THE ARGOSY

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THE DEERSKIN TALISMAN.

A TALE OF MEXICAN TREASURE.

BY GILBERT CAMPBELL.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOG HUT IN THE SIERRAS.

IT was on a dark winter evening that three persons were bending over a fire in a comfortable log cabin which had been erected upon a sheltered spur of one of the lofty mountain ranges which run across Northern Mexico. The snow had been steadily falling all day, and the mountain tracks were almost obliterated by the soft mantle that Dame Nature had cast over them, as though she wished to conceal their shortcomings from the eye of man. But few stars were out, and though the white surface of the snow gave forth a certain dim and shimmering light, a stranger would have found it next to impossible to have picked his way through a district, all the landmarks of which were quickly disappearing.

All was silence around the cabin save the short sharp bark of the coyote as he roamed about in hopeless quest of prey, while his large gray brother and the dreaded puma had sought a more congenial refuge in the forest at the foot of the hill.

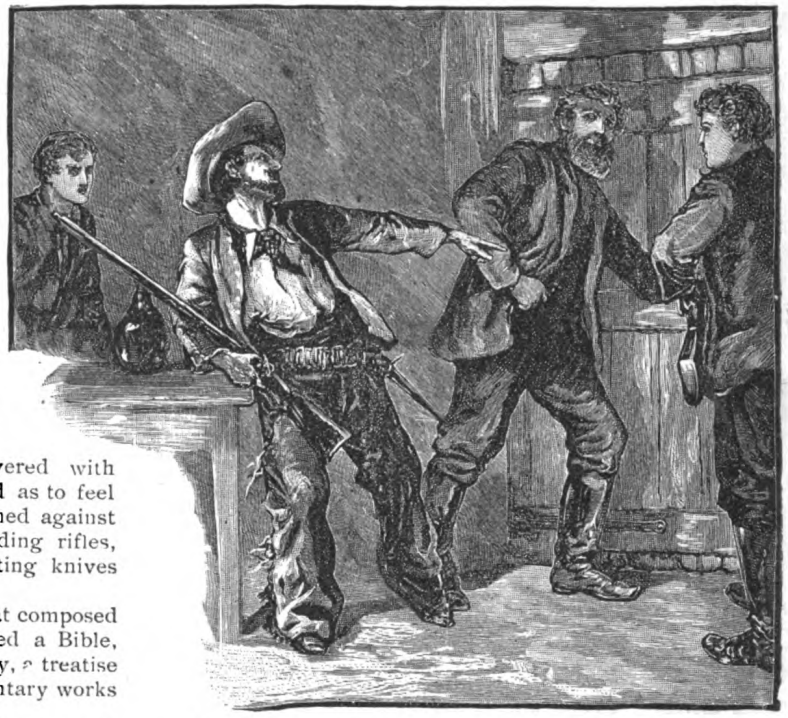
Within the cabin the scene was comparatively cheerful. The log hut had been built with more attention to comfort and convenience than is usually seen in habitations in Mexico; the inside of the walls had been carefully plastered with clay, rendering it impossible for the keen winds that swept across the Sierras to penetrate through the chinks of the logs composing the outer walls, while at one end was a real chimney and hearth, upon which two or three great logs were hissing and sputtering in a cheerful flame. A heavy table upon which were the remains of a coarse though plentiful supper, stood near the fire, while the three occupants of the cabin were seated in roughly fashioned chairs near the genial blaze. The floor was covered with deerskins, which had been so carefully dressed as to feel like a carpet beneath the feet. In a rack fastened against the walls were three double barreled, breech loading rifles, as many revolvers, and a goodly array of hunting knives and tomahawks.

A shelf near the hearth held the few books that composed the cabin library, among which could be noticed a Bible, a volume or two of American and English history, a treatise upon the diseases of horses, and a few elementary works upon agriculture, natural history and chemistry.

And now let us glance at the three persons who were sitting over the fire. On the right hand side of the hearth was a tall, powerful man some fifty years of age; his features were good, and might have been termed handsome but for the air of sternness and determination which were indelibly imprinted upon them; he had a quantity of gray hair, while his beard, which was of a darker hue, curled far down upon his breast. His hands, which rested listlessly upon his knees, were long and sinewy, and his frame denoted great bodily strength.

James Sedgwick was of New England stock, but the loss of nearly all his property by the stoppage of a bank had determined him to quit home with the small remnant of his fortune and try his luck in distant lands. He had therefore left his wife and daughter Lily, a girl of eleven, under the care of his relatives and with his sons Robert (or, as he was always called, Bob) and Arthur, had pitched his camp in the mountain regions of Mexico, where they had been washing for gold for the past three years, with very fair success.

Bob was a stoutly built young fellow of seventeen, a good shot, and an indefatigable hunter, whose trusty rifle kept his father and brother supplied with food, but who detested the drudgery of gold washing. His eye was as keen as a



HE MADE EAGER SIGNS TO THEM TO CLOSE THE DOOR.

mountain hawk's, and not the wiliest Indian could follow the track of man or beast with more certainty and facility than Bob Sedgwick.

Arthur, who was just fifteen, was more wedded to toil than his brother, and had besides a very great fondness for natural history, his researches into which he pursued with enthusiasm whenever his avocations permitted of it. He, too, was a good shot, though not so sure of his aim as his brother, and possessed extreme fleetness of foot, which had often enabled him to run down the smaller animals which frequented the mountain ridges.

"Boys," said James Sedgwick, between the puffs of his pipe, "we've done well during the past four months, and now that the winter has set in, and work has stopped for a time, I think we might get down to the foothills and see what we can do in the way of skins. Washing for gold is not the only way of making money, and another year like the last will enable us to have your mother and Lily out to keep house for us."

"Oh, won't that be jolly!" exclaimed Arthur, while Bob's eyes sparkled at the notion of the campaign against the four footed denizens of the lower hills.

"Yes," continued their father, "we'll lock up the old place, and hand the key to Indian Joe. We shan't leave many traps about for any one to meddle with, and as for the gold and spare cartridges, those are safely *cachèd*, we know where, don't we, lads?"

Both the lads nodded affirmatively, and the trio sat for some time in silence.

"When do you think we shall make a move, father?" at length asked Bob.

"Perhaps the day after tomorrow," replied his father; "but what is that?" he exclaimed, starting up, as the sound of feet stumbling over the rough road that led to the cabin was plainly heard.

Bob hurriedly snatched a revolver from the wall and glanced eagerly to see that each chamber held its leaden messenger of death, while Arthur, gliding to the door, drew across it the heavy bar which was their only security against hostile intruders. Hardly had he done so than the steps halted outside, and a series of heavy blows were struck upon the thick boards that formed the door.

"Who is there?" cried James Sedgwick, with his hand upon a long hunting knife, which seldom quitted his side.

"*Gente de paz*, friend, *amigo*," answered a voice in breathless accents, while the hammering was continued: "*Caramba!* can you not let a man in? These *malditos penos*, accursed dogs, are at my heels. Let me in, I say, or my blood be on your heads."

"No man crosses James Sedgwick's threshold after dark who will not give his name," replied the owner of the cabin firmly.

"It is I, Lopes, the Tigrero," answered the voice; "let me in, or there will be murder done."

"It is Spanish Jack," cried Bob, "it is all safe, father," and at a sign from James Sedgwick, Arthur released the bar and let the door swing open, when through the opening staggered a short, thickset figure, who, making eager signs to them to reclose the door, fell upon the floor of the hut as though utterly prostrated by some violent exertion.

He was dressed in the usual costume of a Mexican *gambusino*, with the round hat and leopard skin gaiters which most of their class affect; and, in addition to knife and revolver, had a scabbardless machete (short sword) suspended from his belt by an iron ring, while in his hand he grasped a long barreled rifle of Spanish manufacture. As his father and brother were making the door secure the keen eye of Bob saw at a glance that blood was flowing freely from a wound in the shoulder of the newcomer.

CHAPTER II.

FOUR AGAINST TWENTY.

THE man lay silent for a few short minutes, as though to regain his breath, and then, with an abrupt movement, pushed aside Bob, who was roughly binding up the wound in his shoulder.

"*Es nada;* it is nothing," cried he. "Senor Don Jaime, look to yourself; bar door and put out the lights; in another ten minutes they will be here."

"Who will be here?" asked James Sedgwick, with a perfectly composed manner, which contrasted strongly with the other's excitement.

"The whole gang," repeated the wounded man; "they were drinking all day at Ramon's *pulqueria*. There was Redbeard, Guzman, Cifuentes, and a score of other *ladrones*. They said the dog of an Englishman had got enough gold out of the streams, and that now it was time for it to go into honest men's pockets—honest, *carajo!* robbers of the high road, cheats at the monte table are they one and all. I had been dozing in a corner of the room, when suddenly they saw me as I tried to slip out. They knew that I should come straight to you, for you have been a good friend to me, Don Jaime, and they tried to stop me; but I gave Redbeard a pill from my *escopita*," he continued, striking the butt of his rifle with an air of savage exultation; "and though Half-hung Simon gave me a slash over the arm with his bowie, I——"

"Half-hung Simon, did you say?" interrupted James Sedgwick.

"Ay," replied Lopes, "he and no other."

James Sedgwick answered never a word, but taking his rifle and pouch from the rack, he motioned his sons to do the same, and drawing his hunting knife, began to remove the clay with which several loopholes, which commanded the door and the front of the house, had been plugged.

"The scoundrel!" cried Bob fiercely; "he has never forgiven father for thrashing him soundly for ill treating that poor young fellow who died of consumption here last year. He swore to have his life, yet the cur dares do nothing himself; but now that he has got a gang of drunken rowdies at his back he is going to have a try. Let him come on! Why didn't the Texan Regulators finish their work properly when they strung him up for horse stealing, instead of letting his brother thieves cut him down?"

"Hush!" cried Lopes, as a drunken shout was heard some way along the road; "they are coming, do you not hear them?"

"Boys," said James Sedgwick coolly, "take the loopholes on each side of the door; not a man must get nearer to the house than the fence! Fire sharp, but take good aim. The stars are coming out a little," he added peering through one of the freshly opened loopholes, "and you can draw a sure bead upon them as they come up. I will get into the loft and open fire upon them at the turn of the road; perhaps that may stop them for good and all. Lopes, you have done us a good turn, but you are a wounded man, and the quarrel is ours. There is time to slip out from the back and save yourself. Good by, and thanks."

But the Spaniard promptly rejected the proffered hand.

"I am Lopes the Tigrero!" he cried, in scornful assents; "I never turned my back on man or beast! I will stand by you until death!"

"It is not unlikely to be that, I fear," answered James coolly. "Now, boys, to your posts!" and with a firm grasp

of his sons' hands he hurried up the rough ladder that led to the loft, while his sons silently took their stations at the loopholes upon each side of the door.

But in no such temperate mood did Lopes make his preparations for defense. His hot Spanish blood was boiling over with excitement and rage, and as he with difficulty rammed the charge down his long barreled rifle he showered all the invectives which the Spanish tongue can supply upon his coming foes; then he took out his revolver and carefully inspected its charges; lastly drawing his machete from his belt, he laid it ready to his hand, and, crouching behind one of the overturned chairs, took up such a position as to guard the doorway on the chance of its being forced by a determined rush.

Meanwhile the shouts grew louder and louder, and from his post of vantage in the loft James Sedgwick could see the gleam of several torches flickering along the winding road that led up to the log hut.

"The drunken fools!" muttered he. "Torches, indeed; they might as well have painted a spot over their hearts. We could shoot them down like sheep; but no, I will not be the one to shed their blood without necessity and warning. In five minutes they will be within hail, and I will give them a chance for their lives. Boys," cried he, putting his lips to a crack in the rude flooring, "reserve your fire until you hear my rifle speak; then let each pick out his man and shoot straight."

Feeling that his foes were now within earshot, James threw open the loft window, and, slipping boldly into it, cried in a loud voice:

"Gentlemen, to what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?"

For a moment the advancing crowd halted, for, in spite of the flight of Lopes, they had hoped that he might think only of his own safety, and leave the Sedgwicks unwarned of the coming attack. The dead silence lasted only a moment, and then arose a volley of execrations in mingled Spanish and English.

"Be warned," continued Sedgwick calmly; "we are fully prepared; you fight at a disadvantage in the open, while we can pick you off like rabbits from behind our cover. What harm have I done any of you, that you should seek my life! Has not my hand been always ready——?"

"Ay, ever ready," cried a man from the rear of the advancing party, who had been all this time endeavoring to urge on the attack. "You were ready enough to beat me to a mummy for nothing at all; I vowed I would have your life, and I'll have it tonight, together with all the gold that you have robbed us honest miners of!"

"Yes, there you are, Simon," answered James Sedgwick, in tones of bitter irony. "As usual, sneaking behind better and braver men than yourself; I thrashed you for being a coward and trying to rob a dying man; the citizens of your own country would have given a short shrift and a long rope, as they did once before, had they caught you at such a game. I wonder that Mexican *caballeros* and honest miners should associate with such a pitiful dastard."

Stung to madness by the sarcasm of his enemy, and by the ironical smile that he saw upon the faces of his comrades, Simon placed his rifle rapidly to his shoulder. He fired at the figure that was dimly visible in the window; but rage and hate will spoil the best shooting in the world, and, though Half-hung Simon was noted as a deadly shot, his ball struck the heavy window frame fully a foot above James Sedgwick's head.

James at once half closed the shutter, and, resting his rifle against it, took a steady aim.

For a moment the band paused, endeavoring to see if the shot had taken effect; and then Cifuentes, whose courage no one had ever presumed to doubt, snatched a torch from the hand of the man nearest to him, and ran up the steep path, crying, "Vamos, *caballeros;* let us smoke out the bees and get the honey."

