough.

It was not this which attracted Rob's attention, however. A man in Mexican garb, wearing his sombrero well over his eyes, was coolly urging the waltz on the wooden stage, and he shone in a brilliantly lighted room, at one side of which was a bar counter presided over by Dutch Charlie himself.

"I want a nearer look at that fellow," whispered Rob. Chip nodded, and the two stepped inside without attracting the slightest notice.

The horseman's face was half hidden by heavy black whiskers, and the flapping brim of the sombrero did the rest. He rode the mustang to the bar counter, mutely signed for the attendant to pour him out a glass of liquor, which he tossed off, and then sat motionless on his swivel training stool, gazing at the waltzer. Rob caught one keen glance directed at himself from beneath the big hat, and it somehow made the boy strangely uneasy.

It seems as though I'd seen those eyes before," was his unspoken thought. But all at once his attention was turned toward the further end of the room, where the music was, and consequently the dancing had suddenly stopped.

The cause was evident. The musician had dropped his violin on the table before him. As Rob and Chip approached, he was taking from his pallid lips a handkerchief stained with drops of blood. One of the waltzers, a burly man who always wore a hat, was evidently held in respectful awe by all present, greeted the cessation of the dance with a rough exclamation.

"Now don't—don't go to makin' no rackets here, Mister Yount," called Dutch Charlie imploringly.

For Jim Yount was the noted Tennessee desperado, who some years ago enlisted in the army, and whose notoriousness throughout Montana and Nevada as the "Bad Man from Bitter Creek." Murder with him was a pastime, and so thoroughly had he terrorized the localities where he abode that he had invariably escaped justice, though arrested a dozen times at least. There was nothing of the heroic order in this man. He was simply a reckless brute—nothing more or less.

Stepping forward, Yount pushed the muzzle of his pistol in the face of the half fainting musician.

"Pick up that fiddle an' strike up the music agin, you blamed furriner," he fiercely ejaculated.

A faded looking woman made her way swiftly from the other end of the room, and threw her arms about the sick man's neck.

"Don't, Mr. Yount, my husband is not able to play any longer," she cried, imploringly.

One might have supposed that among the crowd of men in the room some one could be found to champion the woman and her helpless husband. But Jim Yount had been known to shoot four times in succession almost as fast as a man could wink, and each time with fatal effect, on much less provocation, so no man interfered.

Rob had frankly admitted since that had he known Mr. James Yount's peculiarities, he is not by any means sure that he would have so done. But—

"Don't you see the man is bleeding at the lungs?" he said angrily, pushing his way to the spot. "Stand aside and put up your pistol, you drunken brute!"

And with the words, Rob roughly thrust aside the muzzle of the leveled revolver, taking ad-

vantage of which the woman helped her husband into an adjoining room and closed the door.

To say that all present—Chip excepted—stood aghast at a temerity which proceeded in part from ignorance, is to put it very mildly. And Jim Yount himself seemed for the moment the most astounded of any one.

"Well, I'm blamed!" he muttered, amid a silence in which Chip afterward declared he could hear the mites at work in the lump of cheese on the bar counter. Dutch Charlie stared at the singular scene in open mouthed amazement. The solitary horseman alone seemed not to partake of the general feeling.

"Why don't the fool shoot—Jim Yount isn't generally backward," some one heard him mutter.

"You young tenderfoot!" suddenly roared Yount, recovering himself, and swinging his pistol in a line with Rob's face, "down on yer kneecaps and 'poligize to me 'an' the crowd for insultin' a gentleman!"

If Rob was inwardly disturbed he did not show it on the surface. Partly because he took it for granted that even in lawless Bragg City a man could hardly be shot down in cold blood by a ruffian simply for the latter's own amusement.

Before Rob could respond, Chip had pressed this side, full to the brim of native impudence, and, as desire, as he afterward said, "to back Rob up."

"Insultin' a gentleman!" exclaimed Chip, with withering sarcasm. "Just hear him, will you—"

"Be quiet, Chip!" sharply commanded his companion, as Yount's face became quite purple with wrath.

"Where we came from," said Rob, unflinchingly regarding his opponent, "gentlemen never threaten sick or unarmed people with loaded revolvers; only a bully or a coward like yourself would—"

"Look out, young feller!"

Rob was in a dilemma. From a friendly bystander might or might not have been necessary. Possibly the Bad Man of Bitter Creek simply meant to frighten his victim badly. However this may be, a cruel light suddenly flashed into the bloodshot eye glancing along the barrel of the leveled weapon, and the finger curled itself around the trigger.

Rob affirmed that even then he had no realizing sense of actual danger, thinking only that a bad scare was intended.

Chip, it would seem, thought very differently. "He looked murder," to use his own after expression. But what could he, an unarmed lay, do against a man who was evidently mad? It was the very word commencing his mental query that suggested his subsequent action.

For, remembering the former success of his billygoat tactics, Chip lowered his bullet head on a line with Mr. Yount's stomach, and propelled himself violently forward.

The waltzer, who was evidently drunk, doubled up like a suddenly closed jackknife, and went backward to the floor with a crash. His head struck a stone spittoon, thus rendering him incapable of further action for a moment.

Lucky moment! For Dounce, the city marshal, with two deputies armed to the teeth, had been hovering about the door. Yount was "wanted!" for a little indiscretion committed the week before in an adjoining county—shooting a cattle drover on sight. And before he could fairly recover himself, the ruffian was heavily sat on, handcuffed, and marched away.

Chip and Rob became at once the center of an admiring and rather the sister crowd. Rob was complimented on his pluck—Chip on his presence of mind. Each was invited to the bar, an invitation which I need hardly say was firmly though courteously refused.

"But I'll tell you what we will do," said Rob, good naturedly. "Step up here, Chip."

The waltzer, Rob took the violin from the table, where it had been left by the musicians, and drew the bow across the strings with the easy touch of a skilled amateur.

There was a sudden cessation of noisy revelry, as in unison with the vibrating chords the two voices rose on the smoky atmosphere.

The song was an old one, called "The Moon behind the Hill," yet better adapted to such an audience than anything more modern or elaborate:

"It brought me back a mother's love,

Until in accents wild

I prayed her from her home above

To guard her lonely child.

It brought me back across the wave

To live in memory still:

It brought me back my Mary's grave—

The moon behind the hill.

A curious silence followed the rendering of the simple words. For I fancy among the most hardened were some whose thoughts were carried back to an earlier and better life.

Song after song followed, and all present seemed to be drinking in the unaccustomed melodies with eagerness. I say all—I may except the solitary horseman, who had not spoken or moved the mustang from its tracks during the entire proceedings. But as Rob and Chip began for a final song—the former's favorite, "Robin Adair"—the mounted man bent down from his saddle and whispered for a moment in the ear of an undersized, slouchy looking person, who was leaning against the bar. Then, wheeling his pony sharply round, he rode out and down the wooden steps into the darkness, the entire procedure attracting no particular surprise or comment.

