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WHOLE No. 445.

ON STEEDS OF STEEL;

OR,

THE TOUR OF THE CHALLENGE CLUB.*

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

CHAPTER VII.

"ON TIPTOE STEALING."

"WHAT'S the matter, Will?"

This was what Hugh naturally wanted to know when I cried "Hist!" in a melodramatic fashion and held up one finger as the sound of the crunching gravel fell on my ear.

"Everything that's awkward is the matter," I replied. "Here come the fellows that really belong here, and we're occupying their rooms. Come, we may as well get up and begin to dress. We can't very well get out otherwise."

"Wait till I see what time it is," responded Hugh, now thoroughly wide awake and hopping out of bed with alacrity.

He took his watch from the bureau and went to the window to look at it by the moonlight.

"Great Scott, Will!" he exclaimed softly. "It's half past one. Surely nobody'd arrive at any one's house at this hour of the night."

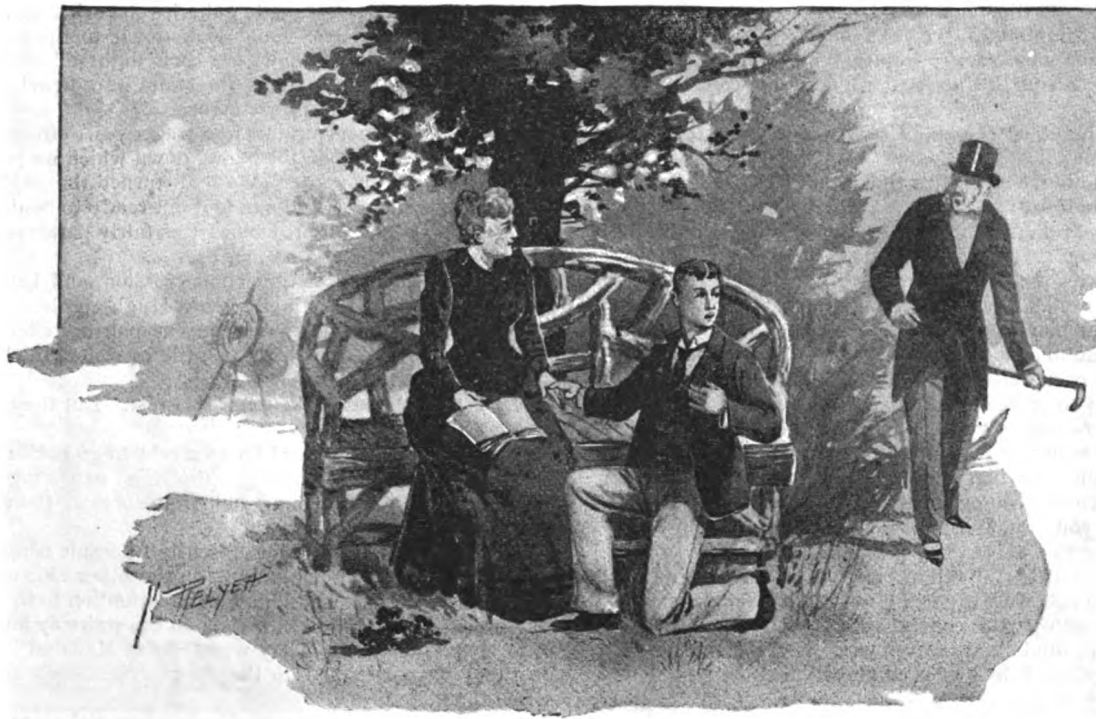
"But the proof of the pudding's in the eating," I retorted, tumbling out to take up my post beside him. "Here they are!"

"And there they go," he added triumphantly, pointing to the spectacle of a carriage being driven slowly around the curve in the avenue back towards the gate.

"Perhaps they've all got out and are waiting down at the door to be let in now," I suggested. "Listen!"

We remained perfectly still for a minute or two, standing there at the window in our undress uniform. But there was

*Begun in No. 443 of THE ARGOSY.



I PLUMPTED DOWN ON THE GRASS AND SEIZED THE OLD LADY'S HAND IN MOST GALLANT FASHION.

no sound of bell, and nothing stirred except the leaves of a horse chestnut which the light night breeze fluttered softly against one another just below us.

"I tell you what, Hugh," I whispered then; "they've come in on the chance of somebody being up, and finding the house all quiet, gone off again, not liking to disturb the family. Now's our chance."

"Our chance?" repeated Hugh. "For what?"

"Why, to get out of this awful predicament," I responded. "Come, let's wake the other fellows."

"But where shall we go?" Hugh wanted to know.

"I don't know—I don't care—anywhere so we're out of this," I replied. "Fancy staying and having those fellows discover in the morning that they've been entertaining the wrong crowd!"

"But imagine what they'll think when they find us gone," rejoined Hugh.

"Ah, but that doesn't concern us," was my prompt reply. "We won't be in it."

"No; but before I make a start at this ghostly hour, I'd like to know where we *shall* be?" grumbled Hugh.

"Oh, we can fix that afterwards," I told him. "The main thing now is to get out of this without discovery," and I started into the next room to impart the direful tidings to the remaining half of the club.

We had an awful time getting those two fellows up. They were dead tired, Steve especially, as he had good cause to be.

"What if we are in the wrong house?" muttered Mac. "Can't we explain everything in the morning in a civilized fashion? What if they catch us skulking off this way? They may shoot us for burglars."

"But they mustn't catch us," I insisted. "I'm responsible for getting you fellows into this beastly scrape, and I propose to get you out of it with the least embarrassment."

"But where are you going to take us?" Steve, Mac and Hugh put the question in a breath.

"Hush!" I implored. "Not so loud."

"But tell me where we're going, Will?" persisted Hugh, catching me about the neck to whisper the words straight into my ear.

"To the hotel, of course," I answered, beginning to get into my clothes.

"But a one horse affair like that won't be open all night," Hugh objected.

"Well, we'll make them open it," was my reply. "I guess they won't refuse four guests."

At last I got the fellows started getting ready, reminding them to be sure and carry their shoes in their hands till we got out on the piazza.

"But I hate to do a thing like that, Will," declared Steve. "It's so sort of underhand and burglarish."

"Well, if you prefer to stay here and accept of hospitality that doesn't belong to you, you can do so."

I was beginning to lose my temper. Fellows always get provoked quicker when they themselves are to blame for anything. Didn't you ever notice that?

"What'll you say, Will, if they do catch us going out?" Mac put in at this point.

"Why, of course I'll tell them just how it is, and that we've chosen this way of getting out of the scrape as being the best for both parties concerned. Now, are you ready?" and I looked round on my forces with more of the eye of a commander than I had ever employed in cycling pure and simple.

"Aren't you going to leave a note, explaining our unceremonious leavetaking?" Steve wanted to know.

"And expressing our thanks for the Welsh rarebit?" added Hugh.

"And our regrets that owing to previous engagements we cannot prolong our stay?" finished Mac, which set the other two laughing, and put me on tenter hooks for fear they would be overheard.

"Now look here, fellows," I pleaded, "this is mighty serious business."

"Of course it is," retorted Hugh promptly. "But it wouldn't be if you'd let us stay in our beds like Christians and face the music by daylight. But come on. I feel as grave as if I was going to a Greek recitation on which I wasn't prepared."

"Now, no one is to speak a word until we are clear of the grounds," I commanded, turning around with my hands on the knob. "You are simply to follow me and keep on the grass. Do you all understand?"

The three nodded their heads solemnly, and I was about to open the door when Mac dropped one of his shoes.

Luckily, it didn't make much noise, and then it dawned on us all simultaneously that we might just as well put our foot coverings on, as they were all rubber soled. This relieved us of carrying anything but the rolls containing our luggage, and I was on the point of making a second start, when Steve plucked my sleeve and in a husky whisper announced that he had forgotten his brush and comb.

So we all sat in the hall and waited till he hunted around, secured the missing articles and stuffed them into his roll.

"Are you sure they won't slip out and fall with a crash on the marble hall?" I asked him when he declared himself ready, and after he had made a precautionary examination we started in earnest.

We couldn't have been in a better house for our purpose. I thought of this when I had conceived the idea of our escaping in this midnight fashion. The ceiling of the main hall was the roof of the mansion—that is, the stairway wound up on one side, leading to galleries on each story, over the railing of which one could look down to the ground floor. Stained glass windows at each flight allowed the moonlight to stream in, and as the stairs were heavily carpeted we had everything in our favor.

Stepping like the conspirators in a tragedy, we crossed the upper hall to the head of the stairs, down which we passed with never a creak or rustle. We had turned the angle on the second floor and I had one foot out ready to begin the descent of the second flight, when I was fairly paralyzed by hearing Mac, right behind me, sneeze.

And not once, but three times in succession, and between the second and third I distinctly heard Hugh giggle.

"It's all up with us now," was my despairing reflection; but I didn't stop, but kept right on till I reached the lower hall.

Then I turned and looked for the rest. But they were nowhere to be seen.

I didn't dare call out, and I was afraid to go back; so I just stood there with my back to the door, expecting each instant to hear voices calling out from some of the upper rooms to know who was there.

But all was still—so still that presently I became conscious of a strange sound just behind me, on the other side of the front door. Before I could pay much attention to it, however, three figures bobbed into view on the stairway and began to slowly descend. They were Steve, Mac and Hugh, who must have dropped to the floor when Mac's sneeze startled them.

I stepped forward into a ray of moonlight and placed my fingers on my lips. Then I beckoned them all to fall in close

behind me, while I felt carefully for the bolt that fastened the front door. And while doing so I heard again the mysterious sound that had fallen on my ears before, and which I had momentarily forgotten. The other fellows heard it, too, for they started and touched me on the arm.

And the noise was certainly of a sort to deeply concern us, for it sounded exactly like the heavy breathing of some person who was lying close up to the door on the porch.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT WE FOUND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR.

AS if by common consent, all four of us backed away from the door and kept on till we had reached the extreme other end of the hall, and here we halted to hold a whispered consultation.

"What do you suppose it is, Will?" began Mac.

"A dog, I guess," suggested Hugh.

"No; I'm sure it's a person," I insisted.

"Well, I don't know but I'd just as lief step over a man's body at this hour of the night as that of a bulldog," and Dinsmore started off on a low chuckle, which I nipped in the bud by putting my hand over his mouth.

"Isn't there any other way out?" asked Steve.

"There must be," I replied, "if we could only find it."

"I wonder if we dare strike a match," put in Mac.

"No; not for worlds," I hastily interposed. "Let me tell you: Let's open that front door and go out the way we first intended. Whoever is there can't belong there, and we will frighten him much more than he will scare us. Are you with me?"

"We are," answered the three fellows, with a unanimity that produced a fearfully bass sound.

"Come on, then," and I once more led the way to the front.

By careful feeling I managed to draw the bolt without making a noise; then I slowly pulled the heavy door towards me. But I had scarcely opened it more than a crack when Hugh pushed his mouth close to my ear and whispered hoarsely: "Shut it a minute; quick, Will!"

Wondering what could be up now, I instinctively obeyed, and then we all backed off into the further regions of the hall again, just as if we were a chorus in a comic opera and had had an encore.

"You forgot something, Will," began Hugh, as soon as we were plump against the wall. "If we go out now who's going to lock that door behind us? It doesn't seem a nice way to repay the hospitality we've been given here, to leave the house exposed to burglars."

This was a contingency I hadn't thought of, and for a time it staggered me.

"Let's go back to bed again," suggested Steve, whom I could hear yawning heavily every few minutes.

"Never," I rejoined. "It must be close on to morning now. We'd much better get outside and camp on the piazza till daylight, when we can go off with an easy conscience."

"That's it!" exclaimed Hugh softly. "We'll do that, and then find out who is on the other side of the door. So once more unto the breach, my friends," and this time Dinsmore led the way.

Eagerly we all peered forth as the door swung inward, and a remarkable sight met our vision. There on the piazza, so close up to the doorway that there was no stepping over them, lay four young fellows.

Enough moonlight stole under in under the piazza roof to enable us to see that they were neither tramps nor burglars. They were dressed in light tweed suits, and each had his

head pillowed on a well filled satchel, while summer overcoats answered the purpose of spreads.

"The men who were expected, and whose rooms we have been occupying," was the thought that flashed into my mind. Then: "They must have come in that carriage, found that all the family were abed, and decided for a lark to camp out here all night."

I was debating just what we had better do, when the decision in the matter was taken out of my hands.

Hugh and I had been first, and as he had only opened the door a little way, there was not room for Steve and Mac beside us. They heard our half suppressed exclamations of astonishment, and eager to find out the cause, crowded forward so suddenly that I was pushed ahead till my foot struck the form of one of the sleepers, and over I went, plump on top of two of them.

Instantly there was a scuffle. The fellows on whom I had tumbled naturally awakened with a start, and as naturally laid about them with their fists in the endeavor to get rid of the burden that had so suddenly dropped on them, and for a minute or two there was a regular rough and tumble scene enacted there on the porch.

"Hello! Is it you, Barnes?" I heard one of the fellows say.

But by this time we had become disentangled, and there we stood—the eight of us—on our feet, looking at one another as well as we could in the uncertain light.

"I beg your pardon," I began, addressing the strangers generally. "I hope I didn't do any damage by dropping on you so unceremoniously."

