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WHOLE No. 443.

ON STEEDS OF STEEL;

OR,

THE TOUR OF THE CHALLENGE CLUB.

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

CHAPTER I.

HANDICAPPED.

"WILL—W-i-l-l! Don't you hear me? It's a superb day, and you're sleeping away the best part of it!"

That's always the way; you never finish out the last thought you have before going to sleep; it is continually being interrupted by something that occurs the next morning. However, on this occasion I was very glad to hear my sister's voice.

I was up in a jiffy, and after seeing that it was already nearly seven, didn't waste any time looking out of window. I expected any minute to hear the ring at the doorbell announcing the arrival of the other Challengers, and here was I, their captain, just out of bed.

For this was the long awaited day when we expected to start on our tour a-wheel. We had planned it as far back as April, when the first warm weather of the season set the blood coursing swiftly through our veins and filled our minds with all sorts of summery visions.

There were four of us—by us I mean members of the Challenge Cycling Club.

We all owned Safeties of the best make, but the longest ride any of us had ever taken was twenty six miles—made by Dinsmore and myself the fall before when we were at Sea Bright. It had been arranged this time that we should start as soon as school closed, and take a trip of two weeks' duration, with no particular destination in view, returning afterwards, not to New York, but to the resorts in New Jersey where our families were to spend the summer.

And while I have been giving this preliminary explanation, I have dressed, breakfasted, given my wheel a thorough inspection and am popping my head in and out the front parlor window every three minutes, looking for the other Challengers. But half past seven, eight and quarter past sounded from the chimes of the Swiss clock on the mantel, and, although as many as a dozen cyclers had flashed into view on the asphaltum paved

avenue, none of them wore the uniform that proclaimed membership in our very select club.

"It's very queer they don't come," I remarked to Edith for about the tenth time. "We were to leave here promptly at half past seven, so as to be sure to get to Derrytown by night without having to override," and once more I poked my head out of the window.

We were to go out by the Riverside Drive, and, as I lived farther north than any of the others, it had been agreed that they should all assemble at our house and make the grand start from there. And here it was nearly an hour after the time, and not a single Challenger had put in an appearance.



ON LEVEL GROUND STEVE AND MAC HELD THEIR OWN WITH US.

I had just decided to mount my wheel and run down to Hugh's—who lived next below me—when I saw him coming up *alone*.

I rushed out of the front door and down to the edge of the sidewalk, to meet him.

"What's the matter?" I demanded. "Where's Mac and Steve?"

"Why, aren't they here?" replied Hugh, dismounting with a surprised look. "I thought there had been some misunderstanding, and they'd come straight to your house without stopping at mine, expecting to meet me here."

"No; nobody's come yet but you," I answered. "Hold on. I'll get my wheel, and we'll both go down to the Osborns' and see what's the matter."

"Will! Will! Are you going off without bidding any of us good by?"

Mother's voice called me back as I was trundling my machine out of the basement door. I leaned it against the wall and hurried up to the dining room.

"I don't know whether I'm going or not," I said. "Everything seems to be all mixed up, for now, instead of riding north, I've got to go south. But it's bad luck to start twice, so we'll call this one."

"Don't forget to inquire wherever you can for the Beecham's, and take good care of yourself," mother called after me.

This was not the gallant setting forth I had pictured. What could have befallen Aleck McKie and Steve Osborn? But we would soon know. The Osborns lived in an apartment house near Fiftieth Street, and Hugh and I soon had our machines in the hallway, and had rung for the elevator.

"Has Mr. Osborn gone out with his bicycle yet?" I asked of the elevator man as soon as the car was on a level with our faces.

"No, sir," he answered.

"Well, then, has Aleck McKie been here?" put in Hugh.

"Yes; and gone off again," was the reply.

Hugh and I looked at one another in mystification. However, we would soon get to the bottom of matters, as we had never reached the third floor and had rung the Osborns' bell. Steve himself opened the door for us.

"I saw you coming," he said. "I can't go."

"Can't go!" echoed Hugh and I in one breath.

"Come on into my room and I'll tell you how it is," Steve went on.

But there was no need of doing this. As we were crossing the hall, his aunt—who had acted a mother's part to him since he was a baby—came out of the library and met us.

"Oh, boys," she said, "I'm so sorry to disappoint you; but when it came to the test I could not bear to think of Stephen off on one of those machines, so far away from home. I would know not one minute's peace of mind. What if he should fall sick while he was running down hill?"

So this was what had caused all the delay. I must say I felt a little exasperated. Steve was older and bigger than any of us, and to have our tour balked at the very start because his aunt was afraid he couldn't take care of himself was absurd. But of course I didn't say this. I knew Miss West too well. It was only after long teasing that Steve obtained her permission to join the party, and now, if anything was to be accomplished, it must be done by diplomacy and in no other way. And in this Mac had been before us.

"There is only one condition on which I can consent to let Stephen go," Miss West continued. "Alexander was here, and when I told him that I could not bear the thought of Stephen being for so long a period on a bicycle, he suggested that they might get a tandem tricycle and ride together."

Hugh and I each groaned inwardly. How could we hope to live up to our name if we were weighted by a three wheeler in the ranks? Still, if this was the only condition on which we could get Steve, we felt that it was better than leaving him behind.

"And does Aleck think he can get a tandem this morning?" I asked.

"Yes; he's gone around to see Jim Howe about it," said Steve. "Here he is now," as we heard the elevator stop at the Osborn floor.

He hurried to open the door, and Mac came in triumphant. He had secured the loan of Jim's machine in exchange for his own Safety. It was down at the door now, watched over by little Dick Tippet from across the way, and we must start at once.

I am bound to say that Miss West looked disappointed. If she could have seen the dire disasters into which that tandem was to be the means of involving her beloved nephew, she would have had cause to be still more downcast.

As it was, she took leave of him with tears in her eyes, and so many injunctions as to what he should do in case it rained, or he fell off, or scarlet fever broke out in the hotel where we might be stopping, that I feared Dick Tippet would get tired of playing watchman; so I slipped off without ceremony and waited the rest of the time on the sidewalk.

At last the others came. We mounted our wheels, the great tandem in the rear, and with a hearty send off from young Tippet, started on what was destined to be a most eventful tour.

CHAPTER II.

BASEBALL CALLS A HALT.

"I'M no end sorry, fellows, to throw cold water on our tour at this early stage," began Steve, as he and Mac spurred up to range alongside of us as we turned into Madison Avenue. "You might almost as well have a buggy along as this lumbering thing."

"Oh, I guess we can manage all right," I answered, but candor compels me to state that I really did not *think* so. I had been on a tandem trike myself, and knew just what obstinate things they were. "Invalid chairs" I had several times called them in contempt, and here we were, setting out on our famous trip with half the club mounted on one.

But our discussion of the matter was interrupted at this point by the first predicament that luckless trike was destined to get us into. Both Steve and Mac were accustomed to the narrow track trikes, and interested in the conversation as we all rode up the avenue abreast, Mac, who was steering, failed to realize that his present mount required a much wider path than his two wheeled favorite. The result was a sudden cry from the driver of a street car we were passing, who turned aside just in time to allow the right wheel of the trike to bump softly against the front platform of the car as the latter was brought to a hasty standstill with the brake.

There was considerable commotion among the passengers, a lot of forcible language from the driver, and when things were disentangled and we were once more ready to proceed on our way, Hugh exclaimed decidedly, "Let us turn around and go back to tell your aunt, Steve, that that thing you're on is ten times more dangerous than your own machine."

"No, no; don't go back now," I broke in. "It's bad luck."

"And she'd settle the whole thing by making me stay at home," added Steve.

And so we kept on, deciding that while we were within the limits of the city, at least, we would not make such a widespread disposition of our forces.

As will have been gathered from what has already been told, our club was a most informal affair: there were no dues nor even a clubhouse. We four had ridden a good deal together, all being from the same school; and when we had planned this tour, we had agreed to call ourselves a club for the occasion at any rate, and as we all needed new suits, had had them made as regular uniforms. And as I had owned a machine longer than any of the others, the fellows declared that I must act as captain.

We each carried changes of underclothing, a mackintosh, toilet articles and an extra pair of shoes in our M. I. P. bags, strapped to the handle bars, and each fellow, moreover, had fifty dollars with him to pay hotel bills and incidental expenses. But to return to our first day's experience.

On level ground and smooth pavement Steve and Mac held their own with us all right, but they had a beautiful time of it getting up the incline on the other side of 125th Street. Finally, they had to get off and push, while Hugh and I dismounted, stacked our machines, grumbled to one another and waited for them to catch up.

But this drawback wasn't a marker to the tribulations that were in store for them when we struck rough ground in the neighborhood of High Bridge. Hugh and I easily found a path that bore us along famously between the bad spots. They both had to take to the ground again, while we two on our bikes slowed down as much as we could, so as not to get too far ahead.

"This is fearful, Hugh," I turned my head finally to remark to my chum.

"And the worst of it is," he answered in his blunt way, "we can't pitch into and blame them for it. They're just as much disgusted as we are. Can't you think of some way we can get around that exasperating, molly coddling aunt of Steve's? It just makes me sick."

"Poor Mac," I returned. "He's worse off than we are. He hasn't even the consolation of thinking he is making a martyr of himself to oblige relatives."

"But he's doing it for the sake of a friend, isn't he?" That is just as noble of him, I take it."

Hugh was always a quick one.

Well, we plodded on in this way for the best part of the morning; then we came to a good stretch of road again, but Steve and Mac were so used up by their hard work that they hadn't strength nor ambition to make much of a spurt, so Dinsmore and I contented ourselves with quarter mile dashes, at the end of which we wheeled about and came back to our luckless companions on the trike.

"It's like a funeral; that's what it is," declared Hugh, after one of these maneuvers.

I fully agreed with him, but I couldn't think of anything we could do. Of course we were at liberty to go on ahead and leave the slow half of the club, but neither Hugh nor myself would for a moment think of such an expedient.

By reason of our handicap we did not reach the town where we had planned to take our dinner until after two. As we ran up to the hotel we noticed that the piazza was crowded with ladies and gentlemen, mingled with whom were the uniforms of a baseball club. We soon discovered that a match game of considerable importance to the town was to be played that afternoon.

This information was furnished to us by Mac, who, with Steve, had remained outside to dispose of the machine while Hugh and I went in to order dinner.

"We must stop over and see it, Will," declared Mac. "It is the final in a series for the championship of the county."

At this instant Steve came in, breathless with excitement.

"I say, we must stay over," he exclaimed. "I got talking

with a fellow out there, and he wanted me to play at short for them. He'd heard of my work on our nine, and their substitute had just been injured by a carriage. I'd like no better fun than to do it."

"Well, you certainly deserve some fun, old fellow, after this morning's experience," I reflected, and so, as we were all more or less baseball fiends, it was decided that we should lay over till after the game.

Steve's acquaintance came in the dining room to chat while we were eating dinner, and I must say I wasn't greatly impressed by his looks. He was a tall, awkward looking fellow, with small eyes, set rather close together, and his head ran up into a sort of hill at the back, which queerly enough made me think of a monkey, although I never saw a monkey with a head shaped that way.

He—the baseball chap, not the monkey—was the captain of the visiting club, gave his name as Mooney, and laid the flattery on thick on Steve's playing.

Osborn had made some fine records as short stop on our school nine. He was terribly long armed and could reach a ball that would be certain to escape most fellows.

"We've got poor Briggs's suit in a room up stairs," Mooney said, as we were eating our dessert. "You two are about the same size. Come on up as soon as you're through and put it on."

Hugh inquired how "poor Briggs" came to meet with such an unfortunate accident on the very day of the game, but Mooney heard, or pretended to hear, a call from one of his friends on the piazza just then, and didn't wait to answer the question. He was back in a minute, and took us all up stairs, where, in a small room, half a dozen fellows were smoking cigarettes and changing their clothes.

"Here, there's no room for us in there," I said, as we looked in through the doorway. "We'll wait down on the piazza for you, Steve."

"I don't like that Mooney, Will," began Hugh, as we walked back to the stairway. "Did you notice he never looks a fellow straight in the eye?"

"Yes, and he never answered that question you asked him about how their substitute short stop came to get hurt," I added.

Just then Mac gave a joyful exclamation and hurried forward to speak to a group of three young ladies on the piazza. Two of them were friends of his from New York, and the next minute we had been introduced and were chatting away at a great rate.

CHAPTER III.

THE FALL OF THE INVINCIBLES.

"SO you came up from New York on your wheels to see the game?" remarked one of the girls, after we had chatted awhile of the weather and the coincidence of Mac's meeting them so unexpectedly.

"Oh, no, we're on a tour," I hastened to explain.

"But you are surely going to stay and see the match?" put in another of the girls.

"Yes, and help us cheer the Crescents on to victory," added a third.

Hugh and I exchanged glances. The Crescents were the home nine, and our sympathies were now supposed to be with the Invincibles, with whom Steve had cast in his fortunes for the afternoon.

At this point the father of one of the girls and uncle of the other two came up, was presented, and then invited us to walk over to the grounds and occupy seats in the grand stand with his party. We accepted after a trace of hesitation on Steve's account, and twenty minutes later were

packed in among a mass of fluttering ribbons and waving fans.

It had fallen to my lot to act as escort to a bright girl with black, snapping eyes and a quick way of talking that put a fellow on the strain, so to speak, all the time, to be ready for the next idea she'd spring on you.

"It's perfectly horrid those nice Crescents have to play with a club like the Invincibles," she remarked, as she bowed to a smart looking young fellow with a blue crescent on his jersey. "I feel sure it must be because they cheated, that they won so many games."

"You have lots of friends among the Crescents, then?" I rejoined, hoping it wouldn't come out that I had one among the Invincibles.

"I should think so," she replied, "and you must cheer just as loud as ever you can for them."

"Guess I'd better not mention Steve," I told myself.

Well, the game began, with the Invincibles at the bat. The first man struck out, whereupon the young lady rapped my arm with her fan in ecstatic glee, and then watched breathlessly for the next triumph of her favorites. The second Invincible was put out at second base, and then came Steve's turn at the bat.