(To be continued.)

SNOWFLAKES.

BY MABEL HAYDEN.

How they fly all thro' the air,
Merrily,
Making glad the wood and glen,
Cheerily,
Now they dance along the way,
Glancing o'er the frozen bay,
Feathery flakes athwart the cold, clear day,
Swiftly on the schoolboy slides
Laughingly;
Bright his eye, and his cheek glows
Rosily,
Now his happy, joyous glance
Doth the old and young entrance,
'Tis the day for boyhood's sweet romance.
Now the wild free dance is o'er,
Finally;
Each pearl flake assumes her place
Gracefully;
Till they everywhere have lur'd
Fleecy snow robes o'er the world,
Where deep night has 'round her silence fur'd.

Our First Great Hunt.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

DO believe that all boys are born with the love of guns, just as all girls are born with the love of dolls.

On my fourteenth birthday my Uncle Richard made me almost perfectly happy by the present of a new breechloader with a "pistol grip." He was a gunner himself, and so knew just what I wanted, and what I ought to have. It was a handsome one, and "choke bored" in the left barrel, so that the shot would go very close together, but with the right calculated to scatter considerably.

Uncle Richard knew what he was about. He knew that I would sometimes have occasion to fire at a single bird, and sometimes at a flock, and he had made provision accordingly.

"Your left barrel," he said, "will carry you just where you aim. Whenever you fire at an object within fifteen rods with the barrel and fail to hit it, the fault will be in you. When the ducks go up in a great wide flock, though, you must use the other barrel to mow them down with."

He had bought me also a lot of brass shells, and all the other "fixings" for a breech loader, for Uncle Richard never did anything by halves.

Of course I was delighted. There was, however, a slight drawback upon my content. Rob Wilson, my bosom friend, had no gun. Rob could go out with me upon all my tramps, and we could use the breechloader between us; but then I should all the while be feeling sorry for him, for when a boy goes out shooting he wants to own the gun himself, and not be dependent for it upon a companion.

But fortune, working through human agencies, had something good in store for Rob also. His birthday came just three weeks later; and on that occasion he came running over to our house with a new gun in his hand, the very counterpart of my own.

"See grandfather's present!" he exclaimed. "He has given me this gun! I'd no idea he meant to do any of the kind. It's just like yours. Now we can go out together and have glorious times! Grandfather knows what a gun is—he's an old sportsman—and he says if I am to live here in Florida, I must learn how to shoot."

I had been to school five days in every week since getting my gun, and on every Saturday it most providently rained, so that no opportunity had offered for a good hunt. How ardently Rob and I hoped that the next holiday would be clear and pleasant!

It answered our wishes when it came; for no day, even in our sunny Florida, could have been more inviting to the lovers of "wood and wild."

During the week some incidents had happened calculated to excite the sportsman's instinct, already strong within us.

On Tuesday Joe Bowers had shot a sand hill crane, and on Thursday Sam Rivers had killed a wildcat. True, these youngsters were several years our seniors, yet we believed that with a fair opportunity what was possible for them was also possible for us.

Then, too, an immense bird, which could have been nothing less than an eagle, one afternoon swooped down in the very dooryard of the Throop family, who lived a mile from us, carry-

ing off a large Brahma rooster, and seriously frightening poor Mrs. Throop, who was at the moment enjoying a swing in her hammock close to the spot.

"Dear me!" she said, in relating the occurrence to my mother, "I wish some one had been there with a gun. It was as if Sindbad's great bird had flown down into the yard. You may imagine how I felt to see my poor Brahma going off through the air in the clutches of that dreadful thing."

The same eagle, or one supposed to be the same, had been seen by a number of other persons; and one of these, a Mr. Brooks, who was a taxidermist, told my father that he would give twenty five dollars for the huge fellow, dead or alive.

"I saw him sitting on the top of a pine tree," he said, "and you can't think how he showed up! But my gun was at home; and, besides, I don't suppose I could have got at him, gun or no gun."

As Rob and I were upon the point of starting out on that Saturday morning, we saw Uncle Richard, who wished us good luck, and said he would go with us some day and show us how to shoot.

"Should you see anything of my white geese," he added, laughing, "just pop them over for me and bring them home. They have been gone a month now, and I suppose they are as wild as red Indians by this time, unless something has eaten them up."



IT FIRED HASTILY, AS THE EAGLE GRADUALLY ROSE INTO THE AIR WITH HIS STRUGGLING VICTIM.

He referred to a flock of domestic geese which he had owned, but which, becoming more and more estranged from home, had at last risen upon the wing and taken a final leave of civilized life.

"Put as many shots into them as you like," he said, "for they will never come back of their own accord."

We promised to keep a lookout for them; yet neither he nor ourselves had any idea that we should see the truants.

Provided with a clumsy dugout, we pushed foster upon one of the shallow bayous so common in the portion of Florida where we lived, and were soon far away in a labyrinth of green reeds, miniature islands and narrow, intricate channels.

We tried the effect of lead upon a number of alligators, and, I think, put out the eyes of one big fellow, at least—but not a single thing did we bag, bird, beast or reptile.

At length we entered a large and comparatively open basin, where there were small flocks of aquatic birds. But they were very wild; and, though we would fire at them as they rose, our shots had no effect but to make them fly the faster, as they whirled away from us, disappearing beyond the swamps and reeds.

In the midst of all, up went a couple of big fowl, of which I saw only one, as I was pushing the boat—although Rob, who fired at them, insisted that there certainly were two.

"And what's more," he added, "I'll bet they are some of your Uncle Richard's geese. They looked like geese, and they made a noise like geese."

As to myself, I could testify to the noise, and I did think, too, that the one I had a glimpse of as I was working away at the "setting pole," looked exactly like a goose.

"Well," said I, "if that's the case, let's chase them up. If we should get one of 'em, wouldn't Uncle Richard laugh! I guess the raccoons and things have killed all but those two."

"What's that away off in the sky?" asked Rob. "Seems to me it looks mighty big for a hawk."

Looking in the direction he indicated, I observed a large bird soaring majestically above the bayou, now flapping its sail-like wings, and again keeping them motionless as it circled royally in the blue air, far out of gunshot. At length it alighted upon a high tree, and we saw that it must be an eagle.

"It is the same fellow that scared Mrs. Throop and stole her rooster," cried Rob. "I'll bet it is!"

"And Mr. Brooks offers twenty five dollars for him," I replied. "I don't believe we can get near him, but let's try it just once and see."

We pulled around a point of the land, and keeping close to the shore where the old fellow could not discover us from his perch, made our way carefully along, pushing the dugout without noise, and stooping low at every opening between the clumps of reeds or trees.