There was a moment's silence, and then James Sedgwick's rifle rang clear and sharp through the frosty air.

CHAPTER III.

FIRE AND POWDER.

BUT for once James Sedgwick's skill had deserted him. Cifuentes continued his course unhurt, while the man from whom he had snatched the torch fell on his face with a loud shriek.

A few minutes' rush up the winding path brought the besiegers to the fence that surrounded the log cabin. Then Arthur's rifle spoke, and the man known as Guzman staggered back, shot through the shoulder, while a bullet from Bob struck another of the gang in the chest, killing him on the spot.

"*Carrai?*" cried Cifuentes. "*Buonos camaradas,* behind the fence; the dogs will pick us off else, one by one. Let each get the best shelter he can, and keep up a heavy fire on the loopholes and the windows of the loft. There are only two men, one of them wounded, and a pair of youngsters."

"*Si,*" answered Guzman, who, behind one of the posts of the fence was trying to bind up his wounded shoulder with a gaudy silken scarf, "but the young imps shoot straight enough; look at my arm, and see Mike there." And he pointed to the man that lay upon his face in the snow.

Following their leader's instructions the bandits scattered themselves along the line of fence, and, taking advantage of every kind of shelter, opened a hot fire on the defenders of the hut. But as most of them were armed with the old fashioned, muzzle loading rifles, their fire was not particularly rapid; and if they allowed the slightest portion of their person to be seen beyond their posts of vantage, a bullet whistling closely to them showed that the little garrison kept a sharp watch, and that the slightest mistake might prove a fatal error.

"*Caramba,*" cried Cifuentes, as one of James Sedgwick's bullets grazed his cheek, "this will never do; let us burn out the English dogs. Here, Peres," he continued to one of the gang, "you are always bragging about your archery, can you plant a half dozen arrows in yonder roof?"

"*E vero,* senor," returned the ruffian, detaching from his back a small bow of Buffalo horn; "but what good will arrows do?"

"Fool!" returned his leader, "do you not see that a few arrows with blazing cloth fastened to them will soon drive these English from the hut? Quick, let us get into shelter below the crest of the plateau, and arrange matters."

The cruel plan was soon carried ont, and very shortly arrow after arrow, each bearing a tuft of burning rags, soaked in the fiery spirit called mezcal, went soaring through the air, and fixed themselves in the sheets of bark which roofed the hut. In most cases the snow with which the cabin was covered extinguished these dangerous missiles; but here and there the heat from the chimney had left the roof bare of its protecting cover, and there the arrows burned away merrily.

Meanwhile the sudden cessation of hostilities had surprised the little garrison.

"Can it be that they have become tired of this work," said Bob, "and are drawing off for good? I think we made it

rather hot for them while it lasted, and that they did not relish it much."

"I am afraid," replied Arthur, "that they have only gone under shelter to plan some other scheme; but if we can but hold them at bay until morning they will not dare to continue the siege by day. I only wonder that some of the miners by Deadhorse Gully have not come down to our aid on hearing the firing."

"Do you not know," broke in Lopes, "that there is a great game at euchre to come off at Bill Ducker's saloon at Otivida tonight, and that every miner in the neighborhood is there? Yes! the rogues knew what they are about, choosing tonight for work of this sort."

"Boys," cried the voice of James Sedgwick from above, "there is no harm done, I hope."

"No, father," exclaimed the boys together. "A few bullets have come in through the interstices of the logs, but no one has been touched. We think they have had enough."

"I think so, too," returned their father; then, in a despairing voice, he exclaimed, "Ah! the villains; they are firing burning arrows into the roof, and the hut will soon be in flames."

The effect of the arrows soon became apparent, and the roof began to crackle, while here and there sparks were visible in showers, and dense smoke began to make its way into the loft. No effort could be made to extinguish the fire, as any one attempting to do so would at once have been the mark for a dozen rifles. The only hope was that the dampness of the weather would prevent the fire from spreading until daylight, when the garrison felt sure that the siege would be raised.

Meanwhile the bandits had taken up their old positions behind the fence, and kept up a heavy fire upon the garrison, so as to distract their attention and prevent them from making any attempt to extinguish the flames.

"I cannot stand this much longer," cried Lopes, as the smoke in the lower chamber became thicker and thicker, "and how the Senor Jaime can endure it passes my comprehension. Give me that small keg of powder—it is better outside than in. Stand by the door, and I'll see if I can't clear away the villains."

"You will be killed if you show yourself," cried Bob.

"Do nothing rash," urged Arthur. "At any rate consult father before you act."

But Lopes was too angry to listen. Hurriedly making a slow match with a piece of linen and some powder, he inserted it in the little keg; then, raising it in his arms, he signed to the brothers to open the door. Mechanically they obeyed him. Lighting the match, he raised the keg high above his head and rushed into the plateau. A volley greeted him, and one bullet struck, but did not stop him. Then the bandits saw his intentions, and with a wild cry they deserted their positions and fled down the narrow, winding path.

But Lopez, in spite of his wound, staggered to the edge of the plateau and hurled the engine of destruction into the midst of them as they impeded each other in their efforts to fly, and then threw himself flat on the ground.

The match reached the powder, a tremendous explosion followed, a dense cloud of smoke rose up; some forms were seen writhing upon the ground; but two, disengaging themselves from the *debris*, fled swiftly down the mountain side.

"Fire!" cried Lopes faintly; "they are Simon and Cifuentes," and he lapsed into insensibility.

Bob and Arthur were surprised that their father had for the last few minutes made no sign; and now they repeatedly called upon him to come down. No answer was returned; and Bob, full of apprehension, darted up the rude ladder. A loud exclamation from him called Arthur to his side. James Sedgwick was stretched upon the rough flooring of the loft. A chance bullet from the last volley had pierced his heart, and he lay stone dead at the feet of his sons.

(*To be continued.*)

ARTHUR BLAISDELL'S CHOICE.*

BY W. BERT FOSTER.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

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

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

Soon afterwards Hiram falls ill and gets Arthur to promise him that he will take full charge of the place. This word having been passed, Arthur is prevented from accepting a position Mr. Davidson offers him on the JOURNAL. But still harder lines fall to the boy's lot. Hi is sent to California by the doctor's orders, and shortly afterwards the elder Hart is robbed. He accuses Arthur of the theft, and is on the point of having him arrested when Arthur threatens him with a counter charge of attempted manslaughter, for in his rage the old man has fired an ancient musket at the boy. Matters are compromised, and Ben Norton leaves very suddenly, under what, to Arthur, seem suspicious circumstances.

Meanwhile Hal has done some good work on the JOURNAL staff, has received an advance in salary, but has at the same time fallen into rather unfortunate company, having made an intimate of Mont Raymond, the society reporter, who introduces him to the Happy-Go-Lucky Club and Mr. Chess Gardner. He attends a supper given by Raymond, which ends up rather disgracefully, and is reported by the JOURNAL'S rival sheet, the TELEGRAPH, the next morning with Hal Blaisdell's name prominently mentioned. As a consequence he is dismissed from the staff of the paper.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH BOB HARRIS LENDS A HELPING HAND.

ARTHUR BLAISDELL slept but little that night. Tormented by the thoughts of the disgrace that overshadowed him, he lay tossing on his bed while the tall kitchen clock down stairs tolled the dragging hours.

He had been accused unjustly himself, and therefore he was the more careful in accusing Ben Norton of the robbery. He went over Ben's career at the farm in every detail. There had always been something very reticent about the fellow. All that was known about him was what he had chosen to tell himself, and that was little indeed.

Then his mind reverted to the meeting of Ben and Chess Gardner in the woods—the crime which had been hinted at in the talk he had overheard at the time. It all passed before his mental vision as though it had occurred but yesterday.

He remembered, too, that Chess Gardner had been on the farm the day Black Bob ran away with little Flossie Davidson; and then there was his appearance at the old house the night Annie and himself were out on their walk. The man with Gardner that night must have been Ben. What had the two men been plotting in that out of the way place? Was Ben Norton a scoundrel, or not?

These and numerous other questions passed through Arthur's mind until finally, just after the old clock had struck eleven, he rolled over and dropped asleep.

At that very moment, in the cozy little cottage in the city, Hal was telling Little Mum all about his mistakes and fool-

*Begun in No 439 of THE ARGOSY.

shiness, while in caterer Blanks's supper room the wild companions Hal had just left, were making night hideous with their carousal.

Just as the clock struck the hour, too, Mr. Chess Gardner, sitting on the piazza of Major Van Slyck's villa at Newport, lit a fresh cigar, and, planting his patent leather boots on the rail in front of him, muttered:

"They're at work by this time. I shall be a rich man tomorrow!" and smiled with satisfaction.

That night, which proved so eventful for other characters of my story, marked an era in Bob Harris's life as well. That youth had been spending the evening with some boon companions in the village of Watchemoket, some distance from the Center. Considerably after midnight he left the little box-like apartment back of McGreggor's groggery which he and his companions used as a "club room," and started toward home.

He had been gambling all the evening, and had lost to one and another of his friends sums aggregating more than fifty dollars. The question might be raised how a youth like Bob Harris had come into the possession of so much money. His companions wondered, too; but Bob maintained a discreet silence, and the young fellows who won it from him cared little whether he came by his money honestly or not, so long as they got it.

Bob was too slow and stupid to be a fortunate gambler, and luck was generally against him. Occasionally he was allowed to win a little, but that was simply to encourage him to play more. This night he left the club room in a perfectly wretched state of mind.

"All gone—every red cent of it," he muttered, as he stumbled along the rough and unlighted country road. "It didn't do me a bit of good. I don't seem to have no luck at all—I always lose. Here I am strapped again; not a cent to bless myself with. I—I'd make a strike at 'most anything to raise a dollar."

After a few moments' moody silence, he continued his half audible soliloquy.

"I've got ter get some rocks somewheres, for the old man'll be after me f'r that cash pretty soon, an' I hain't got the first copper towards it. I—I must git something somewhere."

He stopped in the road a moment and hesitated, as though turning some plan over in his mind. By this time he had traversed half the distance to his home, and had reached a place in the road overhung by thick bushes on one side and bordered by a wood on the other. It was dark, gloomy and dismal, but hardly darker or more dismal than the thoughts in the young fellow's mind.

After a little hesitation he sought an upturned stump beside the road, and crouched on the ground in the deep shadow behind it. Here, although the earth was damp and his position uncomfortable, he remained perfectly quiet for more than an hour. In fact the sky was becoming gray in the east before he moved perceptibly. Then the rattle of wheels aroused him, and rising to his knees, he peered along the dusty soad in the direction of the city from which the wagon seemed to be approaching.

The vehicle was a common light express wagon, attached to which was a powerful horse, driven by the only occupant of the wagon, who sat well muffled up in one corner of the seat. The body of the truck was entirely covered with a piece of sail cloth, which showed the outlines of several bulky packages.

At the instant the wagon reached his hiding place Bob Harris sprang out of his concealment, and holding a heavy club in his right hand, grasped the horse by the bridle.

"Get down out of there, or I'll knock your head off!" exclaimed Bob, in a harsh voice.

His threat seemed fairly to terrify the driver, and in a voice apparently shaking with age and fright he cried.

"Don't kill me, sir! I hain't got nuthin' about me ye want——"

"Shut up and get down out of there!" commanded Bob, sure that he had obtained an easy victory.

"I—I haint got nuthin'," stammered the other pitifully.

"Come down an' I'll see what you've got," returned Bob.

Leaving the horse's head, Bob took his club in his left hand and held out his right to assist the trembling steps of the presumed old gentleman to the ground. The instant he touched the other's hand he found out his mistake.

Bob's wrist was grasped in a grip of steel and he skipped up to the wagon seat with the agility of a ballet dancer. Still retaining the reins in one hand the stranger held the struggling youth upon the seat with the other, and starting the horse they went flying along the road at a gallop.

"Well, young feller," said Bob's captor, every appearance of age and tremor gone from his voice, "I reckon yon barked up the wrong tree that time, eh?"

But Bob continued to fight desperately to free himself without uttering a word.

"Now see here," exclaimed the other angrily, and throwing his leg over the youth to hold him down to the seat, the stranger drew an object from his pocket and held it close to Bob's head.

"Keep still!" he commanded, in a harsh voice," or into kingdom come you go!"

Bob recognized the flash of steel and quailed under the touch of the cold muzzle of the weapon.

"When you go out hunting for ducats again, young feller," advised the stranger, "carry a shooting iron with yer."

Bob remained sullenly silent but scrutinized his captor closely. He was a roughly dressed, heavily built man, with a thick, bull neck, and an unpleasant cast of countenance, which was greatly increased by a wide scar along his jaw.

"Look here, younker," said the stranger eying Bob keenly, "I think 'twas oncommon luck' throwed you in my way tonight. I've just been wantin' a good smart boy like you to help me."

Bob remained silent, not knowing whether the man was fooling or in earnest.

"And I can put you in better business than that, too," he continued.

"That was the first time I'd ever done anything of the kind," mumbled Bob.

The man laughed harshly.

"Yer can't play that game on me—yer took to it altogether too nateral, you did. Yer can't fool me any more't you could talk like a man a little way back there. I knew yer was a kid first time yer spoke. I'm too old a duck ter be fooled that easy. Now I can get you into safer an' better business 'n that."

"Well?" interrogated Bob cautiously.

"Do you know where there's an old hulk of a house about here?" inquired the stranger, abruptly.

"Remington's?"

"Dunno. Stands on a back road and one end's been burnt down."

"That's Remington's?"

"Know where it is then?"

Bob nodded.

"Like a book," he responded.

"Well, then," said the stranger, passing him the reins,

"drive me there. Don't go by any other houses if you can help it."