But instead of replying, one of the fellows stepped forward, and coming up to me, linked his arm in mine, and walked me to the edge of the porch, where the moonlight could fall full on my face.

"Great Scott!" he muttered then. "This isn't any of our crowd. Who are you fellows, any way?"

"Members of the Challenge Cycling Club," I answered, and was about to proceed to explain how we came to be in our present awkward predicament, when he quite paralyzed me by putting out his hand and exclaiming:

"Is that so? Glad to meet you. Jack told me you were going to be here, too. Why, what's the matter?"

I had staggered back against one of the pillars, quite collapsed for a minute by the information he had given me.

Was it possible that I had made a grand, double back action blunder, and that we had been in the right Robinsons' house all the time,

Seeing that I was unable to speak for the moment, Hugh stepped forward and said: "I guess we're all more or less topsy turvey tonight. We hadn't any idea you were coming, and so——"

"And so when I heard a stranger's voice at our door," I broke in, "calling people I'd never heard of, and as we've never been here before, and as Robinson isn't such a very uncommon name, I jumped to the conclusion that we had made a horrible mistake, and was for getting out of it as quickly as possible."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the other softly, for he had motioned for one of his friends to close the front door. "And that's why we've been cheated out of our beds. But we'll forgive you on account of the size of the joke."

"Why didn't you make a row when you got here?" I asked.

"Simply because it was so beastly late," was the answer. "You see, we belong to the Americus Dramatic Club, and after a matinee, which we gave in town yesterday afternoon, we were all invited to a theater party in the evening and to

a supper afterwards, to meet some of the nobs among the professionals. Well, we got through about midnight, and then Clarence Booth here suggested that we all keep on in his wagonette and come up here on the chance that Murray might not yet have got home from the wedding. But when we found the house all dark we decided to bunk out here and make a surprise party for the family in the morning. Jack's away, you know."

"He is!" I ejaculated, almost joyfully. "Then—then we—"

"No, no," laughed the other. "You're not going to crawl out of your second blunder so easily, young man. He'll be back this morning, and left word with Murray that you fellows were to be entertained right royally."

"Murray!" I repeated. "That must be a brother I've never met. Where's Tom?"

"In Europe; but, look here, we might as well introduce ourselves. I'm Harry Vane, and this other fellow you tripped over is Hamilton Perry. That chap yonder, with the yellow streak of down on his upper lip, is Peyton Clark, and the dark browed villain of the troupe is Claud Bliss."

I took the hint and presented the Challengers by name, and then suggested that now the door was open, we might as well all go in and up stairs.

"What larks if we could all snuggle into our beds," laughed Vane, "and keep the whole facts of this midnight fiasco from the family. We could bow gravely when introduced in the morning, and have no end of fun out of it."

I was only too ready to fall in with any proposition that would tend to cover up the revelation of my double blunder, and to this end I insisted that the new comers should remove their shoes. To this they readily agreed, and then the procession of eight filed solemnly into the house, and up the stairs to the third floor.

We all entered our room, and then Vane, who knew the house pretty well, carefully tried the door that opened out of the apartment occupied by Steve and Mac.

"All right," he whispered. "Here are two rooms all ready for us. Come on, chums; good night, fellows; see you in the morning; but remember not to speak till we are introduced."

Then the door was closed, and the four members of the Challenge Club were left once more together.

"I resign," I began as I started to make ready for bed again. "I'm not fit to be captain of a canal boat."

"Not for worlds," returned Hugh. "What's a tour worth if everything goes smoothly, giving a fellow nothing to talk about afterwards? This will make my best stock story next winter," And I groaned as I remembered who would be the hero of it.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH I ASSUME AN ENTIRELY NEW ROLE.

WE were awakened the next morning by Vane, who came in and wanted to know if we were going to sleep beyond breakfast time and so miss the honor of being introduced to him at the table. But I will not stop to describe our morning at the Robinsons'. Will only say that we were duly presented to the four members of the Americus Dramatic Club, and afterwards earned from Vane, its president, the commendation: "Capitally acted! When we want an understudy, I'll know where to pick him out."

Alas! I little knew what a pitfall this praise was preparing for me.

Jack arrived soon after breakfast with the news that Dudley Tilford, the "leading juvenile" of the troupe, had re-

ceived news of the sudden death of his aunt, and consequently would not be able to appear that night.

"That's rough," exclaimed Vane. "I don't know where we'll be able to find another such match for the Ellen. We can't have a fellow shorter than she is; it would look ridiculous. Ah, there's Osborn! He'll surely overtop her," and forthwith he proceeded to propose that Steve undertake the role of the lover in "Popping the Question."

"It's the shortest part in the play," he pleaded. "Not fifty lines in it. You can easily learn it during the afternoon, and there'll be no trouble about the costumes."

But Steve stood aghast.

"I take part in a play!" he exclaimed. "Why, you might just as well expect to see an airship fly as that."

"But you are so beautifully tall!" sighed the poor manager.

"Oh, is that all you want me for?" laughed Steve.

"I'll explain how it is," went on Vane. "You see the play's to end the evening's entertainment, and give the girls a chance. The one who's to play Tilford's lady love is terribly tall, so we must be particular in getting a substitute. The part itself is easy as rolling off a log. All you've got to do is to make love gracefully."

"Couldn't do it, count me out," cried Steve, holding up his hands in horror. "Why can't some of you fellows take it?"

"Well, to tell the truth, we're none of us quite up to the mark in height. You've no idea what a giant Miss Truman is. But how she can act, though! She is almost as tall as you are, and every bit as big as—Hasbrouck there," and as he spoke Vane left Steve, and came straight for me.

We were all lolling out on the grass by the tennis courts, watching Perry and Hugh play.

"Come, Hasbrouck, you help us out," Vane implored. "I'm sure you could carry the part off beautifully."

"And I'm sure I'd blunder from beginning to end," I replied, adding, as I lowered my voice a little: "You know my capacity for putting my foot in it."

"But I want you to put your whole figure into this," he went on. "Come up to our room with me; I've got a book there, and I'll put you through your paces in no time."

Well, perhaps I was weak to allow myself to be persuaded into it, but I will confess that I had always had a desire to go "behind the scenes." And here was my opportunity, for the performance of the Americus Club was to be given that evening in the town's new opera house, which I had heard described as a most complete and charming little theater. The upshot of the matter was I accompanied Vane to the house, and at the end of twenty minutes was deep in my study of the part, which, as he had said, was a very short one.

Then he took the character of the lady himself, and instructed me how to go down on my knees before him, place my arm about his waist, and step lightly off, bound to the church to be married, together with other bits of business that he took in all seriousness, but which to me, unaccustomed as I was to rehearsing for the stage, seemed supremely silly.

I am afraid this is just what Vane thought I was, for I couldn't keep a straight face through it all; but when he gently reproved me, I declared that I would be so scared on the occasion of the performance that laughter would be the very last thing to occur to me.

"Then don't for heaven's sake go to the other extreme and look solemn as an owl," he begged. "All you've got to do is to imagine you are the very Henry Thornton himself, in love with a charming girl, whom you are determined to obtain for your wife."

I nodded my head and mumbled "yes, yes," as I applied

myself vigorously to the study of the lines, but as I had never as yet wanted to make any girl my wife, and felt pretty positive if I had, I wouldn't have selected as tall a one as Miss Truman was described to be, I feared that my prospects of giving a realistic representation of an ardent lover were decidedly slim.

"But how about a dress rehearsal?" I called Vane back to inquire, as he was about to leave me and my prompt book together.

"I'm afraid you can't have one," he replied. "You see this is an old play, and everybody's appeared in it at least once already, so no provision was made for a dress rehearsal. Jove, though! I wish we could have one, now that you're new to the part. I don't see how it can be managed, though. Miss Truman has an engagement in town for the afternoon, so we can't count on her, and she is the principal one. However, get your lines as pat as you can, and we'll see what can be done this evening while the first play's on."

This piece of information was no calculated to make me any easier in my mind. It would be hard enough for me to make love to a girl I didn't know well, in any case, I felt, but when it came to breathing out sighs of the tender passion to a young lady I hadn't laid eyes on till that moment—well, I couldn't make a much worse blunder than I had about the Robinsons' house, and with this very meager species of consolation I forced myself to be content.

All that afternoon I shut myself rigorously away from the rest, and studied my part. When we met at lunch Hugh declared that I looked as solemn as if I had been cast for the part of the melancholy Dane in "Hamlet." But the news that Mac received by telegram cheered me up a bit.

The message was from his father and announced that he had had an interview with Miss West, and that both Steve's and Mac's Safeties would be shipped that afternoon.

"Then the tour of the Challenge Club will begin in earnest tomorrow morning," I announced, and with this joy in anticipation I bade the rest of the fellows good by with a comparatively light heart as they started off on a drive, leaving me to slave again over that little yellow book.

But whenever I began to feel disgusted with myself for having undertaken the thing, I pictured the fascinating foot-lights which I would see for the first time from the rear, the rapt and expectant audience, the hearty applause which the fellows had assured me they would give me on my entrance, and the luster of my last century costume.

Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were older people than I had expected to find them, but wholly wrapped up in their sons, and therefore were prepared to extend a hearty welcome to their sons' friends. While I was walking up and down one of the paths late in the afternoon, repeating my lines to myself, I met Mrs. Robinson, who was out picking flowers.

"Well, is our lover fully charged with his passionate outpourings by this time?" she asked, with a smile.

"I hope so," I replied.

"Let me have the book and we will see, if you like," she went on, leading the way to a garden seat near the archery grounds. "Come, begin now, and act as much as you like. I want to see you make a success of it this evening. Imagine I am Ellen Murray."

Determined to do my best, I started in, and strutted up and down the path before her in great shape, and so far lost myself in the part that when I came to my cue for kneeling at her feet, I plumped down on the grass and seized the old lady's hand in the most gallant fashion.

"Come, fly with me——"

I had got so far when a cough behind me caused me to start, and I turned to behold old Mr. Robinson standing

there, regarding the scene with a most perplexed expression of countenance.

I jumped to my feet and got as red as the roses Mrs. Robinson had gathered. But she laughed long and merrily, and taking her husband's arm, went off with him to explain, for he was somewhat deaf, and didn't always keep track of what the young people were up to.

Dinner time and the costume Vane had ordered for me arrived together, and I was all excitement then for the time to come when I should put it on. We hurried through dessert, and then I went off in the carriage, with the members of the company, to the opera house.

My heart beat with great rapidity, as, for the first time in my life, I passed in at a stage door, and I did not mind being deprived of witnessing the first play from the front so long as I was in the "enchanted region" behind.

There was one drawback, however—Miss Truman did not arrive as early as was expected. Then the other young lady with whom I had a few words to exchange in the play came about nine o'clock, and brought the discouraging information that Miss Truman had been taken suddenly ill, and would send a substitute, who would not be able to come until the last minute. If I had only thought to inquire the substitute's name, I might perhaps have avoided a catastrophe that was impending. But I felt that, as I knew none of them, it made no difference to me which girl it was, and so I rushed blindly on to my fate.

(To be continued.)

BRAD MATTOON.

OR,

LIFE AT HOSMER HALL.*

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

MEANTIME, what of Mr. Gordon Ivers?

On finding that his efforts to unseat Dr. Hope proved quite futile, and only aroused the enmity of the trustees against himself, he relapsed into sullen and morose silence concerning the academy and all that related to it.

If any one supposed, however, that this inactivity indicated a disposition to relinquish his hostile intentions, he would be very much mistaken. Gordon Ivers was not that kind of a man. He was only the more embittered by his encounter with the trustees, and remained silent and inactive simply for the lack of opportunity to vent his spleen. He was biding his time.

As for Sidney, the time soon began to hang heavily upon his hands. Though by no means a lover of study, the hours he had spent at the academy had been the pleasantest of his life. He missed the companionship of the boys, and the thousand and one agreeable diversions of the academy life. As time passed, and no pleasurable occupation seemed to offer itself, Sidney grew insufferably bored.

"Well, what do you want, anyhow?" was his father's unsympathetic response, when he appealed to him. "Haven't you your own way in everything now—more than than you ever had at the Hall? You can ride, fish, shoot, and a hundred other things. What more do you want?"

"I want something to do—I mean, I want to work at something. There's no fun riding or shooting all alone,

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without any of the fellows. I want something that will be pleasant and profitable, too——"

"You mean you want to work for your living?"

"No, no. I mean some sort of study. You know you said I should go to Yale, and now that I have left the academy, I miss the fellows so that I want to get to college as soon as possible. I never can get there by lying idle."

"I thought you said only two months ago that you hated study?"

"Oh, that was Latin and Greek—so I do; but there are studies that I like very well. You know, I always intended taking a scientific course at college, which does not include Latin and Greek."

"Well, what course do you want?"

"I think I should like civil engineering best. I take considerable interest in it—and I know very little about it."

"Perhaps when you know more about it you'll take less interest in it," said Mr. Ivers, with a short laugh; "still, have your dose of it if you want. I don't know about the 'engineering,' but the 'civil' part can't but do you good."

Sidney, who did not relish his father's joke, scowled disagreeably and remained silent.

"Well, where are you going to get any preparation for college around here?" went on Mr. Ivers. "You don't want to go to the Bramford High School."