Presently two white geese came flying over the swampy spot, and settled upon the water a quarter of a mile from us.

"There," exclaimed Rob, "see that! Those are the very two we scared up, I guess. They look like the same ones anyhow."

"Yes, and they must be Uncle Richard's

twenty rods off, but in our excitement we did not stop to measure the distance. In fact there was no time to lose. "Bang!" went both our guns together. A few of the shot may have reached the intended mark, but if so, it was not with force enough to do execution. The execution was done nearer to us—for our heavy charges met the old feering goose as she was rising upon the wing, and she dropped stone dead into the water!

By this time the bird of Jove had risen victoriously with his burden, and we saw that it was all over with the old gander. The progress of the robber was slow, however, as he flapped upward, and there still seemed a chance of getting nearer to him.

Rob grasped the pole in a desperate effort to push along, while I kept my breechloader going with shell after shell. But it was all to no purpose, and at length, in despair, I ceased firing.

Away went the big robber of the air, with the prize so boldly secured, and our disappointment was intense.

But he was not to get off so easily. "Caw, caw, caw," came a chorus of cries from a little distance, and looking around, we saw a flock of twenty or thirty crows flying rapidly towards us. They passed over our heads without seeming to notice us in the least, and we saw that they were in full chase of the eagle.

"O, good! good!" cried Rob. "He'll have to light somewhere to defend himself, and then we'll get at him!"

Sure enough, the old fellow made for the neighboring shore, with the crows darting upon him every sweep of his great wings. Soon he alighted upon the bank, while his sable enemies posted themselves all about him at a safe distance, ready to pounce upon him the moment he should attempt to fly.

Such a cawing as there was! Such a prodigious gabble!

Pushing the dugout along as fast as possible, we approached within fair shooting range. The crows hopped uneasily about, and the eagle seemed upon the point of once more taking wing.

Aiming carefully, we let drive, still hardly daring to hope for complete success, and almost beside ourselves with excitement.

"Bang!" And the boy who loves a gun will imagine the thrill with which we saw the noble head go down, and the strong talons upturned in convulsive struggles.

The glorious bird was gasping his last when we reached him. And what a superb creature he was! What a fierce head he had, and what strong, savage claws!

We returned home in triumph, bearing with us the eagle and the two geese, the last of Uncle Richard's stray flock.

Mr. Brooks gave us twenty five dollars for our royal prize, which he set up in a very lifelike manner in his large collection of natural curiosities.

And so ended our first great hunt—nor have we ever found such excitement in any other.

A NEW USE FOR BLACK CATS.

THERE will soon be a call for a Cat Defenders' Society, to emulate the protective tactics of the Audubon Association with respect to birds. In both instances, strange to say, the chief offenders are not bad boys with sticks and stones, but fair women with their insatiable desire to be "in the fashion."

The London *Pall Mall Gazette* prints the following in an item of Paris news:

A favorite dress at fancy dress balls this winter will undoubtedly be the black cat costume—a low necked and sleeveless corsage and tunic in gold yellow satin, cut in one, in the princess style. The latter is looped over a short underskirt in black velvet, and is bordered with a row of little figures of Napoleon cut out of black velvet. On the left side of the corsage is placed a large stuffed black cat, the tail curving over the wearer's shoulder, while the outstretched forelegs of the animal claw up one side of the overskirt. Long black gloves reaching above the elbow, with gold yellow silk stockings, and black satin slippers, complete the toilet.

STILL HOPE FOR HIM.

POLICE SERGEANT—"Is the man dangerously wounded?"

Irish Police Surgeon—"Two of the wounds are mortal; but the third can be cured, provided the man keeps perfectly quiet for at least six weeks."

The scene of the tragedy was more than

KEEP YOUR FACES TO THE LIGHT.

DISAPPOINTMENTS may o'trattle us,
Losses, griefs and grim surprises
May assault us in the weary way we go;
Look not back, but onward, ever,
Lo! the goal before us rises
And the valley of the shadow lies below!
With a hand to help the fallen,
Where the rugged steeps delay us,
Though the reddening summits warn us of the
night.
We shall conquer all the evils
That assail us and betray us,
While we keep our faces bravely to the light!

[This story commenced in No. 261.]

The Cruise of the Dandy.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

Author of "The Young Pilot of Lake Monto-
ban," "Always in Luck," "Every Inch
a Boy," "Young America Abroad
Series," etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WOUNDED PRISONER.

SPOTTY was convinced that Luke Spott-
wood was really in pain, and that he was
in no condition to make any resistance,
however disposed he might be in that
direction. The appearance of his wound was
abundant evidence of his sincerity, in the present
instance. When Spotty had attended to the
inflamed hand, he left the forecabin, locking
the door behind him, for he decided to allow
the prisoner no unnecessary liberty; it was bet-
ter to be on the safe side.

Tom had supper well under way, and Spotty
assisted him by setting the table. Both of
them were not only half starved, but they were
very sleepy, for they had not obtained more
than three hours' rest the night before, and had
been on a seven days' run all the day long.

A hearty meal, with coffee, re-
stored them to their usual condi-
tion. Tom was inclined to be
rather gay; but Spotty could not
help thinking of the banker
whom he had regarded as his
father for so many years.

"I would give something to
know that your father got to
Montreal all right," said the en-
gineer.

"It is hardly time for him to
be there yet, but I think he will
go through all right," replied
Spotty. "I suppose the fact that
Mr. Hawke has been in Platts-
burgh today has been telegraphed
to New York, and that steps
have been taken to cause his
arrest. Probably those officers
heard from there before they did
anything."

"Very likely," replied Tom.
"I suppose the police in Mon-
treal will be on the lookout for
him, and that a detective will go
there from New York."

"Mr. Hawke would have been
captured before this time if he
had gone to St. John's. They
would have taken him as soon
as he got on the train, and the
jewelry would have proved that
he was the right man."

"I should not want to take
his chances as it is," added Tom,
shaking his head. "He may get
out of Montreal all right; but a
man who has done wrong is apt
to make a mistake in trying to
cover up his tracks. The very
thing he thinks will assist in his
escape is often the very thing
that exposes him."

"Mr. Hawke is a very timid
man, though it is his guilt that
makes him so," replied Spotty.

Tom dropped his knife and
fork, and looked earnestly at the
captain. He seemed suddenly
to have obtained some new idea.

"What makes you call him
Mr. Hawke, Spotty? I never
heard you speak of him in that
way before," said he. "Why
do you call him that, as you
always did, and did a while ago
this very day?"

"He is not my father," replied Spotty, sadly.
"Not your father!" exclaimed the engineer.
"He is not; he told me so himself while we
were at the island."

Spotty had to give all the particulars, and
Tom was so astonished and so flabbergasted that
he could not find words to express himself.

"One thing more, Tom; Luke knows that
Mr. Hawke is not my father," added Spotty,
when he had told his story.