All this time they had been rattling along the road at a good pace and were now near the Center. Bob quickly turned back and struck into a side path and skirting the village, they entered the back road through an old unused wagon track and in a few moments arrived at the deserted house.

"They do say this place is ha'nted," said Bob, for the first time breaking the silence.

"'Tain't very pleasant," admitted the other, springing to the ground. "Now, young man, just you give me a lift with them," and he threw back the sail cloth, disclosing the packages with which the team was loaded.

"Mabbe you'd like to know what this is," he said, pointing to the load, as Bob joined him on the ground. "Well, ter give you the straight tip, these 'ere goods was 'run in'—smuggled, ye know."

Bob nodded. He began to understand something about the matter now.

"I've had to bring these out here till the p'lice gets quiet like, an' may have to stay a week or two. Nobody ever comes near this ruin, do they?"

"No, they don't—'specially in the night," responded Bob, with a perceptible shiver.

"Well, keep a stiff upper lip and ketch holt here," said the other, and they commenced carrying the packages into the house.

They put them all into one of the rooms on the first floor. The last article was a heavy iron box, with a handle on either side, the contents of which clinked noisily as they carried it.

"There," said the man, with a sigh of relief as they again reached the team. "Now I've got one thing more for you to do. I want you to drive this team as far towards Pawtucket as you can before daylight and leave it on the road somewhere. Here's something for your trouble," and with a tremor of delight Bob saw that the bank note he received showed the double X in the corner.

"That ought to satisfy you," said the man with the scar, laughing. "Come here tonight with some victuals for me and I'll put you in the way of earning more just as easy. Don't let anybody suspect you, Do you live 'round here?"

"YEW DON'T MEAN IT!" GASPED RUSSELL, STARING IN OPEN EYED AMAZEMENT AT THE SPEAKER.

Bob nodded.

"So much the better. When you come, go inside and knock on the floor four times, this way," and he illustrated it by knocking on the side of the wagon. "Now go on with you," he said, "for it's most sun up."

Then he entered the door of the ruin and Bob leaped into the wagon and drove rapidly away.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HAL RUSTICATES.

AND now let us return to Hal. Almost stunned as he was by the managing editor's words and by his dismissal, he rushed out of the *Journal* office and walked blindly away. Every one he met seemed to know his disgrace and point at him as the leader of a party of wild young fellows in a drunken carousal.

It wasn't that he cared so much for the position on the paper. Since realizing that he had made such a fool of himself in following in the train of Mont Raymond, he had really wished in his heart that he could find some situation more

congenial to his tastes. He had to admit to himself that he was becoming tired of it.

But the thought of having his name branded through the public press, as it had been, filled him with horror, He felt as though he was forever utterly disgraced—Little Mum would be completely crushed by the blow.

Hastily traversing the principal business thoroughfares of the city he reached Waterman Street, and after mounting the steep grade to the top of College Hill, passed the University Buildings and campus, and continued along the broad avenue towards the country.

He passed Major Van Slyck's residence as well as many others just as magnificent, without a thought of their grandeur. Soon the houses became more scattered, and finally he reached the shore of the Seekonk and started across Red Bridge to the other side. Half way over the draw he stopped and leaned over the railing, watching the brown water swirling about the black piles.

"I shall have to leave this part of the country—nobody will employ me in the city after this," he muttered. "I—I don't know what to do," for now that trouble had come in earnest, this young fellow felt himself utterly helpless.

"I wish I could see Arthur," he thought. Then, after a moment's silence, he exclaimed: "I know what I'll do. I promised him I would come out to see him some day—I'll go now. I can find my way to the Center from here and he can pick me up there," and with this resolution he set his hat more firmly on his head, squared his shoulders, and started on his walk at a lively pace.

Before he had gone far, he had walked off the worst of his feelings, and felt considerably better. The world began to look a little brighter to him, for a young man must be in a bad state indeed if trouble can make the world seem dark for any length of time. In fact, before he had covered half his journey, he began to whistle, and really enjoyed the hard beaten paths and pretty country lanes.

"Why, if I'd known it was so pleasant out this way, I would have been here before," he thought, as he took in all the sights and sounds about him.

The September sun shone brightly on the verdure and the scarlet sumac in the low land at his left. The birds sang, a tiny chipmunk ran along the wall beside the road, and far away on the river the white sails of the pleasure craft danced to and fro. All nature seemed happy, and he, catching the infection, almost forgot his troubles.

It was eleven o'clock as he approached the Center.

"Art probably won't be along for an hour yet," he decided. "I'll go up to the post office and get acquainted with those funny old characters he told us about."

He had little difficulty in finding the post office, and, as he approached the building, he recognized from his brother's description old Welcome Arnold, who was sitting bolt upright in his hard bottomed chair on the piazza.

"How de do?" said the old gentleman, bobbing his head in a jerky fashion to Hal, and scrutinizing the young man keenly with his sharp little eyes. "Goin' ter hev a shower, ben't we?"

With a glance at the sky, which now for the first time he noticed was rapidly becoming overcast, Hal replied that he thought they probably would, and passed inside. Russell Arnold was in his favorite position—sitting in a chair tipped back against the wall, with his cowhide boots on the desk before him, and the local paper in his hand. Mr. Arnold never seemed to have enough trade to keep him busy. Perhaps it was because he preferred to gossip with his customers rather than wait upon them.

"Haow air ye?" queried Russell, recognizing a stranger in the vicinity at once, and, dropping his paper, he rose to his feet with the aid of a prodigious yawn.

"Very well, thank you," returned Hal, with a smile. "Can you tell me if Arthur Blaisdell has driven past here this morning on his way home?"

"No, he hain't—that is, I don't b'lieve he hez. Say, father, hez he?" he demanded, raising his voice.

"Hez who?" returned the old man.

"Hez Artie Blaisdell passed by here this mornin'?"

"I hain't seen him," piped the old man in reply.

"Then he hain't been here," said Russell, confidently, to his questioner, "f'r what father don't see 't goes on 'raound here hain't wuth seein', that's all. But I reckon Art'll be here bye'n'bye. It's airly for him yet. Ye better wait."

"Well, I'll wait till this shower goes over, any way," returned Hal.

"Ye're a stranger in these parts, hain't ye?" queried the postmaster.

Hal replied that he was.

"Some relation of Artie's?" hazarded the questioner.

"His brother."

"Dew tell! Be you Artie's brother? Jewhiz, I wouldn't ha' knowed ye from a wild gander!" and the postmaster stretched his great bony hand over the counter very cordially.

"I be happy ter know ye," he said. "Artie an' I's great friends, we be. Goin' ter stay abeout here 'long?"

"Only today," replied Hal, greatly amused, and wondering what there was in his appearance which made it impossible for the postmaster to distinguish the difference between him and a "wild gander."

"Wish ye c'd stay longer," returned Arnold heartily.

The sun had now entirely disappeared beneath the gray black clouds, and the distant mutter of thunder was heard now and then. The strange calm in all nature which usually precedes a thunder storm pervaded everything, and even the little sparrows had flown up to the eaves to seek shelter from the approaching downpour. Hal walked to the open door and looked out upon the scene. Old Mr. Arnold still occupied his seat on the porch, and he invited Hal to take a chair beside him.

"Take a cheer," piped the old man, pushing the article towards him with his cane. "Ye'll stay till the shower's over, won't ye?"

"I guess I'd better," returned Hal, taking the proffered seat.

"Goin' ter hev a leetle rain," suggested the old man. "Hain't had none in quite a spell."

Hal nodded.

"Guess 'twon't be much of a shower," went on Arnold senior. "We don't hev no great thunder storms nowadays. I kin 'member a good smart shower we had 'beout fifteen year ergo, consider'bly airlier in the season 'n' this ere. Silas Pegrim an' me went ter town tergether on a load o' wood, an' kemin' back a storm kem up an' it thundered 'n' light-*ninged* right smart. When we left Watchemoket th' lightning was a-splinterin' the telegraph poles all about us, an' the bolts was a-strikin' here, there, an' everywhere. But it didn't happen ter strike us in the team, though Sile an' me spected it all the time.

"Wal, there was them telegraph poles all 'long the way hum, an' the lightnin' was a-dancin' on 'em an' a-splinterin' of 'em, an' fin'ly, when I druv inter th' barnyard, Sile gives a look 'raound, an' sez he: 'Welcome,' sez he, 'jest look in yer waggin.' An' I looked, an' b'gosh 'twas chuck full o' kindlin' wood! 'Twas, f'r a fac'."

Just as the astounding tale was finished, an awkward

looking, red faced individual, who had been approaching along the road with rapid strides, reached the post office and sprang upon the piazza just as the rain began to fall.

"Hello, Bill!" exclaimed the postmaster's voice from the interior. "Ye look ez natural ez the step-stun. Haow be ye?"

"First rate," returned the red faced young man, taking the letters which the postmaster handed him, and casually looking them over. "Goin' ter be a shower, hain't there?"

"Guess there is," responded the postmaster, gazing reflectively out of the open door at the rain, which was beginning to patter down on the dusty road in great drops. "What's the news up your way?" he inquired.

"There hain't much," returned Bill, looking at the other equivocally. "S'pose you've heered what little there is."

"Hain't heered nuthin' from up your way sence last week."

"Didn't you know ol' man Hart was broke into?"

"No, ye don't say! Hurt him much?"

Bill favored the postmaster with a long stare, and then replied:

"Naw—didn't hurt him, 'ceptin his feelin's an' his pocket book. 'Twas his haouse 't got broke into."

"Sho! ye don't mean it?"

"Fac'," returned Bill, nodding his head.

"Tramps?" queried the other.

"Nop. 'Tain't been proved yet, but they dew say 'twas Art Blaisdell," responded Bill calmly.

Hall, who had been listening idly to the foregoing conversation, suddenly began to take an interest in the red faced fellow's remarks. He still remained on the piazza out of sight of the two men inside, and in his surprise and interest in the intelligence, the postmaster evidently forgot his presence.

"Yew don't mean it!" gasped Russell, leaning his hands on the counter before him, and staring in open eyed amazement at the speaker.

"That's what," returned Bill, evidently eager to tell the scandal. "'Twas Sunday night. When the folks got up Monday morning there was thirty dollars or more gone, 'an a lot o' jewelry, an' Art had cleared out."

"Cleared out! Ye don't mean it!

"Wal, he hadn't gone f'r good—jes' went to the city, ye know. He was gone 'long 'nough ter git rid of the jewelry. I s'pose. Besides robbin' the ol' man he pizened his hogs—'most killed 'em."

"Wal, I be astonished!" ejaculated the listener breathlessly. "What did ol' man Hart do?"

"Why," said Bill, waxing eloquent, "he knew Art was young, an' so he went ter him kinder fatherly like, an' admonished him. An' what did the young wretch do but 'tack him."

"Ye don't say!"

"But I do," declared Bill vehemently. "Knocked the ol' gentleman daown, and threw him daown the skuttle inter the barn cellar."

"Why, Bill," gasped Arnold, "be you a-lian'?"

"Not a bit."

"Why—why—the boy must be crazy!"

"I dunno but what he is," said Bill, shaking his head sagely. "Pears ter me he goes wild, 'casionally. He's allus a-fightin'. Why, ye know he an' Bob Harris had some trouble an' he 'tacked Bob daown by the ice houses one day like a little fury. 'Most killed him."

"I thought he licked Bob 'cos he started that 'ere black horse o' his ter runnin';" said the postmaster doubtfully.

"Wal, I don't know haow that was," returned Bob doggedly. "But I know he's dangerous. Why he tackled that cousin o' Hi's—you know, the one 't comes out this way once 'n a while. His name's Webb."

"Yew mean that sort o' half baked critter that comes about here?"

Bill nodded.

"He don't 'mount ter very much, that's a fac'; but he never done any harm. Howsomever Art went f'r him an' tried ter drown him."

"Tried ter drown him!" repeated the postmaster, aghast.

"Wal, he doused the poor feller's head in the horse trough till Mrs. Hart run out an' made him stop."

"Wal, I sh'd think he *was* crazy I never heered anythin' like it in all my days. What's Mr. Hart goin' ter do with him?"

"I 'spect he wants ter shet him up. But ye see the boy's got Hi's business all in his hands. Ye know Hi was fool 'nough ter trust him. So I s'pose the only way the ol' man kin settle things is ter get Art ter turn everything over ter him an' promise ter let him go if he'll do it."

"Why, if he'd steal fr'm the ol' man, Hi must a lost a good deal by him," suggested the postmaster.

"Most likely Hi's aout three or four hundred dollars. Ye see the boy waited till he got aout of the way an' then he commenced a cuttin' up. I spect Hi'll be 'beout ruined," said Bill.

"Who's a-goin to run the milk route?" asked Arnold.

"Wal, I'm goin' to 'til the ol' man kin get some one else. Pegrim hain't very busy jest now."

"I'm sorry 'nough f'r Hi an' Mrs. Hart," said the postmaster slowly. "An' I would'nt believe a bright little feller like Artie Blaisdell would a-done that."

"Bright little feller!" exclaimed Bill, seemingly determined to make out the worst case possible against Arthur. "He's the meanest little runt I know of. Why he got mad with me an' tried ter scare me with a ghost rigged up one night when I was goin' hum from the temperance club. I didn't scare wuth a copper o' course, an' if he'd tried it agin I'd walloped him well."

"Why, I wouldn't ha' believed it," declared the postmaster. "He was sech a nice appearin' little feller. Why, his brother was here this mornin' ——"

"And he's here yet," rang out an angry voice, and looking up they saw Hal standing in the doorway.

"What do you mean by those lies you have just uttered against my brother?" he demanded, advancing on Bill with flushed cheeks, and hands clinched threateningly.