"What a great, ungainly looking fellow," remarked my companion, whereat I called myself all manner of names for not having explained matters in the first place. Of course I could not do it now, without putting the young lady to confusion.

"There, what did I tell you?" she exclaimed delightedly, as Steve struck his ball straight into the hands of the man at third. "I knew he wasn't any good."

"But just wait, young lady," I felt like remarking, "till the Invincibles take the field. Then you will see what your great, ungainly fellow can do."

The first inning closed with a score 2 to nothing in favor of the Crescents, which brought forth uproarious cheers except from a crowd of men and boys on the opposite side of the diamond, who looked black as thunder clouds as nearly as I could see for the sun. The young ladies of our party were in great spirits and the old gentleman muttered: "Good, good; glad to see those mean spirited Invincibles get their deserts."

Hugh, Mac and I scarcely dared look at one another. To be sure we had done nothing to be ashamed of, but it was not pleasant to feel that our friend's lot was cast with the enemy, as it were.

In the next inning Steve had his opportunity, and he certainly did make the most of it. The Crescent's first man was caught out just as the Invincibles had been, and I was pounding my heels on the boards and halloing "Good—good, there!" before I realized what I was doing.

"It isn't good, Mr. Hasbrouck, it's horrid," declared Miss Renwick. "What are you applauding their side for?"

"But that was a neat catch, you must allow," I rejoined.

"Look, there's Percy Havens at the bat," she cried, evading a reply.

Percy Havens was certainly a natty looking fellow, but he couldn't play baseball worth a cent, and went out on three strikes without any trouble, whereupon the crowd on the other side of the grounds howled with joy, and Miss Renwick began to talk with me volubly about Harvard.

The second inning ended in a tie, and things began to grow exciting. The third resulted in a victory for the Invincibles, the fourth brought the Crescents up with their rivals again, and so it went on till the end of the seventh, when the score still stood 4 to 4, and the excitement was intense. Steve had done his best, and I could see the Invin-

cible men coming up to shake hands with him every once in a while.

"Who is that fellow?" I heard a man say behind me. "He's not the Invincibles substitute short stop, I know."

The eighth inning began and was nearly ended when an incident occurred that broke up the game and made things lively for a while. Percy Havens was at the bat again. From all I could hear on the grand stand he was, in spite of the poor luck he had had thus far, a great favorite—with the girls, at any rate. My seatmate watched breathlessly as he prepared to strike.

"One ball," called the umpire.

Another trial, and "Two balls," came ominously from the same quarter.

There was a dead silence on the grounds as Havens prepared for his third chance. He struck at the ball when it came, hit it and started to run. The ball, too, started forward, then seemed to change its mind, and began to descend toward the ground. Steve's eyes were glued to it, and just as it neared the earth, he threw himself backward, stretched out one of his long arms, fell prostrate on his back for an instant, and then rose with the ball in his hand.

Then pandemonium broke loose. The Invincibles yelled and cheered and threw up their hats, while the Crescents began to hiss and crowded up around the umpire with stern cries of "Judgment, judgment!"

"Of course he never caught it," exclaimed Miss Renwick. "He picked it up off the ground."

"No, it hadn't quite touched yet," I assured her.

And this was the difference of opinion that turned the athletic grounds into a fierce debating arena for the next twenty minutes. Steve declared, as I could make out by his gestures, that he had caught the ball before it touched the earth, and in this he was of course backed by all the Invincibles. The Crescents as stoutly maintained that the ball had been picked up off the ground. The umpire seemed unable to settle the matter. The ball had taken such an entirely unlooked for course and the point at issue was such a close one—a matter of a few inches—that unless somebody had been stationed near the point where it fell with instructions to note distances, nobody but the short stop himself could settle the matter. The short stop, that is, and Hugh, Mac and I. We had all seen Steve make just such a catch at one of our school matches, and now we all three began to recall the incident to one another.

"We must get out there and help him," said Mac.

"Help who?" Miss Renwick wanted to know. "Percy Havens?"

"No, the other one," I answered. "That was a perfectly fair catch. I've seen him make one just like it. Come on, fellows," and leaving the girls in a perfectly scandalized condition, we wormed our way out through the mass of ladies and were soon pushing a path to the center of the excited group on the diamond.

Steve appealed to us at once, and we fearlessly proclaimed knowledge in the matter. Of course this brought out about his connection with our New York nine.

"Then he isn't your regular substitute," the captain of the Crescents demanded, strutting up to the captain of the Invincibles.

"No; he was disabled just before the game," retorted Mooney, but there was an uneasy look in his eye as he spoke.

"How, when, where? You didn't say anything about this before," and the Crescents' captain faced Mooney in a determined fashion.

"Well, it was just as we were starting to come over,"

began Mooney, looking a little frightened, I thought. "You see, he was just going to step into the stage, on the front seat with the driver, when the horses started up and the wheel went over his toe—"

"Toe!" burst forth Hugh at this point. "You told me it was his ankle."

"Oh, yes, I meant his ankle," retorted Mooney, getting as red as his stocking; "his toe—I mean—"

This was enough. With a howl of rage the Crescents swept forward and fairly drove the Invincibles, and us with them, from the grounds. Mooney was caught in his own trap, and as soon as we could disentangle ourselves from the mob, we hurried back to the hotel for our machines, resolved to get out of town with all speed.

"I seem to be nothing but a Jonah this trip," groaned poor Steve, when he had heard about Mac's girl friends. "Like as not they'll never speak to you again, and all because of my crazy notion to play ball."

"Oh, it's all in the tour's adventures," I remarked consolingly. "We wouldn't like it if we hadn't some excitement."

"Well, I'm afraid there won't be much of it on wheels as long as we are lumbered with this heavy thing," returned Steve, as he mounted behind Mac on the trike.

But how far he was from being a true prophet was made startlingly manifest not half an hour later. We had left the town behind us, and had about completed the ascent of a long and particularly steep hill. As usual, Mac and Steve had got off to push, but the last time I looked back they had just remounted. I was about to spurt ahead for a little dash with Hugh on the level, when his voice in sudden alarm attracted my attention.

"Quick, Will," he cried, "the trike!"

As I turned in my saddle he circled around me and headed the other way. I followed suit instantly I saw the cause. The fellows had mounted too soon; they couldn't get force enough to start the tricycle ahead; Steve's weight had lifted the front wheel from the ground, so that the machine could neither be checked nor steered, and now it was rushing backward down the hill like mad, aiming straight for an object in the road the sight of which made my heart leap into my throat with terror.

(To be continued.)

THE COMING PHONOGRAMS.

Don't destroy all the letters you receive. It may be that before you die specimens of the manner in which correspondence was carried on at the present day will possess the historic value that now attaches to spinning wheels and spinnets. Here is what a contemporary has to tell us about Mr. Edison's progress with the practical phonograph:

Mr. Edison is now turning out at his New Jersey factory the first batches of the phonograph cylinders for mailing purposes. Already ordinary phonograph cylinders are sent by post to a considerable extent by people who have machines and who like to hear each other's voices in correspondence.

The new ones are small—only about three inches long by two thirds of an inch in diameter—and one of them inclosed in its pasteboard case, only takes one two cent stamp to carry it as far as San Francisco from Washington. The case itself is cylindrical, with a cotton pad at each end, and also at each end a round wooden projection fitting into the end of the cylinder, so that the outside of the latter does not come into contact at all with the interior of the mailing case. Such a mailing case will serve to carry very many cylinders before it wears out. One of its ends screws on, so that it is something like a bottle.

The Wizard believes that the most important use of the phonograph in the future will be for epistolary purposes, phonograms being sent by mail instead of letters. Each of these little mailing cylinders can be peeled, thin as it is, half a dozen times by the usual attachment of the phonograph for that purpose. It costs only three cents to begin with, and you can hardly get note paper for less than half a cent a sheet. The cost of the necessary mailing cases will not exceed that of envelopes in practice.

BRAD MATTOON

OR,

LIFE AT HOSMER HALL.*

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

HOSMER HALL is a select academy for boys, in the charge of Dr. Hope, who is much beloved by all his pupils. Brad Mattoon, who has led a life of travel and adventure, comes to the academy. His off hand manner and odd dress arouse some ridicule at first, and he makes an enemy of Sidney Ivers, who endeavors to draw him into a trap by a forged letter. The plot is frustrated, and Sidney is expelled. Sidney's father, who owns the Hosmer estate, on which the academy stands, determines to make trouble for Dr. Hope. Brad leads the boys to victory in a snowball fight, punishes Sidney Ivers, whom he has caught bullying a small boy named Wilton, and by numerous other acts gains great popularity. A great skating contest takes place, which Brad enters, his chief opponent being Eugene Clifford, a fine athlete and a general leader among the boys—Eugene is a little jealous of Brad, and the contest is sharp. In the first event—the 200 yards dash—the heel comes off Brad's shoe and Eugene wins. Being re-equipped, Brad pluckily determines to recover lost ground by winning the succeeding events, the first of which is fancy skating.

CHAPTER XXI.—(CONTINUED.)

THE CONTEST.

BRAD buttoned up his jacket, and slid out into the open space. The story of his mishap had been pretty well circulated by this time, and had aroused universal sympathy, so that he found himself the recipient of a very generous greeting of applause when he made his appearance. To this encouraging sound he struck boldly out into the center of the space and began his work.

At first he confined himself to the conventional figures, only varying them with curious combinations of his own invention, and afterwards elaborating them until they were almost unrecognizable. It was to the spectators like the playing of well known tunes with innumerable variations and embellishments. Many of these were very clever, and elicited outbursts of applause. Brad felt that he had a thoroughly well versed and appreciative audience, and was stimulated to do his utmost. He had not proceeded far when the judges began to open their eyes, and watch him more intently, while spectators looked at one another with expressions of surprise and interest. There was something new and taking about Brad, and the admiration for him grew rapidly.

At last, when he had exhausted his resources in two foot figures, he prepared himself for a *finale* which he had carefully thought out during the past week, and as carefully practiced.

He first retired some considerable distance up the race course. Then, pausing a moment, he took a good start and came flying down the course on one foot. As he entered the open space in front of the clubhouse, he made a complete circuit of it, still on the same foot, gradually narrowed the circle, making a curve inward toward the center, and then suddenly passed into a series of one foot figures that made the spectators fairly giddy.

Without changing his foot, but using the other foot as a means of propulsion as well as balance, he continued whirling, twisting, curving, and bending in innumerable graceful figures, tracing out almost every curious and fanciful design that the curve is capable of forming. Such a performance had never been seen on the lake before, and the spectators sat open eyed for a moment, wondering where he got the mysterious motive power that carried him on and on without the least symptom of flagging. When at length Brad had completed his repertoire, and slid quickly out of the open space, an outburst of applause arose that lasted for several minutes. Harold Fisk came forward enthusiastically,

* Begun in No 436 of THE ARGOSY.

grasped him by the hand, and tried to entice him out to acknowledge the applause, but this Brad sturdily refused to do.

"Well, the prize is yours, anyhow," said Fisk. "We settled that soon enough. And now I have a proposition to make. A number of people have asked to see some waltzing on the ice. Of course you know the step. Will you waltz with Miss Lena Carter?"

Brad blushed with pleasure.

"Why, certainly, but I—I don't know Miss Carter," he said.

"Oh, well, that's nothing. Come along. I'll introduce you," and Fisk started to lead the way.

"Jerusalem, Brad!" exclaimed Perry Landon softly over his shoulder. "How you are rubbing it into Eugene Clifford for beating you in that first race. To take the prize this time was enough, but to take the girl too!—just look at Eugene over there."

Brad stopped and turned in an instant. Clifford was standing a few yards away, his face clouded and bent downward, and kicking nervously at the ice with the toe of his skate. His feelings were easy to guess.

In an instant Brad's mind was made up.

"One minute, Mr. Fisk," he said.

Harold Fisk came back.

"On second thought I think I will have to decline. You see, I haven't had much time to practice this winter, and my work has completely tired me out. I want to rest so as to be ready for the last race."

Fisk started to remonstrate.

"No," insisted Brad, "and besides I am not sure that my step would suit Miss Carter, and I would hate to make a botch of it. Now there is Eugene Clifford over there. He must have skated with her often, and he can do the waltz justice, for he is rested."

Harold Fisk turned reluctantly away.

"Don't let Eugene guess that you have spoken to me, please," added Brad. Then, as Fisk passed on, Brad continued to Perry, "No fellow of any spirit wants to be second fiddle. I wish Fisk had asked Eugene at first. But still he won't know the difference."

They watched Fisk speak to Clifford; saw the latter hesitate a moment; then saw his face brighten a little as he followed Fisk out to the open ice; and then they went into the clubhouse, where Brad threw himself down upon a sofa to rest.

Brad had another reason for wanting to win the last race, in addition to the medal and general prize, which a victory in the final event would secure—and that was to make up for the exasperating result of the first race.

A loud outburst of applause announced the close of the boys' race, which was won by some sturdy Bramford youngster, who seemed to be a general favorite, but whom neither Brad nor Perry knew.

Then came Rob Wilton to the door with the summons.

"All out for the last race!"

Brad was on his feet in a moment.

"How do you feel?" asked Perry.

"Fresh as a lark," was Brad's cheery answer.

"All right, old boy, show them what you can do this time."

"Put in your best licks now," was Perry's last word as Brad stepped on the ice, "and the silver cup is yours."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FINAL RACE.

SIX contestants were entered for the half mile race; Brad, Eugene Clifford, Bob Turner, and another Bramford man, Fred Dawson, and Dan Ellis, the last named not a whit abashed by the ten yards difference that lay between him and Clifford at the close of the two hundred yard dash



THE ADMIRATION FOR BRAD GREW RAPIDLY.

The course being one eighth of a mile in circuit, four laps of course constituted the half mile race, the starting and finishing line being just in front of the grand stand.

There was a general clapping of hands as the six boys took their positions; and then followed the deep hush that precedes the signal to start. It was but a moment: then the starter's word of warning, the sharp crack of the pistol, and the racers were off.