"Then that is the cat in the meal. He knows
more than he tells on the house tops," added
Tom. "And what do you know will use to his
own advantage, and not at all for yours?"

This point was considered at length; but as
neither of the boys knew what Luke wanted to
accomplish, they did not make any progress in
arriving at a satisfactory conclusion.

"We have accomplished our mission in this
part of the lake, Spotty," said Tom, when they
had given up all consideration of what they
could not comprehend. "What is the next
move?"

"I hardly know; I have not decided upon

anything," replied Spotty. "If Luke was not
on board, I would just stay where we are at
least till tomorrow morning, and perhaps for
two or three days, until things are settled. I
have nothing to do, and nowhere to go."

"We can put Luke ashore anywhere we
choose," added Tom. "It will not take long to
get out of him."

"I think I will go down and see him again,"
continued Spotty, as he finished the meal. "He
has had no supper, and I will take a cup of
coffee down to him, with something to eat. He
had some fever about him when I looked him
over before, and I think you had better toast
some bread for him, if you please, Tom."

In a few minutes the tray was ready for the
sufferer, and Tom carried it below, Spotty at-
tending him with the lantern. Luke was still
in great pain, though he thought the poultice
had done him good. He asked if there was any
laudanum on board. This medicine was one of
the few kept in the locker of the fore cabin for
emergencies, and Tom went for it. Spotty per-
suaded the patient to eat the toast, for he thought
it would do him good. The coffee he drank
without any teasing.

The captain was unwilling to give him a dose
of laudanum, as he desired, but he applied the
medicine externally to the wound. It was soon
evident that the remedies had given him tempo-
rary relief, if nothing more. The boys made
up a good bed for him in another bunk, assisted
him to remove a portion of his clothes, and then
made him comfortable under the bed clothes.

"Your father did not come down with you,"
said Luke, after he had arranged himself in the
bed.

"If you mean Mr. Hawke, he is not my
father," replied Spotty.

Luke raised himself in the bunk, and looked
steadily into the face of the captain of the Dandy.
But perhaps he felt that this act was exposing a
feeling he had better conceal, and he composed
himself once more on his couch.

you on my honor; or to you either, for that
matter," interposed the patient.

"We will drop him, if you please, Mr. Spott-
wood. He is out of your reach now; and the
next question is, what shall we do with you?"
continued Spotty.

"I suppose you can do anything you like with
me in my present condition," replied Luke, in a
rather surly tone. "I am disabled in one hand.
I feel as though I had a fever, besides."

"The fever comes from your wounded hand.
I should judge that you had taken cold in the
wound. I should advise you to see a doctor."

"That is easy enough said when I am a pris-
oner in this hole," added the patient, bit-
terly.

"You know why you
are a prisoner. I will
not say anything that
is disagreeable, if I can

"I will put you on shore wherever you say,
Mr. Spottwood; and I don't think I can do any
better than that," added the captain.

"Certainly you cannot, and you have been
very kind to me this evening, though you were
a tiger during the day," replied Luke, more rea-
sonable than he had before appeared.

"If I was a tiger, you thorned me, and I did
nothing except in self defense. But no matter
about that. If you will say where you desire to
be landed, you shall be put ashore as soon as I
can take you to the place."

"How far are we from Burlington?" asked
the patient, in a more polite tone.

"Thirty five miles."
"I will go there,
then, if you please.
What time is it now?"

"About eleven
o'clock. We will have
you there at two in the
morning," replied
Spotty, as he moved to
wards the door, leaving
the lantern on the table
for the sick man in case
he wanted it.

"That will be a
rather early hour in the
morning for a man in
my condition to go on
shore," added Luke.
"Couldn't I remain
on board of this boat
until my wound is bet-
ter?"

"I think not. I
should not be willing to
take the responsibility
of caring for that
wound in your hand.
It is swelled up to
nearly double its natu-
ral size, and you may
have to submit to have
it amputated."

"You don't think it
is so bad as that?"
asked Luke, much
alarmed by the words.

"I don't know how
bad it is; and, as I said
before, you had better
see a doctor as soon as
you can. You shall be in
Burlington in three hours. I hope
the lessons of the last three days
will last you the rest of your life-
time."

Spotty moved towards the
door.

"Stop a moment, Spotty; I
want to talk with you. It is for
your interest as well as mine,"
pleaded Luke.

"I have no interest in com-
mon with you," answered the
captain of the Dandy, as he left
the forecabin.

He found Tom on deck, fast
asleep on a bench. Rousing him
from his slumber, he told him
the boat must go to Burlington
at once, in order to get rid of
the prisoner. The fire was
started up, Spotty cast off the
bow line, and the Dandy was
soon going up the lake. It
wanted five minutes of two by
the clock in the pilot house when
the bow of the steamer touched
the wharf.

The place was silent, and all
its people were sleeping. The
night boat was not due for an
hour, and Spotty wished to be
away when she arrived. He
was afraid Luke would give
them trouble, but he did not.
He was a lamb, and as soon as
he was on the wharf, the Dandy
started across the lake.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

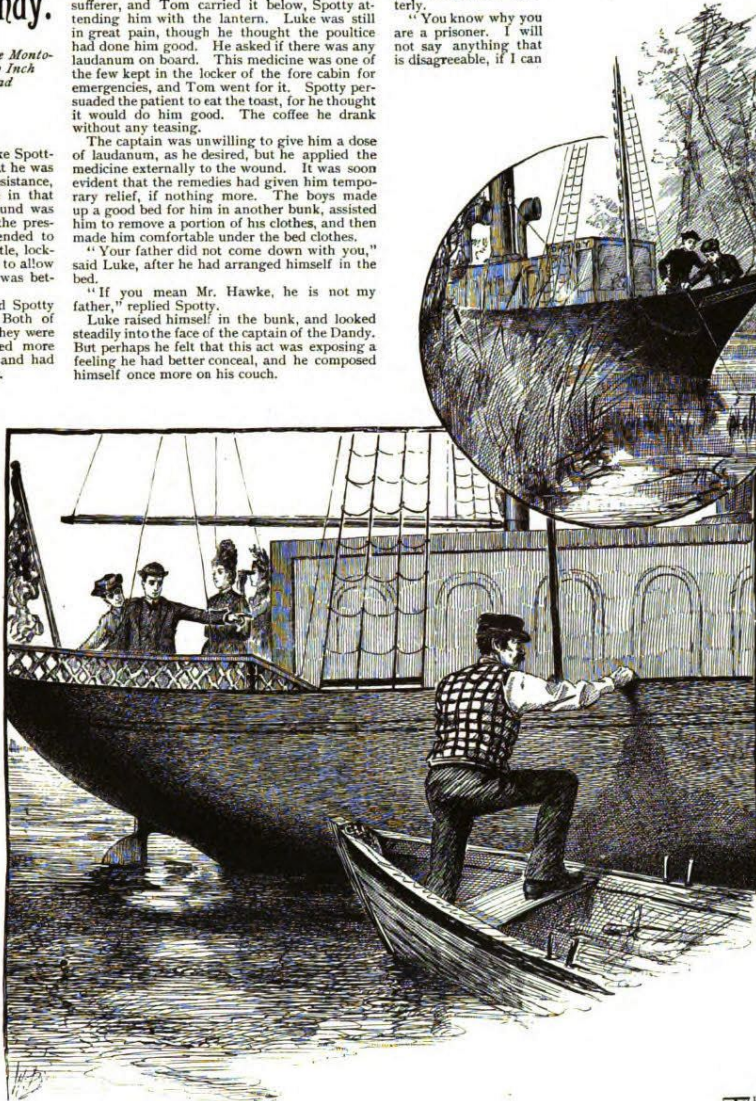
THE DANDY HAS A NEW OWNER.