(*To be continued.*)

AN AMAZING ACCOUNT OF CHICAGO.

WITH the approach of the Columbian Exposition, we may expect to have all sorts of absurd descriptions of America circulated by the foreign press. It would seem as easy to get things right as wrong, but the fact remains that in nearly every item there is some ridiculous blunder. Naturally at present Chicago comes in as the subject of the lion's share of these. The *Tribune* of that city furnishes us with the subjoined quotation, from a newspaper published at Nantes, France:

Chicago is situated at the foot of the Falls of Niagara and receives the waters of the great lakes. In no part of Europe will you find so great a city. Its boulevards are regular and as straight as its streets, which seem to have been ruled with a straight edge, and in it all railroads have termini. One is almost frightened by the height of the buildings, in which all styles of architecture meet without confusion. About sixty years ago we first visited the Falls of Niagara, and our first stop was naturally at Chicago. Excellent hotels, very attractive people were there; and as we took a rapid walk along the banks of the "Father of Waters," we were obliged continually to avoid meeting the descendants of the companion of St. Anthony (pigs). Now these noisy animals have their own quarter, where they are sold, and they no longer by their squeals disturb the public peace.

WILL THEY COME TO THE MONOCLE?

SOME fifteen years ago the sight of a small child in spectacles was unusual enough to cause passers by on the street to first wonder and then experience a sensation of compassion. Now the wearing of eyeglasses by children is so common that it excites no comment. And not long since a paragraph went the rounds of the papers telling how a kind hearted gentleman fitted his near sighted horse with a pair of goggles. But the *Optician* now comes forward with an item that assigns a most extraordinary reason for the shortage in the blue glass supply of Vienna.

At the suggestion of Dr. Verincourt, of the Department of Agriculture, of Russia, a large number of farmers had recourse to blue spectacles in order to preserve the sight of their herds of cattle, and in one province over one thousand animals are now meandering about with the aid of blue glasses. This has been found necessary because the reflection of the light upon the snow has been so blinding that tens of thousands of cattle have been attacked with ophthalmia.

According to a recent dispatch from Vienna, the entire supply of blue glass in the Austrian capital has been exhausted for this purpose, and it has been found necessary to obtain additional supplies from Paris and London. A farmer who is now in Vienna says that the sight of thousands of cattle groping their way through the snow with their eyes cased in immense goggles is one that can neither be imagined nor adequately described.

SOME FACTS ABOUT OUR FLAG.

ON the Fourth of July another star was added to the forty three studding the blue ground of our beautiful national banner. As all know, each star stands for a State of the Union, and the last one placed in line represents Wyoming, admitted July 10, 1890, the rule being that the star shall be officially added on the Independence Day next succeeding the creation of the new State. As at present arranged, our flag contains four rows of seven stars each, and two of eight, the latter being the upper and lower rows. In commenting on this forty fourth star, the *New York Tribune* takes occasion to print an interesting description of how the national emblem is manufactured.

The making of flags is an industry at the Brooklyn Navy Yard of the importance and vastness of which few people have any comprehension. The flag making department is under the supervision of the Bureau of Equipment, but its immediate superintendent is James Crimmins, who has been in charge of it for twenty years or more. In three rooms on the top floor of Building No. 7, in the Navy Yard, the flags for the entire Navy are made. Whenever any change is made in the design of either an American or a foreign flag, word is sent to this department, and thereafter the flags of that nation are made after the new design.

The method employed in making flags at the Navy Yard is interesting. Years ago flags were made of plain bunting, and the designs were painted upon them in the proper colors. Now the entire flag is made of bunting of the required colors, the devices being sewed.

In making a flag, an enlargement of the desired design from a book of colored plates is made by a draughtsman. This is carefully cut out on paper. This pattern is laid on a sheet of zinc, which is then shaped into a permanent pattern, by which the devices in colored bunting are cut. Both sides of the ensign must be exactly alike.

When, as in many cases, the device is intricate, the work of making the flag becomes difficult. Thus, on the Chinese flag the device is a large dragon, with claws, scales, tail and tongue. This flag was formerly triangular in shape, but it is now oblong, like those of other nations. Another flag is adorned with mountains and two bodies of water, with ships. Several flags have lettering upon them. Such intricate work must be done by experts.

The flag department is always busy. Flags for the Navy are turned out at the rate of 100 a month, or 1,200 a year. At times the rate is greater than this. The flags of new design and the flags required to take the place of those which are worn out cause the greater part of the work. There are Naval vessels and navy yards on both sides of the continent to be supplied with flags. Each ship, before she sails, must have a complete set of flags for duty at the place to which she is going.

PRUDENCE, PUDDING AND PLUMS.

"BUSINESS first, pleasure afterwards," is a maxim that finds as many followers among children as among grown folks. They, like the rest of us, enjoy looking forward to the good times coming almost as much as in realizing them. And the elders sometimes meanly take advantage of this trait, as when the wily father announces at dinner that they who eat the most bread shall have the most pie, knowing well that the stomachs filled with a supply of substantials will have no room for sweets.

Still, all children are not alike, and the prudent have to atone for the shortcomings of the improvident, as do the big actors on the stage of life. Quite a touching little story, illustrating this fact, is related by The Woman About Town in the New York *Evening Sun*:

A few days ago some children were eating dinner at the house of a friend, who gave them rice pudding for dessert—rice pudding with raisins in it. Now one of these little boys didn't love rice, but did love raisins, and being a conscientious and well trained youngster, with a prudence that he had no business with, considering his years, he first ate carefully all the pudding, saving all the plums and making of them a circle around the rim of his plate. When he had paid penance for the pudding, he meant to reward himself by eating all the raisins.

Opposite to him sat another little boy who had a decided preference for raisins over rice. But this little boy wasn't prudent; he was only a boy, the promptings of whose stomach were better than those of his brain. And the first thing he did was to eat up all his plums. That being done, it suddenly occurred to him that there was nothing left for him to live for. So he lifted up his voice and wept aloud.

And when the kind hearted hostess said: "Why, Davy, what are you crying for?" he howled, "I ain't got any more raisins" Then the good lady glanced down at the plate of the other little boy who sat at her side and said: "Well, here is a little boy who doesn't like raisins, and who has put every one of his aside, and if you won't cry you shall have every one of his raisins."

A COOL PROCEEDING.

A FRENCH journal tells how a gentleman walking fast on a cold clear day, and getting in a perspiration, found flakes of snow on his head when he took off his hat in bowing to a friend. The phenomenon is accounted for by the condensing of the moist warm air within the man's headgear by the chill of the outside temperature. While it is not always easy to arrange for these impromptu snow storms, if you want to cool yourself off on these hot summer days by producing home made ice, you have only to go through the subjoined formula, furnished by the *Evening Sun*:

To make ice artificially in a pail, procure a thin metal cylinder, and prepare a mixture composed of finely powdered nitrate of ammonia, 2 parts of water, finely powdered sal ammoniac, 1 part, and water 3 parts. Place the cylinder in a pail of water and make the mixture in it, and with the hands turn the cylinder rapidly. The mixture produces 54 degrees Fanrenheit of cold, so that if the temperature of the water and other materials used is, say 70 degrees, some ice ought to be formed.

The water should be as cool as possible to begin with. After use, if to be employed again, the solution must be boiled down to dryness, ground to powder, and mixed again with its own weight of water. This is one of several methods, with salts of like effect, none of which, however, is of practical value, but is only interesting in an experimental way.

HOW THE ELECTRIC LIGHT PROVIDES THE BIRDS WITH BREAKFAST.

TURN about is fair play, and as the lower kingdoms furnish man with all sorts of adjuncts to his well being, from birds' nest soup to hen's eggs, it seems only just that among the many inventions he has sought out, some should benefit his dumb friends.

Among the scientific items in a recent issue of the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, we find the following:

Some of the new conditions to which the use of the electric light gives rise have a grotesque phase. In a town in Connecticut a new industry has sprung up. It appears that the strong light of the arc lamps has the effect of attracting worms out of earth. An ingenious boy conceived the idea of turning this peculiar phenomenon to account, and scooping up the worms into a basket nightly, he started a trade with the local fishermen for the bait which they are always glad to get. The youngster was in a fair way to fortune when the secret of his little business was discovered, and now groups of boys with tin cans can be seen every night at work under the electric lights in the development of this new branch of commerce.

But while enabling bait to be thus secured for the fishermen, the electric light is actually a bait itself for the many moths and bugs which fly by night. The English sparrow has been quick to take advantage of this, and numbers of the little hustlers can be seen waiting for the street lamps to cool after the current has been turned off in the morning. Presently there is a flutter and a rush, and sometimes as many as half a dozen birds are inside the globe struggling for the fat and tender morsels which it contains. Since the discovery of this bonanza on the part of the birds, the entomologist, who has come to rely greatly on the same source of supply, must be up early if he would save his rare specimens from being served for breakfast.

THE ARGOSY

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,
155 East 23d Street New York.

WE reprint this week on the front page our great premium offer of bicycles for securing new subscribers. Already many of these clubs have been completed and their formers made happy in the possession of a handsome wheel.

Show the paper to your friends who do not now take it, tell them that now is a splendid time to subscribe, as a new story started last week, while another is begun in the present issue; call their attention to the fact that it is the highest grade boy's paper published in the country, and that still further improvements are in contemplation for the near future that will place it second to none in the world.

* * * *

AN item of news, that at first thought seems astounding, comes to us from Brussels. It is announced that the waiters in the Belgian capital have struck in the hope of doing away with the feeing system.

But reading further, one ascertains that these knights of the napkin are not candidates for the lunatic asylum, but possess very clear headed notions as to what will constitute for them the best division of profits as between themselves and their employers. It seems that they are paid no wages at all, but, on the contrary, are expected to give the proprietor of the restaurant a fixed percentage of the amount they take in in fees.

These men surely are in bad case. It is humiliating enough—or ought to be—to receive a tip for one's own pocket, but when these gratuities find their way into the pockets of somebody else, we cannot wonder at the worm's turning.

* * * *

IN a recent discussion as to the advisability of establishing a school of journalism at some of our colleges, a contemporary very justly declares that "if the colleges will only teach men to see and think, they can safely leave them to work out their newspaper education for themselves."

See and think! What comprehensive terms these are! The world is constantly unfolding its wonders for our benefit, but how often do we take them in with unseeing eyes because we do not digest them, so to speak, by means of thought? The naturalist can read a volume of information out of the tiniest flower, and although we cannot all be specialists, yet, by the combinaton of thought and observation, the least advantaged boy can pick up many a scrap of knowledge which would otherwise go drifting unheeded past him.

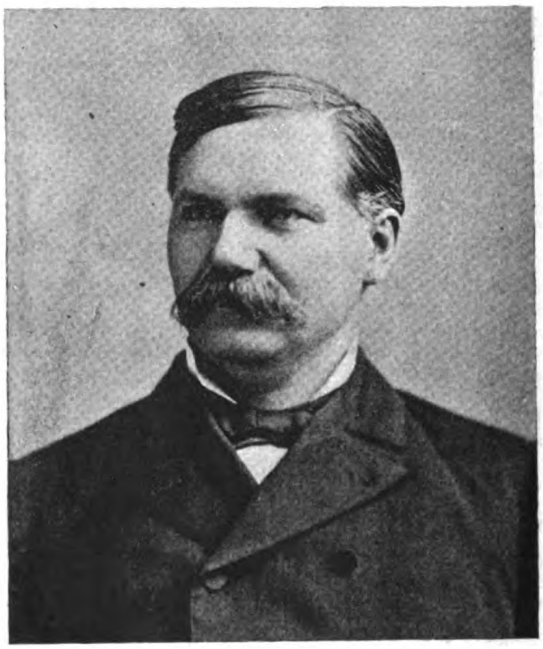
Do not acquire everything by asking questions. You will remember what you learn twice as long if you think it out for yourself.

COLONEL DAVID B. HENDERSON.

CONGRESSMAN FROM IOWA.

PERHAPS the most prominent Scotchman in American public life, since the death of the late Senator Beck of Kentucky, is Colonel Henderson of Dubuque, Iowa, who has been five times elected to the House of Representatives by his district, and is recognized at Washington as one of the most prominent Congressmen of his party.

The colonel, whose full name is David Bremner Henderson, was born at the village of Old Deer, Scotland, on the 14th of March, 1840.



COLONEL DAVID B. HENDERSON.
From a photograph by Bell, Washington.

When he was six years old his parents emigrated to America, settling in Illinois. Three years later they crossed the Mississippi into Iowa, where young Henderson grew to manhood on his father's farm, getting his education at the public schools, and in a course at the Upper Iowa University, at Fayette, Iowa.

He was just of age when the war broke out, and in September, 1861, he enlisted as a private in Company C, Twelfth Iowa Regiment. He was promoted by election to a lieutenancy, which he held for more than a year, until in March, 1863, he was discharged owing to the loss of his leg. Useful work, however, was found for him in superintending the work of raising troops in Iowa, as an enrollment Commissioner.

In spite of his lost limb, Mr. Henderson returned to the front in June, 1864, as colonel of the Forty Sixth Iowa, with which regiment he remained until the war was brought to a close and he was mustered out of service. The following year he was appointed Collector of Internal Revenue for the third district of his State. This office he held for nearly four years, resigning it in 1869 to take up the practice of law for which he had been studying for some time.

As a lawyer Colonel Henderson was successful. He served for two years as Assistant United States District Attorney for the northern division of Iowa, and is now senior partner in the firm of Henderson, Hurd, Daniels & Kiesel, of Dubuque.