"I should say not," said Sidney in lofty contempt. "Besides, I couldn't get the special preparation I want there. But there is Mr. Lawson, the architect and civil engineer. I could study with him. Everybody says he is very well informed; and then there's Mr. Peabody, the town surveyor. I could go out and get practical experience in surveying from him. He would be glad to give me instructions for the service I could render him."

"Very well. Fix it to suit yourself; anything rather than having you grumbling around here, kicking the dogs and swearing at the servants."

Sidney lost no time in making his arrangements with Mr. Lawson and Mr. Peabody, both of whom agreed to instruct him in their special branches. From that time on Sidney found plenty of work to occupy him. From nine o'clock to twelve in the morning he was usually at Mr. Lawson's office, busily employed at the drawing board; while, during a part of nearly every clear afternoon, as soon as the snow left the ground, he was to be found carrying the pole and line for Mr. Peabody.

As the spring advanced, Sidney grew more ambitious, and determined to have a theodolite of his own, so as to do a little amateur surveying himself. His father, who had watched his progress with indifference, scarcely bestowing upon it any more attention than an occasional cynical comment, grumbled considerably at the expense of purchasing such an instrument; but, as Mr. Peabody had an extra one which he was willing to sell cheap, Sidney at length obtained consent to buy it, together with the usual accompaniments in the form of a chain, tape, pole, etc. Those who knew Mr. Peabody's ability to drive a good bargain would probably have said on general principles that the theodolite was dear at any price, but still it served Sidney's modest purpose well enough; and none who saw him during the next two weeks plodding industriously over the fields of Hosmer, with Pomp, the colored boy, carrying the pole and chain, would have guessed that he was other than a full fledged surveyor.

"Here is the material for a map of the whole estate," said he to his father one night, as he tapped his notebook and gave a nod of satisfaction. "I've been a week, off and on, making the measurements."

"And how many do you suppose are right?" asked his father with a sarcastic smile, as he looked over his glasses.

"Why, all of them, of course," answered Sidney, considerably nettled. "What good would my training and studying be if I couldn't measure off several acres of land——"

"Well, if 'several acres' is your idea of the size of this estate, your measurements must be away off— But, here, let me see them."

Mr. Ivers took the notebook and glanced over the figures.

"You needn't expect to find mistakes there," said Sidney. "I know my business, and I've been over the whole ground twice."

"Well, we'll see now," answered his father. "We'll see if you are so all-fired smart. Hum—m—m—' 200 feet, 180 feet, 150 ft. 5½ in.' Looks all right. But hold on. What's the use of guessing when I have the figures."

Mr. Ivers went to his safe, opened it, and after some searching, drew out a thick document.

"Here we are," he said, as he rescated himself. "Here are the measurements indicated in the will. Now, we'll see whether you're right or not. There is no use going over the whole thing. I'll simply try you on that part of the estate that lies next to the Bramford road."

There was silence for several minutes, while Mr. Ivers glanced back and forth from the notebook to the document, rapidly comparing figures.

Suddenly he burst into a hearty laugh.

"Just as I thought, my young surveyor. Oh, you're a good one! I'm proud of you; indeed I am."

Sidney started forward uneasily.

"How do you mean? Are there any—have you found a mistake?"

"Oh, only a slight one—nothing of importance. A mere matter of two hundred feet. Of course that makes no particular difference," and Mr. Ivers's laughter increased.

Sidney blushed scarlet.

"Two hundred feet out of the way?" he exclaimed. "Oh, that is simply impossible. What is the measurement?"

"The line running back from Bramford road along the boundary of the academy grounds. Here, look for yourself."

Sidney examined the figures in the notebook, then on the document.

"I don't care," he maintained obstinately, "I am sure I didn't made a mistake."

"Why, you stupid booby!" exclaimed his father with some show of impatience, "can't you see that you must be wrong. This is the will—old Reginald Hosmer's will; that is, it is a copy of it. Do you mean to set up your figures against the will?"

"I don't believe I've made a mistake," persisted Sidney.

Mr. Ivers gave the notebook an impatient toss across the table.

"Well, you're about as obstinate as you are ignorant," he said in disgust. "You'd better take to breaking stones on the road, or something that won't need the exercise of any sense."

Sidney, who was greatly angered and humiliated by his father's words, snatched up the notebook, turned on his heel, and left the room.

About noon the next day, however, he burst somewhat abruptly into his father's presence, with a triumphant expression of face, and exclaimed:

"There, I knew it! I knew I was right!"

"What do you mean? Right about what?" asked his father, who had apparently forgotten all about the matter.

"About that measurement. I have just been over that line again—and this time with a tape measure."

"Well?"

"And my figures are *correct*."

"Sidney, what—why, what do you mean?" Mr. Ivers's voice was harsh and loud.

"I cannot be mistaken this time. My figures are right."

An evil expression suddenly lighted up Mr. Ivers's face.

It lasted but a moment, however. Then he was perfectly calm again—at least, to all appearances. But one could not easily fathom Gordon Ivers. At times when other men grew wildly excited, he became cold and still. It was his way.

"Sidney," he said steadily, "you are positive this time? There can be no mistake?"

"Not a chance of it."

His father once more opened his safe, and took out a copy of the will.

"And you say the correct measurement of that line is 2,000 feet?"

"Yes."

"Not 1,800 feet?"

"No."

Mr. Ivers's eyes flashed again for an instant.

"Sidney," he said, "I will measure that with you this afternoon. If you are right, you shall have a brand new theodolite—a gold mounted one if you want."

Sidney started to speak, but his father silenced him by a gesture.

"If you are right, then these figures on this document are wrong—200 feet

short. This, however, is only an exemplified copy of the original will which is filed in the office of Mr. Jenks, the county surrogate. This copy may be wrong and the original correct. I will take it into Bramford, after measuring that boundary, and compare it with the original will."

"Well, and what then?"

"What then!" exclaimed his father, gripping Sidney's arm like a vise. "Suppose your measurement is correct, and the original will contains a short measurement—200 feet short? Then what happens? Then there are 200 feet of land held by the academy trustees as their property which they are *not entitled to according to the will*. And what is more interesting, that particular 200 feet happens to *include the school building*. Here, get my hat and we'll make that measurement at once."

At about five o'clock that afternoon the father and son were seen returning on foot from Bramford. Mr. Ivers's hand rested affectionately on Sidney's shoulder, their heads were bent in earnest conversation, and their faces betrayed feelings of a strong and very unusual character. That these feelings were not unpleasant was evident from the grim smile that occasionally surmounted Mr. Gordon Ivers's features, and from the air of genuine satisfaction with which he slashed off the heads of the tall weeds that skirted his path.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BRAD IN NEW YORK.

"YOU haven't forgotten your promise, Brad?" said Eugene Clifford about four days before the Easter vacation.

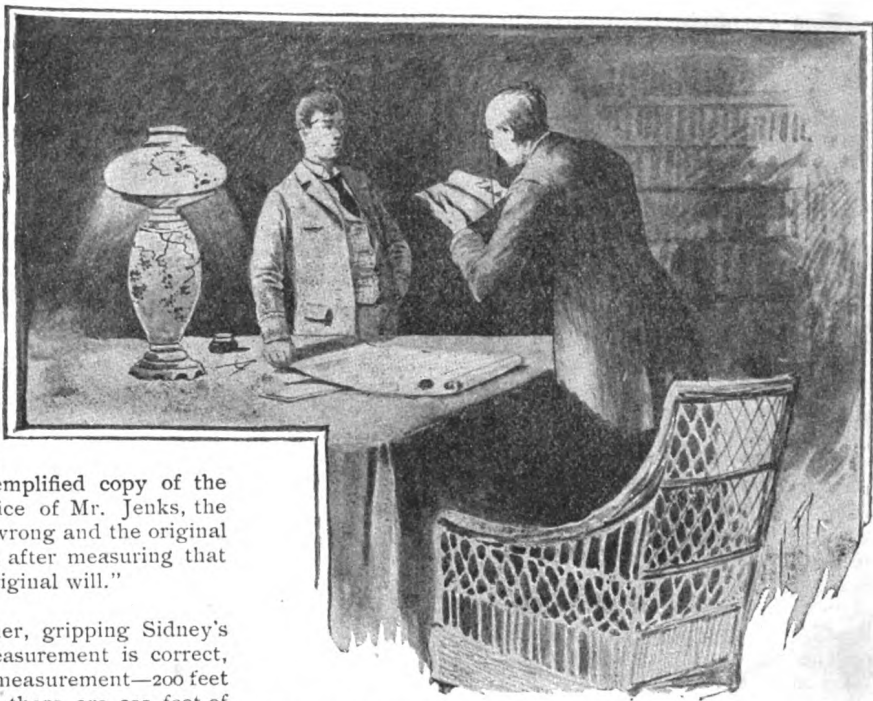
"Not a bit of it," was the prompt answer. "I don't get an invitation like yours every day, and I have stored it up carefully. I was only afraid you would forget."

"Well, I don't see why you should care so much for it. Of course I mean to give you a rattling good time; but,

after all the traveling you have done, I shouldn't think a short trip to New York would offer such a pleasant prospect."

"The reason is simple enough—I have never really seen New York. I suppose that surprises you, but, the fact is, I have seen less of New York than of any great city in the world. I haven't been there often, and then only for brief visits upon Mr. Parker. So the outlook, you see, is very pleasant."

And very pleasant indeed it proved. Not three hours after the last exercise before the Easter vacation, Brad and Eugene set off for the city, arriving about five o'clock in the



AN EVIL EXPRESSION SUDDENLY LIGHTED UP MR. IVERS'S FACE.

afternoon. Eugene picked his way through the trucks and cabs that jammed the street at the entrance of the ferry-house, ignoring the numerous cabmen who stood on both sides, shouting and gesticulating wildly to attract attention, and made straight for a handsome coupé that stood near the opposite curb. As they approached, Eugene waved his hand to the uniformed coachman, who immediately touched his hat, leaped down from his box, and opened the door.

"How is every one, Andrew?" asked Eugene with a smile, as he motioned Brad to enter.

"Very well, sir—all looking for you to come home. Hopin' you're well and strong, sir."

"Yes, thanks, I'm all right," and Eugene stepped in.

As Brad sat back on the richly upholstered cushions, shut in from the rude turmoil of the street behind plate glass windows, he could not help reflecting on the infinite advantages that wealth could command; and could not but be impressed by the ease and nonchalance with which Eugene carried himself in luxurious surroundings.

"I've been pretty nearly everywhere, and had lots of experiences of certain kinds," he mused to himself, "but I'm blessed if I could carry myself with the ease and grace that Clifford has. It is only luxury that can give a fellow polish like that—and yet, after all, what's the difference? If a

fellow is a real gentleman, I suppose he'll show it, no matter what his bringing up is—and if he isn't, all the luxury in the world won't make him one."

And with this democratic sentiment, Brad disposed of the matter, and turned his attention to the constantly shifting panorama that the crowded thoroughfare revealed.

After quite a long ride the carriage drew up before a handsome residence on upper Fifth Avenue, facing on Central Park—a beautiful home in a beautiful situation. Here Eugene and Brad alighted, a footman came down the steps for their baggage, and they entered the open door to find Mr. and Mrs. Clifford awaiting them.

Brad was received with cordial hospitality, and a genuine sincerity of feeling that set him at ease almost immediately. No host and hostess knew better how to entertain than Mr. and Mrs. Clifford, and of this fact Brad received ample testimony during the week that followed. Such a busy, happy week! On the go from morning till night, hurrying from one species of entertainment to another, there was barely time to complete the schedule of pleasures which Eugene had laid out beforehand, and were quite ready each night for the sound sleep and agreeable dreams which Mrs. Clifford's handsome, comfortable, old fashioned beds courted.

Certainly Eugene kept his promise, for every minute of that delightful vacation remained precious in Brad's memory in after days, just as the concluding event of it marked an important epoch in his life.

As a crowning feature of the week, Eugene had arranged for a large reception at his home, to be given on the last evening of their vacation, and to which the many new friends whom Brad had met during the week were invited.

"It is to make up for the reception at the clubhouse in February, which we both missed," said Eugene. "and it shall be in honor of you, too, just as that one was—the only difference being that *we* have the guest of the evening while the club did not."

"A very questionable advantage," remarked Brad with a laugh.

The reception was an exceptionally brilliant affair. It was not composed entirely of young people, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford having invited a number of their own particular friends. Prominent among these was Mr. Raymond Parker, whom Mr. Clifford knew well, and who was asked particularly for Brad's sake, the latter having been unable, during the scramble of the last week, to find time for more than a hasty call upon his old friend. Mr. Parker wrote in reply to the invitation that an engagement occupied him for the early part of the evening, but that he would attend later.

Brad was treated as the special guest of the occasion, without, however, being forced into prominence, which was always objectionable to him. He, accordingly, enjoyed himself to the utmost. The minutes sped rapidly by, and the hour grew late before any one was aware of it. It was nearly eleven o'clock when Brad succeeded in disengaging himself from a group with which he had been conversing, and set out on a search for Mr. Parker.

Not finding him in the rear parlor, he was about to cross the hall to the library, when a feeling of keen thirst drew him toward the dining room, which was further down the hall.

It was now quite deserted, and Brad found nothing upon the table but a number of dishes, which had been brought back from the parlor after the refreshments had been served.

On the sideboard, however, stood a heavy silver water pitcher, and towards this Brad hastened at once. He was about to pour out a glass of water, when his eye was ar-

rested by a decanter cut glass that stood on a shelf of the sideboard.