THE Dandy had not been in motion more
than an hour before the speed bell rang,
startling Tom Gates into a wide awake
condition. He was so sleepy for that he
he had been obliged to pace the engine room
to keep from falling asleep, which was quite con-
trary to his idea of discipline when on duty.
He checked the speed of the engine, and pres-
ently stopped at the signal of the gong. He
waited for any further calls upon him, but none
came.

Presently he heard the brushing of the
branches of trees against the sides of the boat,
and it was plain that Spotty had run her into
some creek. The branches took off her head-
way, and she came to a standstill. Tom knew
the place. It was up a bay, where a stream
flowed in, and not even her smoke stack could
be seen from the lake or the shore. The en-
gineer wondered what the captain was driving at,
as he gaped time after time.

"Draw your fires, Tom!" shouted Spotty,
through the tube.

"All right," replied Tom, between the gapes.
He drew the fires, as directed, and this indi-
cated more than a short stay in this place, and
then he did all that was required to the boiler
and engine to keep them in proper condition.
Spotty soon joined him, and they gaped in



A BOAT CAME ALONGSIDE AND GAVYNOR SPRANG ON BOARD OF THE DANDY.

"Mr. Hawke is not your father?" he added.
"I supposed he was."

"Excuse me, Mr. Spottwood, for contradict-
ing you, but you knew when you came on board
of this boat that he was not my father. I don't
like falsehoods, especially when they do no good
to any one," replied Spotty, mildly. "But I
don't care to talk with you on that subject."

"Mr. Hawke seems to keep away from me
this evening. Why didn't he come down with
you?" interposed Luke.

"He is no longer on board. He went ashore
at least two hours ago, and I hope he is in Mon-
treal by this time."

"But there was a steamer after you from
Plattsburgh, was there not?"

"Yes; and another from Rouse's Point,"
added Spotty, coldly.

"And your father—Mr. Hawke has got
ashore?" asked Luke, more in wonder than re-
gret, apparently.

"It is not necessary to talk over Mr. Hawke's
case," said Spotty. "He is out of your reach
now, and—"

"I intended no harm to him, Spotty, I assure

help it," answered Spotty, gently. "Whatever
you have done, and whatever you intend to do,
I am not disposed to injure you, or to render
your situation uncomfortable. I will do any-
thing that is reasonable which you may desire.
I have no reason to keep you a prisoner any
longer."

"Your father had certain articles which he
solemnly promised to put in my possession."
"I will not have anything to say about Mr.
Hawke, or your affairs with him," interposed
Spotty. "I will land you in Windport—"

"No, no! I don't wish to go there!" ex-
claimed Luke, involuntarily putting his left
hand upon his hair and beard, as though they
were the reason why he did not wish to encoun-
ter his acquaintances in that place.

"I believe your home is at the Champlain
Hotel in that place; and I supposed you would
wish to go there, and have your wound properly
cared for. Perhaps you prefer that I should
land you at your uncle's place, opposite Gold-
well?" suggested Spotty.

"No, no, there!" added Luke, as decidedly
as before.

in unison for a time before either could say anything.

"We will turn in," was all Spotty said by the strength or the desire to say; and in two minutes more both of them were under the bedclothes in the forward cabin. Perhaps no two boys were more thoroughly worn out than Spotty and Tom, though they could have kept the boat going all night if there had been any excitement to prevent them from dropping asleep at their posts.

Spotty was too sleepy to say why he had put the Dandy into the place of concealment, but he had any reason for doing so. He slept like a log, and so did Tom; and the Dandy lay enfolded in the trees that grew on either side of the creek. The silence was supreme in and around the steamer.

Daylight came, and the sun rose bright and clear after the clouds of the night; but the tired voyagers on the lake did not wake. The hours passed by, and still they slept. At nine o'clock Tom was the first to wake. He looked about him for a moment and took in the situation, and then went to sleep again. He woke once more an hour later. He was no longer sleepy, and he got up.

It was a long time since supper the night before, and he made a fire in the gallery. It was a lazy time, for there seemed to be nothing more to do. He looked the boat over, and put everything in order on board. He examined the large stock of provisions and stores that had been on board, and he used of the excursion party. He got a beefsteak out for breakfast, for the fresh meat could not keep much longer without a new supply of ice.

When breakfast was ready Spotty was still asleep, though it was after eleven o'clock. Tom called him, and they partook of the morning meal together, but the use of the excursion party to be at all impaired by their long sleep.

"Here we are," said Tom, when he found that his companion was not disposed to talk much.

"In the creek," replied Spotty.

"Why are we in here?" asked the engineer.

"I thought we might as well be in here as anywhere else," replied Spotty, who could give no reason for the retired position he had chosen for the Dandy. "We have nothing to do, and nobody to help us."

"But we are going to do something some time, are we not?" queried Tom.

"I suppose so; but we have not yet decided what," replied Spotty.

"They did not decide that day. The Dandy did not leave the creek that day, nor the next. Her crew ate, slept, fished, and read. Spotty swept out the cabins and put them in first rate condition, making the beds, and doing all the work of a stewardess. Tom attended to the boiler, cleaned the engine, and polished the bright work. In spite of the strain of her late cruise, the Dandy was never in better condition, even on the day she left the yard of her builder.

On the third day, Spotty came to a conclusion. He discussed the situation thoroughly with Tom. By this time it was evident that the creditors of Mr. Hawke had taken possession of the banker's property at Gildwell. The Dandy was a part of his estate, and Spotty realized that the creditors had now the best claim to her. He would have been glad to retain her, for both he and Tom could make a good living out of her in the summer season, by using her for parties at the various towns on the lake. It was no use of thinking of such a thing now, for the boat did not belong to him. On the third day Tom got up steam after breakfast, and a couple of hours later the nose of the Dandy struck the pier at Gildwell.