He was first elected to Congress in 1882, and has now represented his district at Washington for eight years, having been confirmed in the possession of his seat in every subsequent election. His creditable record, his powerful oratory and his practical abilities have won him the foremost place among the Iowa Congressmen, and an honorable national reputation.

THE CHINESE CONSPIRACY;

OR,

A NAVAL CADET'S ADVENTURES IN THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE.*

BY ENRIQUE H. LEWIS.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

LAWRENCE COLEMAN is a Naval cadet on board the frigate Benton, flagship of the American fleet on the Asiatic station. Admiral Hewett commanding. The period is during the commencement of hostilities in the late Franco-Chinese war, and it becomes necessary to send a messenger from the Benton's anchorage in the harbor of Foo Chow, China, to the minister at Pekin with a cipher dispatch. Ensign Dalton is selected as this messenger. But it comes to the ears of Colonel Monroe, the American consul at Foo Chow, that this young Dalton was selling information to the French concerning the Chinese preparations for war. It has therefore been determined to send Coleman along with him, to keep a watch on his movements and to carry a copy of the dispatch to the minister at Pekin in case Dalton should fail to do so.

This duty Lawrence at first declines to perform, even going so far as to tender his resignation from the service, but when it is represented to him that he is only sent as a precautionary measure, he recalls his decision and arranges to leave for Shanghai by next day's steamer, on which he finds that a friend of his—Charlie Travis—is also to be a passenger. Early the following morning the admiral sends for Coleman, but is amazed to hear that he is not to be found aboard the ship.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSASSIN'S SWORD.

WHEN Lawrence left Travis at the tea house he walked rapidly to the neighboring wharf, and, embarking in one of the numerous native native boats waiting for stray fares, started for the ship.

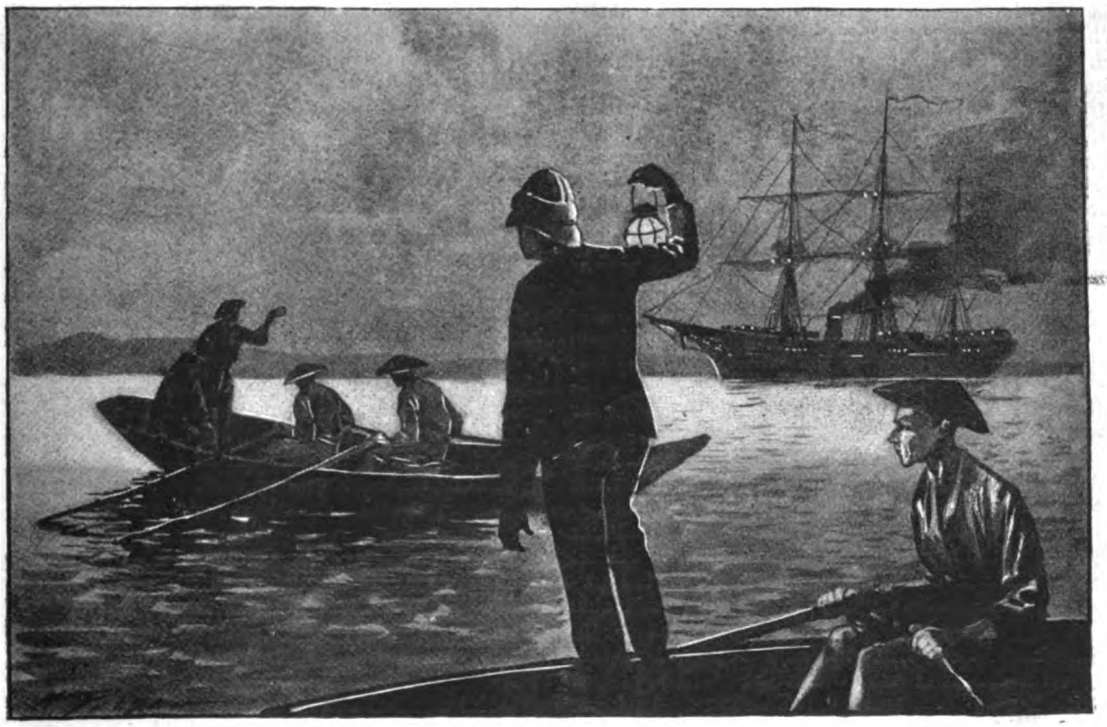
The night was very dark, and, out on the broad expanse of river, danced a myriad lights, the anchor signals of a fleet. The near proximity of war had called to this threatened port vessels of all nations, and day by day the assembled squadrons were augmented by new arrivals. English ironclads, ponderous floating batteries of impregnable power; German corvettes, small, but flaunting the double headed eagle in proud defiance; Italian cruisers, conspicuous by their never failing crowds of eager seamen lining the forecastle; white painted Spanish sloops of war, the objects of perpetual laughter and amusement on account of their peculiar custom of overhauling the blocks aloft at sunset, rain or shine, a practice set down by the English and American tars as "chasing Satan out of the ship," but in reality a wise precaution due to the lesson taught by the loss of a warship—lost on account of the running rigging jambing in the blocks; and last, but not least, Yankee men-of-war: wooden, armed with obsolete guns, and slow of speed, verily Quaker ships with Quaker cannon, but manned by the finest crews that sail the sea, and holding their places in the front rank, unproductive of ridicule and commanding respect from all. All these went to make up a formidable armada, the like of which Foo Chow had never seen before, and trembled thereat.

Although having only one oarsman, Lawrence's sampan made rapid progress down the stream, as the tide was ebbing fast; and he soon distinguished the triangular lights of the flagship ahead. The faint sound of a ship's bell came floating over the water, and he counted two strokes—nine o'clock. It was taken up in rapid succession by other vessels and then a far away rat tat of drums and the clamoring notes of brazen bugles, softened by distance, rose and fell on the wavering breeze. A brilliant flash illuminated the night for one brief second, followed by the sharp report of a heavy gun, and then silence settled down once more. It was tattoo.

Just after the echoing sounds had died away, Lawrence heard a splashing of oars behind him, and, turning his head, made out the shadowy form of a boat coming astern. From the quick beat of the blades it became evident that the occupants were in a hurry, a fact soon proved by their rapid approach.

Under the after seat of the sampan in which the middy was seated, an old fashioned horn lantern cast a feeble ray on the face of his boatman, and happening to glance in that

*Begun in THE ARGOSY of last week.



COLEMAN HELD THE LIGHT SO THAT HE COULD SEE PLAINLY, AND WAITED.

direction, he saw with surprise that the fellow appeared ill at ease, or, to put it more forcibly, seemed visibly frightened.

All Chinese watermen know something of English. Their contact with the numerous foreign vessels frequenting the ports renders this inevitable, and although mainly a gibberish known under the title of "pigeon English," yet it can be understood with practice.

Lawrence was not conversant with Chinese, but prided himself on his proficiency in "pattering pigeon," as it was termed in salt water parlance, and he was just on the point of asking the boatman what was the matter when there came a hail from astern in Chinese.

It was immediately answered by the "sampanese" in Coleman's boat, and the fellow dropped his oar and waited.

Lawrence jumped to his feet, and felt for a revolver he generally carried when ashore, but it was gone. In his hurry and excitement on leaving the ship that afternoon, he had forgotten to transfer it to his suit of mufti.

The situation was critical, as the lawless element on the river had grown bold of late, owing to the laxity on the part of the authorities, and the expectation of war. Their depredations had reached even as far as the lower anchorage, and it was considered unsafe to venture forth at night without being well armed.

"What did you stop for?" demanded Lawrence sternly, taking the lantern from under the seat. "Pull ahead. We have nothing to do with that other boat."

"They have a note for you, sir," replied the boatman. "They called out that they had a message for the young tsung [officer], and I stopped."

Thinking it might be word from the consul, and feeling more secure as he noticed their comparative nearness to the Benton, Coleman held the light so that he could see more plainly, and waited.

By this time the approaching sampan was almost alongside. The dim light in his hand showed Lawrence that it was occupied by four Chinamen, two at the oars, and the others sitting in the stern.

One of the latter held up a white object shaped like an envelope, and stood erect as the two boats came together.

"The gracious gentleman who represents your glorious country has commanded his humble servant to deliver this into your highness's hands," he said in excellent English, and with the flowery touch common to the country.

"Thank you," simply replied Lawrence, leaning over to take the note.

There was a sudden movement made by the other passenger, and, before the middy could raise a hand in hindrance, he was struck a sharp blow on the shoulder. The force was sufficient to stagger him, and, as he reeled backward, another cruel stroke landed on his head, and he toppled over into the water.

If it had not been for one thing, his young life would have ended with that watery plunge. The weapon used by the would be assassin was a short native sword, dull and unwieldy, but it would have answered the purpose had not Lawrence been in the habit of wearing a huge cork helmet while ashore. This saved his life, and he arose to the surface a short distance away, slightly stunned, but still able to swim.

As he shook the water from his ears he heard a wild, shuddering scream, and then all was silent. The light had disappeared when he fell, and in the direction of the boat, or what he thought was the direction, a profound blackness rested, made more apparent by a little fringe of twinkling points to the right, where the shore lay.

The stillness was intense. Not a sound even from the ghostly fleet of ships so near at hand.

Where was the villainous crew that had tried to kill him? Was that terrible cry from one of them, or, as he sorrowfully expected, from his unfortunate boatman?

Lawrence was a boy of nerve, and having been reared in a country town, where to swim well was a common freehold of every lad, he coolly deliberated on the best possible means of saving himself, at the same time treading water.

He was too weary to call for help now, and thereby run the risk of revealing his presence to the sampan that must still be lurking in that shadowy spot. No, it was better to remain in silence, and trust to their speedy departure.

But he reckoned without the knowledge of two alarming facts. The current was setting outward and downward with stealthy impulse; and a numbness was creeping over that wounded arm, with disability close at hand.

He suddenly became consious of both misfortunes at one and the same time. Chancing to think of the flagship, he made an effort to turn in that direction, and succeeded, but at cost of a violent twinge in the shoulder.

Lawrence forgot the pain in the astounding discovery he made. At what seemed only a minute before the Benton, was actually close enough for him to catch an occasional glimpse of her hull, true only a darker smirch against the night, but still perceptible. Now that had disappeared, and the only indication of her existence was a little three cornered series of lights away off to the right.

Thoroughly frightened, he raised his head higher out of the water by a strong physical effort, and shouted!

Was that an answering hail?

Encouraged, the lad again sent forth that wailing cry:

"Help! help!"

Again came the answering call, but nearer, and then with flapping wings, a sea gull swept over his head.

The disappointment was great, but, like a brave hearted lad, he gritted his teeth, and fought the growing numbness with manly determination. He tried to shout once more, but the weak sound of his voice startled him, and he resolved to keep his breath for the last struggle. One minute might mean rescue, and it might mean a grave down in that noisome bed of the silent river.

He was becoming slightly incoherent, and he vaguely wondered whether it would be quiet down there, or if the morning gun from the flagship would disturb his slumber, and cause him to rise and greet his shipmates anew.

* * * * * *

Torpedo boat No. 39 of the French squadron should have kept outside the neutral line, but her commander, a valiant young lieutenant, prone to enthusiasm in his profession, and much given to injudicious adventures, transgressed the rules, and crept up the Min that very night.

As he quietly stood in his little conning tower he espied a a floating form off the starboard bow, and steered towards it. It was the work of a moment to snatch the drowning body trom the ravenous maw, and then those big hearted Frenchmen forgot their perilous position; forgot the dire penalty of being caught, and labored over that piece of floatsam until it gave one quivering sigh, and sat up with a dreamy smile of thankfulness.

CHAPTER V.

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

THE admiral was astounded.

He stared at the imperturbable face of the orderly as if doubting the announcement just made, and, with a slight touch of irascibility, ordered him to repeat his words.

"Sir, Lieutenant Seabury says as how Mr. Coleman cannot be found on board," droned the marine, removing his eyes from the nodding tassel of the admiral's night cap, and again plodding his way through the mazes of that intricate salute.

"Eh? Nonsense!" shouted the bluff old sailor. "Who told you that? Tell Mr. Seabury I want him. Cannot be found, forsooth! Bless me! Is this a man-of-war or a trackless forest? Tell Douglas I want him, or—er—give *Captain* Douglas my compliments and ask him to please come here for a moment."

When he had finished, the orderly wheeled and marched out on deck, but his step was irregular and the little finger of each hand had wandered astray from his trouser seams. He had stumbled on a sight not mentioned in tactics—a rear admiral uniformed in one slipper and a night gown.

The officers sent for were soon in the cabin, and it transpired that the first message was correct. The admiral's amazement increased when he learned that Lawrence had been detailed for the mid watch, and, knowing the young cadet's thorough attention to duty, he became alarmed at his unaccountable absence.

A messenger was dispatched forthwith to the Consulate, and other arrangements made for finding the middy.

Admiral Hewett's anxiety became very much augmented when he reflected on the other issues at stake, and he paced the narrow confines of his outer cabin with impatient strides.

"Confound it! If that boy has been murdered by these bloodthirsty pirates around here, I'll shell the town," he muttered to himself, then added with a grim chuckle, "It's bound to happen any way when the Duquesne opens her ports. Now what do you want, sirrah?"

The last was called forth by the sudden appearance of the orderly, who had so forgotten his military training as to display a slight touch of excitement in his manner.

"Sir, Lieutenant Seabury says as how, an' Captain Douglas says as how that—that Mr. Coleman has reported on board again, and has been killed by river thieves, but he wants to see you."

"Send him to me instantly," ordered the relieved officer, and, as the confused marine disappeared, he laughed; "Killed, eh, and he wants to see me, nevertheless. Well, I'll wager he is a lively corpse. Why, bless my soul, Mr. Coleman, you look as if you had had a watery experience."