Though there were six, the interest of the spectators was naturally confined to Clifford and Brad, and of this interest the latter obtained his full share. The sympathy which his mishap in the first race had aroused, and the admiration which his skill in fancy skating had so justly earned, made him a prime favorite. As to the issue of the half mile race, however, the sporting experts among the spectators differed in opinion. Some held that Brad would surely have won the first race had he not been unfortunate, and believed they detected in his stroke a strength, speed and lasting power that would assure him victory in the last race. Others retained too great a respect for Eugene Clifford's past record, and too firm a faith in his ability to improve on that record to take up readily with a newcomer. They readily acknowledged Brad's unrivaled superiority in fancy skating, but they remained unconvinced as yet of his ability as a racer.

At the start, then, there was a slight balance of feeling in favor of Clifford. This grew during the first lap, for Eugene took the lead at once, gaining until he placed a good six feet between himself and Brad. They were in this relative position when they came down to the grand stand, and turned the curve for the second lap, and a loud outburst of applause greeted Eugene as he swept around and started again up the curve. In a moment more, however, this was drowned in cries of surprise and delight from Brad's particular admirers.

"By George, look at Corduroy! See him creep! See him crawl up! Gained a foot! Another one! Go it, Corduroy! Go it! Another foot! Keep it up! Look at that! They're abreast! Good boy! Hurrah for Corduroy!"

Sure enough Brad, immediately on rounding the curve for the second lap, took a spurt and gained steadily, lessening the distance foot by foot until he was nearly abreast of Eugene. Bob Turner was some seven feet in the rear, while the others were pressing him closely. In this manner they rounded the upper curve, and came down toward the grand stand again, Brad and Eugene nip and tuck. It was an exciting moment, and the lake rang with the conflicting cries of the spectators supporting the two leaders. It was Brad's turn now, however, for, while rounding the curve for the third lap, he gained another two feet and took the lead, accompanied by a wild volley of cheers. As he did so, Brad heard Eugene Clifford utter a quick, passionate exclamation, and dig the blades of his skates into the ice in shorter and more rapid strokes.

Eugene's feelings would not be hard to guess, as he faced the prospect of the loss of the medal, the general prize, and his hitherto unrivaled reputation as a racer—all in this one defeat; but Brad had no time to think of this. His sporting blood was up, and he was sternly bent on winning that prize if it cost him a limb.

Up the course they went again, this time on the third lap, and Brad still holding the lead. As they reached the upper turn, Clifford began to push Brad very closely, pressing hard just behind his back. So close did he press that Brad began to fear a collision.

"Keep off, Eugene!" he cried. "Turn out! The inside track is mine."

Eugene paid no heed, however, and, just as they reached the curve at the upper end, he pressed Brad quickly forward, wedged himself into the inside track, and regained the lead by making a shorter turn than his opponent. It was a clever trick and cleverly done—but not fairly done, for Brad had felt a distinct shove in the back which sent him out of his track. This, however, was not noticed at that distance by the spectators, as their loud cheers for Clifford testified, and it had only the effect of angering Brad beyond measure.

When, therefore, they started again down the straight, long stretch toward the grand stand, Brad, with heart beating wildly, partly with excitement, partly with anger, set his teeth and hurled himself forward with renewed strength. On and on they came, flying on the wings of the wind, and turned the curve for the fourth and last lap with Eugene still just barely in the lead. The excitement was now fast culminating, and the tumult of cheers and cries from the grand stand and clubhouse passed all description.

On the way up the course the positions during the previous lap were just reversed, Eugene leading, with Brad pressing him hard. As they approached the upper curve the idea suddenly flashed over Brad's mind: "Why not shove *him* this time. It would give me the race, and serve him right. It would only be tit for tat."

It flashed there only for an instant, however.

"No," was his second thought, "I can beat him without that—or not at all. He's getting winded now, and I can overhaul him on the homestretch—"

"Look out, Eugene! Look out with your skate! What are you trying to do?" cried Brad loudly, as, at this moment, Eugene's skate struck his with a vicious click.

Whether it was intentional or not only the sequel could tell. One thing was certain: Clifford was growing desperate. In spite of his previous training, Brad had pushed him so hard that he was fast becoming winded. He was of course conscious of this, as well as of the fact that Brad appeared still in fair wind and good condition. Though in the lead at the turn, he did not enter the home stretch confidently. He was panting heavily, and his face showed the desperate tenacity with which he clung to the hope of winning—that set, hard expression that betrays the reckless determination to gain the victory at all hazards.

He paid no attention to Brad's words, but kept hugging the inside track closely. Now that they were on the homestretch, Brad determined to let himself out to his full bent—to make every drop of blood in his body tell. Accordingly he shifted to the right a little, and endeavored to pass out and around Clifford, but the latter anticipated him by shifting also to the right. Again their skates collided.

"Keep out of my track!" shouted Brad, shifting to the inside this time.

Clifford tried to shift back again in order to keep in front of him, but Brad was too quick for him, and succeeded in gaining a position on the inside track just abreast of Eugene.

Then came a sudden clash of the skates; again Brad's cry of warning, still unheeded; another clash; and then Eugene, with a quick exclamation of alarm, plunged forward head foremost, the impetus of his speed carrying him several feet through the air, and landing him on a rough heap of broken ice at the side of the track.

Brad was staggered for a moment, and stumbled forward several strokes, but recovered himself, losing only a few feet of the long lead he had on Bob Turner and the others; then dashed on down the homestretch, and finished the race alone, from the spectators.

sweeping in over the winning line, to an uproarious salute.

Brad brought himself to a short standstill, and stood leaning heavily on the arm of Harold Fisk, while Perry Landon hastened up with many others to congratulate him. He was utterly fagged out, winded, and profusely perspiring from his violent exertions, and willingly enough slipped on the overcoat which Perry brought him.

"But how about Clifford?" said Brad, as soon as he could find breath enough to answer Fisk's congratulations. "He was ahead when he fell."

"He could not have taken the prize had he kept the lead," answered Fisk. "We had already decided that he fouled you before the accident happened."

Their conversation was here suddenly interrupted. The cheers of the spectators had stopped rather abruptly, and now expressions of alarm were heard from all sides.

"What can be the matter with Eugene?" exclaimed Perry.

Brad turned quickly.

Eugene Clifford lay just where he had fallen—half way up the track—his body huddled up and still as death.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BRAD PLAYS THE SURGEON.

IN an instant Brad was off, heading a party of a dozen or more, who hurried up the course to the spot where Eugene lay. As he approached, a sharp cry escaped Brad. The ice immediately about Eugene *was covered with*

blood. Hastening forward, Brad took him gently by the shoulders and endeavored to raise him. Immediately a sudden spurt of blood splattered his hands and the front of his coat. With exclamations of horror the rest gathered about, while Brad quickly turned Eugene over on his back.

"See!" he exclaimed. "That gash in his wrist. An artery has been cut— Look out!" Here the blood again spurting freely.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed one boy; "what can we do?"

"Do!" cried Brad. "Bring me some snow right away for one thing—quick, too; every second counts. Here, Perry, support his head, will you?"

Perry Landon rested Eugene's head on his knee and held his shoulders. The injured arm—the left—hung down at his side, and the blood gushed out over his hand, utterly discoloring it.

Brad grasped the arm immediately, turned it upward, and then seeking the right spot on the wrist above the cut, gripped and pressed it firmly with his fingers. An improvement was apparent at once in the marked diminution in the flow of the blood.

The snow was now brought, and Brad, seizing handfuls of it, packed it hastily in and around the wound.

"Not the best sort of a bandage, but it will help to congeal the blood," he said. "Now for tightening the pressure up above. Give me all the handkerchiefs you can."

The bystanders, who now stood in great numbers close about him instantly tossed out handkerchief after handkerchief.

Somewhat restored by the touch of the red snow, Eugene, who had been stunned by the force with which his head met the ice, now opened his eyes and gazed in a dazed manner at the frightened faces about him, finally resting on Brad.

"It's all right, old fellow," said the latter cheerily. "All right—only a little cut. Keep perfectly still, and we'll fix you up in no time."

Brad was picking up the handkerchiefs, when he noticed Rob Wilton just in front of him.

"Brad, can't I help?" asked the little dominie.

Brad's first thought was that the little fellow's nerves would be shaken, but the latter's evident firmness immediately dispelled this doubt.

"Yes, you can," he said. "Knot these handkerchiefs into one long bandage."

Rob Wilton was on his knees at work in an instant. Meanwhile Brad was surveying the arm, which Eugene, with closed eyes, willingly yielded to his care.

"What are you thinking of doing, young man?" said a strong, deep voice just behind Brad. The latter turned. It was Judge Carter who spoke.

"I am thinking of something that will keep the same pressure on the artery that my finger does. It's all right so long as I hold on, but I am growing tired, and I need something to continue the pressure— Ah! I have it." And Brad took from his pocket a smooth, polished Panama sea bean, about the size of a large almond. "Just the thing—my pocket piece."

Placing this just over the spot where his finger had rested, Brad seized the long strip of handkerchiefs which Rob Wilton had knotted, and began swathing the arm about, being careful to press and keep the sea bean in its place.

Judge Carter, who had pushed his way through the crowd, knelt down and watched Brad carefully. Evidently impressed by the latter's confidence and skill, he said little except to offer a word or two of suggestion during the course of the operation.

"There now!" exclaimed Brad. "That will make him safe until we can get him to a surgeon or physician. Where is the nearest one?"

"There is only one physician in Bramford—Dr. Leonard," answered Judge Carter. "Better drive to him at once. Here, one of you boys run down to the clubhouse, unhitch my horse, and drive the sleigh up here. Hurry now. Do you know where the doctor lives?"

"No," answered Brad.

"I can show you," said Rob Wilton quickly. "Take me with you."

The sleigh—a two seated one—arrived in a minute more.

"Now lift him carefully," said the judge. "Mr. Landon, suppose you drive them. There will not be room for me, so you can bring the sleigh home when you have finished with it. When you do, stop at the house and let me know how you have fared and if I can do anything for Eugene."

The crowd broke quickly aside, and Eugene was lifted gently into the sleigh, Perry Landon slipping his skates off. Brad hastily took off his skates also, and got into the sleigh, together with Rob Wilton, both of them assisting in supporting Eugene in a comfortable position. Then Perry Landon, mounted upon the front seat, seized the reins and touched up the horse.

"Don't be afraid to drive fast," called Judge Carter after him. "Get him into the doctor's hands at the earliest moment."

(To be continued.)

ARTHUR BLAISDELL'S CHOICE.*

BY W. BERT FOSTER.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

THE two Blaisdell boys—Hal and Arthur—live with their widowed mother in Providence. It has become necessary for the sons to go to work at once, but positions are difficult to get. Arthur has literary tastes, and through the efforts of Mr. Olney, a friend of the family, a situation is obtained for one of the boys on the *Journal*. In the natural order of things, this would have been taken by Arthur, but just at this time Mr. Olney secures the offer of another place—as that of driver of a milk wagon for Hiram Hart, who lives just outside of the city. Hal seems to do such work; but for the sake of the addition to their slender income, Arthur decides to give the post on the paper to his brother and accept that with Mr. Hart for himself.

He finds it rather dull in the country, but still has some rather lively adventures at a temperance meeting, to which he goes with Bill Olney, who works on the *Pegrim* place next door, and where he is introduced to Miss Annie Remington and her sister, whom he had met on the road in the morning when they were frightened by the bursting out of the bushes of a trampish looking individual. With the latter, who gives his name as Ben Norton, Arthur Blaisdell afterwards falls into conversation, finds him to be altogether inoffensive, and secures for him a place with old man Hart, Hiram Hart's father, where Arthur himself lives. One day, while on his way to the wood lot where Ben Norton is at work, Arthur is passed by a stranger, mounted on an exceedingly handsome horse. He is amazed a few minutes later by perceiving through the bushes this stranger and Norton face to face, the latter with his axe upraised, as though about to strike.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN EXCITING SCENE.

"CHESS GARDNER!" exclaimed Ben Norton again, still advancing on the man before him. "How came you here?"

The man made no reply and moved not a muscle for a moment. When he spoke it was in a calm, seemingly unexcited tone.

"Don't come any nearer with that thing, Ben," he said.

But as the young man continued to advance still with the ugly looking instrument raised, the stranger dropped his riding whip to the ground, and the next instant the shining barrel of a revolver looked Ben full in the face.

"Don't come any nearer," repeated the stranger in the same calm voice, and Ben slowly lowered his axe and obeyed.

"This isn't a very pleasant manner for old friends to meet," continued the man.

"Friends!" exclaimed Ben, with a terrible imprecation.

*Begun in No. 439 of THE ARGOSY.

"Yes, friends," repeated the other coolly, returning his weapon to his pocket. "Why shouldn't we be friends? We know each other too well to be aught else."

"To the fiends with you!" was Ben's only reply, and he gritted his teeth in rage.

"Much obliged, I'm sure," returned the man, with a sarcastic curl of his lip. "But I must say I don't understand you."

"Haven't you done enough to make me hate you?" inquired Ben, in a low but fearfully earnest voice.

"What have I done?" asked the other, in a surprised tone.

"You know," said Ben, still in a low voice. "You led me into *that* and then betrayed me to the authorities. And then you come sneaking around calling yourself my friend! Oh——" and the young fellow stopped, choked for utterance.

"It's a lie!" cried the man, in seeming astonishment. "Who told you that?"

"You can't fool me," replied the other. "The sheriff of Wallace County told me himself that you set them on the trail of us before you vamoosed."

"I!" cried the man indignantly. "I, Chess Gardner, go back on a partner! It's a lie!"

"You did not?" questioned Ben, as though doubting his own senses at the other's vehemence.

"I did not!" replied the other, with as much emphasis as before.

"Sheriff Dickson had good reason for saying so, I reckon," said Ben doggedly.

"He had his *own* reasons. I had no means of knowing that the attack was to be made until the very hour it took place, and then it was too late to warn you fellows," declared the man.

"I don't believe you. No one knew where we were camping but you, and we were surrounded and shot down or captured before one could escape. They didn't *happen* to strike our trail, but Dickson knew just *where* to come."

"I tell you it is a lie," again reiterated the stranger.

"Don't tell me that again!" exclaimed Ben fiercely, "or one of us will never leave this spot alive. Only four of us ever lived to finish our three year terms, and when we were free we met and swore to be revenged on the man who betrayed us! I should have done it now had you not got the drop on me."