The estate had all been attached, and a man was there in charge of it. The steamer was included in the list of property attached, and formal possession was taken of her. The keeper thought some one who understood about her ought to look out for her, and he employed Spotty for this purpose.

Her late captain lived on board of her, having removed his clothes from the house. But he was not permitted to take her out from the wharf, and he did not care to do so. Weeks passed away, and the land and house, as well as all the other property, were advertised to be sold to pay the debts of the forger.

Spotty heard nothing from Mr. Hawke, except what he read in the newspapers. He found in the *Sun* a full account of the cruise of the Dandy, and the manner in which she had dodged the other two boats, the blame of missing the prize being charged to the captain of the *Maya*, where it belonged.

The paper stated that the Dandy had landed the fugitive at St. John's, or some point near that place. Though officers had been on the lookout for him at the railroad station in the town, they had been unable to identify him, though they had examined the baggage of several passengers on suspicion that one of them might be the forger.

Detectives had been at work at Montreal and other cities of the Dominion without any trace of the missing man being found. Some thought he had committed suicide, but Spotty did not believe he had. The scheme had worked as well as was expected, and no passenger that boarded the train at Kouse's Point was suspected. The banker was not over forty-five, and there was still room for him to do something in the world.

The day of the auction came, and many persons gathered at Gildwell. Tom joined Spotty on board of the Dandy, deeply interested in the event that had brought the gathering at the place. The boys had been together half the

time, and had talked over the future. Spotty was more interested in the sale of the Dandy than in anything else about the estate. He hoped the purchaser would want a young man about his size to pilot her, or at least to work on board of her in some capacity.

As he was paid for taking care of the boat, he had not sought other employment; and he still had the money the banker had left him. He hoped some wealthy man would purchase her, and take him as part of her, for he understood her better than any other person. His own position on board of a boatman for the last two years, since Spotty had proved that he was competent to manage her.

Gaynor put in an appearance also. He was evidently looking for a position on board of her. Though Tom said nothing about it, he hoped something would turn up to assist him in a position on board of her. He did not say anything about it, for it was a bold idea that a boy of sixteen should aspire to be the engineer of a pleasure yacht. When he saw Gaynor, he was sure there was no chance for him, even as a scullion on board, if one were wanted.

While Spotty was sitting in the pilot house, just before the hour appointed for the sale, a carriage stopped at the head of the wharf. It was some visitors who wanted to look at the steamer, and the keeper prepared to show them over her, and point out her excellences. Going to the gangway, he was rather surprised to see Mr. Paul Spottwood and his constant friend, Mr. Ducky, who had come to see the boat.

"I am glad to see you again, my young friend," said the agent, or trustee of Mr. Spottwood, for such he was. "But I am very sorry for the misfortunes of your father. You are all alone in the world, I am told, and that your mother has been dead several years."

"I am alone," said Spotty, "I have not a relative that I know of anywhere," replied Spotty, though he did not seem to be very downcast about it, much as he had thought of Mr. Hawke, and of the relation that had formerly subsisted between them.

Mr. Spottwood spoke a kind word, but he appeared to be disappointed when the boys saw him on the other side of the lake. Spotty showed the visitors over the boat, and explained every thing on board to them. But he did not for a moment think that a man like Mr. Spottwood would purchase such a thing as a steam yacht, for he seemed to have no taste for any of the pleasures and excitements of the world.

The two gentlemen returned to the shore, and others visited the Dandy and were shown over her. Gaynor kept close by the boat, and Tom noticed that he spoke to all who inspected her, doubtless soliciting an engagement on the boat if she was bought by either of the visitors. Tom was a little surprised when he saw Mr. Spottwood, but he was not so much so when he saw his case, but it was more than he could do, and he allowed Gaynor to secure the place if he could, without any interference from him.

When the sale began, Spotty and Tom went up to the house. Not a little to the surprise of all the company it was knocked off by Mr. Paul Spottwood; but it was said that he bought it simply as an investment, and that he had paid all the place was worth. The same purchaser took the furniture in the house, though the horses and carriages were sold to another person.

The company moved down to the wharf, and the auctioneer took position on the hurricane deck. This gentleman was as facetious as his craft strive to be. He gave the boat a first rate set out, and said she had beaten every steamer on the lake. He added that Mr. Hawke had escaped into the Dominion in this craft, and he advised any one who had occasion to get into Canada in haste to purchase this boat, and employ the young gentleman who commanded her on the occasion of the flight of the banker. This sally produced a laugh as intended, but Spotty was sad when he heard it. No one had blamed him for what he had done on that eventful day; on the contrary, he had been commended for saving his father. But it was a grievous topic to him.

The bidding began, and was quite spirited for a time. Spotty's heart was almost in his mouth as he noted the bidders, in order to see who they were. It was not till the bids had been raised to a considerable sum, that Mr. Ducky put in a figure. Some said the sums named were more than she was worth. Another bid against Mr. Ducky, and then he raised his own. This time it was knocked off to him, for Mr. Spottwood.

The mallet had scarcely fallen before Gaynor was tugging at the coat of the agent. But the brusk man drove him off, and said he would attend to that matter another time. After this answer to the persistent engineer, Spotty decided not to say anything for himself just yet.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SPOTTY CROSSES THE LAKE FOR GOOD.

SPOTTY believed he had lost his chance for obtaining a place of any kind on board of the Dandy. He had been charged by Mr.

Spottwood with attempting to burn his house on the other side of the lake, and he concluded that the gentleman would be prejudiced against him, though the charge had never been proved. On the other hand, it had never been disproved, except in a sort of negative way. He was disappointed in this item of the sale, and wished some other person had bought the boat.

"I don't think there is any chance for me," Tom, said Spotty, after most of the company had left the boat.

"Then there certainly is none for me," replied Tom. "We shall have to go away to seek our fortune. There is nothing here for us to do. I shall go down to Port Henry, to see if I can't get in to learn the machinist's trade."

"I don't know where I can go to find anything to do," added Spotty, rather despondingly. "I may find a job on one of the passenger boats that ply on the lake; but it would have to be as a waiter or a deck hand, though I might in time work myself up to a better position. It looks a little azure just now."

"I shall perhaps come out all right," said Tom, noticing that his friend felt rather gloomy over the situation. "We can go to New York, and ship before the mast as sailors."

"That would be a hard life to lead, and I have not much fancy for the sea. I think I should find a place in a store at Burlington before I do anything else," he said.

"I must be about it soon, for my money will not last long when I have to pay my own way."

"Gaynor sticks to Mr. Ducky like a mother to a sick child," added Tom, as he saw the former engineer of the Dandy attend the business man again.

But the business man of Mr. Spottwood would not take any notice of him this time. Mr. Ducky turned his back upon Gaynor, and walked into the pilot house, where Spotty and Tom had seated themselves to take their last look at the familiar apartment. Gaynor followed him.