"Hello, that looks tempting!" said Brad to himself. "Perhaps I'd better take wine this time. Ice water is bad for a fellow when he is very warm."

This was unusual for Brad. During his many voyages with Captain Bunn, he had been compelled to keep very strict habits in reference to stimulants. He was allowed to use them only when needed medicinally, and then brandy was administered to him in small quantities. Captain Bunn had repeatedly warned him about spirits, and Brad had carefully followed orders. In this manner he had acquired abstemious habits that made it a simple matter for him to decline wine when offered—as it had been frequently at Mr. Clifford's house.

This, however, seemed to be an exceptional occasion, when wine would be more suitable than water, so Brad did not hesitate to pour himself out a glass and swallow it. Almost immediately a strange, wild, burning thirst seized him, and, before he could think twice, he had again filled and drained the glass. The blood coursed madly through his veins. What was this sudden leaping to life of some sleeping demon within him, some strange influence that seemed to be whirling his senses away?

Another glass, and yet his thirst seemed only to increase, for, scarcely waiting to swallow it, he filled the glass again. He raised it to his lips, and was about to empty it, when he felt himself suddenly arrested. Not by the touch of a hand, but by the consciousness of some one's presence—the consciousness of some strong personality, so vivid, that even Brad's confused and turbulent brain could not but feel it. The glass left his lips, his hand faltered, and he turned quickly around.

In the doorway stood Mr. Raymond Parker, gazing at him steadily, pityingly.

"Brad," he said in quiet tones of authority, "you had better put that glass down."

The glass slipped from Brad's fingers and fell with a tinkle and crash upon the hard wood floor. He swayed unsteadily a moment; then raising his hands, he pressed them to his throbbing temples and leaned heavily against the sideboard.

"Oh, Mr. Parker! What is it? What is the matter with me?"

A moment more and Mr. Parker's hand grasped Brad's arm.

"My boy, you are disgracing yourself; but come, rouse up. You must not return to the parlors—" Here Mr. Parker's hand pressed an electric bell.

"Ask Mr. Eugene Clifford to come here at once," he said to the servant who entered.

"Brad!"

No answer.

"Brad!" Mr. Parker repeated.

"Yes, sir," was the response in rather thick and muffled tones.

"Come to my office tomorrow morning before returning to Bramford. I must see you."

Eugene entered at this moment, and the situation was explained to him in a few words. With a low whistle of surprise, he glanced anxiously at Brad. Then, taking him by the arm, he conducted him up stairs.

(To be continued.)

ALL ON PAPER.

SUMMER BOARDER—"You advertised that it was always cold out here, but I only see one cool thing about the place."

FARMER—"An' what's that?"

SUMMER BOARDER—"Your advertisement."

ARTHUR BLAISDELL'S CHOICE.*

BY W. BERT FOSTER.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FIRE AT HIGH ROCK.

IMMEDIATELY upon leaving the train, out of which the excited passengers were pouring, Hal set off on a run for the conflagration. There were no houses near the railroad, but close to the water, along the summit of a high bluff which overlooked the bay, there was a row of pretty little seaside cottages, and at the southern end of this row the fire had started.

It had now spread to the two houses nearest it, and the wind, which was blowing half a gale from the south, was already carrying both flames and sparks to the roof of a fourth house. At first glance, it looked to Hal as though there was no help for the cottages, and as though all must go.

Before he reached the spot, a fire company—the first on the ground—dashed by him along the dusty road from a neighboring village. The scene was one of wildest confusion. Men were rushing hither and thither with their arms full of household goods, while others had established a "bucket line" from the very shore of the bay up a narrow, devious path to the summit of the bluff, and thence to those houses in greatest danger.

Piles of goods and chattels occupied the open space out of reach of the fire, and more was constantly being added to the heaps from the buildings threatened by the conflagration. With the firelight glaring upon all objects, and the roaring of the wind and flames, it was, indeed, a weird scene.

Only a few moments did Hal Blaisdell spend in thus idly viewing what was transpiring about him. He quickly awoke to the fact that he had work to do. His first act must be to find Mr. Davidson's house and establish communication with the *Journal* office. He asked the nearest man to direct him.

"There it is," returned the excited individual, pointing to the last cottage—a much more pretentious one than its neighbors—standing at the northern end of the row. "That'll go before long!"

At these words, Hal hurried away in the direction of the residence of the newspaper magnate. The house stood directly in the path of the fire, and if he hoped to send any extended report to the *Journal* by telephone he must work rapidly.

On approaching the house, he saw that the hall door was wide open, and the *Journal's* proprietor stood in the entrance, gazing calmly on the scene. Hal had begun to feel a little nervous at the thought of stationing himself at the telephone in a house which would, in all probability, be reduced to ashes in a very short time, and it was therefore with some hesitation that he approached the door.

"Mr. Davidson?" he inquired interrogatively.

"Yes, sir. Are you from the office?"

Hal replied in the affirmative.

"Let's see your card," growled the proprietor.

Hal produced his bit of pasteboard, and Mr. Davidson stood aside and allowed him to enter.

"I—I intended to send up the report by telephone," commenced Hal.

"Well, what's to hinder?" inquired Mr. Davidson, throwing open the library door at the left of the entrance, which, like all the other rooms, seemed to have been hastily shorn of its furnishings.

"Unless the fire is checked it will soon reach here," replied Hal.

"What if it does?" snarled Mr. Davidson. "You can use the telephone until the fire comes, can't you? It's on the side of the house furthest from the blaze. When you see me leave it'll be time enough for you to go. Let me tell you, young man, if you remain on the *Journal*, you've got to have more nerve than that."

An angry reply rose to Hal's lips, but he stifled his wrath and strode across the room to the instrument, which was screwed into the wall beside a wide French window. There was something in Hal Blaisdell's nature which was doggedly persistent when aroused, and he then and there determined to stand by that telephone until after Mr. Davidson retreated from the house, even though the walls should cave in the next instant.

He called up the *Journal* office at once.

Mr. Doliver hastened to the telephone and answered him.

"Is this you, Blaisdell?"

"Yes; are you ready?"

"Just a minute," replied Mr. Doliver, and then came a hasty "Go ahead."

Hal began in a rapid, though distinct voice, to read the notes he had written up. The wire was a private one, and the young reporter had little difficulty in making himself understood. As soon as he had sent in all he had thus far written, he hurried out to view the progress of the fire and to obtain notes in relation to its origin.

At the very moment of his appearance in the street, a steam fire engine, to which was attached four horses, thundered past, together with a two horse wagon, filled with hose and firemen. Mr. Davidson had telephoned to the city for them immediately after the fire started, and they had now just arrived.

But, even with this trained assistance, little could be done to control the blaze. The wind was blowing even stronger than before, and seemed to increase in power every moment. Great masses of smoke and flame were hurled into the air, and then drifted out over the firelit waters of the bay, the sparks and blazing brands falling in a perfect shower into the waves.

But two houses now separated the conflagration from Mr. Davidson's residence. That gentleman seemed to take the matter very coolly, and assisted the firemen in every way possible in their attempt to save his property. Inch by inch the flames were fought, but although re-enforcements were constantly arriving, the fire continued to drive the firemen before it.

The tongues of flame leaped higher and higher, and the gale seemed to roar in exultation over the devastation it was causing.

"They've all got to go," said one stern faced, grimy fire man, standing near Hal. "I never see a fiercer fire, but, thank God, there's been nobody hurt, an' most of the property is well covered by insurance."

This remark put a new idea into Hal's head, and he hurried away. When he again returned to Mr. Davidson's house he had obtained the amount of insurance on each house in the burning row, and the names of the companies by whom the policies were issued. These facts, with an account of the origin of the fire, which, by the way, was the "old, old story" of the careless servant and the kerosene can, he telephoned at once to the city.

"You'll have to hurry up if you want to get hold of many more items," exclaimed Mr. Davidson nervously, hurrying in just as Hal had finished. "The men say that in ten minutes the other side of the house will be all ablaze."

"All right," returned Hal shortly, becoming more cool as the danger drew nigh. "I'll be back soon."

He hurried away once more, and got the stories of two or three eye witnesses and some other items to weave into the narrative. Mr. Davidson was standing in the hall when he returned. The flames had caught one corner of the house, and were rapidly spreading all along the southern wall. The heat was becoming oppressive, and it was evident to Hal that the proprietor of the *Journal* had begun to think of leaving.

"You haven't much more, have you?" inquired Mr. Davidson nervously.

"Considerable," returned Hal, holding up his notebook. "The wires haven't melted off yet, have they?"

Mr. Davidson muttered something unintelligible and followed Hal into the library, wiping his bald head with his handkerchief. Hal at once called up Mr. Doliver and went about his work as calmly as though the fire had been two blocks away instead of roaring within a few yards of him. He was determined to show Mr. Davidson that he possessed some nerve.

His companion tramped uneasily about the room a moment and finally threw open the French window. This act caused a current of air through the room and the smoke commenced to pour in through the open hall door in a dense cloud.

"You will have to close that door if you have the window open," suggested Hal.

The gentleman hurriedly closed the door and muttered something about being "smoked out like rats in a hole." Then he began his nervous pacing about the apartment again. With considerable satisfaction Hal saw that he was getting enough of it.

"I say," said Mr. Davidson, finally growing desperate, "haven't you got most through?"

"Not quite," returned Hal, stopping in his talk with Doliver long enough to answer.

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed the proprietor of the *Journal* irascibly. "Do you want to get roasted alive? I'm nearly suffocated now."

"We reporters have to stand such things," replied Hal, adding wickedly, "but it takes *nerve*."

For a moment Mr. Davidson looked as though he was undecided whether to have an apoplectic fit or to laugh uproariously. But he did neither, for at that moment the flames burst through the partition and the black smoke began to pour into the room.

"Come out! come out, o' there!" yelled a burly fireman outside, and Mr. Davidson waited for no second bidding.

"You can stay and roast if you want to," he exclaimed, "but I'm going."

He sprang through the window, and Hal, after hanging up the receiver, rang off the connection, and calmly followed Mr. Davidson.

A few moments later the entire building was a blazing ruin.

CHAPTER XX.

MICKY MORIARTY PAYS OFF AN OLD SCORE.

"I HAVE a good mind to discharge you," gasped Mr. Davidson, seizing Hal by the arm and dragging him away from the burning cottage. "What's your name?"

"Blaisdell."

"Blaisdell?" repeated Mr. Davidson slowly; then, after a moment's thought, he said interrogatively: "not that young fellow who was out at the Park the day that confounded launch blew up?"

"No, sir—his brother."

"But I thought *he* was going to be a reporter on the paper," said Mr. Davidson. "I intended looking him up before this."

"There was only one opening on the *Journal* and he—that is, we thought it would be best for me to take it. He is working out of town."

"On a paper?"

"No, sir."

"He ain't fit for anything else but a reporter," growled Mr. Davidson. "And as for that, if *nerve* makes a reporter, you ought to be a good one." He stood silent for a few moments, watching his burning house, but when he again spoke it was evident that his thoughts had not been on the scene before him. "I said I had a good mind to discharge you a few moments ago—but I've changed my mind. What do you want most?" he asked abruptly.

Hal was tempted to laugh at the question. Mr. Davidson asked it as though he was ready and able to give whatever Hal should wish—although he was not a very imposing god-mother, or rather, father. But he quickly answered:

"A chance on the paper for Art."

"That's what I thought," returned Mr. Davidson approvingly. "I knew if you were anything like your brother you'd think of somebody beside yourself first. He shall have a place if I live to get back to the office." Then he abruptly dropped the subject. "I'm glad Flossie isn't here to see it burn," he said, gazing at his house, now a mass of leaping, crackling flames. "She went to the country with her aunt two weeks ago, and I'm glad of it."

At that instant somebody tapped Hal on the shoulder and he turned to confront Horatio Guelph.

"How goes it?" the latter inquired.

"Oh, you're too late for the fair," replied Hal, who felt particularly happy.

"Got everything?"

"Yes, and I've telephoned most of it. How did you come down?"

"Team. Got it back here a little way. Take you up if you're ready. No other train tonight."

"Well, I'll go over to the hotel," said Mr. Davidson. "See that you get a good account of this, Blaisdell."

"How haf you get along mit the old man, eh, Blaisdell?" inquired Horatio, as they wended their way to the team.

"Splendidly!" returned Hal, and he recounted with animation the adventures of the night.

"And so your brother is to come among us, is he? Dat ish goot—dat ish goot."

The distance from High Rock to the city was some three or four miles shorter by road than by rail; but it was nearly two o'clock when they reached the office. Hal hastily finished his article and then went home, tired out by his night's work.

The *Journal* was out a trifle later than usual that morning; but it had a full account of the devastating fire at High Rock and the *Telegraph*, with its short article hastily telegraphed from the scene by its reporter was "nowhere." Mr. Coffin announced himself perfectly satisfied with his young reporter's work, and that was considerable praise for the city editor to give.

