

THE ARGOSY

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WHOLE No. 394.



BY EDGAR R. HOADLEY, JR.

but the nurse. But he told me to say to you that he wants to see you immediately on your arrival. You will find him in the library now."

Randolph stepped quickly along the hall and drew aside the heavy curtains that hung in the doorway leading to the library. A middle aged man, with iron gray hair, and a benevolent, kindly face, arose from a large easy chair to greet him.

"Andy," he murmured, as he grasped the youth warmly by the hand.

"Doctor," rejoined the young man, as he gazed with troubled looks into the face of the family physician, "is he—is he dangerously ill?"

"I fear so, my boy," replied the man of medicine, as he placed his hand tenderly on the boy's shoulder; "he is a very sick man."

"But there is hope, is there not, Dr. Wayne?"

"Yes, Andy, there is hope, but not enough to build on. We doctors never lose hope while there is life. There may be a change for the better at the eleventh hour."

"You will bring him through, though, I am sure," said Andy, in confident tones. "Have you called in any other physicians for consultation?"

"Yes; both Drs. Parker and Wood have been here, and everything has been done within the knowledge of medical science. Don't be too confident of *my* powers; it is now all in the hands of our Heavenly Father, Andy."

"You think he may die, then, doctor!" exclaimed Andy, struggling with the emotion that shook every fiber of his body.

"Yes, Andy; if there is no improvement in your uncle's condition within the next few hours, he cannot live longer than tomorrow morning."

The good man spoke as gently as he could, and, though his professional duty had compelled him many times to

CHAPTER I.

ANDY RAYMOND.

"HOW is he?" asked Randolph Raymond, in anxious tones, as he stepped within the spacious hall of his uncle's residence.

"Oh, Mr. Randolph, he is poorly indeed," replied Mrs. Blair, the housekeeper; and it was easy to detect in her looks and tones that things were more serious than she had the courage to reveal.

"Can I see him?" asked the young man quickly, and intense emotion made his voice tremble.

"The doctor says no one is to be admitted to his chamber

communicate the sad notice of approaching dissolution to sorrow stricken ones, his voice quivered and his chest heaved.

With a suppressed sob, Andy Raymond sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

Only a moment he remained thus, and then, choking back the fast rising tears, he stood up and asked :

" Can I see him now ? "

" Yes, I think you may, if he is not sleeping. He has been asking for you since yesterday, when he seemed to realize his critical condition. I will return in a few minutes."

The doctor disappeared through the portières, and Andy once more dropped into a chair to endeavor to realize this terrible calamity which seemed about to burst upon him like a stroke of lightning out of a clear sky.

Only the day before he had thought himself the happiest fellow in the world. He had triumphantly passed the " exam. " which would make him a Senior, had pulled stroke in the winning 'Varsity eight of his college, and was looking forward to a cruise to the West Indies and South America in his uncle's steam yacht during the coming spring and summer, when a telegram came announcing the illness of his only relative, and requesting his immediate presence.

There had been nothing in the message to indicate how serious the attack was, but as Andy read the words that his uncle had been stricken with pneumonia, his heart seemed to come up in his throat, and a premonition of his impending loss took possession of him.

He took the first train for New York, and it now appeared that his worst fears were to be confirmed.

As he looked about the luxuriously furnished apartment, and his eyes rested on his uncle's easy chair, his desk, his beloved books, and the many unique treasures brought from the four quarters of the globe, he could not but combat the idea that their owner was perhaps dying in the chamber above. He could not convince himself that probably he would never hear his uncle's voice in cheery, hearty greeting, as he had heard it many times before when returning from school and college.

As Andy considered the possibility, which now seemed a certainty, of his uncle being taken from him, all of the love of his young life surged to his troubled heart, and a sob of anguish escaped him.

A deeper affection was never felt by son for father than that given by Andy Raymond to his uncle and only relative, John Raymond. In fact, the relation between them partook more of good fellowship, and, as far back as Andy could remember, his uncle had been such a chum to him as no young fellow ever had. He had participated in all of his sports and pleasures, assisted him in his studies, and imparted to him, in so far as he could, the knowledge and experience he had gained during an active seafaring life, throughout the latter years of which he had been captain of an Atlantic liner.

Andy had not been brought up exactly in affluence, but during his young life he had never wished for anything that was not afterwards forthcoming. Perhaps it was because he was not foolish or extravagant in his tastes that he was not spoiled, as most boys would have been with an over indulgent parent, and perhaps it was because, as Mrs. Blair said, he was born with an old head on young shoulders. Certainly no one knew better than she, who had nursed him from a time he could not himself remember.

Perhaps the absence of a mother's love and counsel, and consequently the increase of a sturdy self reliance, had imparted to him a sedate air and a judgment far beyond his

years ; and perhaps his constant association with one so much older than himself had something to do with it.

Certain it is that at the age of twenty, when we present him to the reader, he was a quiet, thoughtful looking young fellow, with no foolish ideas of wealth, or arrogant pride of position, though he had all that money could buy to make a young man happy, and could have moved in what is termed " the best society," had he any tastes in that direction.

With every wish gratified, and no thought of the source of supply, Andy naturally acquired the idea that his uncle was quite wealthy ; but it was only within the last few years, as he neared manhood, he had learned that his uncle's riches closely approached the figures that would designate him a millionaire.

Since ten years before, when he had taken his last Transatlantic voyage, his uncle had lived on his income and engaged in no business, save to make an occasional shrewd investment in stocks and bonds. These ventures had been made with such keen sagacity that what was barely a hundred thousand when he retired, had almost approached a million, as already stated.

During the five or six years preceding the age of ten, when the captain came home to stay, Andy remembered the tall black sides of the great ocean steamers, and the violent storms that often shook them, for he had made several trips with his uncle. When he was left behind, as he very often had to be, he recalled the tender loving care of Mrs. Blair, the housekeeper, and next to his uncle he had an abiding affection for her.

As the years passed, and he grew older and stronger, his uncle taught him navigation and how to handle anything afloat from a small sailboat to a large steamer, under the most trying circumstances.

Under his uncle's tuition, Andy gained great confidence in his powers, and as he was self reliant and bold, without being reckless, we are sure he could have taken the place of a man many years his senior in any emergency.

Andy had indulged in aquatic sports at every opportunity since he was hardly large enough to handle a pair of light sculls, and for several years he had been enrolled on the books of the Manhattan Yacht Club, as the owner and master of the sloop Mercury. Not infrequently Uncle Jack, as he was familiarly known, accompanied his nephew on exciting yacht races, or pleasant fishing parties, acting with genuine pleasure the part of deck hand while Andy filled the position of skipper.

When Andy grew older, and two years before our story opens, the uncle had indulged in what his friends called a foolish extravagance. He had had built a handsome steam yacht, with all the modern improvements, large enough to circumnavigate the globe in safety if he so desired. It did indeed seem a useless expenditure of money, but he argued that as he was fast getting old, and had to give less and less attention to the control of his financial affairs, he must have something to occupy his time and thoughts. What more natural than that he should turn to his first love—the sea—and indulge it by having such a handsome thing created to float upon her bosom ?

Andy was equally as enthusiastic as his uncle over the yacht, and it was a proud day for him when the shapely steel hull glided gently into its element and was christened the " Ulysses " by a beautiful young lady ; but he was prouder still when his uncle called him to the after deck one day and presented him to the officers and crew as her future commander.

She had been permitted to remain idle only at very long intervals since then, for when the nephew was away at

college the uncle was either off to Cuba or the Bahamas ; and when vacation came round, they were both ready to up anchor and away to some foreign country.

As we have already intimated, they intended going on an extended cruise to the southward in the early spring and summer. This cruise was one of the pleasant things Andy had to look forward to, and, as he passed in review, sitting there alone in the library, some of the remembrances we have been trying to tell you of, and awaited the return of Dr. Wayne, he too vividly realized that he ought to be the happiest fellow in the world. He told himself that he would be, too, if his uncle could only be spared to him.

Yet, as he did so, a conviction would force itself upon him that his relative would not live. He felt that he was then preparing himself for a shock that was inevitable. Yet, with all his preparation, how little he could realize the force of the blow until it came.

Could the loss of the uncle, and the sorrow incident thereto, be the only affliction that was to press down upon Andy, he could hope, with youth and time, to overcome its first anguish. But there was to be an element in his sorrow he never dreamed of that would be more crushing and lasting in its effect than the mourning for the mere passing away of a loved one.

Andy had a very high sense of honor for one of his age, and he little imagined his adherence to that high standard would be productive of many and exciting experiences before he was much older.

CHAPTER II.

AN ASTOUNDING STATEMENT.

ANDY'S heart was heavy indeed when Dr. Wayne appeared at the door and motioned him to come. He followed up the richly carpeted stairs in silence.

Noiselessly he was ushered into his uncle's darkened chamber, and as he looked over toward the patient's bed, saw the pale, pain distorted features, and heard the labored breathing, he struggled to suppress the tears that almost choked him.

Silently and quickly he dropped on his knees at the bedside and took one of the sick man's hands in his.

"Andy—my boy—is it you?" asked the uncle, in faint tones, broken by his gasps for breath.

"Yes, Uncle Jack," replied the nephew, huskily, his intense emotion choking him, and hardly knowing what further to say in his numbing sorrow.

"Thank God!" murmured the sick man, as he convulsively grasped the hand that held his. "I can die in peace. Doctor," he continued, making a sign with his disengaged hand.

Dr. Wayne evidently understood him, for he and the nurse retired.

For a few moments there was no word spoken between uncle and nephew, and no sound disturbed the intense stillness but the former's harsh breathing and the tick, tick of a clock.

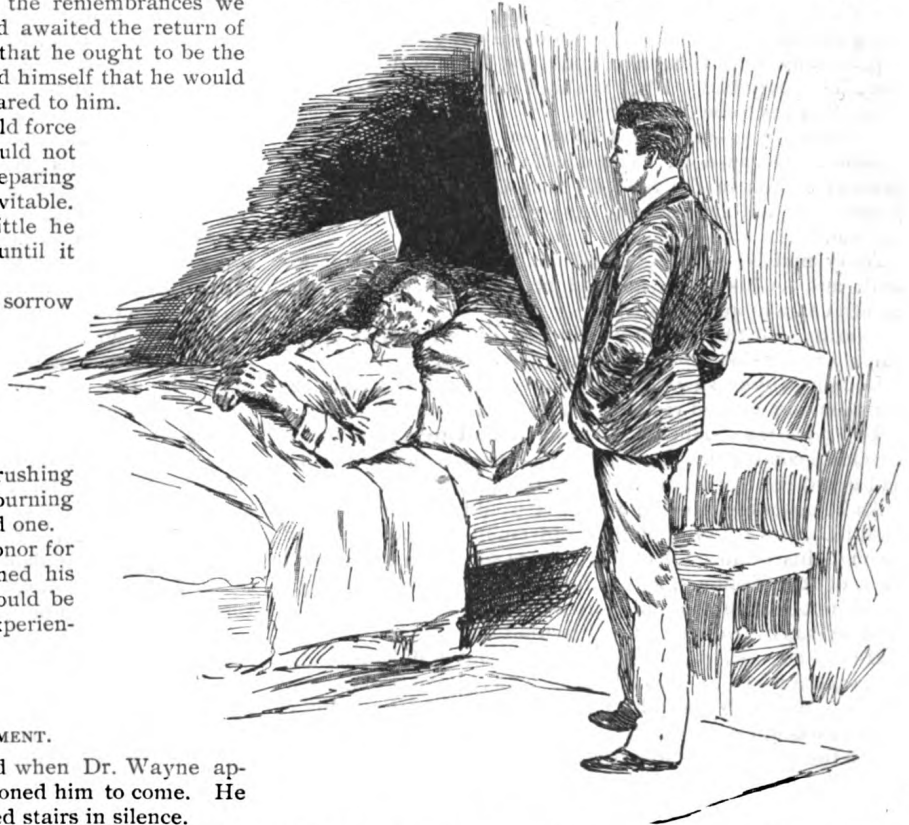
"Andy, my son," murmured the sick man, with an effort, "You will forgive me, I know. I did it for your sake. Won't you?"

"Certainly, Uncle Jack; but I haven't anything to for-

give," replied Andy gently, fearing his uncle's mind was wandering.

"Yes, you have, *my son*," said the uncle with wonderful energy, laying considerable emphasis on the last word.

It was evident he was stirred to his innermost being by some intense excitement, or he would never have been able to bring such steadiness and power to his voice. Andy did



ANDY WAS USHERED NOISELESSLY INTO HIS UNCLE'S DARKENED CHAMBER.

not notice the peculiar stress placed upon his uncle's concluding word, for he could hardly withhold the tears as he realized his relation must be in delirium.

He grasped the hand he held still tighter, and with an almost bursting heart awaited what he thought must be the further ravings of a fevered brain.

"You *are* my son, and I can prove it; but I never did anything to harm you, did I, Andy? You will forgive me and try to make it all right after I am gone. My voyage is nearly over, and I'll soon cast anchor in a strange harbor where there are no storms or broken cables. I have done harm to others to benefit my own, but I can't give up the ship here with a clear conscience unless you say you forgive me, and will see that justice is done."

The sick man stopped from utter exhaustion, and Andy, filled with pity and sorrow, said:

"There now, Uncle Jack, don't let it worry you. Of course I'll forgive you, and will do anything you say."

"You don't understand me, Andy," gasped the uncle, with another effort. "I am—not—your—your uncle. *I am your father*. I have defrauded your own cousin, Randolph—out of—his—his inheritance, and I want you—to return it to him if he is living."

He spoke these words with such calmness and intensity that Andy could not but be convinced that they were something more than the wanderings of delirium.

"Father!" he murmured, in a questioning tone, hardly realizing that his uncle was confessing himself a criminal.

"Yes—Andy—my son—your father," whispered his uncle in weak and broken tones. "You will know all after I am gone. Forgive me—and see—that justice is done."

"Father! Oh, father," gasped Andy, as a sob of intense anguish burst from his lips. "You are not going to die! I forgive anything you have done, for I know it could not have been very bad. I will see that your wishes are carried out. What is to be done?"

"Thank—you—my son. I know you will do what is right. I cannot tell you now. You will find a sealed envelope addressed to you in the Safe Deposit Company. It will tell you all. I—am too weak—to say—more. God bless—you—my son."

Andy noticed that the hand he held was becoming icy cold, and as his uncle finished his labored speaking, his breath came in quicker gasps.

Fearing that the patient was indeed dying, Andy stepped quickly to the door and summoned the doctor.

Doctor Wayne saw that the uncle had fainted from exhaustion and applied restoratives at once.

The poor man rallied for a moment and then sank into a comatose condition. Andy retired, hardly realizing that he had heard the last words his uncle could ever say to him.

As he descended to the library it would be impossible to describe the whirl of thoughts and emotions that throbbled through his brain. Of course intense sorrow predominated over all other feelings, and so filled his whole being that he could not realize the full purport of his uncle's statement that he was his father and had committed a crime.

He did not feel the intense astonishment and deep shame that such a revelation would naturally engender if it was believed. Was it because his extreme anguish prevented him from thinking calmly of it, or was he skeptical, still hoping it was the irrational words of a diseased brain?

Was his supposed uncle his father? he asked himself over and over again in a dumb, unreasoning way.

Certainly his sorrow told him he could not have loved him more if he was indeed his father.

Had his uncle defrauded any one?

He had been told by both Mrs. Blair and his uncle, that the latter's son, Alaxander, had died when almost an infant. If his cousin Randolph had been defrauded, it was evident that he, Andy, was not the true Randolph. Who was he then? Was he the son who was said to have died? If so, he was not even entitled to the name he bore.

How foolish such questioning and speculation seemed to him as he thought how good and honorable his uncle was known to be. He certainly could not have known what he was saying.

But the sealed letter addressed to him in the Safe Deposit Company! Was there such a letter? Andy had no means of further determining the matter then, and, as his uncle died a few hours later, he was so filled with grief, and occupied with matters pertaining to the funeral of his only relative that it was some days before he thought of it again.

CHAPTER III.

SPECULATIONS AND SUSPENSE.

JOHN RAYMOND had been laid away in his last resting place in Woodlawn, and Andy returned in deep mourning to his luxurious home.

How lonely and desolate seemed those spacious halls and

lofty rooms without the presence of their owner, and how distasteful to Andy did their grandeur strike him as he aimlessly wandered through them; how rebellious were his thoughts as he bitterly realized that with all the wealth that was now his he could not purchase one moment's life for his uncle, or surcease from sorrow for himself!

Those were dark and sad days that followed the death and burial of his only relative. Finally his uncle's solicitor, a Colonel Lagrange, called, and the will of the deceased, in the presence of the witnesses, was read in the library.

Andy received with no outward show of emotion the announcement that he was the sole heir, but his heart was deeply stirred by this evidence of his uncle's affection.

Colonel Lagrange had been appointed his guardian until he should reach his majority, which would be about one year hence. The choice was most agreeable to him, not only because he had a sincere liking for Colonel Lagrange, but because it was his uncle's wish.

Andy had formed no plans for the future, and indeed had taken little or no interest in material things, since the day he was called to his uncle's bedside.

Now that he had learned who was to have charge of his uncle's affairs, a thought of that last interview recurred to him. We will not say he had not recalled it during those gloomy days of sadness, but it had been in a doubtful, questioning sort of way, for he was still skeptical as to the existence of a written confession.

He knew that Colonel Lagrange had been acquainted with his uncle for many years, and that the relations between them had been of the most confidential kind. Did the lawyer know anything about what his uncle had communicated to him? And if not, could he ascertain that fact without revealing anything himself?

He felt that if there was any truth in the startling and self-condemning revelation, he would never divulge it to any one who did not already know something about the matter. He had often told himself that if his uncle's last words were not those of feverish fancy they must be true, for Uncle Jack would not make a false assertion in such an extremity; but he had just as often convinced himself that his relative did not know what he was saying.