"Take a seat, sir," said Spotty, rising, and pointing the representative of the new owner to the divan.

"Thank you, young man," replied Mr. Ducky, taking the proffered seat.

"I only want to say a word to you, Mr. Ducky, if you please, sir," said Gaynor, coming unbidden into the pilot house. "As you have bought the boat, and the finest boat on the lake she is, you will want an engineer to run her for you. I have had a great deal of experience in that line, and I have been the engineer of this boat for the last three years. Captain Hawke here has been the pilot at the same time, and he will tell you that I am the best man you could get for the place. Him and me has always been on the best of terms, and he will tell you what I know about an engine."

"If you don't tell it all yourself before he has a chance," replied Mr. Ducky. "Have you got through?"

"I have a certificate to show that I am qualified to run any engine on the lake," persisted Gaynor.

"When I want you, I will send for you," said the business man, rather warmly; and Gaynor had not sense enough to see that he was injuring his own case.

"I have a certificate to show that I am qualified to run any engine on the lake," persisted Gaynor.

"All right; I am willing you should live there," growled Mr. Ducky. "When you get through, let me know, or clear out!"

"I should like to show you my testimonials," continued Gaynor, fishing his pockets for the documents of the business man.

"Show me the back of your head first!" stormed the little stout man. "Didn't I say I would send for you if I wanted you? Show me the back of your head!"

"The back of my head, sir? What has that to do with it?" asked Gaynor, puzzled by the manner of the business man.

"I am not the owner of this boat, and Mr. Spottwood is; but he doesn't want any man for engineer who hasn't a good back to his head, and who doesn't know how to show it to good advantage."

"Really I don't understand you, sir," pleaded Gaynor. "I think the back of my head is all right," and he took off his hat and showed it to the facetious man of business.

"That's it! Now move off with it, and it will take me some time to decide upon it. There is somebody on shore that wants to see you. In other words, won't you oblige me by making your absence apparent?"

"I'll see you again about this business, sir," replied Gaynor, who seemed to have no suspicion that he was making himself disagreeable to the representative of the new owner, as he moved off.

"Was that man really the engineer of this boat?" asked Mr. Ducky, when Gaynor was out of hearing.

"He was, sir," replied Spotty.

"But he wasn't the engineer in that famous cruise of the Dandy, of which I read in the newspapers at the time your father left the States?"

"No, sir; he was not. When I told Gaynor that my father had failed, and could not employ him any longer, he left on the moment, though he had been paid to the first of the next month."

"That is the sort of a lobster I took him to be," added Mr. Ducky, chuckling. "He doesn't know that the back of his head is the best part of him."

"Tom Gates was engineer on the trip you speak of," added Spotty. "He crossed the lake with me when I met you before."

"What are you going to do for yourself, young man?" asked the business man.

"I am going to look out for a place. I may find something to do on board of one of the boats that run on the lake. I rather like that kind of work best, for I have done more of it than of anything else, and I think I can do it better," answered Spotty.

"Then you are just the young man we want to run the Dandy. I told Paul I wouldn't give fifty dollars for the best if you couldn't get the captain," said Mr. Ducky, pitching out the whole plan that burdened his mind.

"You are very kind, sir," answered Spotty, blushing at the implied praise bestowed upon him. "I have been hoping that some one would buy the boat that would take me with her in any place I might be needed. But I was afraid to speak to you about the matter."

"Why so, Captain Hawke?" demanded Mr. Ducky, his brow knitting as though another explosion was at hand.

"We had a little trouble on the other side, you remember, and I was not as gentle as I might have been."

"You were a tough little customer; but you were right, and I respect you for a man as you were on that occasion. If any one has any rights he ought to stick up for them," replied Mr. Ducky, warmly. "But you shall be the captain of this boat, and run her as you think best, for neither Paul nor I know anything about steamboats. Now we want an engineer, for Paul and I are going home in the Dandy-jack, or whatever you call her. What about this, Gaynor?"

"I am delighted with my own position, and I am very grateful to you for giving me the place," said Spotty. "If I am to have charge of the Dandy, I should like to recommend Tom Gates for engineer. He can pass the examination for the certificate; and he will suit me better than any other person."

"I had a hundred times rather have him than Gaynor, who is a blockhead, and doesn't know when to show the back of his head," added Mr. Ducky. "I should like to recommend Tom as he brings a certificate of qualification. Paul will give him a letter to the inspectors, so that there shall be no delay. Paul is a little out of health, and the doctor says he must spend most of his time out on the lake."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Ducky," exclaimed Spotty. "You have done more for me than any other man could."

"We will hear the rest of that speech in the fall," laughed the business man. "Now, Tom, can you be ready to start her in five minutes? Paul sent the carriage back by the ferry."

"No, sir; I can't get up steam in five minutes," replied Spotty.

"Then take two hours for it! But get up steam. You talk square, and that is just what I like. Your friend Gaynor would have apologized for the steam and the fire."

Mr. Paul Spottwood came on board, and Spotty showed him into the cabin. He spoke very pleasantly to the young captain, but he seemed never for a moment to lose the sadness of his manner. He was a man a little over fifty, with a very gentle expression of countenance, though there were certain lines in his face which showed that he could be very determined. He talked very sympathetically with Spotty about leaving the boat to the young captain, but he said about which all his home affections were entwined.

"I have bought this place, my young friend; and all that is in the house is mine," continued Mr. Spottwood. "If there is anything there that you want, you may take it."

"Thank you, sir; there is one thing I want, and that is the family Bible," replied Spotty, who desired it for the record it contained.

He was told to go to the house and get it, and he hastened to obey. Near the wharf he met Gaynor, who was lying in wait for Mr. Ducky. The engineer wanted to know if he had any chance to get the place for which he had applied.

"Mr. Ducky has engaged an engineer," replied Spotty.

"Engaged one!" exclaimed Gaynor. "Who has he engaged?"

"Tom Gates! He is nothing but a boy! And you let him do it? Hadn't you a word for me?" demanded Gaynor, angrily.

"You must talk with Mr. Ducky about it," and Spotty hastened to the cottage, where he wrapped the Bible in a bundle, and returned to the boat, putting the treasure in the forward cabin.

Mr. Ducky was in the engine room with Tom, and Spotty reported to Mr. Spottwood in the cabin. The rich man had something like a smile on his face.

"Ducky thinks I bought your father's house on speculation," said he, laughing. "The dear old fellow is going to be married, and I shall have the place decided to him as a wedding present. I could not keep it in any longer. But don't tell him."

"Spotty promised obedience. The whistle sounded to indicate that the steam was up. In twenty minutes the Dandy landed her new owner at Tonnington. There were visitors at the house, and he hastened to meet them.

"Ducky" followed him, waddling on his way like his namesake.