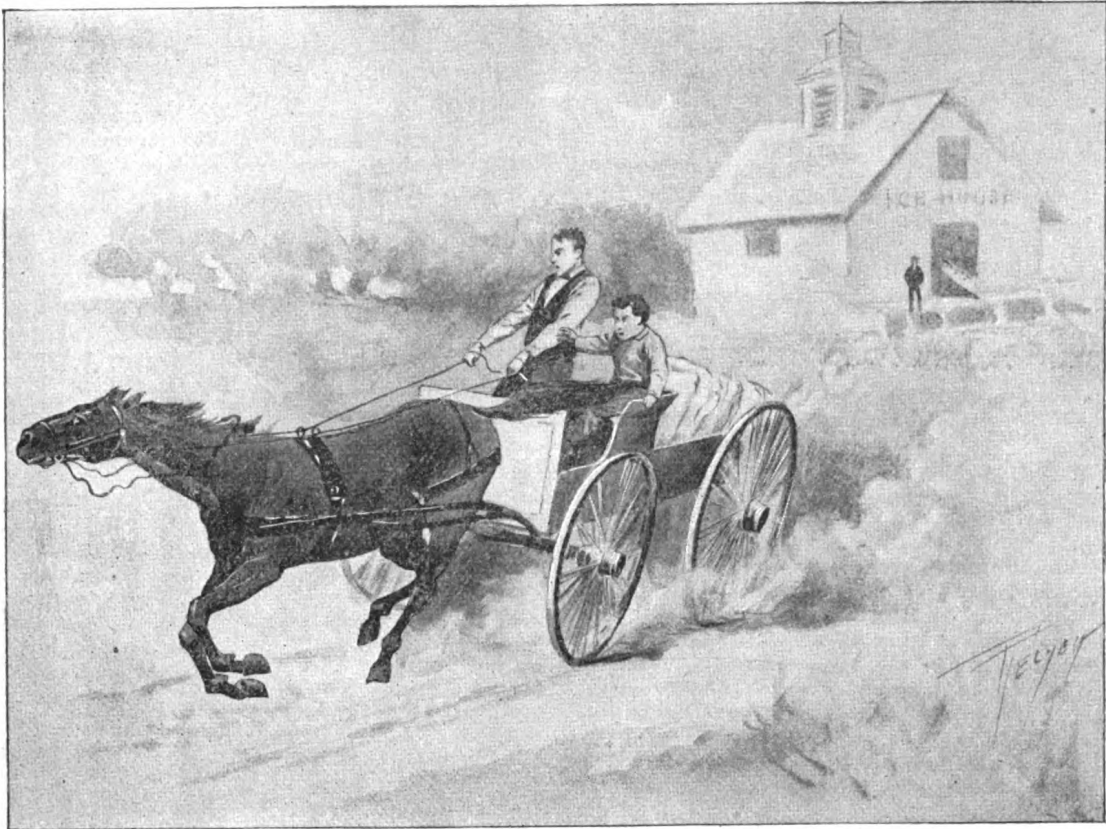
For a few days Hal was the recipient of many congratulations from his associates for his neat bit of work, and then matters quieted down again and all went on as before.

And how did Micky Moriarty get along in his "posishun on the *Jurenal*," as his mother proudly expressed it to the neighbors?

Micky was a bright looking lad of fourteen, small of stature, but stout and rugged, with the broadest of broad brogues, and, as foreman Mack declared, "as smart as a steel trap." He set to work at once, and performed the duties assigned him that first night with promptness and dispatch, and on his arrival home about five o'clock in the morning, he painted in glowing colors to his waiting and anxious mother all that he had done and seen.

It occurred before Micky had been at the *Journal* office a fortnight. It was one evening when the air was sultry and oppressive. The presses were not running yet, for it was early, but the heat from the engines made the atmosphere in the press room almost unbearable.

Micky had been working ever since four o'clock, for he had come down at that time at the request of Mr. Mack to assist in repairing one of the huge machines, out of whose capa-



SNORTING WITH TERROR, THE HORSE DASHED UP THE ROAD.

The very next day he tramped away up town to see Mrs. Blaisdell and thank her for what she had done. He had already seen Hal and thanked him.

"Sure, it's a monstrous big score I'm a-owin' the likes of her," thought Micky, as he made his way down town again.

He at once became Hal's devoted slave, and should the young reporter want some little errand done he had only to mention it to Micky and it would be at once performed. Micky was quick to hear and understand as well, the remarks of the other employees about Hal, and he soon learned that his friend was becoming very intimate with the wildest and most dissolute of all the reporters—Mont Raymond.

"'Twill be a sin and shame, so it will, if that devil gets a hold on Masthur Hal," said Mrs. Moriarty, when her son confided his suspicions to her. "Do you be watchful, Micky, an' when yez can get the chance, jist shove him in the right d'rection. Sure, it'll be too bad indade, if the poor bye bees slippin' away from his mother—an' she such a foine lady!"

So Micky kept his eyes open, his loyal little heart always on the alert to pay off that old score. And the opportunity came sooner than he expected

cious maw the *Morning Journal* came, printed, pasted and folded.

It was now about ten o'clock, and the press having been set to rights Micky went to the side door for a breath of fresh air. The narrow street outside was shrouded in gloom, through which the electric light on the corner of the nearest broad thoroughfare beamed like a star. As the lad stood there hidden in the shadow of the doorway a step sounded on the stair behind him, and a figure came rapidly down from the reporters' room. At first Micky thought it Hal; but in an instant he saw his mistake. It was Mont Raymond, and Micky shrank back without making his presence known.

Just as Mont reached the doorway a figure suddenly appeared from somewhere out of the darkness, and spoke to him. The stranger was dressed in dark clothes with a long cloak (despite the warmth of the night) thrown over his shoulders, and a broad brimmed, soft hat was pulled well down over his eyes, shielding his face completely.

"Hello," said Mont, replying to the stranger's greeting. "How are you tonight? Come up and have a cigar?"

"No thanks," returned the other in a low voice, still re-

maining in the shadow. "I just stopped to know if you were coming up to the club tonight?"

"Cert," returned Mont. "I say, I hardly knew you in that rig."

The stranger made a motion of impatience as though to caution Mont to speak less loudly.

"Well, bring young Blaisdell with you, if you can," he said, turning away. "Some of the boys will be there, and we'll have a little supper."

"All right," replied Mont. "We'll be up between one and two."

The stranger departed and Mont stood a moment longer in the doorway while he lighted a cigar. As he was about to leave the building a quick step approached from the not far distant thoroughfare, and halted at the door.

"Hello, Blaisdell!" the listening Micky heard Mont exclaim. "Just the fellow I want to see. Come up to the club after the 'dig' is over tonight, will you? Some of the boys are going to have a little spread, and I have got an invite for you."

"Thanks," returned Hal, and was about to speak further when he was interrupted by the appearance of a slight figure in the doorway.

"Misthur Hal, is that you?" exclaimed Micky's eager voice.

"Hello, there's your shadow, Hal," laughed Mont.

"Yes, it's I, Micky," returned Hal good naturedly.

"Sure, I was up to your house before comin' down this afternoon, Misthur Hal, with the wash, an' sure yer mother were awful bad with her head—"

"Is that so?" exclaimed Hal anxiously. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Sure, sur, I c'dn't find yez afore," returned Micky, who, in making his former declaration had used his imagination considerably. "True, he had known Mrs. Blaisdell had a headache, but that was all he did know."

"She was feeling bad before I left home this noon," said Hal. "I'll go to the house just as soon as Charlie'll let me off. You will excuse me, I know, Raymond. I'm dreadfully sorry."

"Of course I will," replied Mont promptly. "I hope it will be nothing serious, Hal. You will remember me to her, won't you, old fellow?"

"Certainly," responded Hal, gratefully. "Excuse me to the other boys. I'm with you in heart if not in body," and then he ran rapidly up the stairs.

"Sure," muttered Micky, as he went inside again, "I dunno whether that did any good or not. May the saints preserve me! but I don't believe Father Doran'd call that a lie. She is sick, Heaven bless her! an' she'd be heart sick as well, if she knew what I do."

"Micky," just then exclaimed the cheerful voice of Mr. Mack, interrupting his soliloquy, "Micky you can go home now, if you want to. It's nearly eleven, and you've worked hard enough to deserve a few hours off."

"Sure, its much obliged to yez, I be," returned Micky, and he gladly seized his hat and left the building.

His usual time for getting home was between four and five in the morning; but he had no fear of not being able to get into the house at this time of night. The Moriartys never had their door locked, unless perhaps, when John Moriarty, the husband, and stepfather to Micky, came home uglier than usual with drink.

Micky's own father, Patrick Moriarty, the brother of John, had died when Micky was very small, before they had left the "ould country," which departure Mrs. Moriarty was continually lamenting. John Moriarty was an

evil faced and an evil tempered man with a thick, bull neck, a lowering brow, and a deep red scar across his lower right jaw. Before he had received the wound which caused the scar, and when he was a somewhat younger man, he had been far better looking. Perhaps his good looks was one reason why his brother's widow married him a year or so after her former husband's death.

They sold out and came to America soon after their marriage, and here John quickly showed what his real nature was. He soon drank up and squandered all their little store of money; and since then, while they were driven from pillar to post, Micky and his mother had supported the family. Fortunately but one child had been born to them, a sickly, puny little fellow, having implanted in his very system the effects of all the weakening vices of his father. So it was that poor little Jimmy had always remained an invalid instead of growing into a sturdy, independent boy like Micky.

The frequent respites from the company of John Moriarty while he was serving some petty sentence at the State Farm, were thankfully received by his family. At the present time, however, he was out of "durance vile" and was making his wife and the children as miserable as a drunken brute is capable of doing.

On the way home Micky secretly hoped that his stepfather was out, and would remain out all night. When he entered the outer room of their apartments he thought his wish had been fulfilled. He could hear the regular breathing of his mother from the room beyond, and Jimmy stirred uneasily in his sleep. John Moriarty was not at home.

A lamp burned dimly on the table, and he was about to extinguish it, when the sound of footsteps on the stairs outside arrested him. He recognized at once the heavy tread of his stepfather, although it seemed more steady than was usually the case. Leaving the lamp burning where it was, Micky hurriedly entered the tiny dark closet which served him as a bedroom, and closed the door, all but a crack.

The next instant the outer door opened, and John Moriarty entered with a stranger close behind him. His stepfather threw off his hat, revealing to Micky his ugly, vicious face, and then tiptoed softly across the room to his wife's bed-chamber, while the stranger, who was muffled in a long, black cloak, remained standing at the door.

Satisfied that his wife and Jimmy were asleep, Moriarty quietly closed the door of their room and returned to the table, and turned up the blaze of the lamp.

"All serene," he said, motioning the muffled stranger to a seat. "They're sleeping like pigs, and the boy doesn't git home from the paper office till mornin'."

"Very well," returned the stranger, drawing his chair up to the table, and with a start of surprise the listening boy in the closet recognized the voice of the person who had appeared at the side entrance of the *Journal* office that evening, and had spoken to Mont Raymond.

"Now, I wonder phat diviltry them two is up to," thought Micky. "P'raps it's some' at concernin' Misthur Hal."

So Micky continued to strain his ears to their utmost, but sharp though they were, it was little of the conversation he was able to catch. The stranger seemed to be unfolding some plan in low, whispered tones to his companion, and whatever it was Moriarty caught at it eagerly.

"It is be—autiful! beautiful!" Micky heard him mutter to himself. "But I'll need *some* help."

"You shall have it," returned the stranger, folding up a paper on which a diagram seemed to have been drawn, and returning it to his pocket, "I'll have a man to help you, and remember," here he tapped Moriarty on the shoulder, "one quarter of it shall be yours—a fortune for you, Jack."

"It is that," returned Moriarty. "I'm wid ye, whole handed."

Then the mysterious stranger departed, and blowing out the light, John Moriarty quickly sought his couch. When his stepfather's deep breathing told him that he was asleep, Micky removed his own clothes and crawled into bed.

"Phat iver them divils is at, I dunno," thought the lad, as he fell asleep: "but sure it's no good—that I know!"

CHAPTER XXI.

BLACK BOB.

WHILE the events related in the last few chapters were occurring, Arthur Blaisdell was bravely endeavoring to keep his promise to Hiram Hart, and was attending strictly to Hi's business, despite all the obstacles Mr. Hart, senior, and others threw in his way.

In Mr. Hart's opinion, Hi's request that Arthur should run his business for him was simply the fancy of a fevered brain, and Mrs. Hart seemed to think that it was considerable responsibility to place upon one so young. But in Dr. Hoskins, the attending physician, Arthur had an able supporter.

"If you try to thwart my patient in his request that this young man should manage his affairs for him," said the doctor firmly, "I shall not answer for the consequences. If you love your son you will humor him in this, for, I tell you frankly, he is in a very precarious position."

That at once settled the matter with Mrs. Hart; but with the old man it was different. He did not lack in affection for Hi; but he did consider that his son's business was carried on very loosely at the best, and with only a boy controlling the matter it would be still worse. The stock would be overfed; milk, which, if it was a little old, could be easily sold *somewhere*, would be given to the hogs, and altogether the milk business would be irrecoverably ruined. He tried to make Arthur explain all that he did, and account to him for the money he received or spent. But this Arthur refused to do.

"If Hi had intended me to account to you he would have said so," was Arthur's reply, well knowing that Hi would wish his business kept from the knowledge of his penurious old father, if from anybody.

"He didn't know what he was about, any way," whined the old man. "He's ez looney ez a squinch owl."

"That's all right," returned Arthur, "but he wasn't out of his head when he left things in my care. The doctor will tell you that."