Of course, when the proper legal steps had been taken, he would receive the letter addressed to him in the Safe Deposit Company, if there was such a letter. That, however, would be several weeks perhaps, and it seemed an interminable period to wait for the confirmation or disproof of those startling words. Then, he argued to himself, even if the letter did exist, and did contain such an astounding confession as his uncle had hinted at, it would be well to know if any one but himself had any knowledge of it. On the whole he deemed it was wise to broach the subject cautiously to his guardian.

After the reading of the will, and as soon as the witnesses to the document and Mrs. Blair, with those friends of Andy's who had called more out of curiosity than friendship, had retired, he was left alone with the solicitor.

"Well, Andy, my boy, I suppose I must congratulate you, as is the custom," said the colonel, in kindly and cheering tones; "though, bless your heart, it is no more than anybody should have expected from that good, whole souled uncle of yours. I tell you he was a man among men, and I couldn't have felt worse if he had been my brother, God bless him!"

The voice of the man of briefs grew husky as he spoke, and glanced about the apartment at the mute evidences of his late client's life.

"I appreciate it all only as an additional evidence of his

more than paternal love," said Andy sadly. "Money, of course, can purchase all the good material things of this world, I know, but I feel at present as if I could never enjoy them again."

"You are young yet, my boy, and you will get over that feeling. I am glad, though, to see that the prospect of soon coming into possession of riches is not likely to turn *your* head. It has been said that a father might just as well leave his son a curse as the "almighty dollar," though there are sons of millionaires who are unspoiled by their wealth, and who are an inestimable blessing to their fellow men and the community in which they live."

"I hope to be one of those, Colonel Lagrange, if I am not already spoiled," said Andy, soberly and modestly.

"Well, you are not spoiled, my boy, and if your good uncle's indulgence couldn't do it you never will be."

"Thank you," smiled Andy; "you have a better opinion of me than I have of myself. I never did feel that we had an unlimited lease on wealth or life, but that while we had them we should use them for the greatest good to the largest number." As he spoke, he thought how little he would be entitled to his uncle's riches if his only relative's words should prove true.

"A true philanthropist's sentiments, Andy, but a very hard problem," said the lawyer. "By the way, have you any plans for the summer? I ask because I wish to know how much you will need to carry you through."

"No, sir, I have made no plans," replied Andy, as he thought how utterly impossible it would be for him to decide upon any future course of action until he had seen the letter addressed to him in the Safe Deposit Company.

"By the way, colonel," he continued, "did Uncle Jack ever mention to you having been unjust to any of his relatives, or of having committed any act for which he wanted to make reparation?"

"No, my boy," replied the guardian, emphatically. "Why do you ask?"

"Because just before his death he wanted me to forgive him for something he had done, but I am sure he did not know what he was talking about."

"Of course he didn't, Andy. I have known him over ten

years, and he was always the most honorable, upright and generous fellow in the world."

"I never attached much importance to the words," said our hero, much relieved to know that the solicitor was ignorant of a "skeleton in the closet," if indeed there was one. He even felt strengthened to believe that no confession existed at all. Fortunately Colonel Lagrange evinced no curiosity as to what the uncle's last words had been, and asked no further questions.

After some further conversation, during which the lawyer told Andy that, owing to the Surrogate's Court not being then in session, it would be at least a week before all legal preliminaries could be effected and he could examine his uncle's private papers in the Safe Deposit Company, they parted. Of course Andy was considerably disappointed at this intelligence, but the only thing he could do was to possess his soul in patience and hope that the shadow of such a crime as his uncle had confessed would not fall upon him.

Those days of waiting were long, dreary ones to our hero, filled with serious thoughts and speculation. If his uncle had committed a crime, his shame would be deep and bitter, but if that uncle was really his own father, he felt that his humiliation and grief would be greatly intensified. Of course the world would not know, but how could he rest when wrong was crying out to Heaven for justice through his own heart and conscience?

The days dragged at a snail-like pace, it seemed to him, but not one of them passed that he did not make a trip down town to his guardian's office in the Eureka Building in the hope of receiving the looked for, but much feared paper. He strove to conceal his anxiety in the matter, for fear Colonel Lagrange might ask him some awkward questions.

In justice to his uncle, he told himself many times, he would never breathe a suspicion against his name; and if those suspicions should prove to be facts, no one should know them but the party wronged, if he was in existence and could be found.

At last the day came, and, clothed with the proper authority and accompanied by Andy, Colonel Lagrange visited the Safe Deposit Company.

(To be continued.)



ONLY A CAT.

My pretty puss with silken hair,
Sprung from feline lineage rare,
In the land of Asia, where
You first saw the light;
Your glossy coat it sweeps the ground:
Ah, what a difference can be found,
Between you and your cousins round
Our back yard fence at night.

Your tread is soft, Angora pet,
And never have I known you yet
To take that which you should not get,
At theft you always stop,
And though I've sat me down to dine,
You can sit near me, pussy mine,
And watch me eat, thou cat divine—
S-s-scat!! She's hooked my chop!

TOM TURNER'S LEGACY.*

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER XI.

A SERIOUS LOSS.

SQUIRE KENT had a small office on the same lot with his dwelling house. He held a commission as trial justice, and small cases were brought before him.

Constable Staples entered the office with Tom at his side. He found the squire sitting at a desk in the lower part of the room.

He looked up as the two entered.

"Well, constable," he said, "have you any business with me?"

"Yes, squire, I am sorry to say I have. Tom Turner is charged by Mr. Thatcher with stealing or misappropriating a wallet of his containing one hundred dollars in ten dollar bills."

"Mr. Thatcher must be present to press the charge."

"He said he would be here at four o'clock."

"It is ten minutes after four now. Will you look out and see if he is coming?"

"I don't see him," said the constable, shading his eyes and looking up the street.

"I will wait till half past four. If he is not here then, I shall adjourn the case till tomorrow morning."

Clarence Kent entered the office at this moment, and heard his father's words.

"I'll run round and tell uncle to come," he said, with alacrity.

Squire Kent was somewhat surprised at the obliging spirit manifested by Clarence. It was certainly unusual.

"Very well!" he said. "Don't loiter on the way."

If he had known how anxious Clarence was to see Tom convicted of theft, he would not have found this admonition necessary.

Clarence ran all the way, and entered his uncle's store out of breath.

"Uncle John," he said, "you're wanted right off."

"Where am I wanted?"

"Father wants you to come right over to Tom Turner's trial."

John Thatcher knit his brows.

"I don't see how I can come over just now. I am very busy," he said.

"But," said Clarence, "you don't want Tom to get off, do you?"

"It can be deferred till tomorrow morning," said Thatcher.

"Tom will be running away."

"No; the constable can keep him in charge," said Thatcher. "He won't have any chance."

On the whole, this seemed satisfactory to Clarence. Tom would be under arrest, and this would humiliate him.

"All right!" he said. "I'll go and tell father."

He returned to the office with this message.

"Very well," said the squire. "You can bring the prisoner round tomorrow at nine in the forenoon."

"I suppose," said Clarence eagerly, "he'll be put in the lockup over night."

Squire Kent looked doubtful.

"What do you think, constable?" he asked.

"I will be responsible for Tom's appearance," said the constable.

"Very well!"

"Clarence Kent doesn't seem to be a friend of yours,

Tom," said Staples, as he left the court room with his young charge.

"No; he hates me, I think."

"Have you any particular desire to spend the night in the lockup?" asked the constable, smiling.

"I should be terribly mortified if I had to."

"I don't mean to have you. I'll go over to your mother's, and will explain matters to her. Then perhaps it will be well for you to come over and spend the night at my house. Arthur will be glad to have you sleep with him."

"Thank you, Mr. Staples; it will be the very nicest prison you could think of for me."

"By the way, Tom, what sort of a defense have you? I am your friend, even if I have arrested you. Can you account for the ten dollar bills which you have spent?"

"Of course I can."

"I am glad of that. Do you mind telling me where you got them?"

Upon this Tom told about his rescue of Laura Scott from a runaway horse, and of the sealed envelope which the judge had given him.

The constable brightened up.

"This is very important, and will clear you," he said. "I suppose you have the letter?"

"Yes; I will show it to you."

Thereupon Tom dived into his pocket, expecting to produce the letter, but he was disappointed. His pocket was empty.

"I can't find it," he said, with a blank expression.

"Can't find the letter? That is bad. When did you have it last?"

"Two hours ago it was in my pocket, for I read it over."

"Where can it be?"

"I don't know."

"No one has had a chance to take it?"

"No."

"Do you keep your handkerchief in the same pocket?"

"Yes."

"Then you must have taken it out, and flipped out the letter at the same time. That is unfortunate. It complicates matters."

"Judge Scott would confirm my story, if applied to."

"But, unfortunately, we can't get his testimony in time. Your trial is to come off tomorrow morning at nine."

For the first time Tom became anxious.

"The letter must have dropped in the street somewhere." "If addressed to you, it may be returned by the one finding it. But of course there is an uncertainty about this."

"I don't know when such a thing happened to me before," said Tom, in evident perturbation.

"If I could only see the judge," said the constable slowly, "we could fix it."

"Can't we telegraph to him?"

"Yes, we can do that. I will attend to it myself."

"I shall be much obliged to you."

The constable accompanied Tom to the house of his mother, and the matter was explained to her. Naturally she was much disturbed.

"It'll all come right, Mrs. Turner," said the constable.

"Don't worry. The personal evidence of Judge Scott will be quite as good as the letter. I propose to telegraph him at once, and will place his reply in evidence tomorrow. Meanwhile I shall invite Tom to spend the night at my house as company for Arthur."

"Thank you, Mr. Staples," said Mrs. Turner, not suspecting that Tom was really a prisoner, though styled a guest.

At seven o'clock Tom went over to the constable's house.

*Begun in No. 391 of THE ARGOSY.

and he and Arthur, a boy of ten, were soon pleasantly engaged in a fireside game.

At eight o'clock Constable Staples entered the house, looking a little disturbed.

"Well," he said, "I have had an answer to my telegram."
"Then it's all right."

"Of course. Why not?"

"I thought Tom was a model boy."

"I never thought so," said Clarence, with emphasis.

"At any rate, I didn't think he would steal."

"It's just these boys who pretend to be so good that will steal, and do worse things. Tom's taken in almost every-



"I'VE GOT THE LETTER, SQUIRE KENT," SAID DAN.

"No. Here is the telegram."

TO THOMAS STAPLES, HILLSBORO.

Papa is out of town. Will show him your telegram on his return.
LAURA SCOTT.

"Everything seems to be working against me," said Tom soberly.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PLOT AGAINST TOM.

ALMOST every boy has an intimate friend. Clarence was no exception to the rule. His chum and almost inseparable companion was Dan Otis, who lived in a small house just outside the village. Dan's father was a carpenter, rather inclined to be shiftless, and therefore poor. It was a matter of surprise to some that Clarence should have overlooked the difference in social position, and keep company with a poor boy.

There were two reasons for this. Boys of his own position (he wouldn't admit that there were any quite his equal in Hillsboro) didn't care for his company. Dan was always ready to flatter him, and do his bidding. He looked up to Clarence as a superior being, and submitted to be snubbed and ordered about, and in many ways made himself convenient and agreeable to the richer boy. For this reason the squire's son was willing to keep company with him.

After Clarence left his father's office, finding the case adjourned, he stopped in to see Dan.

"Well, Dan, have you heard the news?" he asked.

"No; what is it?"

"Tom Turner has stolen a hundred dollars from Uncle John Thatcher."

"Tom Turner stolen money!" ejaculated Dan, his mouth and eyes wide open.

body, but he hasn't taken in me. I saw through him long ago."

"Tell me how it happened."

"You see Uncle Thatcher had a hundred dollars in his wallet, all in ten dollar bills. They suddenly disappeared."

"That don't make out that Tom took them."

"What do you say to this? Yesterday Tom paid out three ten dollar bills—two to my father for rent, and one to the grocer for groceries. Looks kind of suspicious, doesn't it?"

"That's so. I wouldn't have believed it if you hadn't told me. I would have thought of any boy's doing it rather than Tom."

"That's because you were deceived in him."

"He might have got the money from some one else."

"Don't be foolish! Where could Tom Turner get three ten dollar bills? You don't seem to have common sense, Dan Otis."

"What's going to be done about it?" asked Dan after a pause.

"I'll tell you what's going to be done. He was arrested this afternoon by Constable Staples on a charge of theft, and taken before my father for trial."

"How did the trial come out? Was he found guilty?"

"The case is postponed till tomorrow, because Uncle John was too busy to appear against him. It will come off tomorrow morning at nine o'clock."

"What will be done with him if he is found guilty?" asked Dan thoughtfully.

"You can guess," replied Clarence significantly.

"Will he be sent to prison?"

"Of course."

"I shall be awfully sorry."

"Why should you be?" demanded Clarence sharply. "He isn't a particular friend of yours, is he?"

"No, but I think he is a good fellow."

"Look here, Dan Otis," said Clarence imperiously, thinking it necessary to quell at once all disaffection, "I want you to understand that if you are his friend you can't be mine."

"Can't a boy have more than one friend?" returned Dan with unusual spirit.

"I don't say that. I only say that if you choose to be friends with Tom Turner you can't be my friend."

"Why?"

"Because he and I are enemies."

"Has he ever done you any harm?"

"Never mind! I don't choose to tell my private affairs. All I've got to say is, that you can choose between us. If you think it's for your interest to desert me for Tom you may."

"I don't intend to, but all the same I shall be sorry if Tom has to go to prison."

"Then he shouldn't steal."

Dan did not reply. He felt that the relations between himself and Clarence were already somewhat strained, and it would be the part of prudence to drop the subject.

They made arrangements to go off on a hunting expedition the next day. Clarence had a gun which he would now and then allow Dan to use. Dan was much the better marksman, but finding that if he were too successful Clarence became angry, he managed sometimes to miss when he might have hit the object fired at.

"When shall we go?" asked Dan.

"Say about eleven o'clock, or perhaps ten."

"It would be better to go earlier."

"That's true, but I want to be at Tom Turner's trial."

"I thought you didn't feel any interest in him."

"I don't feel any friendly interest in him, but I want to see him found guilty," and a smile of gratification lighted up the face of Clarence.

Dan looked grave. He was not a model boy, but on the other hand he could not understand why Clarence could feel such a bitter animosity against Tom.

"All right!" he said after a pause. "I think I will go to Tom's trial myself. But I hope he will get off."

"Look out, Dan Otis! If you sympathize with my enemy I shall give you up as a friend."

"I can't help it if you do. I've got nothing against Tom, and though we are not intimate friends I wish him well."

Clarence did not at all like this speech, but he saw that it would not do to venture too far with Dan. He found the latter a very convenient friend and follower, and did not care to give him up.

"Well," he said shortly, "we will meet at the trial then."

Clarence did not stay long after this. After he left Dan's attention was drawn to a piece of folded paper which Clarence must have dropped. He picked it up, and his face lighted up with joy and excitement.

"Tom Turner isn't a thief after all!" he said, "and Clarence knew it all the time. Yes, *I will be at the trial!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

TOM'S TRIAL.

THE cases held before Squire Kent usually attracted few spectators, but when the hour came for Tom's trial the little office was crowded. Tom was well known and popular, and his reputation was so good that the charge against him excited the greatest surprise.

"You don't really think that Tom Turner took your

money, Mr. Thatcher?" said old Noah Stokes, a white haired patriarch of eighty.

"Why shouldn't I? Hasn't he been found red handed with the evidence of his crime in his possession?"

"What does that mean?"

"It means that my money was all in ten dollar bills, and the prisoner passed three ten dollar bills yesterday, as I can prove by the people he paid them to. Doesn't that look suspicious, hey?"

"It does look bad, that's a fact, but I've knowed Tom ever since he was a baby, ay, and I knew his father before him, and his grandfather and I used to sit in the same seat in school."

"All very interesting, no doubt!" sneered John Thatcher, "but it doesn't prove that Tom didn't take the money."

"I know that, but it's a good stock for three generations, and I won't believe that Tom has become a thief."

"Perhaps you won't, but if there's legal proof of it he'll have to go to prison just the same."

"You don't mean to say you'll send Tom to prison," faltered the old man in pained surprise.

"It's the best place for him. Maybe it'll prevent his stealing again."

"Look here, Mr. Thatcher, I'm a poor man, but I'll make up to you—in time—whatever Tom's spent of the money, if so be as he has really taken it, if you'll let up on him, and not send him to prison."

"That's very kind of you, but it isn't right that the innocent should suffer. Besides, I want the boy punished for whatever he has done. It will be the best thing for him in the end."

At this moment Tom entered the office with Constable Staples. He was unusually grave, and there was a look of anxiety on his face, but he met the gaze of his friends without flinching.

"That isn't the face of a guilty boy," said old Noah Stokes, as he glanced eagerly in the face of his old schoolmate's grandson.

"How are ye, Tom?" he said, pressing close to our hero, and holding out his hand.

"Well in health, Mr. Stokes," answered Tom, smiling faintly, "but I don't like the position I am in."

"It's a shame," said old Noah earnestly. "I was just tellin' Mr. Thatcher that you wouldn't steal."

"No, Mr. Stokes, I am not a thief," said Tom proudly, "I never took the value of a cent that didn't belong to me."

"I said so!" said the old man triumphantly, striking the floor with his cane. "I knowed the grandson of my old friend Ben Turner wouldn't disgrace his name by stealin'."

At this moment Squire Kent entered the office, and pressing through the crowd took his seat behind the table.

"Order in the court!" was proclaimed, and business commenced.

"Constable Staples, what case is there before the court?"

"Tom Turner is charged with stealing a wallet belonging to Mr. Thatcher."

"Mr. Thatcher, do you appear against Thomas Turner?"

"Yes, sir; the boy has stolen a hundred dollars belonging to me—a sum I can ill afford to lose."

"That is, you charge him with the theft. Did you see him take the money?"

"No."

"Have you any witnesses who saw him take it?"

"No, but you know yourself that he was paying away ten dollar bills yesterday. My money was in ten dollar bills."

"Wait, we must proceed regularly. I will swear you, and you can testify to those facts formally."