They had hardly gone before Spotty discovered a boat rolling towards the wharf. In it was a man with very short hair and a very short beard, both of a red color. Of course it was Luke Spottwood.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ENEMY PUTS IN AN APPEARANCE.

LUKE SPOTTWOOD had not been seen in Tonnington or Windport since his departure for Plattsburg with the forger.

He had evidently been waiting for his hair to grow so that the raven part of each individual lock might be removed by the barber's shears. The shortness of his hair and beard showed that he was very impatient to return to the vicinity of Gildwell, if not of Tonnington,

for certainly his mission was not yet accomplished.

As he approached in his boat, Spotty felt that he would rather have met the Evil One, if that being was really more evil than Luke. He had wondered that he heard nothing more from his enemy, for as such he regarded him, without being able to express the reason for his enmity.

In the pride and flush of his new position it was not at all difficult to see this obstacle in his path. Perhaps he had never felt so happy in his life as when the place of captain of the Dandy was given to him, unless it was when that of engineer was assigned to Tom Gates, though one piece of good fortune seemed to complement the other.

Luke pulled his boat to the landing steps, and made it fast to the ring. As he was now subjected to orders that he would do anything to obtain them, even at the risk of spending a term of years in the State prison.

Luke lost no time in going on board of the Dandy. He could not have known that the boat had been purchased by his uncle, and probably he started for the wharf as soon as he saw that the steamer was crossing the lake.

Luke came to the open door, and saluted the captain as politely as if he had no intention of wronging the occupant of the room; and Spotty replied as politely as he always did, except when he was excited.

"I am glad to see you, Spotty," said he, after the formal salutations had been disposed of. "How do you get on? Has it been all right with you; and he did not take the trouble to say anything that was not true.

"I have been wishing to see you for some time; but my wounded hand kept me at Burlington till yesterday," continued Luke.

"I am not going back there at present," replied Spotty. "At least I shall not until I am ordered to do so."

"Not going back? I wish to see you very much on a matter of business, which is as much in your interest as it is mine; and I thought you would like to see me here."

"I am at home here," replied Spotty, not very graciously. "Of course you are at home on the boat."

"Excuse me, but what do you mean by that?" inquired Luke, startled by the statement.

"Mr. Paul Spottwood, your uncle, has bought the Dandy. Mr. Duckridge has made me her captain, and Tom Gates her engineer," answered Spotty, in an easy tone, and not as though he were starting to argue, as he knew it must be to the nephew of his owner.

"Uncle Paul bought the Dandy!" exclaimed Luke, and his brow darkened in spite of his effort to be polite and gentle.

"Such is the fact; and he bought the estate of Mr. Hawke on the other side of the lake," added Spotty, and the news he had told produced precisely the impression he supposed it would before he imparted it.

"I should as soon have thought of his buying an elephant," continued the nephew, struggling to conceal his chagrin. "What can he want of a steam yacht?"

"Probably he can answer that question better than any other person," suggested the captain. "As he has bought the place on the other side of the lake, very likely he wants a suitable craft to connect his two estates."

"Then you are to live on this side of the lake, Spotty," added Luke. "Well, I am glad of it, for I shall see more of you; and I dare say I shall frequently be a passenger in the Dandy."

Spotty had his doubts about the last proposition, and he made no answer.

"Have you heard anything of your father since he left?" asked Luke.

"Not a word; and I did not expect to hear from him so soon, if I did at all."

"Of course you don't think your father will willingly leave you in ignorance of where he is, and even of the fact that he is alive?"

"Under the circumstances, I should say that he will be very likely to do so," replied Spotty. "He did not care to talk with me about my father, and he manifested his impatience as fully as he could without positive rudeness."

"Your father was very much devoted to you, Spotty; and I think he will find a way to communicate with you without exposing himself," persisted Luke. "If you get a letter signed with a name you never heard of before in your life, you will recognize the writing of your father."

"You know that he is not my father, if no one else does," said Spotty, quite out of patience with the oily tongued hypocrite.

"I am aware that you believe he is not your father," replied Luke, fixing his gaze upon the captain.

Spotty had resolved not to talk with Luke upon any topic connected with Mr. Hawke any more than good manners might require; and he thought there might be a limit even to good manners in this direction.

"I don't wish to say anything more about this subject, if you will excuse me, Mr. Spottwood," he said.

"Certainly! I don't ask you to talk of anything that is disagreeable to you," added Luke blandly. "So you are to live on this side of the lake?"

"I don't know where I am to live; I have received no orders," replied Spotty, willing to change the subject to anything.

It was a heavy talk between Spotty and Luke, and after a while they both went to work for their fortunes. Fortunately for the captain, if not for his companion in the pilot house, Mr. Duckridge was seen conducting several persons down to the wharf.

Spotty rose from his seat, and hoped Luke would take the hint and leave. But the visitor was not one of that sort; he took no hint short of a kick.

"Ah, Luke, you are a stranger," said the business man as he came on the forecastle of the steamer, and saw the nephew of his principal.

"No, sir; in Burlington most of the time," replied Luke.

But it is doubtful if Mr. Duckridge had been unhappy about his absence, for he took no notice of it, and he was kind enough to shake hands with his relative, and spoke a pleasant word to him, though it was plain enough that he did not wish to prolong the conversation.

"Mr. Basbrook, this is Captain Hawke," said the elder Mr. Spottwood, introducing the foremost of his guests.

"I am very glad to see you, Captain Hawke," replied Mr. Basbrook, extending his hand. "I thought you must be all of six feet high, from what I have heard of you."

"Only a boy, sir," replied Spotty, blushing like a girl.

The rest of the party were introduced to the captain, who might have been excused for thinking he was a person of some consequence.

The company were shown over the steamer, and all, especially the ladies, were delighted with her. But they soon declared that they must get on to take the train to Plattsburg, and their trunks were all packed for the journey.

"We must have supper on board, and the cook shall go with us," said Mr. Spottwood. "The party went ashore, and Tom went to work on his fires at once. Luke did not go. He had 'cheek' enough to invite himself to join the excursion. He told Spotty he was glad he had come on board as he did, for he should be happy to join the party. He evidently intended to go."

Just then a boat came alongside and Gaynor jumped on board.

(To be continued.)

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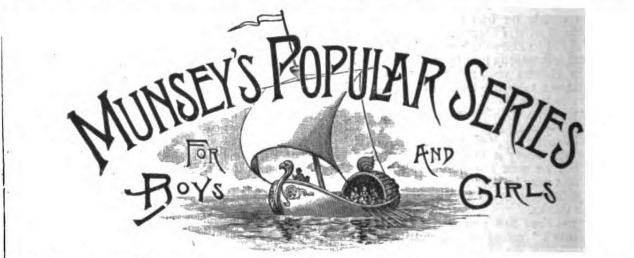
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