Old man Hart had some cows of his own, the milk from which, beside that which was used in the farmhouse, Hi always purchased at the rate he paid to his other dairy men. Very shortly Arthur noticed that although about the usual quantity of milk was used in the farmhouse, Mr. Hart had considerable more to sell. He immediately grew suspicious, and on testing the milk, was assured that it was not pure.

He complained to the old man, returned two cans, declaring that he would not pay for them, and unless he could have "unwatered" milk he didn't want any. Mr. Hart stormed furiously, but Arthur remained obdurate, and after that the boy had no more trouble in that direction.

In these and many other ways Hart displayed his spite, and although he tried not to show it, Arthur could not hide from Little Mum the fact that he was having a hard time.

The Harts had no ice house, and all they could possibly pack into the ice box would not last more than a fortnight. Hi always obtained his supply as he needed it from Mr. Remington's houses, which were situated on the banks of a lovely pond four miles away. On one of the very hottest days of that summer, about a week after Hi was taken ill,

Arthur discovered that their ice was very low, and that a new supply must be obtained at once.

"Mr. Hart, I shall have to go for a load of ice this afternoon," he said to the old man at the dinner table. "So if you're not going to use Black Nell, I'll take her."

"I'm a-going ter use her," growled the old man, "an' Nell Taft, too. I'm a-goin' ter plow a piece of the swamp medder."

"We have got to have the ice," said Arthur mildly, "and the roan mare has been on the team this morning, and I dare not use her again today. This hot weather doesn't seem to agree with her."

"Wal, ye kin take Bob, can't ye?" snarled the old man, pushing his chair back from the table.

"I never have used him, and I don't know how he will act with me," returned Arthur. "If we were not so nearly out of ice I'd wait until tomorrow; but we must have it today."

"Wal, you kin get it f'r all o' me. I'm a-going to plow that 'ere medder. I reckon Bob won't hurt ye. He needs exercisin'," and jamming his hat down over his eyes, the old man stamped out of the room.

"Don't take Bob," said Mrs. Hart, as Arthur rose from the table. "Wait until tomorrow."

"But we must have the ice today. It may spoil twenty dollars' worth of milk."

"Well, don't take Bob, Arthur."

"I won't if I can help it," returned Arthur, as he and Ben Norton hurried out to the barn.

But Mr. Hart had got ahead of him, and had already started for the meadow, with the black and the bay mare hitched to the plow.

"Come on, you, Ben!" yelled the farmer. "I want ye."

"Well, you'll have to want a little, I reckon, you old curmudgeon," said Ben in a tone too low for the old man to hear. "Are you going to take that horse, Art?" he asked.

"I've got to," returned the boy.

"Well, Heaven help you!" exclaimed Ben. "The beast will kill you, sure."

"I hope not. Any way, somebody has got to conquer him. It may be two months before Hi can exercise him again, and if he remains idle all that time no living man can hold him. I think I'll try it."

"Well, I'll help you harness him," returned Ben, shaking his head.

They backed the light wagon out on the barn floor, and after harnessing Black Bob, Arthur making sure that every buckle and fastening was secure, they led the animal out and hitched him between the shafts. Black Bob, with ears erect and nostrils quivering, seemed to scent the battle from afar, and pawed the floor impatiently while Ben held him by the bit.

"All right!" exclaimed Arthur, gathering up the reins and bracing himself for the struggle he knew must come with the hard bitted beast. "Let him go!"

At that instant young Louey, who had just run out of the house, commenced climbing into the back of the wagon.

"Lemme go; will yer, Art?" he cried.

"Get off! get off!" shouted Arthur; but before the words left his lips, Ben had let go his hold on the horse's bit, and Black Bob dashed out of the barn, through the farmyard gate and down the road like a whirlwind, while Master Louey, with a final kick of his legs, threw himself over the tailboard and sprawled into the bottom of the wagon.

Fortunately Bob had headed in the right direction, and although he kept to the road and obeyed the rein when Arthur wished to turn him, the boy felt himself powerless to stop the animal. They were fully a mile from home before Arthur dared to turn round to see what had become of

Louey. Instead of lying at the bottom of the wagon and crying with terror, as Arthur supposed he would, Louey had risen to his knees and was clinging with both hands to the back of the seat.

"Get down!" commanded Arthur. "Aren't you frightened?"

"Well, I should smuligate!" returned Louey, with an elfish grin. "My! ain't we going?"

"Yes, and likely to go, too, for aught I see," returned Arthur grimly.

Finally Black Bob changed his gait from a gallop to a long, swinging trot, and Arthur felt more at his ease. In an incredibly short space of time they reached Mr. Remington's ice houses, and Arthur found no difficulty in stopping Bob and backing the wagon up to the platform before the door. He fastened the horse to one of the hitching posts, and obtaining a pike, entered the great barn-like building which was half-filled with cakes of ice. He always loaded his wagon himself, and then drove upon the scales and had his load weighed. Another wagon besides his own was standing by the platform, and just as Arthur entered the ice house he came face to face with—Bob Harris!

"Oh you sneak," exclaimed Bob, leaping upon the platform. "I've got you now. Air you going 'ter fight me fair?" and he commenced to peel off his coat.

"No, I'm not going to fight you—I've got something else to do," returned Arthur, and he entered the ice house without bestowing any further attention on the bully.

He at once began to slide the ice cakes down the inclined plane to the platform, and did not again make his appearance on the outside until he had shoved down sufficient to load his wagon. As he approached the exit he heard Louey cry out as though in pain, and on stepping outside he found that Bob Harris had been amusing himself during his absence by throwing bits of ice at the child.

"Come, no more of that!" exclaimed Arthur angrily.

Bob laughed mockingly and threw another piece of ice at the boy, who sat cowering upon the wagon seat; but the missile went wide of its mark. Arthur restrained the impulse he had to kick the bully off the platform, and commenced to load his wagon as rapidly as possible. He knew that Bob Harris was trying his best to make him fight, and although he was far from being afraid of the bully, he was still averse to giving Bob the satisfaction he sought. He had slid three or four cakes into the wagon, when another cry of pain from Louey arrested him.

Bob had not desisted at all in his contemptible occupation, and although but a poor shot at best, had finally hit Louey again with a bit of ice.

"Don't you do that again!" cried Arthur, stopping in his labor and preparing to spring from the wagon to the platform.

At that very instant another fragment of ice left the bully's hand. It skimmed over Louey's head and struck Black Bob right behind his ears.

The horse started when the missile struck him, and springing to one side snapped his hitching strap as though it had been pack thread. Snorting with terror, Black Bob dashed up the road, scattering the ice cakes on every side, while each jolt of the careering wagon threatened to throw both occupants to the ground.

(To be continued.)

RURAL REPARTEE.

Drive away those rascally boys in the strawberry
hem what's what,
and show them which is switch."

TRAIN AND STATION;

OR,

THE RAMBLES OF A YOUNG RAILROADER.*

BY EDGAR R. HOADLEY, JR.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DOROTHY SUDDENLY ATTAINS
THE DIGNITY OF A YOUNG
LADY.



"HIS gets me!" cried conductor Blake blankly, when all means to discover the cause of the setting of the brakes had apparently been exhausted. "I've seen some curious things in my time, but this is certainly the most mysterious wrinkle I ever ran against yet. If this thing keeps on, we'll never make our time."

The engineer, Dash and Roberts, with most of the trainmen, were gathered near the baggage car door. No one had any suggestion to offer, and for a moment there was silence.

"Are you sure there is nothing wrong with the brake gear that would throw on the brakes?" the conductor continued, turning to the car repairer.

"Sure as my eyes can make me. Everything looks all straight," was the reply.

"There isn't anything the matter with the gear," added the engineer positively. "The air works all right from the engine."

"Are you sure you have looked everywhere, Mr. Blake?" interposed Dash, who had been pondering over the strange occurrences, and now had an idea, though he did not imagine it would amount to anything.

"Why, yes, certainly I am. Why do you ask?" replied Blake, turning to the young baggageman.

"But hold on," he resumed quickly; "there *is* one place we haven't looked yet—the sealed express car. But what's the use of that?"

"That's just what I mean," said Dash. "As that's the only place you haven't looked, the trouble must be there if it isn't anywhere else."

"But how are we to get into it? It's locked and sealed," rejoined the conductor.

"The express messenger has got a key, no doubt, and can seal it again," suggested Dash, who was familiar with the method of handling through express cars.

When there was a heavy run of express matter from St. Louis for points on the road connecting with St. Louis & Pacific, it was put in a separate car, locked and sealed, not to be opened till it was turned over to the road, when the contents would be delivered by another messenger, who would receive it at the terminus of the St. Louis & Pacific. The messenger on the through mail carried the bills for the freight in the car, and also the key.

The latter readily consented to open the car, and when the door was shoved back he sprang in. He almost as quickly jumped backwards, and gave a cry of astonishment or fright. A black, hairy object landed on his shoulders, and both rolled over to the floor of the car.

The trainmen looked on in astonishment for a moment,

*Begun in No 436 of THE ARGOSY.

but as the messenger struggled to his feet, and the hairy object straightened out, they gave a shout of laughter.

The messenger's assailant was a large monkey of the baboon variety. With much chattering and many grimaces, the animal made for the open door, and leaped to the ground.

"Catch him, boys, catch him!" cried the messenger, recovering himself. "He's express, and has got out of his box."

Several of the trainmen, who were not afraid of the hairy thing, made a simultaneous dive for his monkeyship. But the agile brute eluded them, and it was only after a lively chase about the train and around the station that he was surrounded and captured. And then he fought, bit and scratched so that his legs had to be tied before they could carry him to the express car.

When he was returned to the slatted box from which he had broken, it was found to be on top of some other freight, not far from the roof of the car. The air brake cord ran just above the box, and the conclusion was that the animal, with the curiosity and mischievousness of his species, had been attracted to the swinging cord as soon as he had gained the liberty of the car, and had been performing some of his gymnastics upon it, which had set the brakes.

After the monkey had been confined securely in his box, the car was resealed, and the train continued on its way. The messenger found among the bills for the car one for a monkey consigned to the proprietor of a museum. As there were no more mysterious stoppages of the train, it was conclusive evidence that the brute had been responsible for them before, if any further proof had been necessary.

"The first instance on record of a monkey stopping a railroad train," laughed Dash, when they had returned to the baggage car.

"But not of some one *monkeying* with the air cord who had no business to," growled Blake, who had just entered, evidently not in a very good humor. "We'll be late for our connection, and there will be more kicking."

"There's always an explanation for everything that seems supernatural, if we only know where to find it," continued Dash, and as he said it he felt he would like to understand something more about the mysterious and ghostly procession he had witnessed at Dead Man's Cut several days before.

"I suppose you're right, Dykeman," responded the conductor, "though I've seen some mighty hair raising things I never expect to have accounted for."

"So have I, for that matter," replied Dash, again thinking of Dead Man's Cut; "but I believe there is an explanation for them just the same, that would, no doubt, seem very commonplace and ridiculous to us if we only knew it."

Blake shook his head doubtfully. It was evident he had had a miraculous experience in his career, and with the superstition that seems to be prevalent among railroad men, was slow to acknowledge a disbelief in the supernatural.

"Next stop is Madrid, Dykeman," interrupted Roberts, "We've got a big lot of stuff to go off there, and it's time we were getting it in shape."

Dash turned with alacrity from the discussion. There seemed to be a special incentive in the announcement, for he handled the baggage and packages with an ease and rapidity that was unusual.

Perhaps it was because the next stop was where Dorothy Orloff resided, and he had a slight hope he would see her in passing through, though it was rather improbable. He had noted on the list of stations, when assuming his duties that morning, that Madrid was on his run, and we will not say he

had not had this hope in his mind since leaving St. Louis. At any rate, when approaching Madrid, he kept a sharp lookout from the side door, and when the work of unloading and loading was done at the platform, he cast a searching glance into the crowd gathered at the station.

Apparently he did not find the one he was looking for, as an expression of disappointment settled on his face.

Conductor Blake had called his "all aboard," and was just about to signal to go ahead, when a horse and buggy dashed up to the platform, and a lady and gentleman quickly alighted. They had evidently driven hard to catch the train, for the gentleman just had time to put the lady aboard when the cars pulled out. The lady was, no doubt, traveling alone, for her companion returned to the buggy and drove off.

Dash was just turning away from the baggage car door when this occurred, but he had seen the belated passenger, and something in the appearance of the lady made his heart beat faster. She had had her face turned from him, and with the hasty glance he had caught of her he could not be positive it was Dorothy Orloff, though there was something strangely familiar in her figure, and she was dressed entirely in black. But there were several things he could not understand. He remembered that the young girl had had on a short dress, reaching only to her shoe tops, when he first met her, whereas the lady he had just seen wore a garment that almost trailed, and she looked much taller, which made it very doubtful that she was Miss Orloff. And besides, instead of the long braids of golden hair that Dorothy possessed, and Dash had admired, the traveler had her hair done up plainly in a coil at the back of her head.

Notwithstanding these things, he could not be perfectly satisfied that the lady was not the orphan maiden, and he took the first opportunity to go through the cars to be convinced one way or the other. As he stepped into the next to the last coach, and glanced down the seats on both sides of the aisle into the faces of the passengers, Dash undoubtedly saw Dorothy Orloff about half way down the right side.