John Thatcher did so.

First, however, Tom was asked if he was guilty, or not guilty, and in a clear ringing voice he answered: "Not guilty!"

"What have you to say, Thomas?" asked Squire Kent. "Do you admit paying away three ten dollar bills yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were these bills formerly the property of John Thatcher?"

"No, sir."

"Are you prepared to tell the court where you got them?"

came into your hands. Judge Scott is not a man to give so large a sum to a boy like you."

"I stopped a runaway team containing his daughter and little boy. It was for this he gave me the money."

"If Judge Scott himself would testify that he gave you the money that would be sufficient. Have you taken any means to secure his evidence?"

"Yes, sir, I had a telegram sent to him last evening."

"Did you receive an answer?"

"Yes, sir; here it is."

Tom took from his pocket Laura Scott's telegram.

"Humph! this is something, but the original letter would



CLARENCE'S HEART GAVE A QUICK BOUND WHEN THE BOY DREW OUT A DISCOLORED WALLET.

"Yes, sir; they were paid me by Judge Scott of Scranton."

"Have you any evidence proving this?"

"I had a letter from Judge Scott accompanying the money."

"If you can produce this letter it will go far to proving your innocence."

"I can't produce it, sir, for I have lost it."

Tom's friends looked blank, and they heard a derisive laugh from one corner of the office. It proceeded from Clarence Kent.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE TRIAL ENDED.

"YOUR story is a very singular one," said Squire Kent. "How and where did you lose this important letter?"

"I can't tell you, sir, exactly. I missed it yesterday on returning from a walk. I think I must have dropped it from my pocket when I took out my handkerchief."

"In that case it would have been found. I hardly think I can give credence to your account of the way the money

be better. If you cannot produce it I am afraid I must bind you over for trial at the county court."

A gratified smile appeared on the face of Clarence. Things were coming out as he expected and wished.

A few feet from him sat Dan Otis. Dan understood the situation and felt very uneasy. He saw that Clarence had endeavored to suppress the letter in order to convict Tom, and he felt disgusted by the meanness and malignity of his friend. Should he make it known that he had the letter? If he did, Clarence would never forgive him. If he did not, poor Tom would be unable to escape from his trouble, and he would be unable to forgive himself.

"Dang it all!" soliloquized Dan. "I'll tell and take the risk."

He held up his hand, as if he were at school, and called out, "Squire Kent."

The squire frowned, and turning his head toward Dan, said, "Silence, boy, or you will be put out of the room."

"But I've got the letter," said Dan.

"What letter?"

"The letter you've been talking about—Judge Scott's letter."

There was a buzz of excitement in the court room, and all eyes were centered on Dan. Clarence turned pale, and feeling hurriedly in his pocket ascertained his loss for the first time.

"Let the boy come forward!"

Way was made for Dan to pass through the crowd, and he pressed forward till he stood next to Tom. The latter gave him a quick but silent look of gratitude which quite repaid Dan for his sacrifice.

"Pass up the letter."

Dan did so, and Squire Kent, adjusting his spectacles, looked it over.

"I know the judge's handwriting," he said after a pause, during which you might have heard a pin drop, "and identify this letter as his. I am bound to say that it confirms the boy's story."

There was a little murmur of applause in which it is hardly necessary to say that Clarence did not join.

"Was the fifty dollars spoken of by Judge Scott in ten dollar bills?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"How many of these did you spend?"

"Three."

"Have you the other two?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you show them?"

Tom drew two tens from his pocket.

"Where's the other five?" asked John Thatcher in a querulous voice.

"These were all I had," said Tom quietly.

"I don't believe it."

"I cannot tolerate such interruptions," said Squire Kent in a dignified tone.

"What I want is justice," retorted Thatcher.

"You shall have it, but I cannot hold this boy, against whom there is absolutely no case. Thomas Turner, you are discharged."

"Three cheers for Tom Turner!" proposed an enthusiastic friend.

The cheers were given, and even Squire Kent did not rebuke the indecorum. In truth he was glad that the case against Tom had failed, for a selfish reason, as otherwise he might have felt compelled to surrender the twenty dollars which had been paid him.

The unexpected result pleased all but two persons. These were John Thatcher and Clarence Kent.

"Am I to lose my money?" asked Thatcher, pressing up to his brother in law, the squire.

"I hope not, John."

"Then why did you discharge the boy?"

"Because he had no more to do with the loss than you or I."

"You allowed yourself to be imposed upon by his story."

"Pardon me," said the squire indignantly, "I don't require any instruction about the discharge of my duties. You will have to look elsewhere for your money."

As John Thatcher left the office Clarence joined him.

"Uncle John," he said, "it's too bad for that boy to get off. I believe he stole the money after all."

"So do I. Your father ruled dead against me, and I his own brother in law," added Thatcher bitterly.

"I took your part, Uncle John."

"Thank you, Clarence. If the case had come before you, I might have obtained justice."

"I wish it had come before me; I'd have sent that Tom Turner to prison."

"He'll get there yet. He won't always have such an indulgent judge."

At the next corner Clarence parted from his uncle. A few steps farther on he overtook Dan Otis—Dan, through whose evidence Tom had escaped. If there was any one that Clarence hated at that moment it was Dan. He had a grudge against him, and he meant to have it out with him.

"Dan," he called.

Dan turned. He saw the storm on his friend's brow, and nerved himself to meet his anticipated anger. He had made up his mind to break with Clarence, if necessary. Thinking over their relations he failed to see that he derived much advantage from the connection. He had felt flattered by the notice of the squire's son, and this, more than anything else, had made him desirous of keeping up the intimacy.

"Well?" he said interrogatively.

"Where did you get that letter?"

"I found it."

"I dropped it in your yard."

"So I supposed."

"Then why didn't you return it to me?"

"It belonged to Tom Turner," answered Dan boldly. "It didn't belong to you."

"At any rate it was in my possession. It was for me to return it."

"But you wouldn't have done it."

"How do you know?"

"You wanted to send Tom to prison, and insisted that he was guilty, though you had the evidence of his innocence in your pocket."

"Look here, Dan Otis, where did you get all that law talk?"

"Is it law talk? At any rate I mean it."

"I won't be friends with you any more if you turn against me that way."

"What do you call turning against you?"

"Keeping secret that you had the letter."

"Would you have handed it to your father?"

"I don't choose to tell."

"I know you wouldn't, and that would have been about as mean a thing as you could do."

Clarence was startled at this bold condemnation from his ally and sycophant.

"How dare you talk so to me?" he demanded.

"There is no daring about it. When I was friends with you, Clarence Kent, I didn't know how mean you were."

"I won't speak to you again," gasped Clarence, the veins on his forehead swelling.

"I would rather you wouldn't."

"And I have a good mind to flog you."

"Come on!" exclaimed Don, undaunted.

"I don't care to do it in the street. I don't want to get into a street disturbance."

"Come into the woods then. I'll show you a bully place where no one will interfere with us."

Clarence cooled down when he saw how readily his challenge was accepted.

"I don't want to fight with a boy like you, any way."

"Just as you like."

Clarence was becoming more and more disgusted. He turned away abruptly, and not caring to meet any one, struck into the fields and walked on till he came to a small cabin where lived a poor German woman with a demented son.

Fritz, a tall, ungainly boy of fourteen, shambled up to Clarence, and said shyly, "If you'll give me a cent, I'll show you what I've found."

"All right! Here's the cent."

Fritz went to the corner of the back yard and began to

probe the earth with his fingers. Clarence looked on curiously, but he didn't dream of what Fritz had concealed. His heart gave a quick bound when the boy drew out a discolored wallet, which he recognized at once as his uncle's.

(To be continued.)

GOLDEN TREASURE.

A TALE OF AUSTRALIA.*

BY LIEUTENANT E. H. DRUMMOND.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

COMO'S ERRAND.



THE idea that had come to Jack caused him to leap from his seat as he exclaimed:

"Can you get me a piece of paper, and ink or pencil?"

"Whatever for?" asked Crosby, surprised by Jack's abrupt movement, and by the earnestness of his face and voice.

"Como will take a message."

"And who in the name of fate is Como?"

"This dog here. Hundreds of times has Dick—my brother," Jack explained, in a voice that shook though he tried to make it steady, "sent him

home to the head station with messages from all parts of the run. He might find his way from here. Any way it's a chance. Eh, Como, will you?"

The dog knew that they were speaking of him, and, with ears pricked up and inquiring eyes, he looked at Jack as though waiting for an explanation.

It was with difficulty that Crosby could find what they wanted, but at last he discovered on the decrepit side table, which was littered with bridles, foul, empty bottles, odd bits of iron, straps and bits of rubbish of all sorts, a stockman's dusty note book, in which there were a few unused pages, and with a stump of pencil still fastened in it by the sticky and worn elastic band.

"Here you are!" said he, bringing these trophies in triumph to Jack. "You must look sharp, for I expect they will be coming back directly."

For a moment Jack sat quite still without putting the pencil to the paper, for he had so much to say that he did not know where to begin. At last he began to write swiftly, looking up, after a minute or two, at Crosby, who was leaning out of the window, whistling softly to himself.

"How am I to tell them where I am?" asked Jack. "I can't describe this place."

"Oh, say Norton's Gap, south of the Dixieville road, just after you have passed by Badger's Creek. Tell them to ask for Lingan's. Most people know where that is, though it is out of the way and few come to it."

For a moment or two the stump of pencil rapidly traveled over the paper, and then again Jack paused.

"I don't know what is best to be done. They can't send enough men after me to capture Starlight and all the rest,

for, not counting you, of course, there are seven of them including Foster."

"Yes, and probably Lingan and his son would help them, and Lingan's son's wife, too, big Eliza, who's nearly six feet high, and a regular Amazon."

"I don't like the idea of sneaking off without a row with them," said Jack, who was still thirsting for vengeance, "but I suppose we must, as they are so strong. If I could only have it out with Starlight I shouldn't so much mind."

"You must look on that as a pleasure deferred. Now, then, have you got that letter ready?"

"Yes, I've told them to try to communicate with me through you. I've said that tomorrow night at eleven o'clock you will be on the track that leads from the Dixieville road to Lingan's. I have said what you are like. I expect Brown, our head man, will come, and you and he may be able to concoct a plan. I don't think I can say any more."

"Come on, then."

"Will you do it?"

"Do it? Of course."

Jack called Como, who was sitting on his haunches in the sun idly snapping at the flies which buzzed about him, and, with a piece of frayed string that Crosby produced from his pocket, he tied the all important letter around the neck of the dog.

He folded the paper as small as possible, and placed it underneath the dog's throat, hiding the string in the hair where it was longest and thickest.

"I don't think Starlight will see that."

"Not unless he stops him."

"Oh, he won't do that if Como once gets a start."

They took the dog to the front of the house, and Jack, pointing toward Wandaroo, tried to start him off.

But the dog did not seem to understand.

In vain Jack said, "Home, Como," "Home, then," "Good dog," "Go home," any one of which orders would have been enough from Dick. He was in despair about it, for the dog would not leave him, and he could conceive no other plan of communicating with the station.

At last Crosby came to his rescue with a suggestion.

"Try to make him go back to your brother. He may know what you mean when he hears his name."

It was hard for poor Jack to say it, believing, as he did, that his brother was lying dead in the trampled grass where he had fallen the night before, but he remembered how much was at stake, and, manfully controlling his voice, he spoke again to the dog, who was looking up at him wistfully.

"Hi, then, Como! Home! Take that to Dick! You hear, Como? Dick!"

It seemed as if the creature did recognize the name, for, with a quick, short bark, and an intelligent flourish of the tail, he started off to Wandaroo.

Very anxiously the two watched the dog, as, with his long stride, he quickly covered the ground, though he appeared to be trotting so easily. He traveled at the same leisurely pace, and without looking back, till he came to the corner which hid Lingan's house and buildings from the place where they stood. Here the dog suddenly made a bolt of it, and, rushing madly along, was out of their sight in a moment.

Then they heard the noise of several men shouting, and next the sharp crack of a pistol shot. Jack turned pale, bit his lip, and looked to Crosby for confirmation of his fears.

"They've seen him, the brutes, and tried to stop him by force, as they failed to do it by persuasion. He may have got off. We must go in. Don't let Starlight see us here. And try not to look so anxious."

*Begun in No. 383 of THE ARGOSY.

They returned to the house, and a moment or two later Starlight and two of the other men entered the room.

In a perfectly natural manner, and with rather a complaining tone of voice, Crosby said :

"What kept you so long? I thought you were never coming back again. I don't want to be cooped up here all day."

"We wanted to see what Lingun had got for those bullocks for us, and it took some time to settle up."

"What bullocks?"

"Some that strayed up here, and whose marks we couldn't make out," said one of the men.

"Don't be a fool, Evans. Why, some bullocks that we drove off from Sheridan's station, all the marks on which we got rid of. But it was before you joined us, Crosby, so you don't get any of the plunder," said Starlight.

"What was that shot I heard just now?" went on Crosby, in an incidental manner.

With what sickening anxiety Jack awaited Starlight's answer! He almost feared to listen, yet he could hardly breathe till he heard what was Como's fate.

"Oh, just as we were coming out of Lingun's yard we saw that dog, that great beast of yours, Barnes, trotting coolly off. We called to him, but that made him start off at full rush, so I pulled out my snapper and let fly at him."

"Well?" said Crosby.

"Why, the brute got away. But it doesn't matter. We don't want a great hulking beast of that sort about the place anyhow. He would eat as much as any two men."

When Starlight so lightly dismissed the matter he little knew what momentous results to him and his gang depended upon that "hulking beast" getting away.

Jack breathed freely again when he heard that Como had managed to give them the slip, and Crosby could not prevent a faint smile flickering on his sunny face.

Starlight noticed it and said :

"What are you grinning at, Crosby?"

"At something funny I was thinking of."

"Well, don't keep the joke to yourself."

"Ah, that's the funny part of it. *You* wouldn't think it at all amusing."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A LETTER FROM JACK.

ALTHOUGH the heat was great, for the sky was cloudless, and the shade, where there was any, inviting and cool, Jack's trusty messenger tarried not for rest or coolness. The sagacious canine seemed to know the importance of the news he carried, for he trotted along without a pause. With that unerring instinct which we can so little understand, he made straight for Wandaroo.

Except once, to drink at a little cattle trampled pool which the recent rains had partly filled, he never stopped till he reached the head station, where he arrived dusty, footsore, and panting, about two hours after he had left Norton's Gap. Being a privileged animal, he made straight for the large, general room of the house, and, without being seen by any one, entered the door.

Finding the place quite silent and empty, he passed carefully out between the muslin curtains upon the sunny boards of the broad veranda. He looked up and down it, but, finding that it was as deserted as the room he had just left, he turned, and, pattering along the planks, ran off to the kitchen.

Mrs. Bezzling, the cook, was standing over the fire, screening her hot, red face from the blaze with a tin plate, cooking something nourishing for the patient, and, being intent upon

her work, as a good cook should be, she did not observe the presence of the dog. But Como, thinking it was time that some one paid attention to him, lifted a paw and laid it on her dress.

The good woman looked down, and, recognizing the missing dog, dropped the tin plate with a crash to the floor, and, lifting up her hands, opened her mouth preparatory to a good scream, but, remembering the instructions given that morning by the doctor, she snapped her jaws together again before a sound had had time to come out.

Taking the little saucepan from the fire, and placing it carefully on the hob of home made bricks by the side of the grate, she waddled from the kitchen along the cool, dark passage to the door of the boys' room, where Dick lay.

There she softly knocked, and Nellie came out.

"Come into the kitching, miss," gasped Mrs. Bezzling. "I've had sich a scare."

Here the good old creature thought it would be "genteel-like" to appear faint, so she tottered and placed her hand on her head.

"Now, cook, don't be foolish," said Nellie. "What is it?"

"Como's come back!"

"No! Where is he?" said Nellie, coming out and quietly closing the door behind her.

"I was in the kitching, miss, a minnut ago, a warmin' up that Armour's beef tea, which don't compare with mine, though I say it as shouldn't. For my beef tea, which I'm sure I should be a makin' now for poor, dear Master Dick, is so comfortin'—"

"Yes, yes, but what about Como?"

"Oh, to be sure; Como, of course, miss. I was a standin' over the fire a warmin' up—"

"Oh, you've told me that before," said Nellie impatiently.

"When in leaps Como as bold as brass, and he jumps up agin me, he does, as though to say, 'Mrs. Bezzling, I'm dished!'"

This was rather a stretch of imagination upon the part of the worthy old soul, but she was so excited that she could not help a little exaggeration, which was quite harmless, she thought, and made the story so much more interesting.

However, there was Como, true enough, when they reached the kitchen, and he was overjoyed to see Nellie when she came in.

He had taken a drink of water from one of the tins in the kitchen, and then had stretched himself at full length in his old place beneath the table under the window. When he saw Nellie, he sprang up and rushed to her, and the girl, with tears in her eyes, knelt down on the floor and fondled the dog.

They made a very pretty picture, Mrs. Bezzling thought, as she stood with her bare red arms akimbo, and her head on one side, looking at them.

"Poor old Como! How hot and tired you are! Have you come from Jack?" said Nellie, with tears in her voice. "Oh, Jack, Jack, where are you? If you could only tell us, Como, if he is alive, and where he is! We are in such trouble, doggie."

And Nellie laid her arms round Como's neck and wiped away upon his smooth forehead a great tear from her cheek.

The dog tried to lick her face, forgetting for a moment, it is to be feared, the letter round his neck, in his chivalrous efforts to comfort beauty in distress.

Suddenly Nellie felt the folded bit of paper, and, in a voice that rang with excitement, she cried out :

"Give me a knife! quick, quick!"

"Laws, miss, what for?" said Mrs. Bezzling, starting. "You ain't a goin' to kill the dog, are you?"

"Don't be a donkey," said Nellie, holding out her hand, and forgetting all her politeness in the excitement of the moment.

"No, miss, to be sure not," said the cook, snatching a knife from the table and handing it to her.