"Yes, sir," replied Lawrence, passing into the cabin, his arm in a sling, and with clothes still wrinkled and untidy. "I wish to report an adventure with thieves last night which almost cost me my life."

He thereupon briefly related the startling events of the preceding few hours, not forgetting to speak in glowing terms of the kindness he had met with from the French officers.

"I would have reported on board before this, sir," he added, "but the commander of the torpedo boat insisted on my remaining in the fireroom on the grounds that I would catch cold, and I found, on returning to the dock, that we had run alongside of the French flagship. As soon as it became daylight, they very kindly sent me here in a steam pinnace."

"I'll see Admiral Le Febre and thank him personally, but have you no clew to the dastards who assaulted you?"

"No, sir. It was dark, and all Chinamen look alike to me. The object was robbery, no doubt, and they were only foiled in their attempt by my falling overboard on my first being attacked. I am afraid the poor boatman was killed, though; but that reminds me, sir, it seems strange that his cry was not heard on board."

"I will have an investigation held at once," replied the admiral, his wrath growing apace at the recital. "I'll see if two officers, a quartermaster, several marines, and a whole anchor watch cannot furnish sufficient ears to hear the sounds of an attempted murder going on within a cable's length of the ship. Humph! I'll order a consignment of ear trumpets for the whole lot," and, jumping to his feet, he started every electric bell in the cabin ringing.

"You said those villains pretended they had a note from the consul," he resumed meanwhile, pacing the floor with a thoughtful expression. "I'll notify the authorities on shore, but am afraid it won't do much good. How is your arm? Will it incapacitate you from starting today, as proposed?"

"No, sir," quickly replied Lawrence, his face falling at the bare suggestion. "Certainly not, sir. It is only a slight bruise, and is almost well now."

The admiral's eyes twinkled with secret merriment as he noticed the middy's alarm, and he fondly recalled the days when he would have gone on such an expedition on his hands and knees, if no other way would serve.

"Very well. I am glad it was no worse. You have had a very narrow escape, but I am afraid there are just as dangerous situations in store for you. I will see Ensign Dalton at once, and try the experiment determined upon yesterday. Go and prepare yoursely to leave the ship at six bells, as the steamer sails at noon. Take only the most necessary articles, as you will be given sufficient money to purchase others on the road. I will send for you again when the cipher messages are received from Consul Monroe. If any of your brother officers ask where you are going, tell them it is a secret, and I will spread the rumor myself as to Nagasaki."

Lawrence left the cabin, and repaired to the "steerage country," as that part of a man-of-war occupied by young officers is called.

He found sundry shipmates sitting around a long table in the center, busily poring over various books, the very backs of which were suggestive of educational nightmares, and logarithmic delirium. He was greeted vociferously, and had to explain his thrilling adventures with full details, and before he concluded, posed as a hero on the pedestal of every one's admiration.

Meanwhile a different scene was transpiring in the cabin. Dalton had promptly obeyed the admiral's summons, and on entering the room, found that officer seated in state with divers official maps, etc., in front of him.

"Good morning, Mr. Dalton," greeted the admiral shortly. "I have sent for you to ask your opinion on a matter connected with the trip to Pekin, and also to give you final instructions.

"Yes, sir," replied the ensign, taking a seat the old officer had indicated with an abrupt wave of his hand. He looked pale and worn, and a certain nervous movement of his lips seemed to proclaim uneasiness.

Admiral Hewett's honest soul revolted at his present task. He was no diplomat, and if he could have followed the bent of his sturdy nature, he would have thundered the accusation at the suspected officer, and then accepted his denial as gospel truth, but a latent fear of one Colonel Monroe caused him to try and conceal his suspicions, and he fingered the papers on the table with a ludicrous attempt at calm indifference.

"The consul and myself have talked this over, and think it best to send an assistant with you," he commenced, his eyes directed with a keen look of inquiry at the ensign. "Late reports state that the disaffected provinces are filled with bands of wandering 'Yaou Jin,' who are, as you

probably know, descendants of the old Chinese party which never acknowledged the Tartar dynasty. They are lawless in the extreme, and woe be unto the foreigner caught by them. His life would pay the penalty beyond the shadow of a doubt. Now, in view of this fact we have concluded to send a companion with you." He hesitated for a moment and then continued abruptly: "It will be Mr. Coleman."

Dalton gave a start of surprise, and half rose from his chair. His face flushed and paled alternately, and he seemed astonished in the extreme. He made strenuous efforts to control his emotions, but only succeeded in making them more visible.

"Why, sir," he stammered, "I—I—you surprise me, sir. It is not possible you wish me to take a young, inexperienced lad like that on such a perilous trip. Why, it is preposterous, or—er—I beg your pardon, sir, but you can surely see that one person, knowing the country and language thoroughly, can succeed better without the drag of another who does not know either. I beg of you, sir, to let me go alone."

Admiral Hewett had watched him with growing suspicion. Every word uttered by Dalton only strengthened it, and when he had finally concluded, the old officer gave a deep sigh, and rising to his feet, said simply:

"Ensign, your objections are well founded, but I still think it best to send Mr. Coleman with you. Please return at six bells for final instructions. Good morning."

Dalton bowed ceremoniously, and passed out on deck without another word, leaving the admiral still standing by the table.

CHAPTER VI.

A STARTLING ACCUSATION.

A FEW minutes before eleven oclock the orderly brought word to the steerage that Lawrence was required in the cabin at once, a summons the middy obeyed with alacrity.

As he approached the bulkhead door leading into that part of the ship sacred to the powers that be, he heard an electric bell ringing violently. It continued without intermission, and was evidently causing great distress to the marine at the entrance, who cast a woebegone glance at Lawrence, as the latter told him to announce his name to the admiral.

"What is the matter, orderly?" asked Coleman, noticing the look, and feeling secretly amused thereat. "Isn't that your bell ringing?"

"Yes, sir," replied the marine, in an aggrieved voice, shifting from one foot to the other in regulation mark time style. "He's gone and put a heavy book on the knob, an' he won't let me take it off, sir, an' I don't know when he wants me, an'——"

"Orderly!" came from the interior in stentorian tones.

The excited marine vanished through the door like a flash, and as quickly re-appeared, walking backwards, and saluting with both hands at every step.

"He wants you, sir," he whispered, jerking his thumb towards the cabin.

Lawrence entered, and found the old admiral poring over a huge chart spread out on the center table. He did not notice the middy's approach, and was softly muttering to himself words not to be entered on the log.

Coleman gave an apologetic cough, and stopped near the door. It had the desired effect, and the perturbed officer turned quickly at the sound.

"Ah, my boy, I have been waiting for you," he said, replacing the compasses with which he had been working, and taking up a couple of documents. "Are you all ready to leave?"

"Yes, sir. Everything I require has been packed in a couple of handbags, and I only await marching orders."

"Well, here are the papers. This is the cipher copy, and you must take the greatest care of it. You had better carry it about your person in some secret pocket, if you have one."

"How would it do to sew it up in a money bag? One of those little leather or cloth pockets the sailors sling around their necks. I can have one made of thin rubber."

"That will do excellently. Now, I want to tell you that my suspicions of Ensign Dalton are almost confirmed. He met the suggestion with the most strenuous objections, and, although not yet entirely certain, I am compelled to believe him guilty. You have a most serious task before you, my boy; and I am really undecided whether to send you or not. If there was any other way to arrange the matter, I would do so, but my hands are tied. No, you will have to go, and now, my boy, I leave everything to your discretion. Act for the interests of your government, and conduct yourself in this momentous undertaking with the same spirit that characterized your father in his life. Write me from Shanghai, and if anything occurs, let me know at once, if possible. Your instructions are simple—if Dalton fails, succeed yourself. Good by!"

The worthy old admiral's voice had grown even more husky than was ordinarily the case, and, as Lawrence turned to go, he grasped his hand and shook it.

A half hour later the puffing little steam launch, attached to the flagship, glided up alongside the coastwise packet, Tartar Khan, and the two officers, with their effects, were transferred to its deck.

Dalton went below immediately, leaving Lawrence at the companion ladder, sending some messages back to the ship by the pinnace's coxswain. Very little conversation had passed between Coleman and the ensign since Admiral Hewett had decided to send them together. Dalton had invariably acted in a constrained manner, and had met the middy's attempts at a discussion of their expedition with so much unwillingness that the latter gave it up in disgust. He now felt the more firmly desirous to do his duty to the letter, and, in fact, it went far towards removing his previous disinclination.

When he had completed his instructions to the petty officer in charge of the launch, he started aft to the cabin, and met Charlie Travis coming out of the smoking room.

"Well, I declare!" gasped the surprised youth, staring at the hand satchel Lawrence was carrying, in blank astonishment. "Where on earth are you going?"

"Shanghai, old boy. This is a little picnic I had in store for you," replied the middy, with a grin, dropping the bag and extending his hand. "Sorry?"

"Sorry! Great Scott! I am tickled to death. But you might have let a fellow know. I have heart disease, and the doctor warns me against sudden shocks."

"Heart disease?" laughed Coleman, surveying his friend's glowing face with kindly regard. "Well, if you you have, it must be enlargement of that organ. But, I say, Charlie, Dalton is with me, and we are going to travel together for some time. Nagasaki and Yeddo."

"Whew! Is that so? I don't envy you your companion. Better look out. He has it in for you on account of old Monroe's daughter, Fanny."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Lawrence sententiously, but reddening slightly under his friend's quizzical gaze. "I—ah, say, it's funny, isn't it?" this last in a sarcastic tone.

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Travis. "Touched you on a weak spot, eh? Well, that's all right, Larry; I admire your taste. I am rather smitten myself in that quarter."

"Come on, Charlie!" exclaimed Coleman, hastily changing the subject. "Let us go on the bridge while we are passing the Benton. The steamer is under way and we will soon be alongside."

The propeller was now churning the muddy water with ever increasing force, and soon the white painted iron fabric slipped past the fleet of war vessels, her colors fluttering up and down the after signal halyards in stately salutation.

On board the flagship a group of officers had gathered in a conspicuous place, and when the Tartar Khan steamed by they waved their handkerchiefs in a last adieu. The admiral was not among them, but Lawrence thought he saw the gallant old officer's face at one of the cabin ports.

He felt something rise in his throat, and the familiar outlines of the old frigate grew dim and wavering as he recalled the many favors he had received from his hands. Kindliness beyond his due, and a consideration unknown to official communications. Was it all ended now?

That evening after dinner Coleman and Travis repaired to the forward deck for a lounge, as the stuffy saloon was too warm for comfort. It was very dark, even for that latitude, and, as they groped their way to a seat near the side railings, the somber blackness of the night impressed them both deeply.

The steamer had long since passed out of the river, and the only indication of land was a faint flickering light, away off on the port quarter, marking the site of Lienkaing.

There were many things to talk about, but neither felt like commencing a conversation just then, so they sat in silence, enjoying the fragrant breath of the salt sea air, and that soothing impulse of a fast moving vessel. Time passed, but still they lingered, each wrapped in his own thoughts, and nothing disturbed the silence of the night save the distant clang of machinery down in the bowels of the ship, or a soft lap lap of invisible waves striking against the iron hull.

Suddenly a sound of voices, low and almost indistinct, broke the quiet, followed by the harsh rattling of a bench, dragged across the hard pine deck, and two forms, barely outlined in the blackness, seated themselves close at hand.

The faint tones of conversation continued, now hardly distinguishable, and then, as the unsteady breeze lulled for a moment, the words would come plain and perfectly audible. They were speaking in the native tongue, and something in the voice of one seemed familiar to Lawrence. He sat, vaguely wondering who it could be, and half resolved to strike a match, when suddenly he heard his name mentioned in that familiar voice, immediately followed by a fierce oath in English.

Startled at the unexpected exclamation, Lawrence sprang to his feet, but a restraining hand grasped him by the arm, and he was forced back into the seat.

"S-sh! Keep quiet, man!" whispered Travis excitedly; "there is something up!"

Lawrence obeyed, but he had hardly touched the bench when there came the quick sound of a blow, followed by a groan, and then hasty footsteps were heard running aft. Both lads jumped to their feet with one accord and rushed to the spot from whence the sound had come.

Lawrence fumbled in his pocket for a lucifer, but Travis was ahead of him, and as the little flame grew larger, it revealed the form of a Chinaman recumbent on the deck, a slender stream of blood flowing from a wound in his shoulder.

He seemed to be unconscious, and his stertorous breathing, together with a convulsive twitching of the limbs, indicated that he was badly injured. Charlie started aft for assistance, but the short struggle had attracted the attention of several passengers, and a crowd quickly gathered. Lights were brought from forward, and efforts made to revive the wounded man.

Coleman had taken his place at the native's head, and was engaged in bathing the pallid face with a dampened handkerchief. At last the Chinaman gave a long drawn sigh and opened his eyes. He glanced from one to the other of the rapidly increasing group in a startled manner and then his gaze fell on the middy. He stared at him for a moment, a curious change came over his face, and, suddenly catching Lawrence tightly by the arm, he cried in English:

"*This is the man who tried to kill me!*"

(*To be continued.*)

ON STEEDS OF STEEL:

OR,

*THE TOUR OF THE CHALLENGE CLUB.**

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

WILL HASBROUCK, Hugh Dinsmore, Alexander McKie and Steve Osborn, comprising the Challenge Bicycle Club, start out on a tour from New York up along the banks of the Hudson. After various adventures they are overtaken one afternoon by a storm, which blows over a tree on Hugh. He is temporarily disabled and is carried into the nearest house, which proves to be the cottage owned by Mr. Brandon Darling. There is no one home but the daughter Marian, a girl of fifteen—not even the servants, and it does not take the Challengers long to discover that there is a mystery in the household. What this is is not explained until Jack Mills, the son of a neighbor, comes to call on Marian, and is requested by the latter to inform the young wheelmen that her father, the president of the People's Bank in the adjacent town of Bolton, has mysteriously disappeared, simultaneously with the vanishing of $50,000 of the bank's money. Mills does not believe Mr. Darling guilty, although circumstances seem so strongly against him. Mrs. Darling is off with the carriage endeavoring to discover her husband's whereabouts, and while the party are at dinner, detectives, sent out by the bank, arrive to search the cottage.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE COTTAGE IS SEARCHED.