These words were uttered with a terrible calmness.

"You would have made a mistake had you done so," said Gardner, in nowise moved.

"Don't stand there and lie to me," exclaimed Ben again. Then, in a more subdued tone, he went on: "What evil spirit could have sent you to this place to torment me? I thought I had found the most God forsaken spot in all the universe, where neither you nor any one else who knew me would follow. I've started to live my life over, and now have *you* come here to spoil it all?"

"No evil spirit, I assure you," replied Gardner, paying no attention to the latter part of Ben's speech. "I call it grand good luck that has thrown you in my path again, although you haven't received me particularly gladly, it seems. When I rode away from Sheridan four years ago I never expected to see one of you boys again; and I tell you frankly, Ben, it isn't a pleasant feeling to know that your friends are in danger and yourself unable to assist or warn them."

Ben made a motion of disgust, but only said:

"I know well enough what it is to be *without* friends."

"Not while I live, my boy!" exclaimed the other heartily.

"Do you think I could forget one whom I have ridden, fought, and camped with a thousand times? Why, Ben, it *hurts* to have an old chum meet me as coldly as you do."

"Don't call me your chum. I'm done with you and your kind forever."

"Don't be too sure of that," exclaimed Gardner hoarsely; but, choking down his resentment, he continued calmly:

"Let me explain, Ben. When I left camp that morning——"

"There's no need to explain—I know it all," interrupted Ben fiercely. "Don't think you can come here and smooth it all over with me, you snake in the grass!"

"Come, Ben, I won't stand this talk much longer. If I didn't know you would be sorry for it when you cool down, I wouldn't stay here as it is."

"If you don't like what I say you can leave, and the quicker the better."

"But suppose I don't choose to?"

"Then you'll have to take what I say, I reckon. And now I tell you again, I don't want anything to do with you."

"But suppose I choose to make you have something to do with me?"

"Your threats do not trouble me in the least. You are in more danger from me than I am from you. You shall not come here to tempt me. Go now; I mean what I say," and he pointed along the path. "Go, or you or I will have murder on our hands!"

The man stood a moment, convulsively working his fingers, and then, picking up his riding whip, turned away without a word.

Arthur, who had remained a thrilled and interested, though silent listener to the conversation, had been completely screened from both the actors in the scene by an intervening bush. At this termination of the conversation, he stole swiftly away and made his way back across the fields to the farmhouse.

He had understood enough to know that some time in the past Ben Norton had been mixed up with this stranger in some sort of crime, but that Ben was endeavoring to retrieve his wrong doing.

"I'm sorry I heard them," he muttered; "but I'm glad Ben is no worse than he is. He will not heed that scoundrel, and I will not be mean enough to repeat what little I know of his past. Poor fellow! he may have been greatly tempted—for that man looks capable of tempting an angel of light."

But had Arthur looked back he would have seen that the gray horse still stood fastened to the fence, pawing the earth impatiently; and there he remained until the dinner horn was blown to summon Ben from the wood lot.

Then his master appeared, and, unfastening the animal, mounted and cantered slowly away.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN UNEXPECTED RESPONSIBILITY.

WHEN Ben came in to dinner he seemed pale and agitated; but no one noticed his emotion except Arthur, and he could easily explain it. He would have liked to have given the fellow that help and sympathy we all need at times, but he could not do this without revealing to Ben that he had been a spectator of the scene in the woods. As it was, he tried to be especially pleasant and kind to him, and succeeded perhaps in helping Ben to escape some of the tormenting thoughts which had been brought to his mind by the incident of the morning.

A day or two later Arthur was requested to drive around by the Center for the mail, and accordingly did so. When he arrived at the post office, quite a number of the men were loitering about, waiting for the noon mail, that

had not yet arrived. That being the case, Arthur fastened his horse and mounted to the piazza.

As he did so, he saw a figure, which he easily recognized as that of Bob Harris, slip away from a group just inside the door, and make its exit by the back window. Under the circumstances, Arthur thought it would perhaps be better for him to remain outside and watch his team, or Bob might play some trick with it. So he sat down on the railing of the piazza.

"Hello!" suddenly exclaimed somebody behind him, and

awoke from a doze and exclaimed, in his thin, high, squeaky voice:

"What's that that's gittin' scurcer 'n scurcer?"

"The quail, Uncle Welcome," returned Hal.

"Quail!" snorted the old man. "Who wants quail when there's plenty o' pigeons. Who wants em, I say?"

"Nobody, nobody, uncle," returned Hal soothingly, and with a wink at Arthur; "but there hain't no pigeons now-adays."

"There hain't! Wal, there uster be," said the old man. "I kin 'member when they was so thick over in the swamp land 't ye c'dn't step 'thout killin' 'em."

"Pigeons?" exclaimed Arthur.

"Yes-sir-ree—pigeons," declared the old man emphatically. "I 'member one night; 'twas in the fall of—le's see—'bout eighteen-fifteen, I kalkerlate. Any way I was quite a sprig of a boy. Father came in one night arter chore time, an' says he, 'Welcome,' says he, don't yer wanter go aout arter supper an' git some pigeons?' says he. An' I says 'yes.' So, arter supper we went aout doors an' got a couple o' good clubs an' started f'r the West Woods. The woods was quite er little distance off; but purty soon we c'd hear the pigeons a-kewin' an' a-kewin', but twas so dark in the woods we couldn't see 'em. Wal, when we got inter the woods a ways we threw up aour clubs inter th' trees. 'Twere so 'tarnal dark we couldn't see ter pick up the birds, though we heered 'em fallin' raound us, an' o' course we couldn't find our clubs when we'd thrown 'em once, so we come hum. But the nex' mornin' we went aout with a bush'l basket an' a three peck basket, an', b'gosh, we filled 'em both! Pigeons were mas ter thick about here in them days."

"That ol' chap," said Hal, who had edged further and further away during the progress of the story, and who now beckoned Arthur to follow him outside—"that ol' chap is the champion Continental liar o' this 'ere universe. But bless ye, he b'lieves 'em all himself."

About this time the noon mail arrived on the stage from the city, and Arthur got all there was for the Hart family and started for home. On coming in sight of the house he noticed a carriage standing before the door, and Ben Norton, with Bill Olney and one or two other neighbors, were out by the barn.

"What's the matter?" asked Arthur anxiously.

"Hi's been tuck sudden. Struck daown jest like lightnin'," returned Bill.

"The doctor says it's sunstroke," said Ben, assisting Arthur to unharness. "He fell in the hay field this morning, and has been unconscious ever since. He's overworked himself. I guess that's more than half of it."

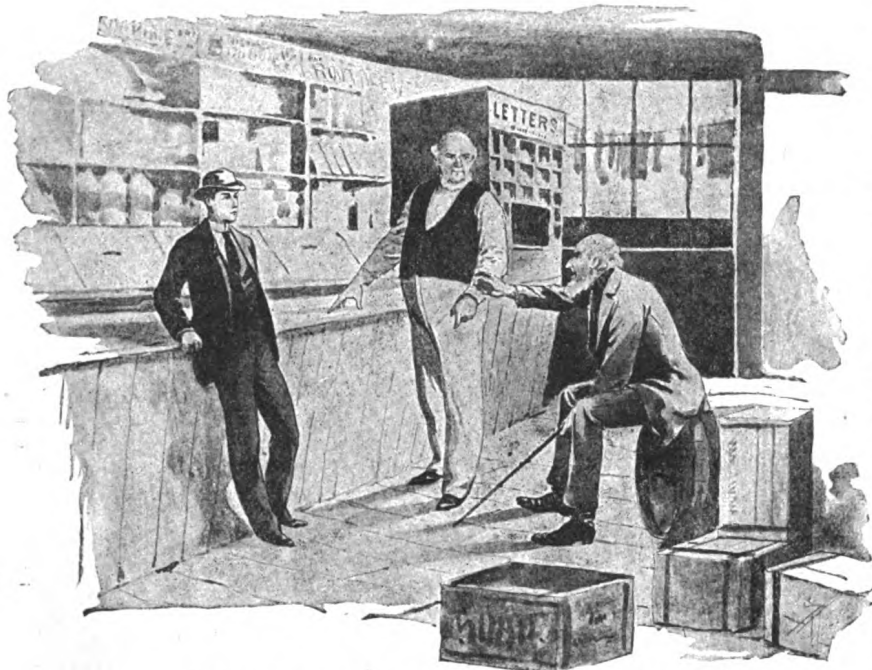
"I was afraid of that," said Arthur, and as quickly as possible he entered the house.

He found Mrs. Hart up stairs in the sitting room. She was crying softly when Arthur entered.

"I'm glad you've come," she said. "He has come to, and has been asking for you."

"Where is he?"

She motioned towards the parlor, and Art stepped



"PIGEONS WERE THICK ABOUT HERE IN THEM DAYS."

Hal Kenyon stepped upon the piazza and clapped him familiarly on the shoulder.

"How are you?" returned Arthur, extending his hand.

"First rate; haow's yerself? Don't see you daown to the tem'prance club any more."

"Oh, I intend coming again some time," returned Arthur; "but I am pretty busy nowadays. I have to attend to everything about the milk team, Hi is so busy. He's working himself sick."

"Sho! Yer don't say! He'd oughter be more careful. He's got a good, rugged constitooion, but he ain't uster workin' aout in the field much."

"The sun affects him easily," said Arthur, "and he'll be flat on his back, I tell him, before he knows it."

"I see him a-workin' like a good 'un when I was over in our east medder yesterday. Ye know, it jines ol' man Hart's land. I was over there lookin' ter see what chance there was goin' ter be f'r quail this fall. I'd heered 'em whistlin' consider'ble lately."

"I've seen two or three flock of them, or else the same flock two or three times, in Mr. Hart's wood lot. Are there many about here usually?"

"Wal, there useter be," returned the young farmer; "but they're gittin' scarcer 'n scarcer every year."

At this, old Mr. Arnold, who was occupying a box behind them, where he usually sat through the day time, suddenly

across the room and gently opened the door. The plainly furnished little parlor had been hastily turned into a bed chamber, and the windows darkened until he could hardly see persons and objects in the apartment.

On the bed lay the form of Hiram, his head tightly bandaged, rolling from side to side on the pillow. At the foot of the bed a tall gentleman stood, whom Arthur rightly supposed to be the doctor, and his aunt—Mrs. Carpenter—sat holding one of his hands in her own.

"Arthur has come," she murmured with a sigh of relief, as the doctor motioned him to approach.

His eyes were wide open, and a smile lit up his face as he saw his trusty young assistant.

"Your prophecy's come true," he whispered. "I'm flat on my back, you see, and the doctor says I'm going to have a time of it. But I shall pull through."

He stopped a moment for breath, and then continued weakly:

"Will you stick by me, Art, and see me through it?"

"Can you trust me to run it all?" inquired Arthur.

"Trust you? With anything, Art. If you will look out for everything—money, stock, and all—you'll take a big load off my mind, and I'll make it all right with you when I get well."

"I'll do my best, Hi."

"God bless you, Art. I can be sick in peace now. Now, doctor, do your worst," he said, with a feeble attempt to be jocular. "I reckon I can stand it."

"That's done him more good than all my drugs could," whispered the doctor in Arthur's ear, as he ushered him from the room.

But Arthur had made the promise with much fear and trembling, although he hardly realized all the obstacles he would have to surmount. Nevertheless, he took up the duty bravely.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE STAFF.

BUT where was Hal Blaisdell all this time? Although so different from his kind hearted and impetuous brother, he was not without many qualities which would in time make him a strong and thoughtful man.

He accepted the opening on the *Journal* thankfully, yet thinking with complaisance that, being older, he was much better fitted for the position than Arthur. Mr. Olney went with him to the office and introduced him to the managing editor, Mr. Jennings. Mr. Jennings in turn presented him to Mr. Doliver, one of the sub-editors, at the time saying that "they liked the style in which he had written up the account of that accident at the Park, and if he continued to write as well there could be no trouble about his suiting."

Hal was on the point of explaining that it was his brother who had written the account, but the thought flashed across his mind that if he did so it would perhaps necessitate further explanation. So he refrained from saying anything to correct the editor's impression, and politely replied to Mr. Doliver's salutation.

He had no intention of sailing under false colors, or of accrediting any of Arthur's work to himself. He thought his style of writing quite as good as his brother's, notwithstanding Mr. Jennings's opinion on the subject. But as Mr. Doliver requested him to wait a few moments until he should be at leisure to take him to the reporter's room, Hal walked over to the news desk, and finding Arthur's article in the issue of the day before, he read it through carefully.

The piece was in Arthur's happiest style—bright, racy, and told in a semi-humorous manner, which plainly showed that

the writer had been interested in what he was relating. It was far different from his own style, but Hal was too sensible not to understand that if he wished to keep his position he must copy after his brother to some extent, at least.

Doliver was at leisure shortly, and beckoning Hal to follow him, he led the way up two winding and narrow flights of stairs to a large, well lighted room, which was furnished for the most part with rows of desks, tables and comfortable looking leather bottomed chairs.

At one corner a square was divided off by glass partitions like an office. Two men were busily writing at the desks as they entered, but neither raised his eyes as Hal followed his silent leader down the long room to the office. In an arm-chair, his feet planted squarely on the top of the desk, and a long string of proofs in his hand, they found the reportorial, or "city" editor.

"Mr. Coffin," said the sub editor gravely, "this is Mr. Blaisdell."

"Humph! all right. Glad to know it," returned the individual addressed, without moving or raising his eyes from the proof. "But what in thunder have you brought him here for, Doliver?"

"He's to be a reporter," returned Doliver, in the same solemn manner. "For all the world," thought Hal, "as though he was attending a funeral or was initiating a candidate into a secret society."

"Oh, he is?" said Mr. Coffin, without showing any more interest. "All right. You can leave him;" and as Doliver turned silently away, Hal found himself deposited, like an express package, at the door of the city editor's office.

To say the least, it was galling to Hal Blaisdell's dignity. For five minutes he stood there; first, on one foot and then on the other, outwardly cool, but inwardly boiling with rage at such treatment. But the angrier he became and the longer he waited the cooler he grew, and finally he sauntered carelessly over to a window and looked out, idly drumming on the sill.