"Stand still," said Nellie, trembling with eagerness, as she slipped her forefinger under the string and raised it from the dog's neck.

She sawed the string through, and, with fingers that shook so from nervousness that she could hardly untie the knots, she at last opened the letter and spread it out.

She did not rise, but, kneeling where she was on the floor, with the light from the kitchen window pouring on her flushed cheek, she read as follows:

DEAREST MOTHER,—I don't know how much you know of what has happened to us. Murri may have told you if he got off. If you know nothing, prepare yourself for a great trouble. We had almost got home last night when we were attacked by bushrangers, and (I don't know how to tell you, it is so terrible) Dick, when I was away from him for a minute, was thrown from his horse by a man and killed. I feel as though it were my fault, though I don't think I could have helped it if I had been close by. I am just heartbroken, and if it were not for you and Nellie I should not care if I never came back. You are all I have now. Crosby says I must make haste; he is a fellow here who is helping me. I am kept by Starlight at a place called Norton's Gap, which lies south of the Dixieville road, directly after you have passed Badger's Creek. Crosby says to ask for Lingan's. Let Brown, or some one, be on the path between the Dixieville road and Lingan's tomorrow night at eleven to try and arrange things. Crosby will be there. He is a big, handsome fellow, with a yellow beard and hair, and clear, blue eyes. You will easily know him.

"Why," ejaculated Nellie, in surprise, "that's just how Martin Crosby, old Peter Crosby's nephew, looks. But it can't be possible that this Crosby is he."

And she hurriedly read on:

Let the police at Bateman know where Starlight is; they will be here soon enough then. It was Keggs who betrayed us; he knows Starlight, and is in with the gang. Keggs is now in Bateman, and maybe the police can catch him there. This is the last bit of paper I have got. I myself am quite well and unhurt. I wish it was Dick instead. He was worth a dozen of me. If you have not found him, he is lying by that split gum we burnt, just beyond the Dip. Don't agree to any ransom for me. Crosby thinks Starlight will try it on. JACK.

All the last few lines were so cramped and crowded together that Nellie could hardly make out their meaning. But she did at last, and letting her hands, still holding the letter, sink idly into her lap, she remained where she was without moving and deep in thought.

It was the clattering of horses into the yard that made her look up, and the next instant Ned dashed into the kitchen.

"How is he now, Mrs. Bezzling?" he whispered, as though his voice would disturb Dick at the other end of the house. "What did the—hello, Nellie, I didn't see you. What did the doctor say? How long was he here?"

"He got here at seven, just after you and Balchin started out with Murri and Baluderree. He says it was concussion of the brain, but that if we keep him quite quiet he will soon get all right. It was the greatest wonder, he says, that he was not killed straight off."

"Has he gone?"

"Yes, he has told mother what to do, and he has been gone half an hour. Brown has gone with him to tell the police all about it, and to get them to try to find Jack, but we don't know whether they are at Bateman or Parrarra."

"Ah! poor old Jack, we shall have to think about him now that Dick is getting along all right. If we only knew where he was we wouldn't have to wait for the police. We can't trace them, Nellie, beyond the Dixieville road. Murri and

that other black boy from the native camp easily tracked them that far, and then we lost them. A mob of cattle had passed along early this morning or last night and trampled out every hoof mark."

"Never mind, Ned. This will tell you where he is," said Nellie, rising and holding out the letter. "Como brought it just now. Hurry up and read it. I must go and tell mother."

Ned read the letter with many little muttered expressions of astonishment and sympathy. What he said when he ended it and handed the crumpled paper to Nellie was very characteristic of him.

"Look here, Nellie. Brown may be away a day or two, and even then may not bring the police with him. I can't bear to think of Jack eating his heart out and believing that Dick is dead, while all the time he is alive and getting better every hour. I shall go and let him know that we are working for him, and that Dick is alive."

"But, Ned, it will be running such a risk."

"Not if I go alone," said the boy shrewdly. "In the first place, they can't know that Jack has sent the letter to us, and they will think that one—er—man would never trust himself with them alone. I shall be all right, never fear."

He spoke boldly, though modestly, and the light that glowed in his steady eyes said more than his words. He had not, however, quite got rid of a trick of his old nervous manner, that of rubbing the palm of his hand on the back of his trousers. This he still did when greatly excited.

"We ought to speak to mother about it, Ned."

"No, don't say anything to her. She has enough on her mind without another responsibility. I shall go on my own hook."

"It is good of you to do all this for us. You are going into danger for our sakes, Ned. At any rate, take my advice in this. Don't go as you are dressed now. Make yourself look dirty and more like a station hand, so that if any of the bushrangers do see you they won't grow suspicious, and you can go to that place near Norton's Gap—what does Jack call it?—as though you wanted a job."

"That's not a bad idea, Nellie."

"You won't be going just yet. I want to see you before you start to send a message to Jack. It will be no use of your getting there before evening. I must go now. Cook, see that Mr. Ned has a good breakfast, for he has had nothing today, and get something for Balchin at the same time."

Saying this, with the letter in one hand and the little saucepan of beef tea in the other, Nellie left the kitchen very thoughtfully.

"Yes, to be sure," said Mrs. Bezzling, when Nellie had gone. "I likes to see men eat well, and you must be hungry, Master Ned. Draw up to the table—if you'd like to wait I'll get a cloth. Begin on the bread'n butter, while I poach you a couple of eggs. I know how you like 'em—not hard, but kind o' set like. I'll have you a chop done in a brace o' shakes, as my aunt used to say. There, there, begin now. Don't set a thinkin'. Nothin'll come out o' your head if you put nothin' into your stummick."

"I've got a good deal to think of," said Ned, looking up, with a smile at her quaintness. "There is Jack in the hands of those bushrangers, and only me to get him out."

"Ah, and fine and hungry he'll be too, I'll be bound," said Mrs. Bezzling. "But you won't help him any by refusing your wittles, so here's the eggs to commence on, and, if the sizzlin' o' them chops don't give you a appetite for 'em, I don't know what will."

"Tell Balchin to come in, then. He's as hungry as I am."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
NED'S ADVENTURE.

NED did not start for several hours after he had formed the resolution of riding to Jack's assistance. By making inquiries from different people about the station, he found that he could easily ride to Norton's Gap in two hours and a half, and, as he did not wish to arrive there much before sunset, he waited till the long, slow afternoon had passed its prime.

He had taken Nellie's advice, and had changed his clothes for old and very shabby ones. Somewhere he had found an old hat that looked disreputable even in that place, where new ones were a rarity, and with this flapping a limp and torn brim over his forehead, and with burst and ragged boots, long innocent of blacking, he looked in as poor a plight as any out of work boy could do, and as little like the clean and fairly well clad Ned Dudley as it was possible for him to appear.

There was one thing he had determined to do, of the advisability of which he was not fully convinced, and that was to take Jack's horse Amber with him. He knew he could not ride the chestnut himself, for the spirited creature would never let any one but Jack mount him, so he intended leading him by the bridle.

His reason for this resolution was hardly plain to himself, but he had some half formed idea in his brain of possibly managing an escape for his cousin, and he knew that Amber would be invaluable in any such attempt, could he only succeed in getting Jack away for a moment from the men who detained him.

Ned had no definite plan in his mind when he resolved to take this second horse. He was trusting, in a very boyish manner, to that good fortune which it is so difficult for the young to believe does not always await them. It was this blind confidence that "something would turn up" which prompted his action, and, trusting implicitly to Providence, though at the same time having a certain belief in himself, he set out on his Quixotic errand.

Ned traveled quietly, wishing to keep his horses as fresh as possible on the chance of his requiring their services that night.

He followed the same route that he had passed over in the morning when tracking the bushrangers, and struck the Dixieville road very near the place where Jack had turned into it the night before. The road was very little used since the dwindling township of Dixieville had gone down in the scale, and at that hour it was quite deserted.

Ned had carefully primed himself with instructions before he left Wandaroo, however, and, keeping to the road till he came to what he thought, from the descriptions of it given to him, must be Badger's Creek, he turned southward by the side of the shadowy gulch and rode boldly on towards the dark, wild stretch of bush before him.

There was no definite road to Norton's Gap and Langan's, but the frequent passage of the bushrangers' horses and the marks of the Langan's carts and cattle had formed a sort of track which was indistinct and broad over the more open ground, but which narrowed in again to something bearing the semblance to a path when the way lay through the uncleared bush.

It was nearly sunset by the time Ned had come to the edge of the last belt of bush. He could see the rambling and ill kept buildings of Langan's from there, and he knew that he had arrived at the end of the first stage of his work.

What lay beyond he could not tell, as it all depended upon chance, and he would have to adapt his plans to circumstances. He felt that he was pitting himself against an unknown force, but he believed, as indeed seemed probable, that his very insignificance would be his security. No one would believe that a boy would thus attempt to challenge, single handed, Starlight and all his band.

Ned himself was quite aware of his own weakness, and that was where his strength lay. He knew that to attempt an appeal to force would be ridiculous, and that his only chance of success in getting Jack away lay in craftiness and cunning.

He did not leave the shelter of the trees and undergrowth of the bush, by which he was quite screened from observation from the house, but, directly that he saw the buildings, he turned to the left, and, leading his horses into the thick-nesses of the bush, he fastened them both securely to the trunk of a tree.

Both animals had been trained to stand quite still, without pulling at the bridle or endeavoring to get away, when secured in this manner, and as Ned had let them drink only a short time before, and as he had been wise enough to bring a feed of maize—a luxury they rarely got—for each horse, he felt sure that they would remain there quietly enough for an hour or two at any rate.

He carefully marked the position of the tree to which he had tied the horses, even walking to it several times from the path, so that he might make quite sure of finding it at night. At last he was satisfied that he could not mistake the place, and, putting on a bold front, he left the bush and stepped out into the open ground that lay between it and Langan's.

Ned remembered that Jack had said in his letter that the house in which he was kept was close to Langan's, and, as he wanted to reach the former place, he began to look about him for Langan's buildings. He could see no house except the one before him, and he thought he should have, after all, to go to the door and ask.

The place looked deserted; he could see no sign of any one about the house or yard; a mildewed look of sloth and neglect lay upon everything; and, instead of being alive with all the usual busy sounds of station life, the whole place seemed asleep.

Ned had approached within a hundred yards of the fence, which inclosed what had once been the garden, when he saw a faint path that seemed to lead along the little valley between the hills at the back of Langan's. Thinking that this might take him to the place he sought, he turned aside, leaving the buildings on his left.

It was not long before he saw, as he ascended the valley, the house for which he was searching, and, without waiting to think what his line of action would be, he walked calmly towards it.

It must be owned that there was a very quickly beating heart beneath that quiet exterior, but Ned had made up his mind to see the inside of that ugly, tumble down dwelling, for he felt that that was where his cousin was kept a prisoner, and he was more determined than before, now that he was actually on the spot, to get him out some way or other.

There were several men lounging about outside the house with that appearance of weariness which idleness produces when time hangs heavily upon one's hands. They were leaning against the house on the posts of the old fence, as though the exertion of standing unsupported was more than they could manage. They spoke a word to each other now and then without moving their short pipes from between their teeth.

As the dusty and rather ragged looking boy walked toward them, they watched him with interest, for visitors to this place were rare, and in this state of tedium and weariness any interruption was welcome.

They did not say anything to Ned till he approached quite close to them, but they looked at him fixedly, and he found their deliberate scrutiny rather embarrassing; but his appearance must have remained natural enough, as nothing about him seemed to strike them as curious.

When he had come quite near to them, one of the men, who was sitting on a stump of wood by the side of the door, leaning forward with his elbows on his parted knees and his hands lightly clasped before him, called out to him:

"Well, young ugly, what is it yer want at this shanty?"

"Is this Lingan's?" said Ned by way of answer.

"No, this ain't Lingan's. These yere do-main is Star——"

"Now, then, don't be a fool," interrupted another of the men in a surly voice, turning his head fiercely toward the first speaker.

"You're a fool yourself, Wetch. I ain't said nothin'."

"No, but you was just a-goin' to," said Wetch, in the same savage voice. "No, this ain't Lingan's. This is Smith's run, this is, and old Smith's out just now. You must 'a' passed Lingan's to git here."

"Does *he* want a boy? I couldn't see any one stirring down below there," said Ned, with a backward nod of his head.

"No, he don't want no boy, so you kin just git," said Wetch, drawing his dirty pipe from his dry, cracked lips, and making a wave with it in the direction of the valley.

"Well, do you know any one about here who is in want of a boy?" said Ned, as loudly as he dared, on the chance of Jack's hearing and recognizing his voice.

"What are you yellin' at? I ain't deaf."

"No, but you are very stupid," said a rich voice from the doorway; and, looking up, Ned saw Starlight, with a folded paper in his hand, standing on the lintel. "What is it that you want, boy? Here, come into the house where there's a light. It's getting so dark outside that I can't see you."

Thus, in the easiest manner in the world, Ned gained the first step of his purpose. He followed Starlight into the room and cast a rapid glance around it.

There was only one tallow candle burning on the table, at which Starlight had been writing, but the room was not very dark, for, although dusk had fallen, the warm glow from the sunset sky still lingered there. Ned could see that Jack either had not heard his voice or else had not recognized it, for he did not look up as he came into the room, but sat, with one leg tucked up under him on the rough bench, leaning dejectedly at the side of the table.

As Ned followed Starlight into the room he managed, unseen by the bushranger, to grasp Jack's forearm firmly to attract his attention, and under cover of Starlight's voice, who was speaking to him, he stooped down as swift as a swallow, and breathed so faint a whisper into Jack's ear that the latter barely caught it:

"*Dick is all right!*"

So utterly surprised was Jack at finding Ned in his room, so astonished at the suddenness of it, and so overjoyed at the glorious news that that faint whisper conveyed to him, that he could not repress a start and an ejaculation of wonder.

"What's that?" said Starlight sharply.

"I didn't speak," said Ned innocently.

"Let me look at you," said Starlight, taking the candle from the table and holding it above Ned's face. "I think I can give you some kind of a job, if you are honest. I am

very particular, though, about employing only honest people." Here Starlight winked, with the eye that was hidden from Ned, at some of the men who had come into the room. "Are you honest?"

The soul of fun, Ned never could resist a joke, and now, although in the very hands of as murderous a gang of fellows as was ever gathered together, the thought of giving Starlight a home thrust was to his mind so irresistibly comical that he quite forgot the danger he was in.

Looking as innocent as a babe, he gazed straight into Starlight's eyes and said, without the flicker of a smile:

"Honest! I hope so, as such things go. I am poor, so perhaps I haven't the same honesty as you and these other gentlemen have, who have horses and dollars too, but honesty enough to prevent me from wanting to steal 'em. Is that honest enough, sir?"

Jack sat perfectly aghast at Ned's temerity, but Starlight only broke out into a peal of his beautiful, irresistible laughter, and, turning to Crosby, said:

"That's pretty tough on some of us who have consciences—you and me, for instance, Crosby." Then, turning to Ned again, he added: "You can earn a supper and a shilling by taking this letter to that house just down below there. If they ask you where you got it, you must say that a man met you on the Dixieville road and gave it to you, and paid you for taking it to Lingan's."

"Oh, but he didn't, you know. You gave it to me," said Ned, looking exceedingly simple.

"Poor but honest!" said Starlight, in a theatrical tone, to the five or six guffawing fellows about him. "Gentlemen, behold what you, *perhaps*, were once. A long time ago," added he, in a half whisper. "My boy, these scruples do you credit, but let me point out to you that you will be my paid agent, my representative, and that if there be any slight falsehood about it," here he gave a little sigh, and gently shook his head, "mine alone will be the blame, and I alone will undertake to bear the consequences. One or two extra are of little moment to me," whispered he to the man who was nearest to him.

"All right," said Ned, who began to enjoy playing his part now that he saw how well it was going. "Where is the shilling?"

"Oh, the sophistication of the youth of this generation!" said Starlight, with mock melancholy, as he produced the coin from his pocket. "I have observed that these honest folk are always the most doubtful of others' honesty. Excuse me, I must shut my eyes—it is too painful. I feel convinced that this simple child of nature is about to ring that sterling coin."

"I always bite 'em to see if they're good," said Ned, with a countrified grin, and suiting the action to the word.

"This is appalling. So young and yet so full of guile. It looks as though you were doubtful of my character," said Starlight, in a voice as of one pained and surprised at any such insinuation.

"Oh, no," said Ned, shaking his head in an innocent, puzzled manner, but enjoying his own double meaning with the keenest zest. "I'm not doubtful of it at all."

One or two of the men, of a humorous turn, roared at this keen thrust, which was all the more delightful coming from so innocent and simple a boy as Ned appeared to be. Starlight joined heartily in the laughter, and said:

"Take the young simpleton away before he makes me ill."

"I don't see nothin' to laugh at," said Wetch. "Give the boy his supper and let him go."

"'Tis excellent advice, most learned Wetch," said Star-

light ; and then, turning to Kearney, who had rejoined them that morning, he added, " but it appears, in Wetch's case, at any rate, that ' mirth dwelleth not with wisdom.' That boy would be a fortune to us, Kearney, with that innocent face of his."

" Ah, but it would so soon change !"
At which both worthies laughed.

(*To be continued.*)

IN THE SUNK LANDS ;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF THE X. T. C. QUARTETTE.*

BY WALTER F. BRUNS.

CHAPTER XX.

A BAD RETURN FOR A GOOD ACT.

AT last the door swung open and we staggered in, with the raging pack pressing so close behind us that one big fellow was caught half inside trying to follow, and was promptly shot and kicked back for his trouble.

" There !" exclaimed Bob, as we barred the door. " That was what Sammy would call a close shave."

Then we glanced around the cabin and wiped the perspiration from our brows.

The fire had burned down until but a few coals remained. Brute sat in his corner and listened to the yelling without uneasily. The trunk containing the surplus guns and ammunition was stored away under the blankets in one corner, and, as near as we could see, was untouched. The dogs were gone.

" What can it mean ?" I asked, in an awestruck voice.

" It is past my comprehension," replied Bob. " It looks to me as though Joe had taken the dogs and gone out for game, and has not got back yet."