I UNDERSTOOD the whole situation in an instant. Detectives had been sent to search the house for Mr. Darling, and Jack Mills was trying to prevent the indignity. But the tall man's last words convinced him as well as me that opposition would only make matters worse.

"Hasbrouck," called out Mills, beckoning to me, "see if you can't keep Miss Marian from knowing of this. Tell her—tell her these men have business with me. That's true enough; I'll make it my business to have them——"

"Excuse me, young man," the tall individual here interposed, "but I *must* see some member of the family. Are you one?"

"No, but——" Here Mills paused, and a tinge of color came into the cheeks that had been rather pale throughout the interview. I wondered if he had been about to add: "But hope to be some day."

He was spared completing the sentence, however, by the appearance in the hall of Miss Marian herself. She had her napkin still in her hand, and really there was but very little difference between its color and that of her face.

"What is it, Jack?" she said. "What do these men want? I am sure it is something about—about papa. Tell me what it is. Don't be afraid. I want to know all."

"So do we, Miss Darling," interrupted the tall man, stepping forward. "I regret very much that we are compelled to disturb you, but it has been found necessary to have the premises searched for your father."

I stood in the wide hallway leading to the dining room, watching Miss Marian's face during this announcement, for

*Begun in No. 443 of THE ARGOSY.

indeed I could not keep my eyes off her. She looked at the speaker steadily, and then said in tones, at whose firmness I was amazed: "Will it not be sufficient for me to tell you that my father is not here?"

"I wish it were, young lady, I wish it were," responded the tall fellow, pulling out a handkerchief to wipe his face nervously. "But the law can't take account of sentiment,

MR. McDOWELL KEPT LOOKING IN AT MARIAN AND MAC.

you know. So please to understand that what we are about to do is a mere form, a mere form. Todd, will you remain here; you, Hendricks, will search the cellar; I will go up stairs."

It was awful. My appetite all fled; in fact none of us went back to the dining room. Jack tried to get Miss Marian to go out on the piazza with him to be out of the way, but she said she preferred that they should see her. So she sat down in one of the easy chairs scattered about the hall, and I, bethinking myself of Hugh, hurried up stairs again.

It was lucky I did so, for just as I reached the landing I heard his voice calling out:

"Hello, below there, fellows, there's a burglar in the house."

He had seen the leader of the detectives fall on his stomach to look under the bed in a room across the hall, and naturally was alarmed at the proceeding. Stopping an instant to call down and explain matters to the others, I rushed up to reassure my chum.

"It's an outrage," he declared, when I told him. "Why should a man come to his own house of all places to hide. That would be the first spot they'd look for him."

"Then why do you object to their doing what is only natural for them to do?" I wanted to know.

"This isn't the time to draw hair lines, Will," he retorted. "Now, what can we do for this poor girl who's been so kind to take me in? That is the question!"

"I don't know," I rejoined, "unless we find her father for her, and establish his innocence."

"Well, why can't we do that? He must be somewhere."

"Certainly he must, or else he's dead, but the world's a pretty big place, you know, my boy. And if the family haven't an idea of where to look for him, I don't see how we can be expected to do any better. Then suppose we found him, and it should turn out he *did* take the money, he'd be sent to jail, and the family be worse off if anything than they are now."

"You're a regular Job's comforter, Will," exclaimed Hugh. "But it is queer where that man Darling can be, isn't it? I move we stop at that barber shop in Bolton, and see what we can do towards tracing the thing down."

"And I move that you get well as the first number on the programme," I rejoined.

"That's so. I forgot about that," he returned, with rather a cheerless laugh. "But really, I believe I'll be all right tomorrow. All I want is to give my ankle a good rest. There, that fellow's gone down again. Go see what he says when he leaves, and let me know."

I found all three of the detectives assembled in the hall, and the tall one was expressing his regrets to Miss Marian for having disturbed her, "as a mere matter of form" Then he asked her a lot of questions about all her relatives and friends, all of which she answered with that same quiet manner. She seemed more self possessed since Jack Mills had arrived.

Well, the detective went away finally, not any wiser than when he came, I'll vouch, and then that girl insisted that we should all go in and finish our dinner. We did so, and then helped her clear away, and I wiped the dishes, as I had promised to do.

It was by this time well on towards ten o'clock, and you can believe I was pretty tired.

It had been arranged that Steve and Mac should mount their machines and run on to the hotel in Bolton to spend the night there, for we had talked it over again, and agreed that it was too much of a good thing for all four of us fellows to sleep at the Darlings'. As Steve suggested, there was the possibility that the bank president *might* turn up at any minute, and it would be rather awkward for him to find every room in his house occupied.

So I loaned my wheel to Jack Mills, who lived out towards Bolton, and who promised to ride it back the first thing in the morning. He went off with the two Challengers, and I was left with Miss Marian and my disabled chum.

By this time I could scarcely keep my eyes open, and the young lady, who seemed in no hurry to go up stairs, told me that I ought to retire at once.

"Please don't think that you ought to sit up because I do," she said. "You can imagine that I would not be likely to sleep. Good night," and she held out her hand.

How I wished at that minute I could think of something to say that would be just the proper thing! Fellows in novels and in the short stories in the magazines can seem to do it; but nothing came to me except "Wish I could do something for you." I felt that that would sound commonplace, so I said nothing, only pressed the slender hand and tried to *look* what I *felt*.

Then I went up to Hugh. He was already asleep, and, making ready for bed as noiselessly as I could, I crept in carefully beside him. I guess it wasn't more than four minutes before I fell asleep, and then right away I began to dream.

I thought I was coasting on a high wheel down a hill that I knew ended at the edge of a precipice. There seemed to be detectives stationed all along this, each one of them yelling to me to stop. I felt that I wanted to avoid them and yet by the contrary way one always does things in dreams, I seemed to feel that the safest way to do it was to keep straight on and plunge over the brink of the abyss. On and on I went, faster and faster, till presently I could look over the edge and see what awaited me below.

It was horrible enough, too, for the bottom of the valley was covered with broken banks. Literally broken, I mean, for the stones of which they were built had been splintered into hundreds of sharp pieces, and these jagged ends were upturned towards me as if yawning for their prey. And still I made no effort to check my course. I dashed on, reached the brink, rushing between two of the detectives, who were of course powerless to stop me.

Then I went down, down, uttering a fearful shriek as I fell. The shriek was so loud and piercing that it woke me, and then I discovered that I wasn't the one who was shrieking, nor was it Hugh, but some other person who was in the room, close by the bed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN INTERVIEW THROUGH A CLOSED DOOR.

"GREAT Scott, Will, what's the matter?" Hugh had raised himself to a sitting posture in bed, and now sat there grasping me by the arm as if he was in danger of slipping into the abyss I had been dreaming about, unless he laid hold on something.

By this time, whatever had been in the room was out again, and all was still.

"Could it have been Miss Marian?" I said, in a husky whisper, trying to accustom my eyes as quickly as possible to seeing in the darkness.

"Miss Marian?" echoed Hugh. "Indeed it wasn't. What would she want to come in here and put her hand on my head for?"

"Did somebody do that?" I exclaimed.

"Of course they did. That's the reason whoever it was screamed like all possessed.

"Hush," I interposed. "I hear whispering out in the hall. I'm going to get out of bed and listen. There may be some crooked business going on here we ought to know about."

"'Listeners never hear any good of themselves,'" quoted Hugh, as I stepped gingerly out on the floor, and I was glad to notice that he had recovered so much of his old spirits. It promised us a speedy departure from this house of mysteries.

I found the door—after stubbing my toe against the inevitable rocking chair *en route*—and found, too, that it was partly open. I was positive that I had closed it tightly before going to bed, although I had not thought it worth while to lock it. This fact assured me that neither the scream I had heard nor the hand my bedfellow had felt were "the stuff of which dreams are made."

But now all my attention was centered on the whispering that was going on in the corridor, evidently not very far away. Pushing the door noiselessly to until it stood ajar by a crack, I leaned my ear against it and heard these words:

"And what do you suppose it was, Jabez?" It was a woman's voice, evidently an old lady, too. "That child has taken in two strange young men off the road at a time like this, and when she's all alone. They're in Anne's room, and when I went in to get that hair pillow I know she always slept on, I ran my hand right across one of their faces."

"And you screamed? I heard you, Lucinda. But come on in to bed and tell me the——" This in an old man's tones. But they were rather uncertain, as if they were accustomed to being broken in upon, as they were now, by the feminine ones.

"Jabez McDowell, do you think we ought to put our bodies in positions of restfulness with things going on this way? Do you intend to allow those two to remain in this house another instant?"

"But listen, Lucinda," the man put in with more spirit, "it stands to reason Marian wouldn't have taken them in but for some good reason. They may be friends."

"*Friends?*" echoed the woman with a scornful emphasis on the word. "She never laid eyes on either of them before in her life. She confessed that much to me with her own lips not three minutes ago."

"But—but she must have had some reason for doing such a strange thing," the old man persisted.

"Oh, she told me some stories about one of them having a tree fall on him and having no place else to go. You know how soft hearted Anne is; and this girl is just like her mother. I tell her those fellows are detectives and the quicker we get them out of the house the better."

"Then they'll think sure there's something to detect, Lucinda," returned the old man quickly, as if confident that now he had scored a point. "Marian's a pretty smart girl, an' I'm willing to trust to her judgment. Come in and let her get to sleep if she can. Poor child. She needs it."

"Jabez, I believe you're afraid of those two young men. Oh, that I were a man! But never mind. If I haven't got muscle I possess a tongue, and I'm going to see what that will do on the young scapegraces."

Matters were now becoming decidedly interesting, not to say exciting. I was not at all anxious to have the fierce old lady, whoever she was, hold a face to face interview with me under existing conditions, so I pressed the door hastily tight shut and turned the key in the lock.

"What is it? What are they talking about, Will?" asked Hugh for the fifteenth time, I should think. I had always hushed him up, but now I rushed over to the bed and whispered rapidly in his ear:

"Brace yourself, old fellow. We're going to have a call from an old lady who thinks we are detectives in disguise."

"Whew!" whistled Hugh. "I wish I was in condition to get up and run. Who is it?"

"I think it must be some relative of the family," I answered. "Any way, she thinks it mighty queer we're here and wants her husband to put us out."

"And I'd do it if I was in his place," declared Hugh emphatically. "It *is* queer for us to be here at a time like this, or at any time in fact. You must acknowledge that yourself, Will."

"Well, it may be odd," I admitted; "but I don't see but what it is all right. You were hurt, there was no other place near to take you, and we can't get away till you are able to be moved."

"To *be* moved?" he repeated. "Why, I actually believe I could move myself. Wait till I try" and he made a motion as if to get up.

"Don't, Hugh, I beg," I implored him, and just at that

instant there came a rap at the door. "Stay here, Hugh," I commanded him in my most authoritative tones of captain. "I'll attend to this matter—though I haven't the least idea how I'm going to do it," I added to myself.

However, I hurried over to the door and called out in my gentlest tones: "Well, what is it?"

"Who are you?" came the answer in the old lady's voice.

"I'm Will Hasbrouck, if you please, from New York," I answered meekly.

"What are you doing here?" was the next question.

"Trying to get to sleep if you'd only let me." I wanted to say this, but decided it wouldn't be policy, so substituted: "I'm staying with a friend who got hurt in front of the cottage by having a tree fall on him."

"Will you agree to leave this house at once?" was the next rather unpleasant request.

"If you will help me out with my friend and tell me where I can take him."

This answer was suggested to me on the spur of the moment and I waited breathlessly for the result.

"Well," it came after a pause, "I'm not the one to turn a cat out o' doors, providing it is worthy. But the question is, are you worthy? I wish I could get a look at you."

"I'll do anything to accommodate you," I returned. "If you'll wait ten minutes I'll get dressed and come out."

There was another pause, and I was wondering if the silence meant acceptance of this proposition, when the old lady went on: "You must be pretty tired. Marian says you were riding bicycles."

"Yes'm," I murmured respectfully. Now that my other side of the door interviewer was becoming merciful, I thought meekness would be the proper spirit to manifest.

"But what would you think," she went on, "if you were to come home some night and find that your sister had allowed two strange men——"

"But we're not men; we're boys," I hastily interposed. "None of us is over seventeen."

"Boys!" she exclaimed. "Are you sure?"

"I ought to know," I answered with a laugh; "but if you want to wait, I'll get dressed——"

"No, no; I like boys, and I'm sure they wouldn't deceive me, so I'll take your word for it. You can go to bed now. I'll see you in the morning," and apparently quite satisfied with this back handed sort of proof, the old lady went away, and I hurried back to bed.

I found Hugh shaking all over with laughter, which he checked when I arrived to pat me on the shoulder and murmur: "Good for you, Will. You'll be Secretary of State yet one of these days, with your skill in diplomacy. I wonder if Byron ever had such an experience as this."

"Byron!" I repeated, thinking perhaps the pain in his foot had suddenly flown to his head. "What he's got to do with it?"

"Oh, nothing, only don't you remember in 'Childe Harold' he says 'Oh, happy days, once more who would not be a boy?'"

I laughed sleepily, and five minutes later two boys were slumbering.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WE ARE LOOKED UPON WITH SUSPICION.