He had barely commenced this amusing occupation when one of the men at the reportorial desks—a tall, stern looking man, with a ferocious black mustache, threw a pencil in his direction with such good will that it splintered itself on the window casing.

"Don't disturb Horatio while the fires of genius burn," said the other reporter, who sat nearer Hal's position, and who was turning out page after page of rapidly written though legible manuscript, in a very "lady-like" hand; and laughing softly, he continued, "You'll soon learn, stranger, that if you remain here, as 'Doliver the Meek,' stated you were going to, that the next thing Horatio does, after throwing his pencil, is to throw the offender out of the window."

"Mont," suddenly exclaimed the city editor, bringing his feet down to the floor with a sounding thud "have you got that finished?"

"No," returned the reporter who had spoken to Hal, still busily writing as he talked, "but I shall get it done some time. Don't be impatient."

"Impatient! Confound you," fumed the editor. "You ought to have had that done by nine o'clock, and it's eleven now."

"Locks five minutes to it," replied the other coolly, glancing at the electric clock on the wall. "What can you expect of a fellow who didn't get to bed until four?"

"Going to bed's got nothing to do with it. If you'd kept away from the sideboard you'd have been all right. Wouldn't have needed any sleep."

"I didn't drink a drop of anything but champagne—'pon honor!"

"Better haf taken whisky," growled the ferocious looking man, gathering up the matter he had written and passing it to the editor,

"Go on, you old Dutchman," returned the young reporter. "You haven't a grain of self respect. I didn't go to a wake last night, it was a marriage."

"Well, Charlie's been waiting a wake for the copy," said the other, with as good an imitation of an Irish brogue as he had before given of German, and rising, he gathered up his pencils.

"How far you got, Mont?" demanded Mr. Coffin, hastily scanning the manuscript he had just received, and then cramming it into the empty box and sending it shooting down stairs to the composing room.

"Got to the presents," returned Mont.

"Well, cut 'em short," said Coffin. Then wheeling suddenly upon Hal, he demanded, "Well, Blaisdell, what can *you* do?"

"I can wait right here until you give me your orders," replied Hal sharply.

"Bravo! bravo?" exclaimed Mont, softly clapping his hands together, while the ferocious looking reporter went through a paroxysm of silent laughter.

"I rather think you haf met your match," he said to Coffin.

But the city editor seemed to take Hal's remark—which certainly was impertinent—very good naturedly.

"I'm glad you can do that much," he remarked dryly. "But I guess we can find something else for you to do. There's nothing much going on, but le's see—ah, I have it!" he exclaimed, tapping his forehead with one long, shapely forefinger. "Just rustle down to the wharves and see what's come in lately. I understand there's an iron screw steamer expected in from Liverpool direct. You'll find it at Fox Point, if anywhere. Get it in as soon as possible—not later than two, any way."

And thus did Hal receive his first appointment. It was a pleasant day, and he enjoyed his hour's ramble along the wharves. The iron screw steamer, loaded with pig iron, had arrived at the wharf during the previous high tide, and now that the water had subsided, it lay over on the muddy bottom, its draught being too great for it to remain perfectly upright at low water.

He watched with interest the browned and sturdy looking English sailors, carelessly working about the inclined deck, each dressed in blouse, bell muzzle trousers and Scotch cap, with sheath knife slung at the hip. He obtained a few words with the mate, who was a "bloomin' Britisher," and mightily filled with his own importance, and from an old longshoreman, who was smoking his pipe on the edge of the wharf near by, he got a number of interesting facts in relation to the strange steamer and others of her kind who had formerly put in at the port of Providence.

He returned to the reporters' room about one o'clock, wrote out his notes and left them on Mr. Coffin's desk, and after running out for lunch, returned to report himself for further duty.

On his arrival, he found half a dozen men beside himself waiting for the city editor, and all evidently reporters. The two whom he had seen during the forenoon were among them, and all were sitting idly about on the desks, telling stories.

The *Journal's* reportorial staff consisted of eleven men, beside the innumerable correspondents, each of whom covered the town or village in which he resided. The *Journal* was a "blanket sheet" of eight, ten or twelve pages, according to the amount of news and advertising; for

nowadays the size of a great daily is governed by the advertising department more than by anything else.

The young fellow called Mont by his companions, was particularly friendly towards Hal, and introduced him to the men present. The tall one of the ferocious mustache, and who was forever mimicking something or somebody, was Horatio Guelph. Then there was Tom Hayward, a rosy cheeked, smooth faced chap, who looked younger than Hal, though he was in fact some years his senior.

The other three were named respectively Smith, Jordan and Braintree. Smith was a man well along in years, with a large family, while Jordan and Braintree were married as well. Mont, or Montague Raymond, as Hal found his name to be, was the son of a good family, with the necessary acquaintance, education and "cheek" to give him entrance into society. He had a faculty for writing up anything in that line, and was really the "society man" of the paper.

With Horatio Guelph Hal was charmed—fascinated; but without himself and the idle, careless, and just a little dissolute Montague Raymond, a friendship sprang up at once. Mont dressed in the height of fashion, had an easy address, and, above all, possessed the "open sesame" of the best society which the city afforded. Hal was not a little pleased by the attentions he received from Raymond; and before Mr. Coffin, the city editor, returned from lunch, the boy pronounced his new acquaintance "a good fellow." And, on his part, Mont Raymond told himself that he was "quite taken with the young chap," which, unfortunately, boded ill for Hal.

Mr. Coffin quickly apportioned the work on hand, and sent most of the men off, looked over Hal's matter and nodded his head approvingly after using the blue pencil sparingly on the work. Then he sent Hal off on one or two little errands, just to try him, and at nine o'clock he told him he could go home.

"I guess you'll do," he said at parting. "Just keep your eyes about you and do your best work *every time*. That's the only way to be successful in this business. Get down early—by eight, if you can. Good night," and Mr. Coffin turned to the deluge of copy that had been piled upon his desk while he was speaking.

Ha went home with a light heart, and recounted to Little Mum all the incidents of the day. And she kissed the boy and was glad, never for a moment suspecting the dangers and temptations which would assail him in his new life.

(To be continued.)

ENCOURAGE THE BOY WITH A HOBBY.

The child's earliest pleasures are derived from "doing things." The majority of playthings are but imitations of the articles with which in manhood work is associated. Very often the future career of the man is foreshadowed in the choice of toys when a boy. This, then, is a tendency in children which should be very carefully observed. Says a writer in the *Cottage Hearth*:

The ability to use a saw, a drawing knife and a plane is a source of lifelong pleasure and profit. How pitiable is the condition of the man who must run for a carpenter whenever a shelf needs putting up or a door fitted! The education of mind, eye and hand which the use of tools and mechanical appliances furnishes is of great and real value beyond the good resulting from the occupation of leisure time. How well do I remember the corner of the garden allotted to my own use. The little watermelon, the solitary ear of popcorn, was to me of greater value than the larger product of the adjoining land. In that 10x20 plot I acquired the rudiments of gardening, and learned more about horticulture than I have learned by weeks of study from books.

A boy is just as much a boy who devotes his spare time to "conjuring" about the place, building bird houses, rabbit boxes, and a thousand and one things which a boy will try to make with tools, or who watches with unabated interest the growth of the vegetables and flowers in his primitive garden.

TRAIN AND STATION;

OR,

THE RAMBLES OF A YOUNG RAILROADER.*

BY EDGAR K. HOADLEY, JR.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

WHILE traveling with his parents on the limited express from Chicago to St. Louis, Dashiwood Dykeman is made an orphan by the killing of his father and mother in a collision. He is sent off by his paternal grandfather, who educates him, and who, when he loses his money five years later, informs Dash that the latter's name is not Dykeman, and that he—his grandfather—does not know what it is, as his son married a widow, with one child, against the wishes of his parents.

After several vain attempts to secure a position, Dash falls in with Tom Tickmore, a young telegraph operator whom he had met on that ill-fated train years before. Through his influence, Dash gets a chance to learn telegraphy, and finally obtains a situation with the railroad company that employs Tickmore. He is suspended, however, for sixty days, on account of a mishap for which he is not wholly responsible, and determines to go to St. Louis and look for his relatives and learn his father's name. He travels part way as rear brakeman, manages to save the train from a disastrous collision, and, after an unpleasant adventure with tramps, receives a present of \$500 from the superintendent, and a pass to St. Louis. The train he takes passes through a town where a large hotel is burning. Dash gets off to look at the fire, and is left behind. He rescues a lady from the burning hotel, and subsequently meets her and her daughter—Dorothy Orloff—on the train on which he resumes his journey. Their name reminds him of that of the conductor on the ill-fated train at Lonewood years before; but he finds he is no relation of theirs, as their only relative—a brother of the mother's dead husband—was lost at sea before that accident. Mrs. Orloff dies on the sleeper, and Dash uses most of his funds to care for and forward her remains, as she and her daughter had very little money besides the \$500. At St. Louis Dash finds the small amount he had had lost has disappeared, probably stolen, and he is left in the city with only five cents. He goes to Mrs. Fedmore's, a boarding house, from which place his stepfather, Mr. Dykeman, had written a letter to his parents before he had married his (Dash's) mother. He discovers that his own father's name is Basil Orloff, that he and the conductor who caused the Lonewood wreck are one and the same, and that he is undoubtedly alive, though Dash cannot understand how it can be so with his mother married a second time. He also has doubts if the causes which he inquired about the Lonewood tragedy were unintentional.

Dash cannot find any trace of his father beyond Mrs. Fedmore's, where he had come over five years before, after the wreck at Lonewood. He makes an unsuccessful effort to secure a situation, and receives two additions to his capital—one from his grandfather and the other in a very odd manner. He finally goes as caboose brakeman on a local freight on the St. Louis and Pacific Railroad, with a mission to discover some criminal operations of the employees. He witnesses a ghostly and inexplicable manifestation of the Dead Man's Cut, into which he had gone back when his train stopped and whistled for the flagman. He overhears a suspicious conversation while asleep in his caboose, and conductor Cupples makes a savage attack upon him, from which he barely escapes with his life, and then Cupples explains it was a mistake. Dash notes some reports of short freight, and a car with a peculiar number—41,144—which reminds him of the mystical figures, 4 11-44. The local freight is wrecked, and he saves excursion train from a disastrous collision. He notes another strange circumstance concerning car 41,144. He receives a letter from Dorothy Orloff, inclosing a deed to some land in Colorado, which her uncle, Petroff B. Orloff, who had been lost at sea, had deeded to her mother years before. The mother had redeemed the property back to the uncle, but had never received an acknowledgment of the return deed, or been advised that it had been recorded. Dash wants Dorothy to find out if the return deed was ever recorded, to decide if the original deed is of any value. On the return trip of the local freight, the train breaks in two on the grade at Eagle Flat. The rear end of the train is deflected from the main track to a siding which runs off into a river. The cars are thrown into the stream, and it is supposed that Dash and the crew, with the caboose, have gone down with them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DOUBLE EXPLOIT AT BRANCHVILLE.

WE will now return to Dash, whom we left just after the local freight had passed through Dead Man's Cut.

When he was satisfied that he was not to have another glimpse of the spectral procession in the cut, or that there was nothing suspicious to be seen, he returned to the cushioned seat near the rear door of the caboose. He had hardly taken a certain missive from the inside pocket of his coat, and begun to peruse it, as he had done numerous times before that day, when the call for brakes caused him to put it hurriedly back and spring for the rear platform.

He threw the brake wheel around with desperate energy, the clog clicking with a metallic whirr in the ratchet. As it tightened, he threw the whole force of his muscles and swinging body upon the wheel. When he could not turn it another notch in the ratchet, he looked to see if their speed was slackening. He could notice no slowing up, and in fact it seemed they were going faster.

He then rushed to the forward brake and also screwed it up to the topmost notch to which it was possible to bring it. Still there was no diminution in their speed, and Dash wondered why the forward brakemen did not respond to the call for brakes. Certainly if they had, he told himself, the train's speed would be checked.

Then came the signal that no trainman likes to hear—that they had broken in two—for there were always chances of a collision between the two divided portions of the train; and such a catastrophe was especially liable on a grade such as that down which the local was rushing.

The first duty on such occasions is to stop the rear section as soon as possible, and the next, for the forward section to keep on out of the way, till assured the following cars are at a standstill.

As soon as he heard the "broke in two" signal, Dash felt confident a slackening of their speed would follow instantly, for if the brakemen had neglected to put on the brakes going down the grade, they certainly would not fail to do so in response to the last signal. He had done all in his power with the rear of the train to check it, but the caboose slid over the rails as smoothly as if no brakes were set at all. This puzzled Dash, for the car usually trembled and ground over the metals with many a squeak when the brakes were screwed up.

For a few moments Dash watched for some evidence of the brakemen having responded to the call, but none came. The box cars flew along at a greater speed than ever they had when attached to an engine. Their velocity appeared to be increasing every moment.

Dash was astonished and dismayed at the situation. He remembered the north express passed them at the Flat north of Branchville, and if the runaway cars went beyond that point there would be a collision. He sprang frantically up the ladder on the car next to the caboose to seek an explanation of the non-checking of the train. The brake on the last car was not set, and he screwed it up. It was a precarious operation, for the car swayed like a ship in a gale. He had hardly accomplished this task, when the other two men, who had been running toward the caboose, reached the last car.

"Why don't you put on your brakes?" yelled Dash. "We'll go into the express if we don't hold these cars."

"It's no use, Dykeman; every brake on the train is set," responded the men in the same breath, and Dash noticed a scared expression on the faces of both.

"Set!" he repeated. "It can't be."

"It's so, just the same," asserted one, with emphasis. "You don't think we'd be crazy enough to let 'em go on this grade, do you? The train's bewitched, and we're bound for kingdom come."

Dash stared blankly at the speaker for a moment, ready to believe both declarations. The failure of the brakes to do their work was incomprehensible, and certainly smacked of the supernatural.

"Well, Billy," continued the brakeman to his companion, "shall we stick to the boxes, or jump for it? We're sure to strike the express, as Dykeman says."

"It's a toss up which is safest, Cass; but I'll jump if she slows up any."