" No need of that, with the bear meat and venison on hand."

Redoubled howling and a general fight seemed to be going on outside.

" Loafer !" I gasped.

" Can't be ! I'll bet they've got the meat down ! Jerusalem ! They'll starve us out."

" Not much, they won't. When daylight comes, they'll slink off, unless I'm very much mistaken. We'll build the fire up, have something to eat, and wait for the boys to come."

" But they can't come that with pack of howling wolves out there," protested Bob. " This is a pretty mess all around."

I agreed with him.

We prepared a supper of ash cake, coffee, and broiled venison. Of the latter, our supply was limited, for we kept the meat out in the cold, and found it all the better for it, and the short round left in the cabin would not last a great while with two hungry boys.

Then we lay and watched Brute and the fire, and listened to the wolves trotting about outside, and for any sound of the others.

Some of our four footed friends seemed to be satisfied, but stayed to watch those who were not, so we had company.

I was firmly resolved not to sleep a wink ; but when I returned to consciousness, Bob was snoring by my side, and a faint streak of light struggled through a crack in the door.

" Bob, Bob !" I called. " It is daylight, and Treve, Joe and Sammy have not come yet !"

" Then they're not here," he returned, drowsily.

" Of course they're not, and it is our place to hunt them up. Where do you suppose they can be ?"

" Down paying their respects to Jim Lacy, maybe."

" There !" I exclaimed. " Why didn't I think of that before ?"

" I'm sure I don't know," said Bob, sitting up. " We never get lost ; some one always lugs us off. First Simpson got you, and then Jim Lacy caught the rest of the quartette. We can trace them easily through the snow."

" Well, the wolves are gone," I remarked, looking carefully out of the door.

" Nothing left but some bones and their footprints," added Bob, sorrowfully, glancing over my shoulder.

We finished the remnant of our stock of meat for breakfast, and then, taking our rifles, we locked the door and started.

" Why, Loafer is gone !" exclaimed Bob, peering into his shed as he passed.

" And he didn't break away, either," I said, " for his halter was untied !"

We looked at each other, and then at the ground. The wolves had beaten the snow down around the cabin. We started to make the circuit, going in opposite directions, when Bob exclaimed :

" Here is Sammy's rifle lying in the snow, and it looks as though there had been a struggle, for the snow is all stirred up !"

I ran to the spot, and there, sure enough, lay Sammy's rifle. A number of footprints led off to the left.

We walked to the bayou, and saw that the dugout was tied to a root, the knot looking as though it had been made hastily. Then Bob said :

" Jim Lacy must be decidedly anxious for our company, coming away up here after us. Perhaps you and I won't be so fortunate as you and Sammy were, and may get caught."

" Well, let's put his rifle in the cabin, and start. I'm anxious to get them out of their hands. What did they seem inclined to do when you were captured and tied up down there ?"

" Give us food, and club us for eating it," replied Bob dryly.

We put Sammy's rifle in the cabin. On the south side, where the wolves had not obliterated them, we found the tracks of a score of men, among which the prints of Loafer's hoofs appeared.

Farther on, the tracks leading from Sammy's rifle united with the larger ones. Bob looked around, paused, and then said :

" This was no doubt the meeting point."

" Evidently," I responded. " But what gets me, is where Treve went. He was to go with Sammy in the dugout ; but I saw but one track leading from the bayou, and that was Sammy's."

" He might be at large," replied Bob, " but that is doubtful. At any rate, he would have come back to the cabin before this, if possible."

We passed on in silence, passing the canebrake and turning off over the low ground.

" We'll have a path worn between our humble cabin and the angels' mansions if we tramp down here much more," said Bob at length.

" After boys ' lost, strayed, or stolen,' I could not help adding.

" Changing the subject : have you decided on any mode of rescue ?"

" I have not," I returned promptly.

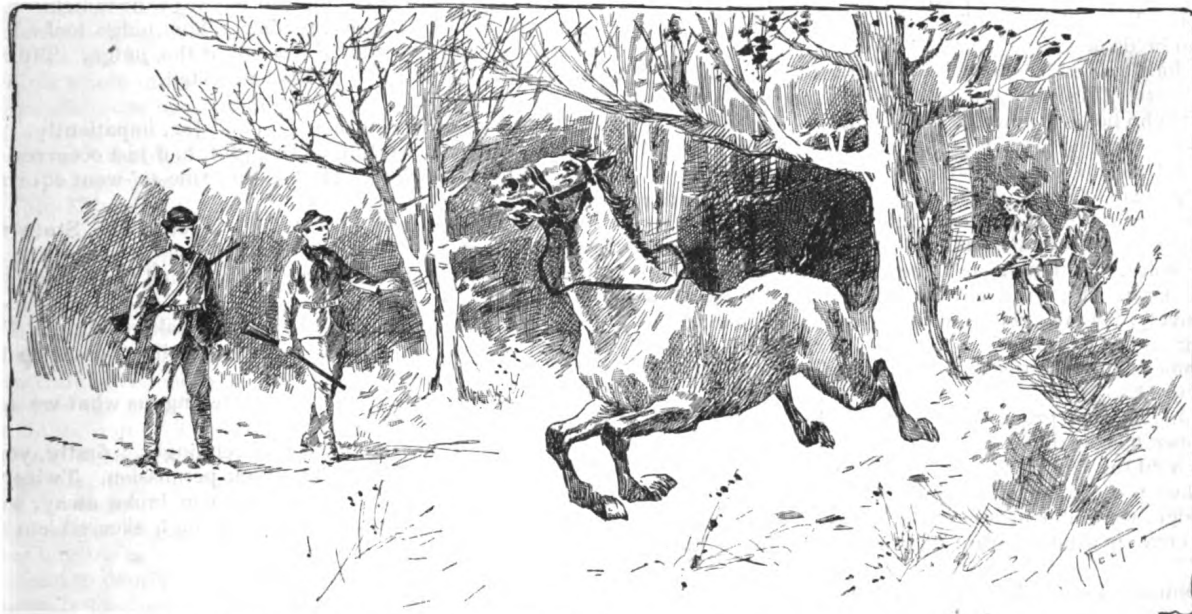
*Regun in No. 387 of THE ARGOSY.

"Neither have I. I suppose it would be better to see how the land lies before making any plans and wasting breath; but we really ought to have an idea of what the other intends to do, in case we are separated, so we could work in unison. I would propose——"

There was a shrill snort ahead, and Loafer came through

our spirits rose. "But how did it happen, and what are we going to do?"

"One at a time," replied Joe. "Such questions are perplexing. I hardly know how it did happen; but it went off quickly and quietly. After you left and Sammy had started——"



LOAFER CAME BOUNDING THROUGH THE TIMBER WITH HAIRLESS TAIL AND HEAD ERECT.

the timber with hairless tail and head erect. He stopped and snorted again.

"Why——" I began, when three villainous looking half breeds popped up in hot pursuit. One carried a rifle.

Before we could recover from our astonishment, he did what we should have done: covered us with his rifle and told us fiercely to "Drap gun! Put ten fingers up heap quick!"

"How nice!" murmured Bob, allowing his rifle to slip to the ground.

The two worthies accompanying the gentleman with the rifle came forward craftily and relieved us of the responsibility of looking after a Winchester.

"Now go that a-way," commanded the commander of the situation, pointing a dirty finger in the direction he had come.

"Yeas and nays are not counted, I notice," said Bob, as we started forward.

When we came in sight of the settlement we both became possessed of an idea that our arrival might be inharmonious, and started back, but our captors waved the rifles in such an emphatic manner that we changed our minds and went on.

Our dogs held possession of the bone collection, and contentedly gnawed them while their hosts looked on. They started toward us, but the half breeds drove them back.

We were led into the largest house, in the front room of which were gathered Jim Lacy and several others. They looked surprised, but not a word was said as they unbarred a heavy door and shoved us into a back room.

The door closed behind us with a bang, and the next moment we were shaking hands with Joe, Treve and Sammy.

"This is 'worse'n hens wrestlin', hain't hit?" questioned the latter, earnestly, when the first excitement had subsided.

"I suppose so," I laughed, for now that we were reunited

"And Treve," I interrupted. "Did he go?"

"No. He felt indisposed at the last moment and stayed to keep me company. Well, after Sammy had started, we brought in a round of venison and were going to have a stew, when the door opened.

"I thought it was some of you forgot something, and turned around to see, when, lo and behold, in tramped about twenty of our angelical friends! Before you could wag your upper jaw they pounced down on us, juggled us in the air until they were satisfied and we exhausted, and then they took Loafer and we started.

"Just then Sammy heard the racket and came sailing back just in time to get an invitation to join us, which he accepted after forcible means had been resorted to. So here we are, with Loafer and the dogs."

"Now how are we to get out?" asked Bob.

"Just before you came in," replied Joe, "we commenced to operate on the logs with our pocket knives."

"And," added Treve, gravely, "I have every reason to believe that if we are not molested, we can, in six months or more, saw through to daylight."

At this moment Jim Lacy's voice was heard saying:

"I reckon we'd better begin to-wunct, or they'll give us the slip agin. When we git through with 'em they won't have backbone enough to claim the ha'r on their heads!"

CHAPTER XXI.

TRIED—WARNED OFF—SIMPSON.

THE door was unbarred and opened, and the grim visage of Mr. Jim Lacy, Esq., peered in.

"Well, we got the hull boodle o' you-uns, didn't we?" he chuckled. "I told Smoky Bill that ef we got half o' you-uns, the other half would kim down lamb-like."

"What do you intend to do with us?" I asked.

"Whatever the court says!"

"What court?" demanded Bob.

"Our court. You-uns needn't think we hain't civilized 'cause we live out yere in the timber. We kin hold as good a court as any one in the State, we kin. Y' hear me?"

"Yes, sir! May I ask who has the honor of discharging the judicial functions of the institution?"

"Hem. Yes. Kim agin."

"Who holds down the bench?"

"Hit hain't a bench; hit's a bcx," corrected Jim Lacy.

"No matter," shouted Bob, with a great show of indignation. "Who holds it down, I asked you?"

"I do!" replied Mr. Lacy, equally as loud. "Say, I don't want none o' you-uns sarse!"

"Very well. Our stock of it is limited and our price high; so you are not likely to handle any."

"I jess piked in to tell you-uns," said Mr. Lacy, moderating his voice, "that as soon's the rest o' the boys kim up court'll begin. Furder," and he pointed his finger at us impressively, "don't none o' you-uns try to git away, fur there's guns in the crowd."

"Thank you for the gentle hint," replied Bob, and Mr. J. Lacy retired.

"Well, this is a great go!" exclaimed Treve. "That clodhopper has no more right to hold us for trial than I have to hold the United States."

"If their prosecuting attorney is as big a muddle head as their judge, we would have no trouble before a fair minded man, no matter what we were tried for. But Judge Lacy; oh my!"

"I nominate Joseph B. Miller for the defendants' counsel," I put in. "He has kept the dust off the books in a law office, and will probably work better for us than any one else, seeing he is as deep in the mud as we are in the mire."

Carried unanimously. Joe blushed and tried to back out, but we would not let him.

"Keep a stiff upper lip and your hair combed, sling all the big words you can think of at him, whether they harmonize or not, and paralyze him," advised Bob.

"It is a one sided arrangement all the way through," replied Joe. "We don't even know what we are to be tried for, and for the life of me I can't guess."

"I kin," said Sammy, who had been watching us with staring eyes. "Hit's a Simon-pure case o' 'run out'; that's what hit is. They'll wear out a lot o' willows on us an' then chase us off. But, by gum, ef pap don't make somebody screech fur this I'm—"

"A prevaricator," finished Bob.

"I s'pose so," admitted Sammy, cautiously.

The door was unbarred and Smoky Bill stepped in.

"As the—collerer, warn't hit, Ji—"

"Marshal!" thundered a voice in the other room.

"I knowed hit wuz about the same," said Bill, desperately.

"You-uns will perambulate into court!"

"The old man is on his dignity," murmured Treve. "I wonder if he has got plush railings and electric lights?"

We perambulated in.

Mr. Jim Lacy was seated on a cracker box behind a pine table at the end of the room, his huge feet spread out underneath and his chin resting on his hands. The rest of the men were leaning against the walls, with the exception of a few who occupied stools. Five blocks of wood were reserved for our use.

"Hit won't take long fur this case," remarked Judge Lacy, tickling his nose with a pencil, just as though he had a few thousand on the docket.

"Stand up!" he yelled.

We stood up.

"I sentence you-uns to—"

"But hold on," interrupted Joe. "We don't know what we are to be tried for; but whatever it is we demand a fair trial."

"Well, hain't you-uns a-gettin' hit?" growled the judge.

"No. Let the prosecuting attorney read the indictment."

Everybody looked at each other. The judge looked at the marshal, and the marshal looked at the judge. Things had taken an aspect they had not expected.

"The—the which?" asked the judge.

"The prosecuting attorney," replied Joe, impatiently.

"Oh!" said Smoky Bill, as though it had just occurred to him. "He hain't yere. He took his rifle an' went squirrel huntin'!"

"What!" ejaculated Joe. "Oh! I see. The State refuses to prosecute. That lets us out."

"Not by a long shot hit don't!" ejaculated the judge.

"But—"

"No buttin' about yere; you mought break somethin'. I'm a-runnin' this yere court. You-uns are guilty, bound to be guilty, *got* to be guilty."

"You cannot sentence us without telling us what we are sentenced for."

"Well," said the judge, condescendingly, "firstly, you-uns hunted on Muddy Run 'thout our permission. Twicely, when we brung you-uns down yere, you broke away, was goin' to shoot the wimming folks an' nigh skeered 'em to death."

A growl went up from the men.

"Surely, your honor—"

"Eh? Kim agin," ordered Mr. Lacy, spreading out his feet and contemplating his audience with ill concealed satisfaction.

Joe saw instantly that he had struck the right strain. Mr. Lacy could absorb more flattery than he could give him.

"I was about to remark to your honor, and these intelligent and well bred citizens," continued Joe, bowing to the former and designating the latter with a wild sweep of his arm, "that I must have misconstrued his honor's eloquent and versatile words in inferring that our presence here is to answer to such an unsubstantial charge. As to the first—I presume you know it is out of your jurisdiction?" and he turned quickly on that wonderfully learned judge.

"Yes, yes," agreed the latter, hastily.

Three of the quartette jammed handkerchiefs into their mouths, and Joe mopped his lips industriously to hide the smile.

"As to the first," pursued Joe, turning his back on us to keep from laughing, "according to the unwritten law, Mr. Isaac Jimmerson holds the claim we were on, and we hunted there with his permission. So, you see, your honor could not have meant to apprehend us for that."

"O' course not," his honor assured him.

"To the second charge, that of feloniously leaving your enchanting mansion and flourishing weapons before the gaze of your gentle and cultured wives, I suppose we will have to plead guilty."

"Ha!" ejaculated the judge, nodding his head vigorously, as though that was the detrimental point.

The rest voiced his sentiments.

"In that," went on Joe, rapidly, seeing that he had overrated them, "perhaps we have erred; but we did it in ignorance of the contumacious nature of his honor."

Here the judge smiled benignly, at what he evidently considered a compliment.

"But we have done nothing the law will not uphold us in," continued Joe, impressively, shaking his finger at the being behind the table, "and if you have a copy of Austin's 'Province of Jurisprudence Determined,' or the works of Main, Mill or Bentham on the subject, I can quickly show you passages that will substantiate, fully and entirely, what I have said."

And Joe pretended to scan the table. Mr. Lacy followed suit, went through his pockets, looked under his hat and finally glanced helplessly at Smoky Bill, who was gazing at the floor with his hands in his pockets, as though trying hard to think where those books were.

"I reckon some one must o' borrowed 'em," murmured the judge.

"Perhaps so," returned Joe, sympathetically. Then he resolved to hazard another "teaser," as he called them, knowing that Mr. Lacy did not know a third as much about law as he did.

"I am sorry they were loaned, as they are of vital importance in a case of this kind; but no doubt your honor is familiar with their contents or he would not be able to hold the honorable and influential position to which these well-read citizens have elected him."

"I—I sartinly have read 'em," stammered the judge, wading deeper into the mire.

"Your honor can look it up at his leisure if he doubts the veracity of my statements," and Joe gave me a sly kick.

I took the cue, immediately arose with the others, and we started for the door.

"Where—where he you-uns goin'?" demanded the judge.

"To our humble cabin" replied Joe. "Surely your honor does not mean to deprive us of our liberty after we have explained away both charges?" and Joe raised his voice and eyebrows as though it were the most astonishing thing he had ever heard.

"But this yere court was made to find you-uns guilty an' give you a general 'run-out.' I reckon I'll have to take advice like the other big ones when they get stumped. What do you say, Bill?"

Smoky Bill borrowed a pipe full of tobacco and smoked it half up before replying. Then he said:

"You're the doctor, Jim. Ef you say run-out hit's run-out, an' ef you say turn 'em loose hit's turn 'em loose. That's what I say."

And having delivered his opinion in this neutral manner, the gentleman with the obscure name plumed himself and gazed at the others as though his words were bound to be conclusive.

They were.

"He talks like a l'arnt gentleman," said the judge, "an' I don't want to run 'em out. An' then there's Ike Jimmer-son—" and the judge paused and nodded suggestively at Sammy.

"He'd have to kim down an' paw dirt," complained Bill.

"An' Milt," said the judge, who seemed glad that he could find obstructions.

"He'd have to cut up rough," added Bill, " 'cause he said hit had to be a run out."

"Who said so?" demanded Joe. "What is his surname? Where can I see him?"

"Right yere!" said a voice from behind.

We wheeled around. The door had been opened softly, and standing in it, with a shotgun in the hollow of his arm, both barrels of which were cocked, was a man we instantly recognized.

"Simpson!" cried the quartette in one voice.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

SAILOR BOY, Brooklyn, N. Y. See article "Apprentices in the Navy," in No. 352.

THE ARGOSY, Portsmouth, Va. We refer you to an article on ballooning in No. 331.