She saw him almost at the same moment, and with a suppressed exclamation of pleasure, and many smiles, awaited his approach; in fact, she seemed hardly able to restrain herself from rising from her seat and stepping forward to meet him.

"Miss Orloff, this is a most unexpected pleasure," began Dash, as he approached her, raising his hat, and extending his hand at the same time.

"The pleasure is mutual, Dash, though seeing you is not unexpected," laughed Dorothy, as she placed her hand in his. "I was watching out for you, and I'm awfully glad to see you again; I have so much to tell you."

"But how did you know I was on this train, Miss Orloff?" interposed Dash. "I didn't say which train I was going on."

"Miss Orloff! There it is again. You seem determined to have me call you Mr. Dykeman, but I just won't do it; so, there. Have you been made president of the road, that you must be so formal? You know it was a bargain we made, and it's real mean you won't keep it," and there was mock severity in the young girl's tones.

"I beg your pardon," stammered Dash, and the spell of her presence seemed more potent than ever to fill him with reverence and confusion.

Perhaps the absence of the girlish braids of hair, and the elongation of the maiden's skirts, thereby giving her a more mature and womanly appearance, had something to do with his increased "happy uneasiness" of mind and his resumption of the formalities. At any rate, she appeared more beautiful to him than ever, and it seemed a great presump-

tion to approach her with other than due reverence and formality.

"I thought the bargain only covered the using of our given names in the letters we should write," he continued, with a smile; "and besides, you appear to have reached the dignity of a young lady now, and it seemed like too great a liberty to take on such a short acquaintance."

He gazed at her in undisguised admiration, and a significant turning of his eyes towards the golden tresses confined at the back of her neck. She seemed to understand him, for she blushed and said with a laugh:

"Oh, you mean my hair is done up just like a grown woman's," placing one hand back and fingering the coils.

"Well, if it's going to have such an effect, I'll take it right down and wear it only in braids."

"I beg that you will not," interposed Dash hastily. "I— I like it better as it is."

"But really, Mr. Dykeman," she went on, with the accent on the "mister," and a roguish look in her eyes, "I am only a few days older than when we first met, and you were willing to say Dorothy then. Besides, I feel as if we had been acquainted a long, long while, and I'm sure no one who had known me all my life could have been kinder to me than you have been."

"Don't speak of it, Dorothy," protested Dash, in unconditional surrender of the formalities, though he was only too happy to do so. "But, really, you *do* look taller."

"I guess it's the dress that has got longer and not I, Dash," laughed the young lady, coloring furiously, and looking down at the tips of her shoes.

"Oh!" ejaculated Dash in confusion; "and I couldn't tell what it was."

It was a revelation to him that when a young girl reached a certain age, she could spring into womanhood by the simple adding of a few inches to her skirts and a change in the mode of dressing her hair.

"But you were going to tell me how you knew I was on this train," he added, changing the subject.

"Yes; and now that we are plain Dash and Dorothy, I will tell you. Well, the superintendent's clerk, Mr. Forsdyke—"

She broke off suddenly and turned towards a young man who was in the same seat next to the window, and who had been listening with interest and some astonishment to the conversation.

"Oh, how very rude and stupid of me," she resumed. "Mr. Forsdyke, let me introduce you to my friend, Mr. Dykeman."

Dash extended his hand cordially, but Mr. Forsdyke lazily put out his fingers in an indifferent manner, and did not even rise from his seat.

"Baggage man on this train, I believe?" he observed in a condescending way.

"Yes," replied Dash shortly, and as he took in the young man from head to foot, he told himself he would not care to cultivate his further acquaintance.

Brakewood Forsdyke or Brakey, as he was called by his intimates, had a very good opinion of himself, and could not help showing it at every opportunity in a very disagreeable way. Next to his admiration for himself, was his pride of his position. Since he had been made secretary to the division superintendent, and become dressed in a little brief authority, it was said among the employees of the road that he had the "big head." He certainly knew how to make himself exceedingly disagreeable to every one except a chosen few, who had brains which were as easily turned as his.

It was a source of astonishment to him that Miss Orloff

should even know the young baggageman, and it was especially galling that she should be on such intimate terms with him. The truth was, he had a secret admiration for the young lady, and he could not understand how she could resist his charms.

"So Mr. Forsdyke told you I was on this train?" Dash remarked, turning to Dorothy.

"Yes; and as Aunt Ellen said I could go down to Center Hill to see her cousin, I decided to take it."

Some further conversation followed, in which was discussed the deed Dorothy had sent Dash, and the prospects of it amounting to anything. Then the recent loss of her mother was referred to, and before Dash could speak of himself or his prospects, he was compelled to return to the baggage car. He was kept busy, and did not have an opportunity to go back again before the train reached Center Hill.

He saw Dorothy on the platform as the train pulled out. Brakewood Forsdyke was with her, and this fact did not tend to make Dash feel perfectly satisfied.

He raised his hat to the young lady as the baggage car door passed them, but Mr. Forsdyke did not deign to acknowledge the salute or even notice the young baggageman in any way.

Dash noticed the discourtesy, and hoped it was the last time he would see, or have anything to do with, the superintendent's clerk. But he soon found that Brakewood Forsdyke was to figure in some of the most exciting and disagreeable experiences of his career.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE TRAIN ROBBERY.

IT was only necessary for Roberts to make one round trip with Dash before the latter was perfectly familiar with his duties as baggageman.

There was very little to relieve the monotonous labors of his position, except the ever changing landscape and stirring life on the train and at stations, and these soon became so commonplace that they were not appreciated. There were no wrecks, or narrow, escapes from wrecks, for which Dash was not sorry, and there was not even a hot box to add variety to the runs on the through mail. The train went through to the connecting road, and returned to St. Louis, as regularly and uninterruptedly as clockwork.

The third day after Roberts had left, Dash heard a surprising piece of intelligence just before the through mail pulled out of the Union Depot at St. Louis.

An organized band of thieves, with a secret retreat, had been discovered in the vicinity of Dead Man's Cut, and the officers of the law had succeeded in arresting most of its members and recovering a vast amount of valuable freight that had been stolen from the railroad company. One of the robbers; who was also an employee of the railroad, had turned State's evidence and implicated the crews of both the local and through freights, and several of the station agents of the St. Louis & Pacific. The guilty employees of the road were also arrested, with the exception of conductor Cupples, who disappeared and could not be found.

If all this had been brought about by the information he had secured, Dash told himself he still couldn't understand it. The only unusual thing that he had seen, or that had occurred, was the ghostly procession at Dead Man's Cut on the first day of his run on the local freight, and the unprovoked attack Cupples had made upon him the same night. He wondered if these things had been the means of discovering the robbers' retreat, but he could not understand how they could have led up to such astounding results. The thieves who

had been arrested at the Cut could no doubt explain the mystery of the spectral looking figures.

And Mr. Rodway could doubtless make everything plain to him now and answer several other puzzling questions that occurred to him in connection with the robbers, but it was uncertain if he would see the superintendent very soon, if he made no more rapid progress than he had made in his present mission.

The days had lengthened into a week, and then the time was rapidly approaching when Roberts would return from his leave of absence, and still Dash had discovered nothing of importance in the case for or against conductor Blake. He had watched the latter closely every time he came into the baggage car, and especially so when he went to his train box.

Dash had hoped that the conductor would some time forget to close his box, and he would be able to get a look at the contents, but Blake never failed to secure it after he had deposited his ticket collections therein.

Finding that Blake was not going to assist him by being careless, Dash decided that he would have to effect an entrance into the box some other way. He had often heard of the impression of a lock being taken with wax, that a duplicate key might be made; but, being ignorant of the process, he simply got a bunch of keys of about what he thought was the proper size, and decided to try each one, as he had the opportunity, till he found one that would open the box.

On the day of which we are now writing, he had tried half a dozen of his keys on the box at various times since they had left St. Louis, but none of them turned the lock. He had to be very cautious in his work, for if he was seen it might prove very embarrassing to himself and disastrous to his mission.

The train had left Wayland, and as there was a long run up grade through Big Rock Cut, and not likely to be any one in the baggage car, Dash once more decided to continue the process of trying his keys.

Making sure that the door in the partition separating the baggage from the express department was closed, he commenced work. He was fast reaching the last one of his keys, and his hopes of success were correspondingly decreasing, when the lock turned. He raised the lid and put in his hand to take out a number of tickets at random for examination. At that moment the door in the partition opened quickly, and some one stepped towards Dash with a smothered exclamation.

Dash started to his feet, with several tickets in his hand, and the lid of the box closed with a slam, being fastened at the same time by the spring lock.

Dash was confused and flushed, and looked decidedly guilty. But it was a relief to him to find that the intruder was Bob Paine, the forward brakeman, instead of conductor Blake, though the situation was embarrassing enough, and he was open to serious suspicion in either case.

For a moment Dash hesitated what to say, and then the other came to his relief with these unexpected words:

"Ho! ho! Dykeman. I didn't dream you were in it, too."

"Well, I am," laughed Dash nervously, for the want of something better to reply, though he did not know what he was in, unless it was the tin box.

"That's all right, then, Dykeman, and I hope you'll get more out of 'em than I did."

"I hope I shall," observed Dash, though he did not know if the other meant the tickets or some persons, and beginning to believe the brakeman was concerned in the ticket mystery; and if he was, he told himself Paine probably could tell how tickets taken up and apparently punched by con-

ductor Blake, were afterwards presented on other trains, apparently intact. Dash glanced at the tickets in his hand and noted that each was duly punctured with a diamond shape, which was Blake's punch mark.

"Don't be afraid, Dykeman; it's all right, I tell you. We're all in the same boat, and I'm mum," continued the brakeman. "But we might as well take a few more, as it's the last chance we'll get."

And Dash was astonished to see Paine take out a key and reopen the conductor's tin box. He did not know whether to stand passive and permit the taking of the tickets, or make an effort to stop the robbery.

Paine was certainly the real robber of the tickets, and they were surely punched when they were stolen, which entirely cleared conductor Blake of the suspicion of collusion in the robberies. But how was it possible that the tickets were afterwards presented unpunched?

Before Dash had decided what action to take, the brakeman had shoved a handful of tickets into his pocket, and was saying hurriedly:

"I don't know whether you know it or not, Dykeman, but the gang's on a big lay this trip, and you'll soon see something to make your eyes open."

"What gang?" asked Dash involuntarily.

"Don't you know? Wasn't you taking them tickets for the gang?" asked Paine quickly, anger and surprise in his tones.

"I certainly was not, or for anybody else," replied Dash decidedly. "and it's about time you were putting those tickets back in that box."

"Oh, ho! that's it, is it? Well, it's about time I was obeying the cap'n's orders."

As he spoke, the train slowed up quickly, and Dash was amazed to see a cocked revolver in the brakeman's hand, aimed straight at his head.

"Stay where you are, Dykeman, or I'll fill you full of holes!" shouted Paine. "The music is going to begin."

There were several shots heard from without as the train came to a stand, and then the end door to the baggage car was burst open, revealing a man with a mask over his face and a revolver in his hand. A hasty glance through the door showed two other men, with Winchester rifles, standing guard over the engineer and fireman, and with intense excitement Dash realized that they were "held up" by train robbers.

The situation now became so intensely perilous and exciting, and the surprises followed each other so rapidly, that Dash never could tell afterwards the exact order in which they occurred.

He had been astonished to learn Paine was the robber of the tickets, but he was positively dumfounded when he realized the brakeman was one of the train robbers. He gazed into the muzzle of the latter's revolver, paralyzed with amazement, till the door was thrown open, revealing other actors in the "hold up." Then, utterly regardless and reckless of his own safety, Dash launched himself at the brakeman, shouting at the same time to the express messenger on the other side of the partition:

"Look out, Meade! Train robbers!"

As he has told it afterwards, he certainly would have got away from the scene if it had been a possible thing, but he seemed to be impelled to do what he did by some force outside of himself, and he deserved no credit for his utter disregard of danger.

Paine fired just before Dash struck him, but as Dash knocked up his arm at the moment, the shot went through the roof of the car.

Dash bore the brakeman to the floor and wrested the revolver from him before he could use it again. He then sprang to his feet, and backed against the partition, determined to go through the door and assist Meade, the messenger, if the latter had not already fastened it.

"Drop that gun, young man!" shouted the masked man, bringing his pistol to bear.

Dash hesitated for a moment, when there came a flash and a report, and a bullet whistled past his ear, completely perforating the partition behind him.

Meade, no doubt thinking the robbers were shooting through the partition to dislodge him, returned the fire, and thus Dash found himself placed in a critical position, where he would be just as liable to be shot by friend as foe.

He promptly dropped to the floor, still retaining hold of the revolver, and Paine remained where he was.

"Help! I'm shot!" groaned the brakeman, the next instant, and with a shudder Dash saw his limbs stiffen out in death. A blind shot from the messenger had inflicted a mortal wound.

"By heavens, you'll go now, sure," shouted the masked robber, as he also witnessed the tragedy, and once more he brought his weapon in range with Dash's body.

The young baggageman now felt certain his time had come. Closing his eyes and breathing a silent prayer, he awaited the cruel, crushing bullet. But the death dealing messenger never came. Instead, there was a rush of footsteps, a strong hand knocked up the robber's weapon, and a voice cried:

"Hold on there, Orloff! The lad shan't be hurt!"