"Don't do either," interposed Dash, realizing they could do nothing to avert the collision, but determined to make an effort to save themselves. "Come to the caboose."

"But we can't see when we're going to strike the express," objected Cass.

"The caboose shan't strike the express if I can help it. I've got an idea," explained Dash.

"All right; come on, Billy."

Dash quickly descended to the caboose platform, followed by his companions.

He reached down between the cab and the last car, and tried to pull out one of the pins, but the link was rigid, and held them solidly in place.

*Begun in No. 434 of THE ARGOSY.

"Bully for you, Dykeman," cried Cass, who understood his object. "If we can uncouple 'em we can stop the old dog house any way."

But all Dash's twisting and pulling would not loosen either pin. He sprang to the tool locker and got a short crowbar. Leaning over he endeavored to drive out one of the pins, but it would not budge.

"Hold on, Dykeman," shouted Cass, who had been closely watching him. "I can help you loosen that thing. Here, Billy, help me with this brake, and when I say the word, let her go."

The two muscular young fellows swung to the wheel, and succeeded in twisting it up several more notches.

"Now!" shouted Cass, casting off the dog, and the two sprang back out of the way. The brake flew off with a whirling rattle.

As Cass had calculated, the extra pressure on the caboose brake had increased the tension of the coupling, and when it was thrown off the cab started forward, perceptibly loosening the bearing on the pins. At that moment Dash gave the pin in the box car drawhead a smart blow with his bar, and it flew up and dropped between the cars to the track.

Cass and his companion sprang forward to the brake again and set it. The caboose gradually slowed up, and the cars drew further away.

"Heaven have mercy on the express," cried Dash, as the caboose finally came to a stop, and he heard a rumbling crash of timbers.

The speed of the rushing cars was checked, but as he watched them, Dash was astonished to see the last car disappear from sight as if the earth had opened up and swallowed them all.

When he looked about him he realized that the caboose was standing on the Branchville spur, and that the box cars had gone into the river. It had all happened so quickly, and the change from peril and suspense to safety had been so sudden, Dash had hardly time to ask himself how it had been done, when the station agent, who had turned the switch to the spur, came running toward the caboose.

"Well, if this isn't the slickest thing I ever heard of," he cried in wonderment, when he saw the three brakemen were not injured. "It was throw you off on the river spur, or let you go smash into the express. I was dead certain you'd all go into the river, but here you are as quiet and safe on the rails as if nearly all of your train hadn't gone to the bottom. How did you do it!"

Dash quickly explained and asked:

"Where's Cupples and the forward section?"

"He was on the engine, and yelled for some one to turn the switch as he went by. I suppose they went in on the other end of the siding, as the through freight filled up this end."

"Do you think they had time to do it?" asked Dash, consulting his watch. "The express is past due, and you know there is a curve beyond the other end of the siding."

"By George! you're right, they didn't have time. I'm afraid the express has struck something after all, and those cars were sent into the river for nothing."

The station agent, followed by Dash and the other brakemen, hastened to the depot to learn if there had been a collision with the forward section.

Meanwhile, conductor Cupples, after he had shouted out to turn the branch spur, and the engine with its three cars had flashed past the station, glanced at his watch.

"Thunder! we've only got a minute to get into the other end of the siding, Jack," he cried, with a groan, into the engineer's ear.

At the same moment a whistle from the express was heard only a short distance away. Owing to a curve in the road, she could not yet be seen.

The engineer and fireman started from their seats, the same thought occurring to them both at once—to leap for safety.

"Hold on, Jack, don't do that; we'll stop 'em yet," shouted Cupples, motioning them back.

"Taint nothing tuat can save 'em now," growled the engineer, but at the same time resuming his position at the lever.

"Slow down, and don't go any further than the end of the switch," cried Cupples, who was peering out ahead.

The engine gradually decreased its speed, and before the engineer and fireman knew what he was about, Cupples sprang to the ground, and leaped to the country road which ran parallel to the track.

A boy, seated on a motionless horse, was watching the rushing train with much curiosity, and judging from his looks he was aware something unusual was going on.

It was a question which was the more astonished, the boy or those on the engine, when Cupples sprang at the rider, forced him from the saddle on the opposite side, and leaped into his place on the horse's back.

It was all done as quick as a flash, and before any of them could draw a breath, the conductor had forced the horse out upon the roadbed and was flying up the track in the direction of the on coming express.

With many a slap and kick, he urged the straining horse on. When he rounded the curve, the express was in sight. With frantically waving arms, he continued towards the approaching train.

The engineer must have thought he was a lunatic, for he gave a series of warning whistles, but did not signal he would stop. Cupples still held the horse straight for the train.

Then the engineer, seeing it was either stop or run the horse and rider down, or else realizing that something was wrong, threw on his brakes.

But not soon enough to check his headway before he should reach the daring rider. When he was within a few feet of the engine's pilot, Cupples shouted at the top of his lungs:

"Stop her! Stop her, for your life!"

At the same moment he pounded his horse's sides with his heels, and swerved him to one side.

The noble animal rose in the air, actually leaping over a portion of the pilot, and almost grazing the edge of the boiler head, and sank with his rider into a deep ditch by the side of the track.

CHAPTER XXX.

CAR 41, 144 AGAIN.

THE express did not come to a stop till it reached a point around the curve that revealed the straight track ahead and the local freight's engine blocking the way. Then the engineer quickly guessed the explanation of the man on horseback riding straight at his train to stop it.

He stepped down from his engine and hurried back to where the horse and rider had sprung from the track. Trainmen and passengers were already crowding to the spot.

Though considerably shaken up, Cupples was uninjured, and he staggered dizzily to his feet. The noble horse had broken one of his legs, and after several ineffectual efforts to rise, sank on one side with a deep and piteous moan.

"Cupples, is that you?" cried the express conductor, recognizing the rider. "What's the trouble?"

"Smash my headlight! so it is!" added the engineer;

"but I'll be dished if I could make out if it was him when he came straight at me like he was going to ride right over us. I thought he was some crazy, country fool, who wanted to show off."

"It's what is left of me," smiled Cupples, as he brushed the dirt from his clothes, "and I'm glad of this kind of an end to a bad day's business. Fifteen of the cars in my train are at the bottom of the Branch by this time, and I'm afraid my crew has gone with them."

He thereupon hurriedly told of the break in two on the grade, and the means he had taken to clear the track for the express.

The passengers were profuse in their expressions of admiration and gratitude to Cupples for what he had done, and the trainmen had an increased respect for their companion in service, though they gave utterance to no words of praise. It was only another of the many exciting and perilous episodes on the rail that each expected, as a matter of course, though the manner in which Cupples had avoided two perils to the express at the same time, would be the talk among them for many a day afterward. They regarded it as Cupples did, when he replied to one of the passengers who suggested a reward:

"Much obliged to you. I don't want anything for what I've done. The company pays me to look out after my train and avoid accidents. It's enough for me to have your thanks and know you're all safe."

"It isn't every man who does what he's paid for, when he is placed in a position where presence of mind and prompt action are necessary to avert an impending disaster," rejoined the passenger.

"Then he hasn't any business railroading," said Cupples.

"Have any of you gentlemen got a revolver?" he asked abruptly. "It won't do to let this horse lie here and suffer. It will be a mercy to put him out of his misery."

A pistol was found and passed to him. There were many expressions of pity and protest from the ladies present, but as the latter retreated, and many heads were turned away, Cupples sent a bullet into the animal's brain.

It was a much to be deplored reward for the service he had rendered; but what was his life compared to the many human ones on the express?

The horse had already given its last expiring kick, when the boy, from whom it had been taken, came running up.

"Oh, you've killed him," he cried in grief and agony. "What did you do it for?"

"I'm sorry, young man," replied the conductor; "but he broke his leg, and I had to do it. It was your horse, or a collision of my train and the express."

"I wouldn't have lost him for any money. Who will pay me for him?" asked the boy, gazing sorrowfully at the animal.

"The company will; and it's not the only thing it will have to pay for that's destroyed this day. There's fifteen loaded cars in the Branch, but I reckon they'd rather pay for 'em and your horse several times over than had any one killed on the express."

"I move that we take up a collection and pay the boy for his horse, as our friend here will not take anything," suggested the passenger who had first spoken to Cupples.

The idea was quickly acted upon, and by the time the saddle and bridle were removed from the dead animal and put in the baggage car, more than a hundred dollars was placed in the boy's hands.

By this time the fireman on the local's engine had thrown the switch to the south end of the siding, and the local, with the three cars attached, was backed in out of the way.

Cupples boarded the engine of the express, and the boy was taken into a coach, to be carried to the station. A great crowd was there to receive the express, for the news of the exciting occurrences had spread quickly through the town.

Conductor Cupples was greeted with a cheer as he stepped to the platform, and when he looked around he saw Dash and the two brakemen forcing their way through the crowd towards him.

"Dykeman!" he cried in astonishment, a peculiar intonation to his voice that could be either pleasure or regret. "I thought you had gone into the river. Did you stop them?"

A close observer might have noticed something more than pleased surprise in his tones and looks—something, slight though it was, that indicated disappointment.

"No, sir," replied Dash; "they're in the Branch;" and it struck him as peculiar that the conductor should take so much more notice of his safety than that of Cass and the other man, who had been running with him for some time.

"Then, how in the world did you get off them without breaking your neck?" interposed Cupples, in wonder.

"Stayed right in the caboose," smiled Dash, amused at the other's perplexity; and he continued with an explanation of the uncoupling and stopping of the caboose just as it rolled on the Branchville spur.

"Well, if this hasn't been a day of narrow squeaks," commented Cupples, and he briefly told how he had stopped the express.

"You've got the stuff heroes are made of, Mr. Cupples—presence of mind and plenty of courage. You saved both ends of your train and the express at the same time," remarked Dash, feeling that it was hard to believe that such a man could be guilty of theft, and perhaps more criminal deeds.

"And you saved yourself and the other boys," added the conductor; "but what I can't understand is why you fellows couldn't stop the rear section, or even check its speed."

This was a question that others besides the trainmen had asked themselves when discussing the dumping of the cars into the Branch. But when the express steamed out of the station, and started to climb the first hill, the mystery was solved.

The train came to a stop just above the foot of the grade, and the drivers of the locomotive flew around with a whirr, having no tractive power whatever on the rails. A liberal dropping of sand on the track did not improve matters very much. The wheels climbed slowly forward a few yards and then stopped again. Much disgusted and perplexed, the old engineer finally got down from his machine to investigate.

"Smash my headlight!" he cried, as he stepped in front of the pilot and looked up the road. "I thought some country jay had soaped the track; but, smash me, the irons are greased, as far as I can see. I can't go up there with this weight behind me."

He reported the matter to the conductor, and the train was backed to the station.

"Did you have a car of oil in your train, Cupples?" inquired the express conductor, after explaining the cause of the backing up.

"Yes; a tank car full, and it's gone into the Branch," replied Cupples.

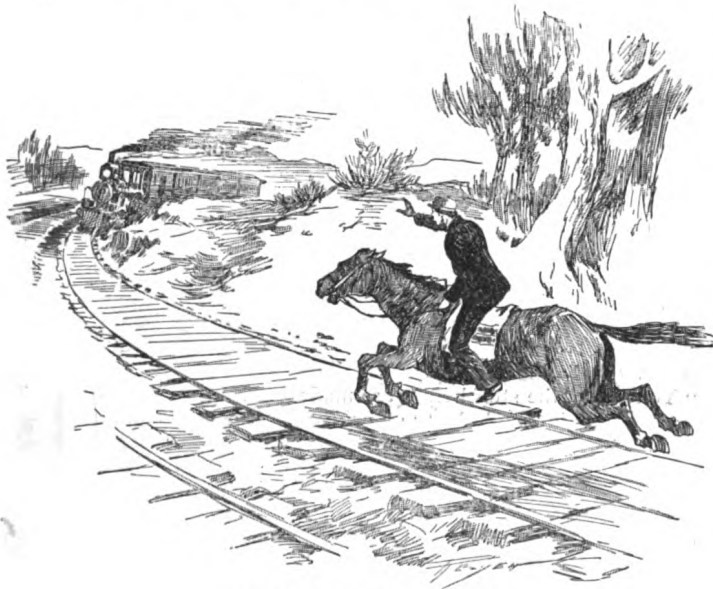
"I guess there didn't much of the oil go with the car; for, judging from the looks of the track up the hill, it must have pretty much leaked out."

"Well, I'll be blowed! That explains why the brakes didn't hold, and the boys couldn't stop the cars."

The engine from the through freight was attached to the

rear end of the express to act as a pusher up the first grade. By the combined power of the two locomotives and a plentiful sprinkling of sand, the train toiled slowly up the ascent. It was thought the pusher would only be needed to Eagle Flat; but when they got on the level they found that the rails were still slippery with grease, and the extra engine had to go to the top of the second grade.

When the freight engine returned and was attached to its train, the local's locomotive had to act as pusher to the through freight up the two grades. When this was done, and Cupples had made a full report of the accident to the trainmaster by telegraph, the caboose was switched out of



STRAIGHT UP THE TRACK HE RODE.

the spur and attached to the three cars which had followed the local's engine when the train had parted.

When he checked over his bills, to turn those belonging to the wrecked cars over to the station agent, Cupples found that two of the cars that had been saved were loaded and the third was empty. The number of the latter was 41,144.

As Cupples noted this fact for the first time, he thought, with a half smile of satisfaction:

"Young Dykeman was about half right. There *is* something lucky about that car. It would have been all up with me if it had gone into the Branch. I wonder if he has noticed it yet."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PERIL AT EAGLE FLAT.

AS already related, Dash had noticed the taking on of the car with the mystic number at Burrsville, and had wondered at the dispatch with which the agents there had unloaded it. But it was not until after the excitement of the stirring events following the break in two had subsided, and they had left Branchville, that he was aware the car was one of the three that had not gone into the river. Then he discovered that the very next car to the caboose was No. 41,144. He was looking out of the glass window in the front of the cab, when the number was revealed to him on the end of the car.

Dash gave an involuntary exclamation of surprise at the discovery.

"What's the matter, Dykeman?" asked Cupples, who heard him.