M. F. H., Ridgeway, Ont. We fear that your coin, if it bears the date 1863, is of no value.

CONSTANT READER, Caldwell, N. J. If in good condition, your copper cent of 1798 is worth two cents.

J. E. B., New York City. You will have to state your object more clearly before we can publish your notice.

E. T. H., New York City. 1. Not that we are aware of. 2. There is a Panola County in Mississippi, and another in Texas.

WOULD-BE-CANOEFIST, Philadelphia, Pa. If anything will make a slim person stout, it is the eating of plenty of starchy, sugary food.

W. M., Marlboro, Mass. The extent of the Presidential term in Mexico is four years. The present chief magistrate is General Parfirio Diaz.

"OWDHAM ROUGHYED," Providence, R. I. 1. We cannot give business addresses in this column. 2. It is possible the writer named may contribute further matter to THE ARGOSY.

C. H. S., Chicago, Ill. 1. We do not understand what you mean by a wall machine. 2. You can get the outfit you want for one dollar, from the publishers of *Our Country Home*, New York.

E. M. T., Williamantic, Conn. "Patroclus and Penelope" is the title of a book, we believe by Colonel Dodge, which tells all about horseback riding. You will no doubt be able to obtain further particulars from your bookseller.

V. J., New York City. 1. A story by the second author named is now running. We cannot at present state when we shall print any by the others. 2. You will find extended information about camping out in two articles published in THE ARGOSY, Nos. 345 and 346.

O. D. B., Sheboygan Falls, Wis. 1. William Murray Graydon is not a *nom de plume*. 2. Yes, a story by Harry Castlemon appeared in Vol. I of THE ARGOSY. 3. You will note that a story by Edgar R. Hoadley, Jr., begins in this number, and he has just started work on another.

F. C. S., New York City. There are various opinions about the efficacy of rubbing the muscles of athletes with a certain liniment before a contest, some asserting that the virtue lies in the liniment, others that it is owing to the friction, while not a few contend that neither is of the slightest avail.

INQUISITIVE. During the summer, from the vernal to the autumnal equinox, the days are longer the farther north you go. In the tropics, the sun always rises and sets at six o'clock. Yonkers, N. Y., is north of the City of Mexico, therefore the summer day is longer at Yonkers than at Mexico; it is longer yet at Skowhegan, Me., and longest of all at the North Pole, where the sun shines uninterruptedly for six months.

JERSEY MOSQUITO, Hoboken, N. J. The 1890 issues of the United States stamps are as follows: one cent, ultramarine blue, head of Franklin; two cent, carmine, head of Washington; three cent, purple, head of Andrew Jackson; four cent, chocolate, head of Lincoln; five cent, brown, head of General Grant; six cent, claret brown, head of Garfield; ten cent, green, head of Webster; fifteen cent, blue, head of Henry Clay; thirty cent, black, head of Thomas Jefferson; ninety cent, orange, head of Commodore Perry.

MILITARY MATTERS.

COLONEL J. A. LAMONT, commander 41st Brigade, would like to hear from young men in North Dakota, who desire to form companies of the National Cadets.

GEO. L. DYKEMAN, commander Eighth Division National Cadets, desires to hear from young men in the States of Idaho, Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming, who wish to form companies. Address the above at Boise City, Idaho.

THE TOUR OF THE RAMBLERS' CLUB.*

BY JAMES OTIS.

CHAPTER XXXVI. HOMEWARD BOUND.



THE members of the Ramblers' Club were very glad, when the sun rose the next morning, that they had decided to bring their vacation in this part of the country to a close. The charred and blackened timbers of the Unknown looked very mournful, and all hands would have been only too well pleased had it been possible to start at once.

There yet remained considerable work to be done, however, and Clay said with a feeble attempt at cheerfulness:

"Now let's see how quick we can be ready to start. If Harvey and Syd will get breakfast Hugh and I'll fish up the goods from the lake."

"All right," Syd replied; "but try to get hold of the bicycles first, for it can't be of any particular benefit to have them stay in the water."

Jethro set off to hire the team as soon as he had partaken of a hearty meal, eaten very leisurely, and by noon everything was in readiness for the departure.

The machines had been cleaned as well as was possible under the circumstances; the engine dragged ashore; the electric motor, twisted out of shape by the heat, taken from the half burned timbers; the guns wiped dry, and the friendly hedgehog fastened in his cage. The moose horns were none the worse for having spent the night under the water, and all hands were surprised at the amount of property which had been saved from the flames, thanks to Syd's energetic efforts.

When Jethro returned with the team the goods were loaded on the wagon, and he accompanied the boys to the store, where the remainder of the day was spent in making the articles ready for transportation on the cars.

Not until nearly sunset did the squire's son set out on his long walk home, and even then he was unwilling to part with those who had experienced considerable trouble because of his egotism. The nickel star no longer glittered on his breast, but was hidden inside his coat, and the air of detective wisdom and bravery was rapidly giving place to one such as an ordinary boy might wear.

"If you fellers ever come down this way agin you'll be sure to let me know?"

"We will," Clay replied, resolved to say nothing more about the past, and in the same spirit Hugh added:

"I'll write when we get home, and perhaps next summer you'll have a chance to go up the lake with us."

"I'm sorry about the boat," Jethro began, but Clay checked him.

"It is useless to talk of what can't be cured, so try not to think of it again. You must start now, or it will be very late when you get home."

"Well, good by," and reluctantly Jethro set off, the others calling after him:

"Attend to the farm, Jethro, and we'll see you next year."

A second team had been hired to carry the party to Andover, and in this, as a matter of course, the hedgehog and the bicycles were to be taken, while the remainder of the goods would be hauled to the station next day.

When they started, after all the business had been attended to, the boys experienced a feeling of sadness at leaving the lake; but this was quickly dispelled by the thoughts of the coming tour, and it was really a jolly party which arrived in Andover at midnight.

From this point to Lewiston the journey was made on the cars, and when Clay was introduced to the jeweler, on whom the boys called for the purpose of collecting the reward for the return of the stolen goods, a surprise awaited them.

The gentleman not only paid the five hundred dollars, but he presented the party with five small, but very neatly made gold badges, on which, in enamel, was the name "Ramblers' Club," and the figure of a mounted wheelman, while beneath this was the date and the name of the donor.

"They are beautiful," Hugh exclaimed, "and I'm glad there is one for Clay, for he surely must be a member of the club; but what about the fifth? Is it for Jethro?"

"Certainly not. Didn't you tell me the party consisted of five?"

"If I did so it was a mistake."

"But what about the hedgehog?"

"Is one for him?"

"Of course, and according to your stories I think he is a very important member."

One of the badges had been fitted with a ring instead of a pin, in order that it might be attached to a collar, and after the boys had given free vent to their mirth at the thought of the fifth Rambler, Clay said:

"Now I intend to do my share toward decorating the junior member of the club. Come with me, and we'll buy a collar."

That afternoon in the presence of the jeweler and the chief of police, Master Hedgehog was invested with the insignia of the Order of Ramblers, and Syd insisted that he looked decidedly proud of the same.

The boys left Lewiston on the next train, and on arriving at Boston two very enjoyable days were spent at Clay's home, after which Hugh, Harvey and Syd began the last stage of the homeward journey.

The prickly member of the club was left in Clay's charge until such time as the boys should send for him, when he was to travel by express.

Of this last portion of the tour it is not necessary to speak since nothing of particular interest occurred. There were two or three slight mishaps, but they seemed very tame as compared with the adventures of the club while in the State of Maine.

That they arrived home safely is known to those boys in New York who visit the apartment in Syd's home which has been fitted up as a club room, with the antlers of the moose as the most conspicuous decoration, and the hedgehog's cage on a pedestal near the presiding officer's chair. The Davis boat from Detroit, which passed through so many adventures on that Maine lake, now lies moored in the waters of the Harlem, and affords the club many a pleasant outing.

Last week Harvey received the following from Clay:

"I have my new boat nearly finished, and expect all the Ramblers' to accompany me on the trial trip, which will be made very shortly. Have I succeeded in the attempt? I truly believe so, and if such should prove to be the case there shall be another and a more extended tour of the Ramblers' Club."

*Begun in No. 382 of THE ARGOSY.

THE CROSS EYED LOVERS.

BY JOHN H. JOHNSTON.

TWO cross eyed swains in a horse car sat,
 And thought they looked each other at ;
 But he looked at me as plain as could be,
 And the man that she sighted was clearly not he,
 He seemed to think she was looking at him,
 And she seemed to think he was looking at her ;
 But the glassy stare of her eyeball dim
 Shied over to me, while the conductor
 Though he was the object of her attention,
 And was going the name of the street to mention ;
 But when he saw the crook in her eye
 He laughed till he seemed as if ready to cry,
 And going forward to gather his fare
 He turned him around and caught the same stare
 In the eye of her lover then and there.
 At the sight of two lovers with both eyes crossed,
 He seemed for a moment confused and lost,
 And in his bewilderment pulled the string,
 Till he gave his bell a double ring.
 And before the driver had turned his brake,
 The passengers all were beginning to take
 A decided interest in the case,
 For each could read in his neighbor's face
 The taking in of the situation.
 And long before we had reached the station
 The feeling we all of us came to share,
 Was that this was the queerest and funniest pair
 We had ever heard of in all our lives.
 And one man chuckled, " Although she strives
 To look with one eye at her lover,
 She's ogling me all the time with the other
 Now if I by the side of a sweetheart sat,
 With a double back action eye like that
 You wouldn't get me much more than once
 To make myself such an awful dunce.
 For, while I my love was trying to tell her,
 Some ignoramus, conceited feller,
 Might think it was he she was lookin' at
 And set me down for a regular flat.
 For with one of her eyes she could smile on me,

While she let the other light on him ;
 So that both of us idiots, don't you see,
 Might come to feel decidedly slim."

Then one of the friends of this troubled gent,
 Who seemed on frolic and mischief bent,
 Said he'd gladly give the price of a shine,
 To see them try to walk a bee line ;
 Whenever they struggled to toe the mark,
 'Twould be like trying to walk in the dark ;
 Were the line the equator they'd see the poles.
 Why ! if we were blind as bats or moles
 It seemed to him we could find our way
 As well as with eyes that were crossed that way ;
 And he wondered how the words would look
 If either should try to decipher a book ;
 The lines would certainly all be crossed,
 And the words caper round till the sense would be lost.
 Why ! Worcester or Webster to them would be
 As puzzling as Greek to a Heathen Chinee.
 A Teuton with three or four schooners aboard,
 At sight of our lovers was helplessly floored :
 " Donner und Blitzen ! Vat's dis dat I zee ?
 Eyes all round the compass like Jack on a spree ;
 Do they schtand on deir heads ven dey vant to zee straight,
 Or turn inside out ven de effort dey make
 To zee somedings right like oder folks do ?
 Mit dose eyes ein lager must look like two."
 And if such were the fact it seemed plain to me,
 He, himself, would be cross eyed two days out of three.

As I sat and listened to all that was said,
 I called on the Muses to come to my aid,
 Just to teach me a moral, worth learning by all.
 And they came in a flash at my very first call.

*The cross in our own eye we never can see,
 While the cross in our neighbor's is plain as can be.
 And the cross in ourselves may be often the same,
 As that which in others we're ready to blame.*



GUY HAMMERSLEY;
HIS FRIENDS AND HIS ADVENTURES.*

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PRECIOUS DOCUMENT.



FINALLY Guy managed to make his way to Mr. Crapfel's side.

"Send those people away," he said, "if you can. Then we can have an explanation in private."

But this suggestion was by no means an easy one to carry out. The neighbors had flocked to the spot eager to be in at a sensation, and now, when they were informed that there was nothing at all the matter, and that they would promote the peace of the Crapfel fireside by retiring at once, they were loath to go. They broke up into knots, and began to discuss the affair with meaning noddings of the head and elevations of the

eyebrows, and such insinuations as "Where there is so much smoke there must be fire."

Mr. Crapfel, however, was a man very set in his ways, and when he had carried his daughter into the back room and returned to place his hands on the shoulders of one or two inquisitive youths and propel them into the hallway with an emphatic "There!" some of the ladies took fright, and with whisperings of "The old man's lost his mind; you may be sure that's the trouble," beat a precipitate retreat.

In five minutes the room was cleared of all save Guy and Jack, and Mr. Crapfel was about to remove the latter in the summary fashion already described, when Guy broke in with:

"He is with me, and we will go at once if you will first speak to your daughter and ask if she wishes to see me."

"But I do not understand," mused Mr. Crapfel, dropping into a chair and beginning to mop the perspiration from his forehead with a bandanna handkerchief. "You are a stranger to me, and—"

At this moment the girl Lottie pulled aside the curtain that separated the parlor from the rear apartments. Her face was as pale as the handkerchief she held tightly clinched in her hand.

"It is about something that happened while I was at the *Fireside* office, father," she said, in clear, resolved tones. "This young man was blamed for it, when it was all my fault. I wrote him out a paper that would clear him, and— and wanted to get it back. But I will only have peace if he keeps it."

She dropped the curtain again, leaving Guy and her father looking at one another mutely.

The old man was the first to speak. He drew a heavy sigh and shook his head sadly from side to side, as he gave Guy his hand.

"It is mournful business, young man," he said, "when a father must believe that a daughter has—has taken what is not hers. But, poor child, it is an affliction. Even as a little

tot, she couldn't keep her hands off other people's things. She thinks I don't know, but I do."

Guy knew not what to answer, nor how to console the poor old man. But he wrung his hand with a pressure that he meant to express sympathy, and then added: "One thing before I go, the question that brought me here to-night, in fact: Does Mr. Bradford live in this house?"

"No; it is two doors west from here, the second flat."

"Thank you; good night," and taking Jack, now almost dead from sleep, by the hand, Guy hastily departed.

And as he got out into the pure night air and saw the stars twinkling down so peacefully, he thought of the precious paper in his breast pocket, and hoped he was not selfish in giving way to the rush of gladness that swept through his heart. For his joy meant deep grief to the two inmates of the apartment he had just left. Still, in the case of one it might be a sorrow that would work out the fruit of repentance.

He said nothing to Jack about the strange scene of which the boy had been a witness. He hoped he had been too sleepy to pay much attention to it.

As they approached the doorway of which Mr. Crapfel had told them, they saw a man just ascending the steps. He turned his head as he heard their footsteps behind him.

"Quick, give me the bag," whispered Jack. "Maybe it's Uncle John."

With a smile in the darkness at the odd means of identification, Guy passed the heavier valise over to his young companion, and the latter's sagacity was at once indorsed.

"By George, that must be the youngster now!" exclaimed the stranger; then, putting a fat forefinger under Jack's chin, he lifted up his face and asked bluntly: "Say, bub, is your name Jack Bradford?"

"Of course it is, and you're Uncle John," cried the delighted boy. "I knew you could tell me if you saw me lug-ging the bag."

"Bless my stars, you're as bright as your father was afore you, poor man. But how did you get up here without my seein' you, I'd like to know, when I went down to the ferry an acrost to the other side to meet you?"

And this was how the uncle and nephew came to miss one another, Mr. Bradford having taken the time of reaching New York for the hour of arrival in Jersey City, and the two had doubtless passed one another in the middle of the Hudson River.

"I'm mortal much obliged to you, young man, for bringin' this youngster safe up here," said Mr. Bradford, touching his hat to Guy.

"Oh, it's a lucky thing for me I did," rejoined Guy, as he shook hands with Jack, and then insisted on doing the same with the uncle. "I hope you'll let me come and see you sometimes," he added. "I don't want to lose track of my mascot, for such Jack here has proved to be tonight".

Now neither Jack nor his uncle had the slightest idea of what a mascot was, but as Guy's tone implied that it was something very nice, they felt complimented accordingly, and Mr. Bradford declared that they would consider themselves honored if "the young gentleman would condescend to pass an evening beneath their humble roof-tree."

Five minutes later Guy was aboard a Boulevard car riding down to the Grand Union Hotel, where he had decided to pass the night. The storage house where his mother's trunks were was close at hand, and he would be enabled to execute his commission there in the morning before going down town.

He was afraid the act was somewhat childish, but he could not refrain from putting his hand for an instant every now

*Begun in No. 389 of THE ARGOSY.

and then against the pocket that held the paper which was to set him all right again with Messrs. Inwood, Tretbar and Fox.

"I wonder how they will take it?" he found himself surmising, and, indeed, this problem of the future, coupled with the exciting happenings of the recent past, kept sleep from his eyelids till a late hour in spite of the downy couch with which mine host of the Grand Union supplied him for the reasonable sum of one dollar.

The next morning he ate an eight o'clock breakfast in the café, glancing the while at the want columns of the *World* and *Herald*. He saw several possible openings, which he checked with his pencil, intending to look them up after his visit to the office of the *Fireside Favorite* and Fox & Burdell's.

"If I can't do any better I may be able to get back my place at the shoe store," he repeated; "at the same time I'd prefer something that wasn't so far away from a man's brain as his feet."

Leaving his hand luggage in the baggage room of the hotel, he walked over to the storage building and spent about an hour there, and then returned to the hotel reading room to write a brief letter to his mother, inclosing the photograph she wanted, directing the communication to the third town on the route of the concert company.

This duty attended to, he started for the office of the *Fireside Favorite*.

He paused for an instant before he pushed open the door at the head of the three flights of stairs. He knew what he should have to face inside, and when he finally entered, the dozen or more girls all stopped work, just as he had expected they would, and gazed at him with round eyes and mouths ajar.

"Would you please tell Mr. Inwood that Guy Hammersley would like to see him for a moment?" he said to the miss who finally managed to recover from her astonishment sufficiently to approach the railing. She was the one who had been set to watch him in Mr. Tretbar's room that afternoon, and as Guy recalled the circumstance his cheeks burned in spite of him.

He could see the advertising agent busily writing at his desk, and presently noted the annoyed expression on his face when the girl delivered her message. He did not send word for his caller to come in, but, springing to his feet, came out to the railing with a frown on his forehead, and his pen held suspended between his fingers, as if to intimate that the interview must be extremely brief.