I WAS awakened the next morning by Hugh punching me in the shoulder.

"Come, get up, lazybones!" he called in my ear. "It must be almost noon, and I'm as hungry as a hawk; but knowing all you'd been through I didn't want to rouse you up before. Get up and see what time it is, will you?"

I felt pretty stiff, and could have gone to sleep again that very minute, but reflecting that we were guests, and guests, too, of people to whom we had never been introduced, I made a supreme effort and hopped out of bed. It was half past nine, I found by consulting my watch on the bureau, and I began to dress with a rush.

"How do you feel, Hugh?" I asked, suddenly recollecting that my chum was invalided.

"Like a daisy, from here up," he replied, putting his hands across the hump he had made of the bed clothes with his knees.

"And from there down?" I went on.

"Like a lump of lead," he rejoined, adding hastily, as he noted my look of alarm, "But don't let that simile disturb you, my boy. Yesterday the feeling was like ten thousand lumps of load, so you see, if comparison goes for anything, I'm almost well."

There seemed to be nobody stirring about the house, up stairs, at any rate.

"Wonder if Mrs. Darling's got back yet?" observed Hugh. "And I say, Will, don't forget to find out at what unearthly hour of the night that old lady who dotes on boys arrived."

This old lady was the first person I saw on reaching the lower hall. She was coming into the dining room from the kitchen, an oatmeal dish in her hand. She hurried to put this down on the table as soon as she caught sight of me, rummaged in her pockets for her spectacles, which she set astride her nose, and then proceeded to gaze at me comfortably.

"Good morning," I said, feeling that I was growing red under this process.

"How do you do, sir?" she replied after an instant, putting out her hand. "Are you the young gentleman that was talking to me through the door last night?"

"I am. Am I young enough!" and I smiled as graciously as I knew how,

"How's your friend?" she asked without replying to my question. "Have you used Johnson's Liniment on him?"

"He's better," I answered, "thank you, but about the kind of liniment, I don't——"

"If he'd used Johnson's he'd be well by this time," she said in her short way. "You'd better take some breakfast up to him."

"I will, if you please," I responded. "How is Miss Marian this morning?"

"Worrited 'most sick, poor child, and no wonder. Her father's gone off, nobody knows where, and now she hasn't any idea where her mother is. Here," snatching up a newspaper from a chair in one corner of the room, "take this and put it somewhere where she won't see it. Then come back and I'll give you that breakfast to take up stairs."

I looked at the first page of the paper, and immediately saw the reason for its banishment. These were the staring headlines:

A SKIPPED DARLING.

NO TRACE YET DISCOVERED OF THE DEFAULTING PRESIDENT OF THE BOLTON BANK.

AN ARMY OF ANGRY DEPOSITORS.

GREAT SUFFERING ENTAILED AMONG MANY HOLDERS OF SMALL ACCOUNTS.

I didn't have time to read further, for I heard the old lady coming with Hugh's breakfast, and stuffing the paper in my pocket, I took the tray, and hurried up stairs with it to my hungry fellow wheelman. I was charged to come immediately down again and eat my own breakfast, when I

was introduced to the old gentleman whose voice I had heard the night before.

"Jabez," said the old lady in performing the ceremony, "this is one of the boys Marian took in yesterday, like the good Samaritan she is."

I put out my hand, but to my surprise the old gentleman pretended not to see it. He merely nodded slightly, then beckoned his wife out of the room.

"Hullo, what's up now?" I asked myself. "I thought last night the old gent was all on our side. It seems then that we can't have them both for us."

I could see them talking rather excitedly out on the piazza, but finally the old lady seemed to triumph, as I imagined she generally did, and then they both came back and we sat down to breakfast. But the old man I noticed kept casting queer glances at me out of the corner of his eye all the time, and whenever his wife began to talk to me, he looked worried.

Before we were through, Steve, Mac and Jack Mills arrived. Jack seemed to be on very good terms with the old people, and when presently I went out with him to the stable, to take another lesson at cow milking, I asked him who they were.

"Mr. and Mrs Jabez McDowell, uncle and aunt of Marian's," he told me.

"But when did they come?" I wanted to know. "I'm sure they weren't here when I went to bed last night."

"They got here about midnight, I guess," he explained. "You see, they live about fifteen miles from her, and drove over as soon as they heard the news. Did you see the paper this morning?"

"Yes, I've got one here in my pocket I promised to destroy," I replied. "Guess I'll make a bonfire of it here on the bricks," which I proceeded to do.

"Have you heard any later developments?" I inquired, as I watched the tinder fly up to the rafters on a puff of wind that blew in at the door.

"Yes," he said. "It seems that there are two of the bank's people missing—the president, Mr. Darling, and an office boy, or rather, young man, in whom Mr. Darling had great confidence. He lived quite a distance out on the other side of town, and it was thought first that he was at home sick, but his mother says she hasn't seen him since the day of the robbery."

"Then he, of course, is the thief, and that lets Mr. Darling out," I exclaimed eagerly.

"The authorities at the bank don't seem to think so," went on Jack. "This doesn't account for Mr. Darling's singular disappearance, you see. The opinion seems to be that the two have gone off together."

"How ridiculous!" I exclaimed. "What would a bank president want to run off with his office boy for?"

"That's what I say," returned Jack. "Another theory is that the office boy has managed to have Mr. Darling foully dealt with, so as to divert suspicion into the very channel it has taken. I don't know but I'd prefer to believe that to anything else, only I can't. And if you knew Horace Canby, you couldn't, either."

At this moment I saw the doctor drive in, and, leaving Jack to finish the milking, I hurried over to go up stairs with him. He said that Hugh was improving even more rapidly than he had hoped, and that by remaining quiet another day he might be able to leave on the morrow.

We all put in a quiet day, chatting about the all absorbing topic of the defalcation, writing letters full of it home, and trying to make the hours pass quickly for Hugh.

The Beechams didn't come. Jack stayed to lunch, and with him old Mr. McDowell was very cordial, but to each one of us Challengers preserved the same stand offish attitude.

And I didn't find out what was the cause of it till that evening, when, Miss Marian having appeared for the first time that day, Mac went in the parlor to have a little chat with her. The rest of us were sitting out on the piazza, and, looking in through the open window, I noticed Mr. McDowell standing by his wife in the further room, glancing every now and then at Mac and Marian, who were seated by the table.

"Why doesn't Mr. McDowell like us, Mills?" I asked suddenly, turning to Jack, who sat beside me. "Do you know?"

"Yes. You won't get angry if I tell you?"

"No, certainly not. What is it?"

"Well, he insists that you are newspaper reporters, sent here in this way so as to get inside—hello, what's that?"

A low, sullen murmur, as of angry voices, broke on the still summer air. It was coming up the hill towards the cottage.

(*To be continued.*)

BRINGING HISTORY HOME TO HIM.

THE teaching of present day history sometimes gives rise to embarrassing episodes. Somebody has got to do the governing and that somebody is very apt to have children who require an education, but still it always seems a matter of surprise to run against them. Here is an incident in point, related in the *New York Tribune:*

A youngster at school in Cambridge was asked the other day by a teacher who wanted to give the children some instruction in modern history, who was governor of Massachusetts. "My father," was the answer. "But what is his name?" inquired the teacher. The little fellow stared at the teacher as if seeming not to comprehend the significance of the query. Finally he said: "I dunno; but he's my father." And, sure enough, the boy was right; his own name was William Eustis Russell.

CAME NEAR BEING AS BROAD AS IT WAS LONG.

WHAT will not the average man do to secure a free pass on a railroad? He recks not that in case of accident his bereaved widow could not procure a cent of damages from the company for his untimely taking off. He thinks only of the present "penny saved," and on the slightest pretext endeavors to secure the coveted slip of paper. In a company that were discussing the question of free passes, says the *New York Tribune*, one of the party told of a railroad that was only a mile in length, but because it had a good big name was able to procure for its officials free passes on all the lines in the country. "Which reminds me," said the third man of the party, "of an application for an annual pass once made to Commodore Vanderbilt by the president of a road about twenty five miles long.

"'Your road doesn't seem to cover a great amount of territory,' suggested the commodore to the applicant.

"'No,' said the applicant, 'it isn't quite so long as the New York Central, but, by gracious, Mr. Vanderbilt, it's just as wide!'

"The pass was issued."

AN AUDIENCE THAT WAS OF ONE MIND.

To make the best of a bad bargain is to go a long way on the road towards making it a good one, for what is done is done, and we all know that no amount of crying over spilled milk will serve to gather up a single drop. A correspondent of the Philadelphia *Times*, in alluding to the recent death of Joe Emmett, tells a story of the actor's career, which shows this celebrated comedian to have been possessed of this desirable trait in an eminent degree.

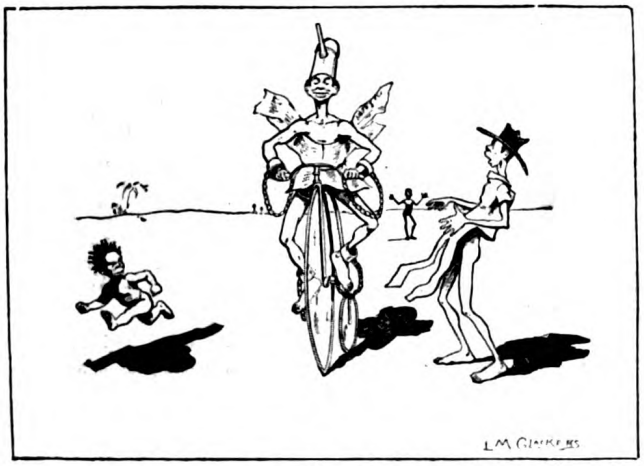
He was the first, I believe to inaugurate trying to make matinees go in Columbus, Ohio. The performance was duly advertised, but when the day arrived and it was time for the curtain to go up the audience consisted of one man. Calling his company together he told them the performance would go on just the same as if the house was full. Then stepping to the footlights he announced to the solitary auditor what he had decided to do, adding if anything pleased him to show his appreciation the same as he would were the house crowded. That night after the play he gave a supper to his company and invited his afternoon audience to participate. The man and he afterwards became great friends.

I.

MR. WASHINGTON SPARKS, traveling through Africa on a bicycle, with a suite of attendants and baggage, rescues a native village from starvation.

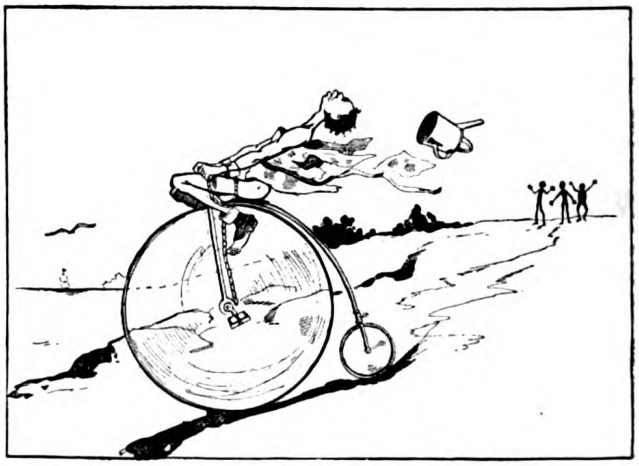
II.

An ambitious native is fired with enthusiasm by the defunct Mr. Sparks's bicycle, and resolves to become a cyclist, but after taking a number of headers,



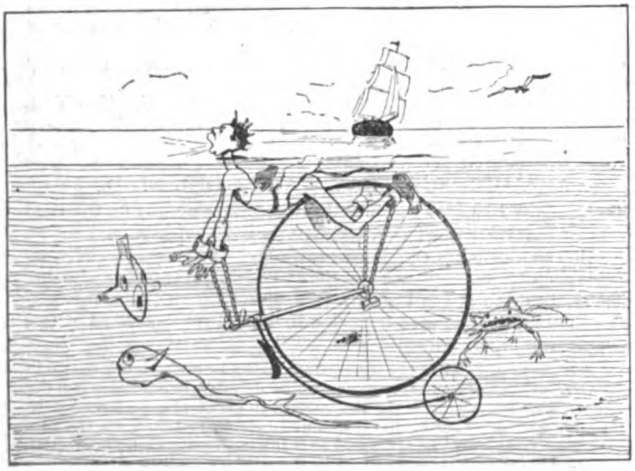
III.

He finds an assortment of handcuffs and concludes that they are attachments to prevent this very difficulty.



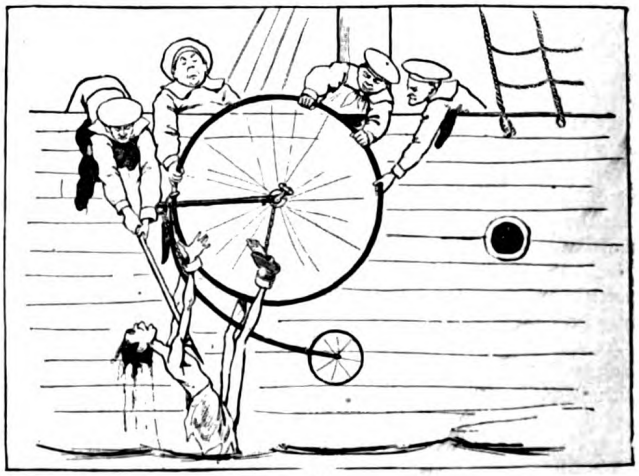
IV.

Unfortunately he gets started down a mountain side, and being unable to stop——



V.

Runs into the briny deep, where he excites wonder in the minds of many aquatic wise heads, but struggles manfully to keep afloat,



VI.

And is rescued by some jolly tars to whom he is an object of unusual surprise.