"Nothing," laughed Dash carelessly; "only there's that car with the lucky number. Its charm still protects it, doesn't it?"

"Is that so?" exclaimed the conductor in feigned surprise. "It *does* seem proof against wrecks, as it has been in two in as many days. By the way, it goes out to Shufflers, as they need an empty there."

"All right," responded Dash, and he did not fail to recall that Shufflers was where they had picked up the car loaded the day before.

Shufflers was reached without anything occurring worthy of note. After car 41,144 was thrown on to the siding, Dash was detailed to check the freight that was to be unloaded out of the local car.

One of the bills was short two caddies of tobacco and a case of wine, and as he noted it on the face of the bill, he remembered the remark of the agent at the terminal that "it was always something like that which was short."

He knew that when such articles of luxury begin to disappear that it was a sure indication that stealing is going on somewhere. But he also knew enough of the system of handling freight to be aware that it was sometimes very difficult, if not impossible, to locate the pilferings.

He made a note of the shortage, to be reported to Mr. Rodway, though it seemed impossible that the goods could have been abstracted while the local car was in their possession, as it had been closed and sealed before leaving every station where it had to be entered, and the seals had been found intact when it was opened again.

On their arrival at the terminal, Dash again assisted the conductor in the clerical portion of his work, though his part this time was devoted to a detailed account of the accident and loss of the fifteen cars at Branchville, while Cupples made the car report.

When he had finished, Dash was ready to seek his bed; and when Cupples had spoken the word for him to Madden, the lodging house keeper, he was given a neat and comfortable room, very different from the one he had been shown to the first night he had arrived at the terminal.

But before he went to bed, Dash did two things in furtherance of the mission for which Mr. Rodway had put him on the local freight. Without being observed, he abstracted Cupples's car report from the mail box. And even if he had been seen by any one but the conductor, it would have been supposed he was getting it to make some correction, as he was already known in the agent's office as being the one who assisted Cupples with his reports.

As the reports were always inclosed in heavy, unsealed envelopes, with the printed address of the car accountant on the face, which were used over and over again for the service until worn out, Dash had no difficulty in getting at it, and returning it as he found it. It needed only a glance down the column of car numbers to tell him that the car 41,144 was neither reported as taken at Burrsville nor left at Shufflers.

Dash then made his report to Mr. Rodway, embodying the facts regarding the non-reporting of the car and the shortage of wine and tobacco at Shufflers. This time—for fear it would be noticed he was writing to the superintendent, and thus arouse some one's suspicions—he sent his communication by post, dropping it in the through mail car of the night express.

And there was one more thing he did not forget to do before he retired that night, and that was to give a final perusal to Dorothy's letter.

The next morning the local freight, which was called No. 30 when north bound, left on time. As usual, the train consisted mostly of empties, to be distributed along the road.

"I wonder if we're going to have any more grief this trip," remarked Cupples, as he checked over his bills with Dash. "I'm getting tired of this smashing up of things, and the gold collars* will have me up on the carpet † if it doesn't stop."

"I'm sure I don't see how you are to blame. You deserve great credit for what you did yesterday," responded Dash generously.

"Don't make any difference, Dykeman. They'll think more about the loss of those fifteen cars in the Branch than of what I did, though they wouldn't say so. If a fellow is unfortunate enough to have many wrecks, no matter what the cause of them, he becomes undesirable, and stands no show of ever running on the varnished cars." ‡

"It isn't likely we will have that 4-11-44 with us this run, and we'll be all right," laughed Dash.

"Why, I thought you said that was a lucky number," smiled Cupples.

"So I did, but I begin to think it was only lucky for the car that bore it, and that it was a regular Jonah for us."

"That's so, it looks that way," commented the conductor seriously, and he seemed to be thoughtfully reviewing something on his mind. He little imagined that the car would be ultimately a "Jonah," as Dash expressed it, for himself in particular.

As there was no work to be done at Shufflers, the local would not stop unless the signal was out for orders. A short distance beyond the station was a high trestle over a creek, and running into the main track, very near to it, was a side track.

As no signal was displayed, No. 30 was not slackened up in approaching the station. The train flew by, and the agent waved his hand to Cupples and Dash, who were standing in the side door of the caboose.

"There's that Jonah," laughed Dash, pointing to car 41,144 on the siding.

The words had scarcely left Dash's mouth, when there was a jolting, jarring of the caboose, and a crunching, splintering noise from the outside, and he and the conductor fell backward into the car.

"Yes, and here's more grief," gasped Cupples, in a jerky manner, as the car thumped along and he struggled to his feet. "We've jumped the track, and will be in the trestle in two seconds!"

He staggered toward the end door, either to set the brakes or jump, and Dash followed him. They had hardly reached the platform, when the jolting ceased, and the caboose moved smoothly, as if on the rails, just as the end of the trestle came into view at their feet.

They gazed at each other, and the receding structure, in astonishment. When the caboose cleared the other end of the trestle, they realized they were safely back on the track again.

"That beats me," cried Cupples, as he leaned out from the platform and signaled the engineer for brakes. "I'm going back to look into it, and see if any damage is done."

The engine whistled down brakes, and the crew swung to the wheels. As soon as the train was stopped, Dash and the conductor hastened back and over the trestle.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" exclaimed the latter, stopping at the switch to the siding, "if the frog to this switch didn't throw us on again."

A further examination showed that the train had left the rails about three hundred feet from the switch. And an inspection of the cars told them that more than half the train had been off the rails. There was no serious damage to running gear, and the train was again started up.

"It didn't get us that time," remarked Cupples, smiling grimly.

"It? What didn't get us that time?" queried Dash, looking perplexed.

"4-11-44."

"Oh! that was because it wasn't in the train. Its nearness on the siding could only give us a narrow escape."

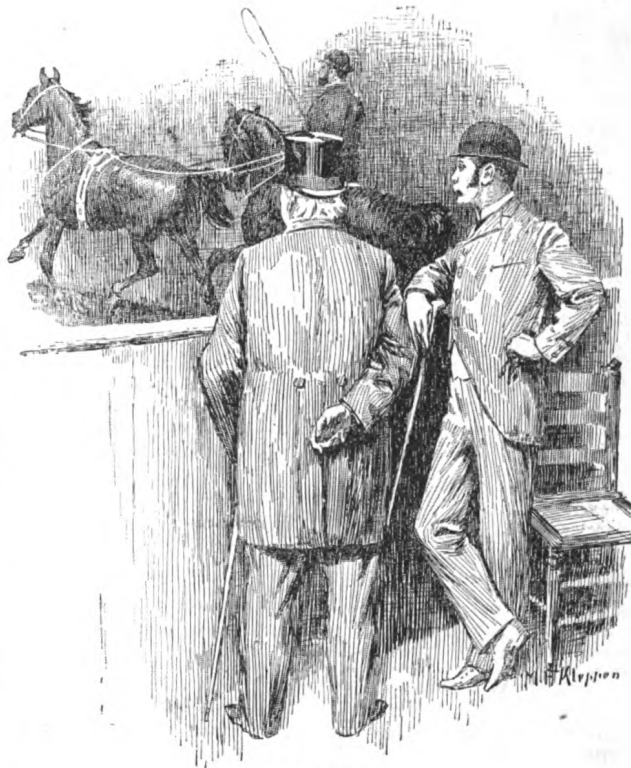
When the local reached Eagle Flat it was behind time, and had to take the siding there for the north bound express to go ahead of it. There were two sidings, one on each side of the main track, running immediately parallel to each other. One of them was only long enough to receive the local's cars, and the engine had to go in on the other, which had a switch at both ends.

Dash had just turned the switch back to the main track, after the passage of the engine to the siding, when he stopped a moment to look down the main track at the express which was in sight and rapidly approaching.

A look of horror overspread his face, his heart almost ceased its beating, and he looked wildly about him.

The other end of the siding was turned to the main track, and the express was coming straight for the local's engine at a speed not less than thirty miles an hour.

(To be continued.)



A MYSTERY.

UNCLE CLOVERTOP—"What's that?"

HIS NEPHEW—"That's a tandem."

UNCLE CLOVERTOP—"And why does it need another horse to pull the one he is riding?"

*Officials. †Headquarters. ‡Passenger Cars.

PRESENT DAY HISTORY PAPERS.

IV.

AUSTRALIA, A LAND OF PROMISE.

NOT many weeks ago an event occurred which seems destined to mark an epoch in the history of the world. There met in the oldest city of Australia representatives from the various colonies of the island continent. This meeting in Sydney attracted universal attention. The object of the convention was to frame a constitution for a federal government of Australia.

The result of the deliberations of that body was the formation of a constitution which points out that sooner or later there will be a united Australia. At this hour the "Land of Promise" occupies the same position which we held one hundred years ago. A century from now she may advance to the position which we hold today. It is even predicted by close observers of modern events that the present generation may witness Australia a powerful nation, the free and imperial mistress of the Southern Hemisphere.

The date of the framing of her new constitution was March 2, 1891. In years to come this day may be made as memorable as July 4, 1776.

Australia, the smallest continent on the globe, was discovered by the Dutch in 1666. In 1788 the first English colony was established in New South Wales as a penal settlement. For forty nine years prisoners were transported to the island. At the end of that time transportation was abolished and restricted to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), where it was continued up to 1853. About this time gold was discovered in the new country. That gave the civilization of Australia an impetus which resulted in placing it on the firm footing which it maintains at the present day.

Only forty years ago the white population was but fifty thousand. Now there are more than four million inhabitants. Melbourne, the chief city, has grown with a rapidity rivaling that of our own Western cities, and is now as large as Baltimore.

The two leading colonies of this British possession, New South Wales and Victoria, are enjoying equal prosperity in the development of their agricultural, pastoral, mining and commercial interests. Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland, the three other divisions which occupy the mainland, are flourishing. New settlers locate within their boundaries daily. Just now there is some talk of dividing Queensland into two States. The colony is very large, while the capital, Brisbane, situated in the extreme south, is too far away for distant residents.

Most interesting facts are presented by the political systems in vogue in Australia. The railroads and telegraphs are largely owned and controlled by the government. Their workings are reported to be highly satisfactory. The members of the Colonial Legislatures receive no pay for their services. A public office in Australia means honor, but no salary. However, under the proposed constitution, uniting the colonies, all officials are to be paid for their work. Among the statesmen who are guiding the destinies of the island is one who, like many another great man, has risen from the lowest round. Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, was once a poor boy. Through his own tireless efforts he has worked his way up and become a political power. His noble, patriotic devotion to the new country is shown in these spirited lines from his own pen:

Fling out the flag—our virgin flag—
Which foeman's shot has never rent,
And plant it high on mount and crag,
O'er busy town and lonely tent;
Where commerce rears her stately halls,
And where the miner rends the rock;
Where the sweet rain on cornfield falls,
Where pastures feed the herd and flock;
Still let it float o'er homes of peace,
Our starry cross—our glorious sign!
While Nature's bounteous gifts increase,
And freedom's glories brighter shine!

A stranger in Australia today would find a cosmopolitan people. All nationalities are represented in a more or less degree, though the English race predominates. The blacks, or primitive inhabitants, are no longer common, being found only in isolated retreats in small numbers. With the march of civilization, these savage tribes, like our own Indians, have been gradually, but surely, driven to the wall; and the day is not far distant when the sun will set upon their race for the last time.

WILLIAM J. BAHMER.

CORRESPONDENCE.

J. D. C., Terre Haute, Ind. It is possible that we may print a theatrical story during the year.

W. C. CALLMAN, New York City. You will have to be more explicit in your notice before we can insert it.

L. K., Gouverneur, N. Y. The series in question is no longer published under that name. The last issue was "The Golden Magnet."

G. J. M., New York City. For the information you desire, write to the secretary of the club named, which is situated, we believe, in the neighborhood of Second Ave. and 59th St.

PHOTOGRAPHER, Brooklyn, N. Y. We think that asphaltum varnish, rather than paraffine, is what you want as a coating for your keg in order to prepare it for a solution of hypersulphite of soda.

PRESSMAN, N. Y. If you have only had two years' experience, and on so many different presses, you would not be able to get a very high position in the city. THE ARGOSY is not printed on its own presses, so that we could not offer you a situation.

H. W., Syracuse, N. Y. 1. The list of papers published in New York city fills several pages in the "Newspaper Directory," so it would be manifestly out of the question for us to give it in this column. 2. The books published by Frank A. Munsey are "The Boy Broker," "Under Fire" and "A Tragedy of Errors."

THE N. G. TRIO, New York City. 1. It is usual for a gentleman, when walking with a lady in a city to keep to the outer side of the pavement. 2. Ladies are not supposed to take a gentleman's arm when walking in the daytime, unless they are either closely related or engaged.

THE CRUISE OF THE DANDY, New York City. In the United States Cavalry the government furnishes the horses for the troopers; the officers supply their own. For admission to the service, apply to any of the regular U. S. Army recruiting stations, one of which you will find in the vicinity of West and Rector Streets, this city.

NAVY, Washington, D. C. 1. We cannot give such a lengthy list of names in this column. You can ascertain for yourself in the navy yard in your city. 2. The first Secretary of Navy was George Cabot, under President Adams. 3. The numbers of THE ARGOSY, 327-342, containing the "Rival Battalions," will cost \$1.30; the six containing Mr. Moffat's baseball story, "The County Pennant," 60 cents.

FIRE-IN-HIS-EYES, Chicago, Ill. 1. To keep the leather of your shoes from cracking, buy good shoes; and to "keep them shined up," use blacking and "elbow grease," or else hire somebody to do it for you. 2. We really cannot undertake to pronounce on the respective merits of the various makes of "Safeties." 3. Living as you do in Chicago, you should be better acquainted with the condition of the roads in that vicinity than we are. 4. There are various "best records" made with Safeties. You do not state whether you refer to mile, half mile, or fifty mile ones. 5. It is impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy just who is the richest man in the United States. Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt has been several times pronounced to be that lucky individual.

MILITARY NOTES.

TWENTY five boys wanted, 5 feet tall or over, to join Company D, Sherman Cadets. Address W. B. Chipman, Jr., O. C. R. R., Boston, Mass.

ALL boys of 16, and 5 feet 4 inches or over in height, wishing to join the Light Artillery Cadets, address Geo. W. Hayden, D Battery, Michigan Ave. and Monroe St., Chicago, Ill.