The voice sounded familiar, and, in spite of the half mask, Dash felt certain the speaker was conductor Cupples.

He hardly knew which filled him with the most paralyzing astonishment and horror—the discovery that Cupples was a train robber, or that one of the marauders was named Orloff. Was the man his own father, he asked himself with a shiver?

The possibility of the question being answered in the affirmative, and the reaction from deadly peril to comparative safety, made him sick and faint, and he almost swooned.

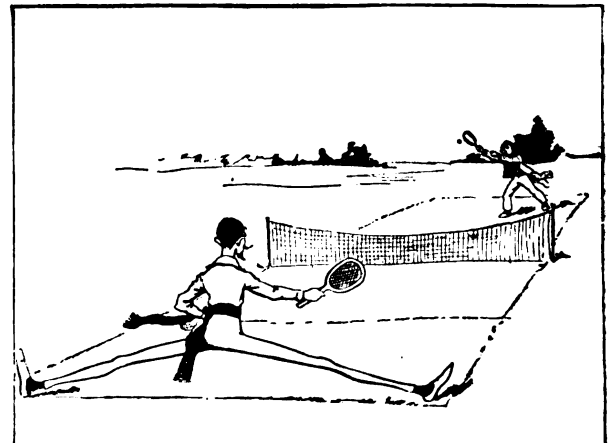
(To be continued.)

THE ELASTIC MAN WINS A RUBBER AT TENNIS.



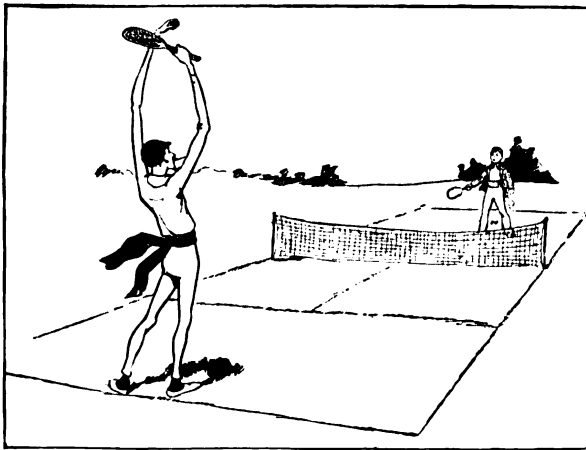
I.

THE Elastic Man meets the tennis champion, Mr. Slowcome.



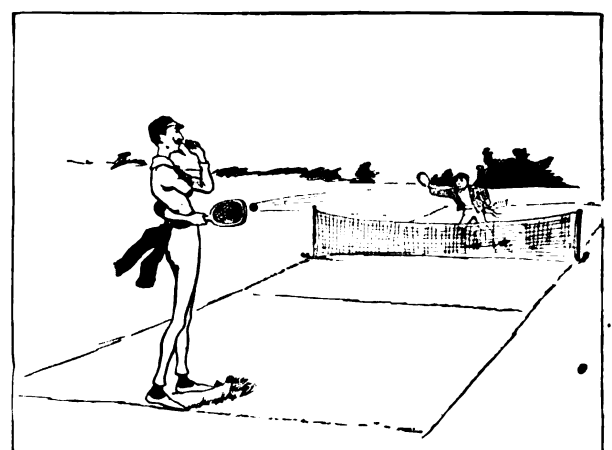
III.

Having won the first game, he prepares to receive.



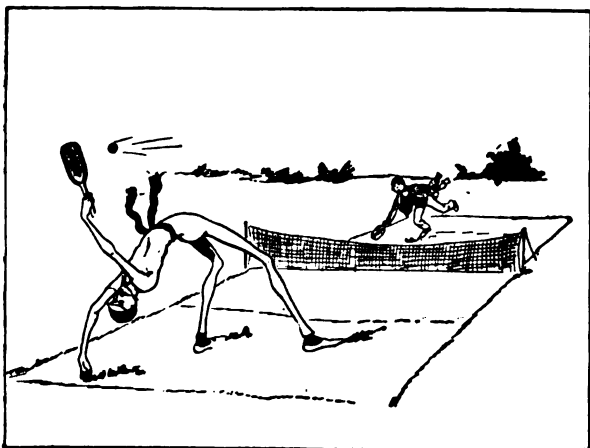
II.

He astonishes the champion by the tremendous altitude of his overhand stroke.



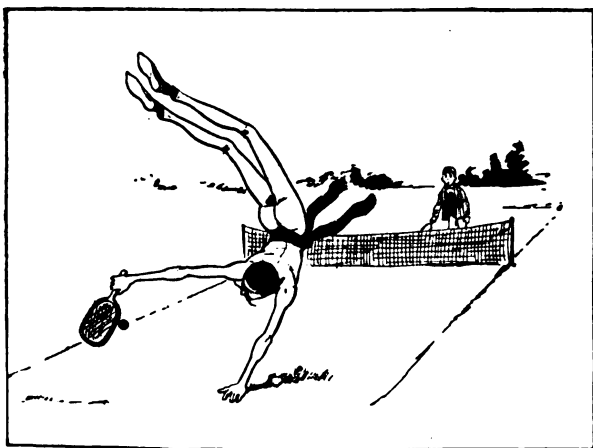
IV.

He returns Mr. Slowcome's most forcible volley with consummate ease and grace.



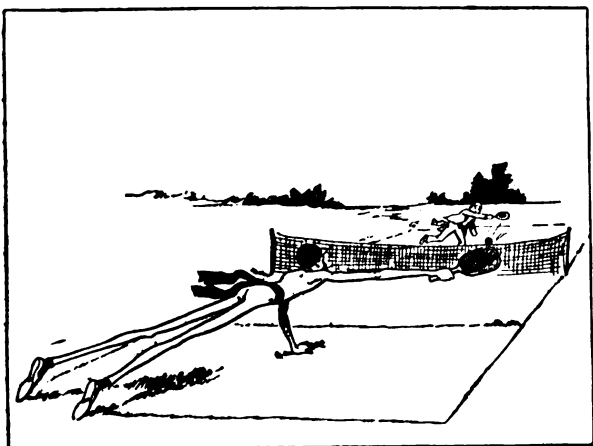
V.

Later on in the game he makes a remarkably difficult and novel stroke.



VI.

But recovers his equilibrium in time to receive Mr. Slowcome's return in elegant form.



VII.

And wins the game by an absolutely astonishing maneuver that utterly paralyzes his opponent.

CORRESPONDENCE

PIANISTIC, New York City. Careful oiling may do something towards removing scratches from a piano.

C. W. K., Chicago, Ill. Stephens's "Canoe and Boat Building," published by the Forest and Stream Publishing Company, this city, will doubtless prove to be the book you want.

H. T. C., St. Johnsville, N. Y. 1. We find no such prohibition among the game laws of New York State. 2. The coin, of which you send rubbings, is a Spanish piece of the reign of Charles the Third.

C. A. B., East Portland, Ore. Yes; we can supply you with Nos. 406 and 413 of THE ARGOSY, on receipt of the price—ten cents each.

YORK. 1. The *Travelers' Official Railway Guide* is published at 24 Park Place, this city, and costs \$5 per year. 2. Communicate with Edwin C. Bridgman, 84 Warren Street, concerning maps and their prices.

S. MEE D., Santa Rosa, Cal. 1. No premium on the dime of 1834. 2. The title "Argosy" is taken from the name of the ship Argos, in which the mythological hero Jason, sailed to Colchis to recover the Golden Fleece.

READER OF THE ARGOSY, Elgin, Ill. 1. See reply to G. R. I. in No. 444. 2. Mr. Alger was twenty two when he wrote his first book. 3. None of the Alger or Castlemon books can now be had in paper covers. 4. Harry Castlemon served in the navy during the Civil War.

H. J. D., Springfield. 1. "May I have the pleasure of your company at supper?" and "May I have the honor of seeing you home?" are the proper forms for the respective queries. 2. As to whether English or American locomotives are the fastest, that is a question about which there has been a great deal of discussion in the railroad world. At present, we believe, England bears the palm.

S. E. M., Washington, D. C. 1. There are a trifle over 109 square inches in a round, solid piece of wood, 1 3-8 inches in diameter and 20 1-2 inches long. 2. It is now very uncertain when Mr. Munsey's new story will be written. 3. The highest price ever paid for a horse has not been made a matter of record. 4. As all nations have not yet engaged in a grand general warfare to extermination, it would be quite impossible to answer your query as to which is the most powerful country in the world.

COLLECTOR, Norwood, N. J. 1. In asking eminent men for their autographs make your note as brief as possible, including with it a blank card in an envelope already stamped and addressed to yourself. 2. It is not necessary to have the house addresses of any of the men you mention. Direct your letters simply to the towns from which they hail. Stanley, or his secretary, may be reached in care of the *New York Herald*. 3. You will have to get your autographs of Lincoln and Garfield from a dealer.

MILITARY MATTERS.

TOM TURNER, New York City. Recruits for the New York National Guard regiments must be eighteen years of age, at least 5 feet 4 inches in height, and able to pass a critical physical examination. When under twenty one the consent of parents or guardians must be obtained. Musicians are enlisted at sixteen.

Boys wanted at once; must be over 5 feet 1 inch in height, and past the age of 14, to join Companies A, B and C of the 3d Regiment Infantry, Sherman Cadets. Excellent chance for physical culture and muscular development. For further particulars, address Captain Frank W. Reynolds, Canajoharie, Montgomery Co., New York.

CAPTAIN C. C. R. M., Buffalo, N. Y. 1. The eight numbers of THE ARGOSY containing the series "Popular Military Instructions," are now out of print. They can be obtained, however, either in bound Vol. V of THE ARGOSY, price \$2.00, or in book form, for 25 cents. 2. A drum major, when out with a military organization, is subject to the orders of the colonel, major, lieutenant, corporal or any other officer who may be in command. 3. There is no fixed number of sergeants in a company. 4. The quartermaster sergeant does not necessarily outrank all other sergeants. It depends on the date of appointment.



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.

* * * *

A NEW SERIAL BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

AS we stated in the prospectus of the present volume printed in No. 442, there will be several attractions not included in that announcement. One of these is a new story by Mr. Alger, called "A Debt of Honor," and which, like his last work, has its scene laid in the West.

* * * *

STATION a sentinel at your lips. Yes; he can stand guard against angry words or harsh judgments, or unkind remarks that may seek to come from within, but we have now especial reference to another duty which should be imposed on him. Instruct him to keep out of your mouth articles that do not belong there. Cigarettes, for one thing, although again it was not with a special view to denouncing this ruinous habit that we are writing.

The text for this little suggestion is taken from the death of the Brooklyn clergyman, concerning whom you have all read, who incautiously placed the cork from a medicine bottle in his mouth for an instant, swallowed it and died after great suffering at the end of two weeks. And almost at the same time a boy swallowed an orange pit, and he, too, paid the penalty with his life.

These facts carry their warning with them. Don't make a pocket of your mouth.

* * * *

SOME time since there was a strike of carpenters in a Western town. The work on which they were engaged was important, so citizens threw themselves into the breach, labored for the same number of hours per day, and in spite of inexperience and other drawbacks, each citizen succeeded, according to the estimate, in turning out 15 per cent. more work than the man whose place he was supplying. In commenting on this fact, the daily journal which reports it assigns as the reason that the volunteers threw their whole soul into their labors, whereas the regular force were but time servers, eagerly listening for the whistle that announces quitting hour.

Here are facts that embody valuable advice to the young man just setting out in the world. Let him regard his employer's interests his own, and he will have taken a long step on the road that may one day see them so in very truth.

NORTON CHASE,

STATE SENATOR OF NEW YORK.

"O H, carried off all the honors at graduation, did he? We he'll never amount to anything then. Honor men never do." Such are frequently the remarks one hears about young men who close their scholastic career in a blaze of glory, as it were. Is it true? Do men rest on their laurels after they have won the "grand prix" at school or college? Perhaps they do in some cases, and then again, these insinuations may be inspired by envious rivals, out-distanced in the race.

However this may be, the subject of our sketch this week affords am-



NORTON CHASE.

From a photograph by Notman, Albany.

ple proof that a successful boy can become a successful man. For Senator Chase, only thirty years old, having been born in Albany, September 3d, 1861, graduated from the Albany Academy in 1878 with first honors, having won five gold medals during his term there.

Mr. Chase then entered Yale College, from which he went to the Albany Law School. He went out from this institution in 1882 with the degree of L.L.B., and at once began the practice of his profession. His first essay in the field of politics took place three years later, and was a most triumphant beginning of his new career. Nominated for assemblyman in the third district by the Democrats, he was elected by a handsome majority, carrying every district, something that had never before occurred.

As a member of the House, Mr. Chase at once began to achieve an enviable reputation for himself. He was essentially for the people and was tireless in looking after their interests in the Legislature. In 1885 he was elected to the Senate, as the youngest member of that body.

A pleasing orator, Senator Chase takes an active part in all debates. He has also introduced over a dozen bills which have since become laws of the State.

For so young a man he holds many responsible positions. He is a trustee of the Albany Exchange Savings Bank, and major of the Tenth Battalion, the capital city's crack military organization. His rise has been a regular and steady one, each higher round of the ladder having been won by proved fitness on the lower.

Such an example of the fruits of studious application cannot but be inspiring to schoolboys all the land over.

GEORGE K. WHITMORE.