"Well, sir," he demanded, in no gentle tone, "what brings you here?"

"To ask you to read this," replied Guy, in a voice which, by an effort, he made equally hard, and he passed over Lottie Craptel's confession.

Mr. Inwood took it, and just as he began to read Mr. Tretbar appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DASH OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

THE publisher of the *Fireside Favorite*, as soon as he saw Guy, hurried forward, looking very black in the face. He had opened his mouth as if about to pour out the phials of his wrath on the head of him who dared show his face in the place again after the crime he had committed there. But he was checked by Mr. Inwood.

"Tretbar," said the advertising man, "look at this," and he handed him Lottie Craptel's letter.

An expression of pained surprise and defeated malice spread itself over the countenance of the publisher as he

scanned the few lines that proved him to have been in the wrong when he had asserted that his employees could not betray his confidence in them.

"Well?" he snapped out, as he passed the letter back to Mr. Inwood, and "Well?" the latter repeated, turning to Guy.

The latter was growing exceedingly wroth.

"They haven't even the grace to beg my pardon for being mistaken," he muttered between his teeth. Then he said aloud: "I wish you would write out a brief statement of the case which I can hand to Mr. Fox. I will wait here for it."

They both turned away without a word, and in three minutes Mr. Inwood came back with a scrawl of half a dozen lines, which he handed to Guy with the remark, "There, will that do?"

Having received a confession from one of the girls employed in our office, we hereby exonerate the bearer from all charge of having appropriated the thirteen dollars. TIMOTHY J. INWOOD.

"Yes, that will do," responded Guy, with some slight emphasis, when he had finished the perusal of the foregoing. "And now, before I go, I must fulfill a promise I made to the girl who wrote out that confession."

"I suppose you hunted her to the death to wring it from her," snarled the advertising agent.

"On the contrary," rejoined Guy, "it was by the merest chance that I encountered her, and it was her own accusing conscience that impelled her to a betrayal of herself. I told her that I would do my best to induce you not to prosecute her, which request I now most earnestly make of you. Good morning," and without giving the other a chance to reply, Guy hurried off; nor did he breathe unstrainedly till he reached the street door.

"I think they two would take the prize for the meanest men in the country," he told himself. "Now if Mr. Fox seems disappointed when he learns he has misjudged me, my faith in male humanity will be sadly shaken."

It was just twelve o'clock when he reached the familiar spot, and the doors were opening and shutting almost ceaselessly to admit the vanguard of hungry business men.

"I wonder if they've got anybody in my place," reflected Guy as he entered, and irresistibly his eyes sought the counter where he had been stationed. Yes, there was a sallow faced youth, with reddish hair, in attendance upon it, and Guy did not know whether to feel disappointed or relieved. Of course he would like to secure a position at the earliest possible opportunity, but then he had never been in love with his duties at Fox & Burdell's.

"Why, hello, Hammersley, how are you?" said the cashier, extending his hand as Guy approached the desk.

This greeting was certainly in refreshing contrast to the reception accorded him at the *Fireside Favorite* office, and the boy's heart warmed at once.

"How are you, Scott?" he rejoined, returning the pressure. "Is Mr. Fox about? I'd like to see him for a moment."

"Easy to accommodate you, for here he comes now."

Mr. Fox looked exceedingly surprised on seeing Guy, but the latter, with a simple "Good afternoon, Mr. Fox," placed the communication from Mr. Inwood in his hand, and then withdrew a step or two to give him time to read it.

"I congratulate you with all my heart," exclaimed the restaurant proprietor cordially, the next instant, as he gave Guy his hand. "Come back in the office with me."

Here Hammersley briefly related how he had secured the confession of the real culprit, and Mr. Fox appeared to be genuinely sorry that he could not take him back.

"But I'll give you a first class recommendation," he added

"and as soon as I have a vacancy I'll send for you, and give you the first chance if you haven't got a better place."

This was certainly treatment in most grateful contrast to that which had been meted out to him at Mr. Tretbar's establishment, and when Guy sallied forth ten minutes later to call at the first address on his list of possible positions, his spirits rose higher than is usually the case with those who start out on such a quest.

This first marked advertisement took him to a lawyer's office in a big Broadway building, and after riding clear to the top floor in the elevator, he was met by the announcement that they had hired a boy five hours before.

"But I ought to expect that," Guy told himself, "at this time of day."

Nevertheless he resolved to go through his list. Other firms might not be so easy to suit, and then he disliked the idea of passing another night without more settled prospects for his future. The next address took him over to Park Row, where a "Mr. Hiram Ballard wanted a youth of 17 to 18 to assist in store."

"That surely strikes me off as to age," reflected Guy, as he made his way with some difficulty along the crowded sidewalk, past the imposing newspaper buildings, in front of the bustling entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge, and between rows of importunate street fakirs till he came to the



"WHAT WAS THE CHARGE? STEALING MONEY?"

designated number. And glancing in at the window to see the nature of the business, he recoiled in a sort of horror, for it was a pawnbroker's shop.

"No, no, not there," he said to himself, as he turned and hurried away; and then, as he realized what slow progress he was making, he could not but add the reflection: "I may be compelled to resort there soon enough."

The third advertisement was that of Hampton & Pitcher, harness merchants in Chambers Street. A life size wooden horse, rigged out with specimens of the blankets, halters, and so on, sold within, stood in front of the door. The smell of the leather recalled strongly to Guy his summers in the West when a boy, and he had owned a pony cart in which he used to drive about the shaded avenues of Glendale.

A man in a yellow duster came up to him as he entered, evidently under the impression that he had come as a purchaser.

"You advertised for a boy in this morning's paper," began Guy, upon which the other interposed with: "Yes; see Mr. Hampton in the rear office."

Cheered not a little by the fact that he was to get as far



A WOODEN HORSE STOOD IN FRONT OF THE DOOR.

as the interview, Guy walked to the back of the store and accosted a youngish man, with very black hair, who was seated at a desk under a skylight.

"Yes, we do want a young man," was the prompt reply to his question. "We've had no end of applications for the position already today, but nobody suits. Have you had any experience with horses?"

"Yes; both in riding and driving. I used to do a good deal of both up to a year ago."

"Well, that's encouraging," exclaimed Mr. Hampton, turning round in his revolving chair so as to fully face Guy, and motioning the latter to a seat. "To the best of my belief, none of the fellows that were in here this morning had ever ridden behind steeds any more spirited than the car horse. You see I want somebody to help show off harness as if he knew something about it, and to throw in bits of personal experience, if necessary, which may gain us a customer. We pay eight dollars a week for a start. Have you had any experience in business here in the city?"

"Yes, a little," Guy admitted, and he drew the letter he had received from Mr. Fox out of his pocket and handed it to the harness man.

The latter read it through and passed it back, with the remark: "A very strong recommendation, but if he thinks so much of you, how came he to let you go?"

"Owing to a very unfortunate occurrence," rejoined Guy, feeling that he was growing most uncomfortably red. "I was accused of something very unjustly, the guilty party afterwards confessed, and I was fully exonerated, but meanwhile Mr. Fox had replaced me with some one else."

"Umph!" Mr. Hampton leaned back in his chair, played a little tune on his teeth with his pen holder, and then asked: "What was the charge? Stealing money?"

"Yes," said Guy, and he was about to add the details, when Mr. Hampton rose from his chair.

"Never mind," he said. "You needn't take the trouble to explain. I'd rather not have anybody here who has even been suspected. Good afternoon."

CHAPTER XIX.

HOMELESS.

"HOW very unjust!" was the comment that rose to Guy's lips as he listened to Mr. Hampton's words; but he did not utter it. He knew it would have been neither becoming nor judicious to do so; there was nothing left for him but to bow to the man's decision, and get out of the place as soon as he could.

"Arthur May-Jones, commission merchant," was the next name on his list. His place was not far off, in Hudson Street, and he had advertised for "a young man to make himself generally useful." There was an ice cart backed up to the door when Guy arrived, and two men and a boy were assisting the ice man in piloting the cakes from the skid to the rear part of the store.

"I suppose that is one of the ways in which the young man is expected to make himself particularly useful," reflected Guy, and then approaching another man who stood in the doorway watching the others work with a look of supreme satisfaction on his face, he asked if they had been suited yet with an applicant in response to their advertisement in the *Herald*.

Before replying, the man, transferring the toothpick he had been nursing in the left corner of his mouth to the right hand side of that aperture, recrossed his legs, and after favoring Guy with a stare that took him in comprehensively from his derby hat to his well blacked shoes, replied: "Yes, and unsuited, too."

Guy looked puzzled, and the other, first glancing over his shoulder to be sure that the boy at work with the ice cakes was just then in the rear of the store, went on to explain: "No style about him. Can take in ice well enough, but no good to go around and drum up trade. Will give him his walking papers tonight. Come back into the office and I'll talk with you."

Guy followed this rather peculiar individual to a room partitioned off from the store proper with glass, where he was invited to take a seat.

"Now, then," began the butter and cheese man, "have you had any experience in our line?"

"No, sir," answered Guy.

"What have you been doing lately?" was the next question.

Guy replied that he had been connected with the Starr Concert Company.

"Oh, indeed, you are a singer then?"

Guy was obliged to admit that he was not, and then briefly explained that he had gone with the company simply because his mother was in it, and that he had left it to return to New York on business for her.

"Do you think you could adapt yourself to the commission business and boom the sale of butter and eggs after soaring in the high realms of art?"

Guy smiled and said that he thought he could, and inquired into the duties he would be required to perform.

"Well, we might send you on the road to drum up trade among out of town customers after we got you worked in. Your salary to begin with would be seven dollars a week."

Guy was about to exclaim that he could not possibly live on that, but checked himself in time with a recollection of the fact that he must now adapt his living expenses to his income, not the latter to the former. So after a little further conversation it was agreed that he should come down ready to begin work on Monday morning, for it was now Saturday.

"And what are the hours, Mr. Jones?" Guy asked as he rose, scarcely realizing his good fortune.

The other made no reply for an instant, and Guy thought he even staggered backward a step or two. Instinctively he turned his head to look towards the front of the store to see if anything had happened there to cause consternation in the mind of the proprietor.

But all seemed to be in smooth running order, and Guy was about to repeat his question, under the impression that the commission merchant had not heard it, when he was utterly astonished to hear the other say:

"To you, sir, there will be no hours in this establishment. I have no use for your services."

"Very good, sir," and putting on his hat, Guy took his departure without loss of time.

"The man must be weak in the upper story," he told himself when he reached the sidewalk. "I thought him a little queer when he first began to talk, but not enough so to change his mind so suddenly as he did just now."

In fact Guy was so perplexed by the circumstance that for a time he forgot to feel grieved over it or to recollect that "Arthur May-Jones" was the last name on his list. It was the sight of this name, as he paused to take a farewell glance back at the store in case the fickle proprietor should have again changed his mind, that gave to Guy a possible solution of the mystery.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, "I believe I forgot the hyphen and called the name plain Jones, instead of May-Jones. That was the only time I used the name, I remember, just at the last. And he's just the sort of a man to make a mountain out of a mole-hill like that. Well, it wouldn't do any good to go back and apologize, so I suppose I must put it down as a lesson in experience, and try again."

And now it was on consulting his paper that he discovered that he had exhausted his list. Besides, it was well on toward three o'clock, and being Saturday afternoon, merchants were beginning to close their stores.

"And I haven't had any lunch either," he added to himself.

In the excitement of securing a situation, thinking that each fresh application might result in success, he had not been sensible of hunger. Now, with the chase postponed necessarily until Monday, he felt himself overpowered with fatigue and weakness.

"I want a good meal," he muttered to himself with a mournful kind of smile, "just when I am least able to afford one. If I'd got a place and had a prospect of earning twenty dollars a week, say, I suppose I'd be so excited that I wouldn't have any appetite at all."

What to do next was now the question. There was his trunk still at the baggage room of the railroad company.

Never in his life had the poor fellow felt so desolate and unsettled. The very fact that he was walking along the

street mechanically, not knowing whither he was going, actually sent a shiver through him as he realized it. He must do something, go somewhere, and feeling that a place for his trunk was the most pressing call upon him, he bent his steps toward an elevated station and took a train up town, with the intention of calling on Miss Stanwix.

He was plunged deep in gloomy meditations, hanging on to a strap as the train pulled out from the Eighteenth Street station, when he suddenly felt somebody tugging at his coat, and a half hesitating voice calling his name.

He turned and saw Jack Bradford, his face radiant at the chance encounter.

"I've just come from the store," he told Guy when they had shaken hands, "and I like it ever so much. We close early on Saturday, you know."

Guy noted the evident pride with which the little fellow brought out the "we" in his sentence, and although he tried honestly to rejoice in his good fortune, he could not but contrast their lots. All the way to Forty Second Street the boy chatted gayly of the new life, and his happiness seemed actually to be contagious, for when Guy left him it was with the reflection that there must be many poor souls in that great city worse off than he was.

A short walk brought him to the house where he and his mother had passed the summer. A new maid opened the door for him. Yes, Miss Stanwix was in, she said, and soon that lady appeared in the parlor.

But when Guy asked if he could have his old room back, or another one, she smiled and shook her head.

"I haven't a single vacant apartment, Mr. Hammersley," she said. "My rooms are all let now to the first of June."

"Can you suggest a place where I might be able to get in?" inquired Guy.

"Well, I can't, not just now. You see we boarding house keepers must look out for ourselves, and unless you can promise that you will stay till next summer, I am afraid you will have some trouble in getting just what you want. How did you leave your ma?"

Guy made appropriate answer and then hurried away, although why he should hurry he did not know. He had neither home nor occupation nor mother now, as he recollected with an added pang.

(To be continued.)

ERRORS OF SPEECH.

III.

A RUSSIAN priest, who has been around the world, told a New York reporter, some time since, that what struck him as especially noteworthy in his travels was the widespread prevalence of the English language. He said that even with a slight knowledge of English he found himself far better off in foreign lands than were those who could talk only French or German.

There have been periods of European history when the court language, the language of the educated and polite, has been, first Greek, then Latin, lastly French. But the English language, in the opinion of many, is destined to become, not merely the court language of Europe, but a medium of general communication throughout the world.

There are many reasons for this belief, which we will not stop to consider. But if it be true, every English speaking person should have a certain pride in keeping the language pure, so far as his influence and example can prevail.

We listened, a few evenings since, to a speech expressed in the choicest language, and almost faultless in its rhetoric

and syntax, yet one oft recurring word was continually mispronounced; it was *government*, which the speaker called *guv'munt*. Such an error is not only painful by contrast with general excellence, but it is inexcusable, and, we may almost say, criminal.

It may take a little longer to say *government* than "guv'munt;" history, than "hist'ry;" library, than "lib'ry;" yet many words are mispronounced through no saving of time or care, but, it would seem, for the mere pleasure of wrong doing. Is it easier to say *git* than *get*, for example? Then *rid* can be pronounced more easily than *red*: for, in the latter case, as in the former, short *i* is compared with short *e*. Yet five men will tell you how to *git red* of a difficulty, where one will advise you to *get rid* of it.

But there are many who really do their best to speak correctly, and whose mistakes arise, not so much from careless habits as from lack of knowledge. All honor to such, for they are building better than they know. Upon the corner stone of carefulness may be reared, by patient toil, a temple that Wisdom herself will not scorn to occupy. Our purpose in these articles is to supply a few blocks for the structure.

In a speech by Edward Everett, found in many school-speakers (upon the voyage of the *Mayflower*, the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, etc.), occurs this sentence:

"The dismal sound of the pumps is heard."

We once heard an intelligent man arguing that the verb in the quotation was incorrect, and should be *are heard*. Of course the slightest knowledge of syntax and parsing would have taught him better, for *pumps*, the only plural noun, is governed by *of*, and is in the objective case, while *sound* is the real subject, and is singular. Moreover, sense, aside from syntax, would seem to teach that the pumps are not heard, but the sound of the pumps. Still, as he made a common error, we will say a few words of general caution.

The subject of a sentence very often stands next the verb, and we may become so accustomed to this arrangement as to insensibly make the number of the verb agree with that of the noun which immediately precedes, whether it be the real subject or not.

If the intervening noun is plural, the verb is then made plural, though its proper subject may be singular, and *vice versa*.

A few examples of false syntax, illustrating this point, are herewith appended:

The simplicity of savage nations *render* them liable to be imposed upon by crafty traders. The leaves upon each separate branch of that magnificent oak *rustles* in the breeze. The daily duties of our short life *oppresses* us. Who is ignorant that the color of the famous Australian swans *are* black? The actual number of stars that are visible without the aid of telescopes *are* less than may be supposed.

There are certain nouns called collective, which indicate an assemblage of persons, and in the use of which considerable liberty is allowed. The speaker, or writer, who employs them may consider them as singular or plural, according as the idea of the multitude, or the individuals which compose it, is most prominent in his mind; thus, *the army was victorious*, signifies that it was the army as a whole, while *the army were elated by the victory* indicates that each separate soldier felt joyful at the army's good fortune.

Good taste alone can decide in such cases which is the better form, and taste is something which is really as necessary to neatness of style as to neatness of dress, and should be cultivated by every one.



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IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Any reader leaving home for the summer months can have THE ARGOSY forwarded to him every week by the news-dealer from whom he is now buying the paper, or he can get it direct from the publication office by remitting the proper amount for the time he wishes to subscribe. Three months, one dollar; one year, four dollars.

WORD comes from Massachusetts that an attempt is to be made to preserve the language of the New England Indian tribes by means of the phonograph. This suggests a strictly novel and unique solution of the problem of where the slim pursed city family shall spend the summer.

Let them secure a phonograph, send it out to some friend in the rural districts, and instruct him to let the matutinal cock crow into it, the bubbling brook play across the mouth of the funnel, and the buzz of the Jersey mosquito lay its trail upon the waxen tablets. Then all that will be necessary will be to close the front shutters, adjourn to the back yard and set the crank in motion, to have all the special features of "summer board" brought to the very heart of the town, at the bare expense of the phonograph.