Boys wanted, past 14 years of age, and over 5 feet 1 inch in height, to join Companies B, C and D of the 12th Regiment Infantry, Sherman Cadets. Great opportunity for military training. For further particulars, address Captain Fred'k Whitby, Piqua, Miami Co., Ohio.

WANTED, at once, about 75 boys, who must be past the age of 14, and over 5 feet 1 inch in height, to join Companies A and B of the 15th Regiment Infantry, Sherman Cadets. For further particulars, address Captain Harry McGaffey, 27 Wolcott St., New Haven, Conn.

NO MERRY BELLS FOR THIS MARRIAGE.

PERHAPS the most literal fulfillment of the old saying that the course of true love never did run smooth was that recorded not long since by a contemporary, in an item from a Georgia town.

There was a marriage near here a couple of days ago, and from day-break to sunset the bride and bridegroom met with a succession of accidents that almost made them repent of the step they had taken.

The first accident happened as the justice and the groom were on their way to the house where the couple were to be united, when their buggy broke down, and the justice's ankle was severely injured. As they walked into the house the front porch gave way, and covered them beneath the debris. They were fished out by the bride and the wedding guests and made presentable for the marriage. While the ceremony was being performed a child fell into the well, and all had to help pull it out.

After a time the ceremony was finished and the couple pronounced man and wife. The pair decided to start for their future home; had gone only a short distance when their vehicle gave way; the gentleman got down to mend the broken part, and had just finished when the house in which they were married caught fire. He, of course, had to assist in putting the fire out, and while absent the horse became frightened and ran away with his wife.

This seems enough for any one day, but there was still another accident in store for the happy (?) pair. After the husband had found his wife and horse, and they were only a few miles from home, the horse stopped in the middle of a creek and refused to move. This made it necessary for the gentleman to get into the water and lead the horse out.

The horse ran away again on the way home, but, fortunately, no damage was done except to wreck the wagon. The last mile of their journey the long suffering couple finished on foot, arriving at their home about eleven o'clock at night.

EVANESCENT VOUCHERS.

VERILY the amount of brain tissue expended by some knaves in devising novel schemes of roguery would suffice, as the old proverb declares, to win fortunes for them if directed into paths of honesty. During the production of a certain spectacular play in New York, says a paper of that city, two young men agreed to furnish the theater with a mob for twenty five cents a man per night. Unable themselves to obtain "supers" at a lower figure, this is how the contractors managed things:

When hiring the auxiliaries they expressly stipulated that no money would be paid unless four consecutive performances were attended, and that vouchers, bearing the date of each night's performance, would be distributed among those present, the presentation of four consecutive dates of which would entitle the holder to one dollar. These conditions were agreed to by the supers.

After the first performance each of the five hundred Roman citizens received a crisp, transparent, handsomely printed certificate, and on each of the following three nights another. On the fourth night, when called upon to present coupons for payment, not one of the five hundred could produce a single coupon. No trace of the elaborate certificates could be found. Every one was mystified. All that could be found in the pockets of the poor Romans were meshy lumps of a sticky substance. The certificates were made of gelatine, and the warm pockets of the supers had caused them to melt like snow.

HOW TO SEE THE EARTH REVOLVE.

SEEING is believing. Suppose you are trying to impress upon the mind of a small child the fact that the earth is not a flat surface, but a globe which revolves daily on its axis around the sun? He will find it a difficult morsel of knowledge to absorb, but by using a bit of practical illustration, suggested by the *St. Louis Republic*, you can give him proof of the assertion.

Take a good sized bowl, fill it nearly full of water, and place it upon the floor of the room which is not exposed to shaking or jarring from the street. Sprinkle over the surface of the water a coating of lycopodium powder—a white substance which is sometimes used by ladies in making their toilets, and which can be purchased of any druggist. Next, upon the surface of this coating of white powder make, with powdered charcoal, a straight black line, say an inch or two in length.

Having made this little black mark on the surface of the contents of the bowl, lay down upon the floor close to the bowl a stick or some other straight object, so that it will lie exactly parallel with the charcoal mark. If the line happens to be parallel with a crack in the floor, or with any stationary object in the room, this will serve as well. Leave the bowl undisturbed for a few hours, and then observe the position of the black mark with reference to the object with which it was parallel.

It will be found to have moved about, and to have shifted its position from east to west—that is to say, in the direction opposite to that of the movement of the earth upon its axis.

The earth in simply revolving, has carried the water and everything

else in the bowl around with it, but the powder upon the surface has been left behind a little. The line will always be found to have moved from east to west, which is perfectly good proof that everything else contained in the bowl has moved the other way.

WHERE ROBBERS CARRY OFF A GARDEN.

THE ARGOSY has recently made mention of several unique thefts perpetrated in this country, as, for instance, when some men robbed a jail and others carried off a neighbor's barn. But in India, it seems, it is possible for evil disposed persons to run off with the gardens of their more well to do fellow citizens. The manner in which it is accomplished is thus described by a contemporary:

The thousands of floating gardens on the rivers of Cashmere are formed by long sedges, which are woven together in the form of a gigantic mat. The sedge grasses, flags, stalks, lilies, etc., are woven on the river or lake banks, while their roots are still growing in the slime underneath; the required amount of earth is then superimposed upon the mat; the stalks are cut and the mat and its load is a full fledged floating garden.

They are usually about twenty by fifty yards in extent, seldom larger, the full depth of the mat and its earthy covering being about three feet. A dishonest Cashmiri will sometimes tow his neighbor's garden away from its mooring, and sell the produce of the other's toil. The writer has frequently seen one of the largest of these miniature gardens being towed by two men in a rowboat, which hardly looked larger than one of the luscious melons serenely reposing on the floating truck farm.

DOING TRICKS FOR A MAGICIAN.

STORIES of Indian jugglers are always entertaining, but when they are told by a man like Hermann, himself the prince of Western magicians, the interest they inspire is greatly intensified. The professor has lately been talking to an Omaha *Bee* reporter, and here is one of the personal experiences he relates:

"When I was at Allahabad a fellow came into my room with nothing on but a breech clout and said: 'Plenty big snake in the room.' I told him to go off; that I had seen all his snake tricks, and did not want to be bothered, but he insisted on it that there were plenty of snakes in the room, so I told him to go ahead and call them out if there were any.

"He stood up in the middle of the floor, and began to play on a sort of flute he had with him. Now, mind you, there was no furniture in the room but a cot bed and two or three chairs. He had not played two minutes before I saw the sheet on the bed rise up till it looked like a small tent, and then an enormous cobra crawled out and coiled itself on the floor, with its head erect and its tongue darting out in anger.

"In an instant I saw other snakes crawling from all corners of the apartment, and they placed themselves alongside their companion. The fakir, still playing on his flute, led the way to the door and the snakes followed him. He paused at the threshold and they raised their heads in anger. Just as I was beginning to get nervous another fakir crept up behind them and cut their heads off with a sharp sword which he carried.

"Now, I have no other explanation for this trick than that the snakes were trained to wind themselves around the bodies of the men underneath the breech clout. When they entered my apartment my attention was attracted to the spokesman, not to his companion, and he might have placed the snakes in the room while I was watching the flute player. This is my only theory."

NOT ADAPTED TO RAILROAD RESTAURANTS.

WHAT interesting possibilities are opened up by the following item. Imagine being invited to a banquet where freshness of the vegetables is assured by ocular demonstration—making them grow to order on the table in presence of the guests! In view of the length of some ultra fashionable dinner parties, this fact does not seem so impossible of attainment as might at first appear. The New York *Evening Sun*, from which we clip the paragraph, does not vouch for the trustworthiness of the tale, which it classes as of the Jack and the Beanstalk variety. But here it is:

The Prince and Princess Blucher of Prussia not long ago gave a dinner, at which the prince performed the marvelous feat of growing the lettuce for the salad on the table in the presence of the guests. After the soup was served the prince had a great dish brought on, in which lettuce seed had been sown in equal parts of rich earth and unslaked lime, the seed having first been soaked for six hours in alcohol—whatever that may have had to do with it. Then the prince watered the soil with lukewarm water. This was after the soup, remember. By the time the fish was served the green buttons of lettuce had appeared above the soil in the dish. After the entree they really showed that they were lettuce, and not cabbages or pieplant. The story doesn't say how long the meal was before the salad came on, but it does solemnly affirm that when it was time for the salad to be dressed the prince had the pleasure of plucking the heads, which were then about the size of Barcelona nuts, and making the salad for his guests.



THE SUBSCRIPTION PRICE OF THE ARGOSY IS TWO DOLLARS PER YEAR, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE. SINGLE COPIES, FIVE CENTS EACH. DISCONTINUANCES—THE PUBLISHER MUST BE NOTIFIED BY LETTER WHEN A SUBSCRIBER WISHES HIS PAPER STOPPED. THE NUMBER (WHOLE NUMBER) WITH WHICH THE SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES APPEARS ON THE PRINTED SLIP WITH THE NAME. THE COURTS HAVE DECIDED THAT ALL SUBSCRIBERS TO NEWSPAPERS ARE HELD RESPONSIBLE UNTIL ARREARAGES ARE PAID AND THEIR PAPERS ARE ORDERED TO BE DISCONTINUED.

FRANK A. MUNSEY, Publisher,
239 BROADWAY, COR. PARK PLACE, NEW YORK.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Any reader leaving home for the summer months can have THE ARGOSY forwarded to him every week by the newsdealer 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, fifty cents; six months, one dollar; one year, two dollars.

* * * *

OUR NEW VOLUME.

SOME idea of the splendid array of features to be presented by THE ARGOSY in forthcoming numbers, was given in a prospectus, printed last week. For the benefit of new readers, we will only add here that arrangements have been made for attractions that will place the magazine on a still higher level than it at present occupies. Serials of the sea, of artist life, of wild adventures in Africa, of thrilling experiences among the Indians; these, together with others, illustrated by the highest grade of pictures, offset by a choice assortment of miscellaneous matter, will make our twelfth volume a notable one.

* * * *

THE special premium offer, giving for each new yearly subscription to THE ARGOSY a practical typewriter, is still in force. Full particulars will be found in last week's number.

In an early issue we propose to make still another offer, of particular importance to boys interested in baseball, football, and other sports. Thus all efforts to extend the circulation of the paper will be amply rewarded.

* * * *

NOTHING is more powerful than example. While THE ARGOSY's serials entertain the reader in his hours of recreation, it is not too much to say that they do a great deal more. It is impossible that the interest inspired by sincerity of purpose and unselfishness of motive, seen in their resulting effects on character and environment, can fail to produce an impression for good.

As example is better than precept, so the influence of action in the body of stories is more potent than all the morals that our forefathers were in the habit of tacking on at the end of them.

* * * *

TWO friends met in the cars the other morning. Said one to the other, by way of greeting: "Well, how is the world using you?"

"I've youth and health," was the reply. "What more can a man want?"

What, indeed? And yet, do we all appreciate these blessings as we should?

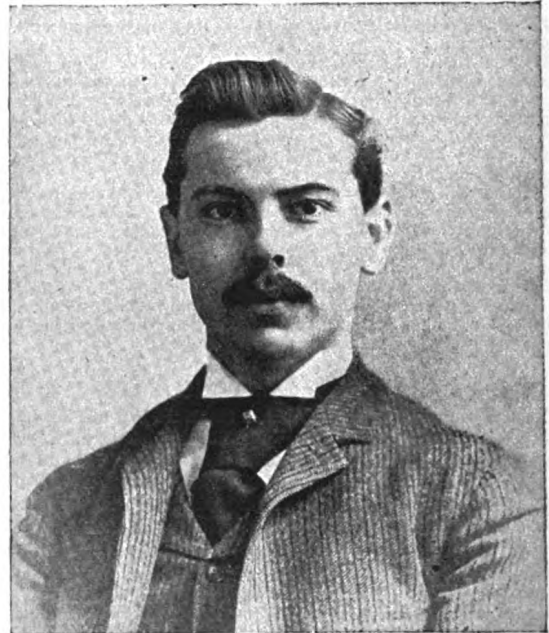
In these chance words, overheard by the way, there is a wealth of philosophy in a nutshell.

WILLIAM D. MOFFAT,

AUTHOR OF "BRAD MATTOON," AND OTHER ARGOSY STORIES.

THE personality of an author is always a matter of deep interest to his readers. We therefore take pleasure this week in complying with many requests and presenting the sketch, with portrait, of one of THE ARGOSY's staff of serial writers.

Born at Princeton, New Jersey, January 17, 1865, Mr. Moffat is now twenty six years of age. From his birth he has lived in an atmos-



WILLIAM D. MOFFAT.

From a photograph by Dana, New York.

phere of letters, so that it is little wonder he has turned his attention to literature. His father, a Scotchman, was a professor, first in the college, and then at the theological seminary at Princeton. The son received his early education at the Princeton Preparatory School, and graduated from the halls of Old Nassau with the class of '84.

Always actively interested in athletics, as readers of his stories must have discovered for themselves, he soon became a member of the University nine. Tennis and skating are also sports of which he is extremely fond; bicycling, too, comes in for a good share of his outdoor attention.

On leaving college Mr. Moffat became connected with the publishing house of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, where he has remained ever since. He is in charge of the advertising department, and is business manager of the monthly periodical, *The Book Buyer*. An ardent book lover, he finds his occupation a most congenial one. His private library contains many rare and costly volumes.

Mr. Moffat's first story for THE ARGOSY was a short one about baseball, written some three years ago. This was followed by "The County Pennant," a six part serial, printed in 1889. Then last year appeared "The Crimson Banner," a full length serial, with baseball again the subject, and which scored a great hit. Besides these serials, Mr. Moffat has contributed to the paper numerous short sketches and articles on out of door sports. In "Brad Mattoon," now running, he shows a skill in character drawing, also an art in planning his denouements, and in arranging for the evolution of the plot, that will give him high rank as a writer of strong, interesting, healthful stories for boys.

These stories are all penned in his leisure moments, and Mr. Moffat modestly tells us that he only hopes his friends of THE ARGOSY take as much interest in reading, as he does in writing them.