* * * *

THIS summer of 1890 promises to be a dismal one for the American small boy. The price of ice has gone up to such a figure as threatens to put soda water and ice cream beyond the reach of his pocket money, while recent advices from China announce that, owing to a strike in the manufactories, the supply of firecrackers for the Fourth of July will be only half as large as usual.

An extra allowance of flags may partially console him for this latter deprivation, but what, oh what can take the place of the ten cent plate of frozen cream and the five cent glass of sizzling soda?

* * * *

IT is scarcely a year since THE ARGOSY made editorial reference to the split between the French collaborate novel writers, Erckmann and Chatrian. And now the report comes from England that the famous comic opera makers, Gilbert and Sullivan, have quarreled, and, in consequence, have ceased to work in brotherly harmony.

What is there about creative work in intellectual fields that makes it "extra hazardous" to the friendship of any two who may "pool their issues" to produce it? If

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan would only defer their separation long enough to give us an opera with the solution of this problem as the theme, they might close their joint career in a blaze of triumph.

* * * *

FASHION is by no means confined to dress. It asserts its sway in almost every field, one of the strangest of these being that of language. A brief item in the *New York Tribune* not long since called attention to the fact that certain words were taken up and constantly used by both writers and speakers as a sort of "fad." Indeed, we are fain to confess that the very word "fad" itself, which has just slipped out from our pen, belongs to this category. Among the terms mentioned in the item referred to were "brainy," "unique," "bizarre," "anent," and "absolutely."

Some writers have a particular fondness for certain words, and are constantly using them. This lays them open to the charge of having "mannerisms," which is as bad for their reputation as a distinctive style would be the reverse. All should strive to widen their vocabularies as much as possible, and thus do away with the possibility of overworking certain luckless words.

* * * *

WHILE the cry "Ranks all full" is the discouraging announcement that confronts many a young man anxious to launch out on a business career, the women are creating new lines of trade for themselves. For instance, here is a woman with but little money and plenty of taste. She announces that for a consideration she will do the city shopping for ladies out of town who cannot afford the time to do it for themselves.

And here is another who will furnish your house for you, in the most harmonious style—provided you pay the bills and allow her a commission. And now we have a Ladies' Guide and Chaperon Association, which undertakes to meet country dames at the train and pilot them safely through the devious ways and perilous street crossings of city life, as well as to provide escortless young ladies with the proper accompaniment in the shape of an elderly female when they wish to pass an evening at the theater.

* * * *

CAN our readers imagine a case where it is considered a mark of honor to be struck in the head with a tobacco box? It seems that no such interpretation could by any possibility be placed upon the act, and yet the case is one of actual occurrence.

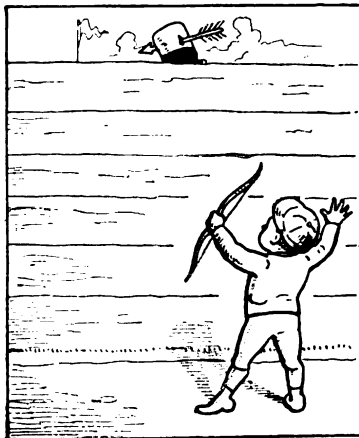
It is described by a writer in one of the magazines as befalling a celebrated Japanese actor who was playing the part of a most desperate and cold blooded villain. So realistically did he enact the role that one of the auditors, to show his detestation of the scoundrel, flung his tobacco box straight at him and inflicted such a wound that the performance had to be suspended for a few moments. But the actor was immensely proud of the recognition his ability to depict a rascally nature had received, and later in the evening made a speech, warmly thanking the unknown flinger of the tobacco box (which, by the way, he wore on his head in triumph) for this evidence of sincere appreciation.

THE ARROW AND THE HAT.



I.

Willie had often heard the Shaksperian expression "Shoot the hat!"



II.

This opportunity was far too good a one to be missed.



III.

Willie heartily congratulates himself upon his marksmanship.

THE ARGOSY
FLOATING FUN.

PICNIC JOYS.

COLONEL YERGER—"Well, how did you like the picnic?"

GILHOOLY—"I was so glad to get home again that I was glad I went."—*Texas Siftings*.

* * *

SUITING THE ACTION TO THE WORD.

"GET under that ball," yelled the captain, as the batter knocked a high fly to center field. "All right!" replied the fielder, running forward and then stopping, "I understand."—*Harvard Lampoon*.

* * *

AN APPROPRIATE GIFT.

"TOMORROW is Bronson's birthday. I say, fellows, let's send him a phonograph."

"Do you think he'd like it?"

"Like it? Did you ever know of a man who was fonder of hearing himself talk than Bronson?"—*The Epoch*.

* * *

A GREAT STRIKE.

UNCLE NED—"Does your father ever play ball, Tommy?"

TOMMY (with the recollection of a recent chastisement)--"No; but I am sure, if he did, that he would make a great batting average."—*Lippincott's Magazine*.

* * *

HISTORICAL DATA.

CHICAGO TEACHER—"In what year did Columbus land?"

CLASS—(No answer.)

TEACHER—"Come! Can't any of you tell?"

BRIGHT BOY—"I don't remember the 'xact year, mum, but it was before the fire."—*New York Weekly*.

* * *

A VARIED DIET.

HE (sympathetic)—"I am sorry to hear of the death of your dog. What was the matter with him?"

SHE—"I am sure I don't know. Poor Fido was such a dear, and we did set everything by him."

HE—"Well, perhaps he ate some of it."—*Harvard Lampoon*.

* * *

STILL GROUND FOR HOPE.

"BUT, Clara, what could you have been thinking of, to engage yourself to such an absent minded man?"

"I repent my word every minute, but my hope is that when we get to the church he will forget, and say 'no,' instead of 'yes.'"—*Fliegende Blaetter*.

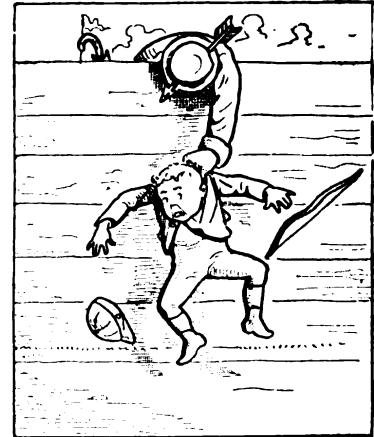
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UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS.

"IF I am wakeful at night," said the author, "I always put myself to sleep by following out, in my mind, the thread of some one of my stories from the beginning. Presently the incidents and characters become confused, and the first thing I know I am asleep."

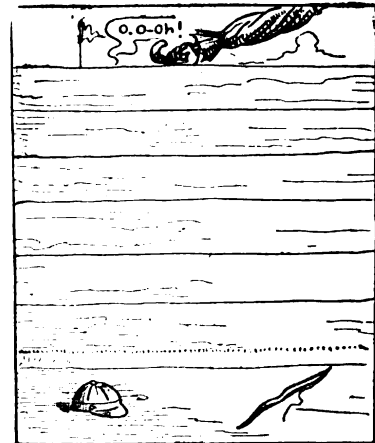
"That's a fact," said the friend, enthusiastically, "I can go to sleep over any of 'em."—*Chicago Tribune*.

A HARROWING TRAGEDY.



IV.

But retribution comes upon him un-awares and catches him by the collar.



V.

The young marksman's lamentations are borne far and wide.

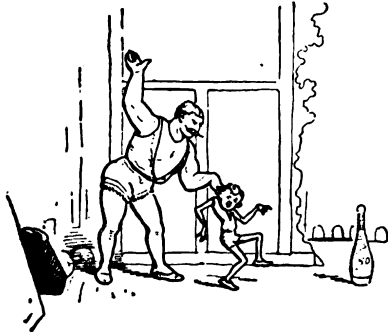


VI.

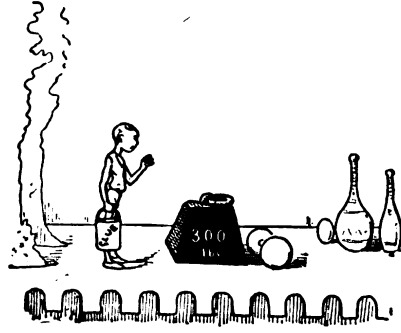
And this is the way in which he now finds it convenient to get his meals.

THE ARGOSY

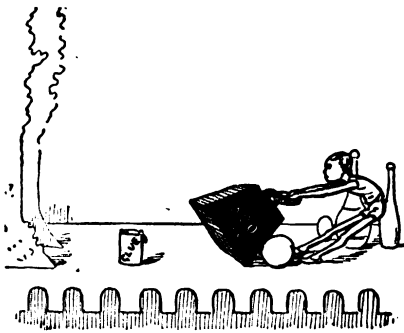
REVENGE; OR, BRAIN *VERSUS* BRAWN.



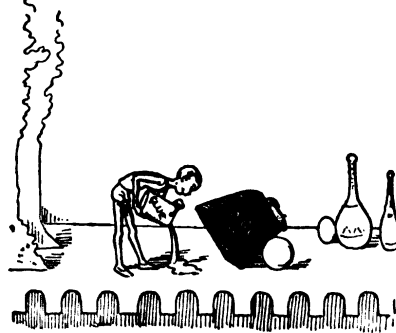
I.—The Strong Man's boy addresses his chief as "Old Onions" and is deservedly castigated.



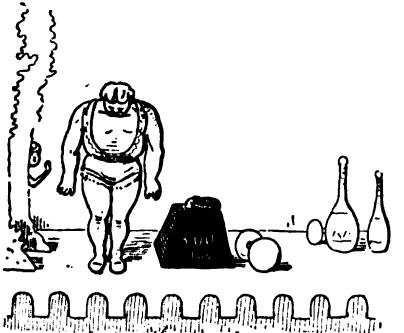
II.—The youth vows revenge, and procures a pot of Stickum's glue.



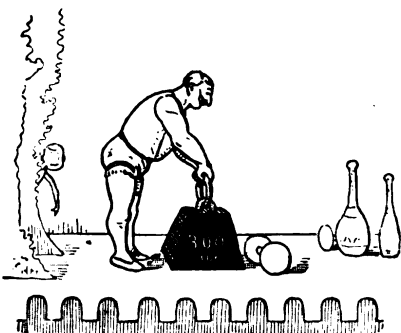
III.—By a mighty effort he lifts the Strong Man's three hundred pound weight.



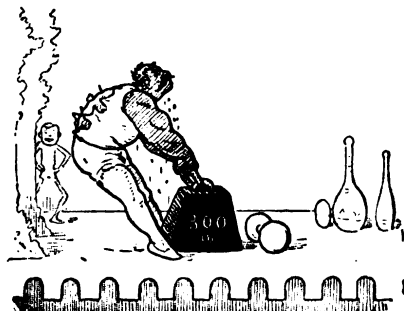
IV.—And pouring the glue beneath it, cements it to the stage, as solid as a rock.



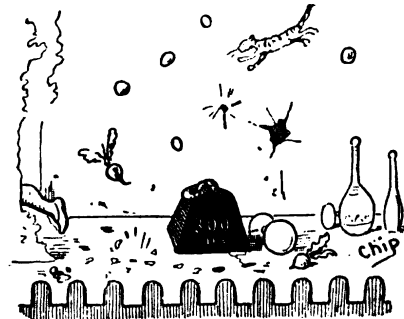
V.—At the evening performance the Strong Man appears on the stage as usual.



VI.—After saluting the audience he grasps his weight. It will not move.



VII.—The Strong Man's frantic struggles are entirely in vain,



VIII.—And he has to retire amid signs of emphatic disapproval.

What It Costs

Must be carefully considered by the great majority of people before buying even what may seem absolutely necessary. Hood's Sarsaparilla commends itself with special force to the great middle classes, because it combines positive economy with great medicinal power. It is the only medicine of which can truly be said

100 Doses One Dollar

And a bottle of Hood's Sarsaparilla taken according to directions will average to last a month, while other medicines last but half or quarter as long. This is practical and conclusive evidence as to its strength and economy. Try Hood's Sarsaparilla and see for yourself.

"Hood's Sarsaparilla purified my blood, gave me strength, and overcame the headache and dizziness, so that now I am able to work again." LUTHER NASON, 53 Church St., Lowell, Mass.

100 Doses One Dollar

"For five years I was sick every spring, but last year began in February to take Hood's Sarsaparilla. I used five bottles and have not seen a sick day since." G. W. SLOAN, Milton, Mass.

N. B. If you decide to take Hood's Sarsaparilla do not be induced to buy any other.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Sold by all druggists. \$1; six for \$5. Prepared only by C. I. HOOD & CO., Apothecaries, Lowell, Mass.

100 Doses One Dollar

FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL USE.

Stops Pain, Cramps, Inflammation in Body or Limb, like magic. Cures Croup, Asthma, Colds, Catarrh, Cholera Morbus, Diarrhoea, Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Lame Back, Stiff Joints and Strains. Full particulars free. Price 50c., post paid.



FOR SIXTY YEARS.

Dr. J. S. JOHNSON & Co., Gentlemen:—It is about 60 years since I first learned of this now celebrated medicine or remedy for the more common ills of life—Johnson's Anodyne Liniment—and for MORE THAN FORTY YEARS I have used it in my family. I think it is due the public for me to say (unasked by you) that I regard it as one of the best and safest remedies that can be found, to be used internally or externally, and should be in every family, for ready use in all cases that it is claimed to relieve or cure.

OLIVER H. INGALLS,

Deacon Second Baptist Church, Bangor, Me.

A SOFT SNAP.

RAMBO (severely)—"The fact is, you are too lazy to work."

PONSONBY (indignantly)—"No, sir! I'm willing to work; but I want a situation where I can work when I feel like it, take as many holidays as I please, and never get docked."

RAMBO—"Why don't you run for Congress?"—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

* * * *

AN IMPORTANT QUERY.

"WHAT would we do without doctors?"

"Well, we might get along, but what would the druggists do?"—*Boston Courier.*

* * * *

UNDERSTOOD THE BUSINESS.

FIRST DUDE—"How is it that you get invitations to balls, parties, weddings and like festivities?"

SECOND DUDE—"It is the simplest thing in the world, my dear fellow. When I suspect that any of my bigwig acquaintances are going to give a blow-out, I tell them that I shall be out of town. They imagine it is safe to invite me. They do so, and lo and behold, I bob serenely up. Strategy, my boy, strategy!"—*Texas Sittings.*



INFORMATION WANTED.

"Ah, sure, Bridget, if I should die I wish ye'd have me leg cut open by the dockthers. I'd jist like ter know fur certain what give me so much trouble."

QUITE OUT OF PLACE.

EDITOR OF COLLEGE PAPER—"Did you see the last issue of *Phi Gamma Kappa*?"

SUBSCRIBER—"Yaas, and I must say, old man—"

EDITOR—"Yes; I know what you're going to say, and I apologize. I was absent last week, and my assistant ran in an article on an educational topic. It shall never occur again."—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

* * * *

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who wish it, this recipe in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 820 POWERS' BLOCK, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

* * * *

SAD EXPERIENCE.

CHOLLY (meditatively)—"By Jove! I wish I knew what Kitty Keene would say, if I should ask her to marry me."

HOLLY (with a tone of bitter reminiscence)—"I could tell you what she said to me when I did, if it would help you any, old fellar!"—*Puck.*

I LIKE MY WIFE TO USE POZZONI'S MEDICATED COMPLEXION POWDER.

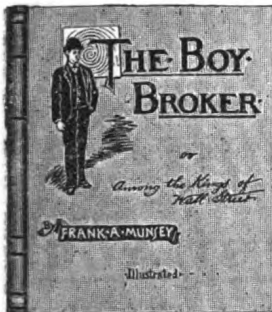
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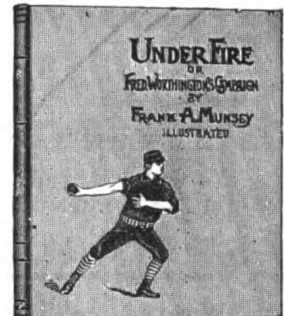
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MY DEAR MR. MUNSEY: I am greatly indebted to you for sending me the superb holiday edition of your latest story, "The Boy Broker." I have read it with much enjoyment, and find it full of interest. There is not a dull line in it. In Herbert Randolph you have given us a hero in every way admirable. Upright, manly and eager to succeed, but only by honorable means, he excites our sympathy from the start. Bob

Hunter and Tom Flannery are boys of a different type, but equally interesting. By his unconscious drollery and rich vein of humor, Bob will take his place among the noted characters in fiction.

Your story is healthy in tone, and calculated to influence boys for good. I confidently predict that it will become a favorite with them and the public. Externally it is the handsomest gift book that has fallen under my eye.

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

MY DEAR MR. MUNSEY: The story of "The Boy Broker" is interesting and exciting enough in a healthy direction to rivet the attention of the reader from the first to the last page. The hero is high toned to the core of his being, and incapable of a mean or wicked action. Even the street boys breathe out the evidence of a high type of humanity in their peculiar language, which robs it of its vulgarity.

The tone of the story is elevating, for it is not only free from injurious leadings, but its spirit is an inspiration in the direction of high aims and a noble and true life. The volume has all the essentials of a good book without a line that deserves censure.

WILLIAM T. ADAMS (Oliver Optic).

What has been said about "Under Fire."

THE story is spirited, well illustrated, and calculated to make the young reader for whom it was written manly and self reliant.—*Cincinnati Times-Star*.

MR. MUNSEY'S writings are known to all, and to mention his name in connection with this work is enough recommendation for it. "Under Fire" is full of interesting reading matter, such as boys like, and is also a very instructive book.—*Mail and Express*, New York.

MR. MUNSEY has written a bright, readable and clever tale. He certainly understands boy nature perfectly, and he has drawn a very lovable and manly hero. The book is unusually well printed and is splendidly illustrated.—*Albany Argus*.

AUTHOR, printer and artist have done their work well, and the book is one that will please every boy into whose hands it may fall.—*Milwaukee Wisconsin*.

(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

THE ARGOSY

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