

# THE ARGOSY

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WHOLE No. 452.

## THE DEERSKIN TALISMAN.\*

A TALE OF MEXICAN TREASURE.

BY GILBERT CAMPBELL.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE LAST OF THE HUT.

**A**FTER the boys had with some difficulty removed their father from the burning cabin, they knelt beside the body and freely gave vent to the anguish they felt at their heavy loss. Suddenly Bob was aroused by hearing a voice behind him exclaim :

"Hulloa, here's a pretty business been a-going on here! Who's been in the muss? Injuns, or half breeds, or white robbers? Here's poor Jim Sedgwick lying plugged full plum center; and there's Spanish Jack, with half his duds burnt off his back and a hole in his side. Say, there, lads, who in the name of mischief has been up to this pretty little game?"

The speaker was a tall, gaunt man, considerably over six feet in height, with a weather beaten face seamed with many a scar, reminiscences of flood and field; he was clad in what had once been a gayly fringed hunting shirt made of dressed deerskin, but with which the thorny bushes and the sharp rocks of the Sierras had played sad havoc; his legs were defended by strips of raw hide wound round and round them, and he was armed with the usual long rifle and knife of the dweller in the mountains.

Bob turned briskly round, while Arthur, with a faint tinge of joy in his voice, exclaimed :

"Indian Joe! Ah, why did not you and the rest come to our assistance, and we might have been spared this!" and half reproachfully he pointed to the body of his father.

"Hang me if I knew that anything was going on," answered the hunter earnestly; "the boys all went yesterday to Billy Ducker's, and I spects I rayther overslept myself, but directly I did hear the firing, I skooted down here pretty smart, you bet. Let us see if there is any hope," he added, as he gently raised the body of James Sedgwick in his arms and examined his wound. "No, not the ghost of a chance there. He was a man with lots of the real grit, and has nobly stood against odds, but he'll never stand first again."

And as he once more placed the body of the dead man carefully upon the ground, he, with a rude kind of reverence, removed his otter skin cap, and displayed a grisly wound which, though now healed, was evidently the result of an Indian scalping knife.

"But come, lads," he continued, with an effort at cheerfulness, "let's try and clear out what we can from the cabin. Come, Spanish Jack," as Lopes came limping up, "lend a hand." And the two, aided by the boys, managed to save nearly everything from the hut, which was now burning fiercely,

"I reckon," said Indian Joe, "that I'll just bring down my old mule, and take away your traps to my diggin's, if you and Bob 'ull keep a good watch here. Cheer up, boys." And the rough but kind hearted hunter strode away, promising to return as soon as he could.

For a few moments the two boys sat motionless by the body of their father, then Bob rose to his feet, and, taking



A WELL AIMED BULLET CAUSED THE MONSTER TO TURN OVER.

a pickaxe from a heap of tools that lay near, motioned to his brother to do the same.

"Oh, not yet, Bob, not yet," cried Arthur, as the tears sprang to his eyes; "we must not put him out of sight so soon."

But Bob silently led the way to a tree beneath which his father had often sat when work was over, and soon the

\* Begun in THE ARGOSY of last week.

strokes of his pick began to ring upon the frozen ground. After a brief pause, Arthur followed his example, and in a short time they had made a sufficient hollow to contain their murdered father; then they heaped rocks over it to protect the body from the beasts of prey, and Arthur repeated over the grave the prayers learned at his mother's knee. As he was turning away, his brother caught him by the arm.

"We have something more to do, something yet to live for," muttered he, hoarsely.

"What is that, brother?" asked Arthur.

"To pursue and track the murderers of our father, nor cease from the pursuit until justice has been done."

Very shortly after this, Indian Joe returned with the mule, and a rough mountain pony, upon which the wounded Lopes was safely bestowed, and with many a backward look the boys left the grave of their father, upon which the flames from the burning hut were casting a lurid glare.

Far up into the mountains they pursued their way along the winding road that led to Deadhorse Gully, where the greater part of the mining community had located themselves; but the boys' thoughts were far away. One parent was lost to them forever in this world, and the other was thousands of miles distant; they were now cast entirely on their own resources; and, though Indian Joe strove in his rough way to cheer them up, and they knew that, for their father's sake, they were sure of finding many friends among the miners in the gully, yet they could not help remembering that they had no claim upon any one in this distant land, and that for the future they must depend upon their own stout hearts and strong arms for even the morsel of food which was necessary to keep body and soul together.

Very painful, therefore, were their reflections as every step took them farther and farther from the spot where they had for some years dwelt so happily together. The day had now broken, and the wide expanse of snow looked more cheerless than ever; trees and rocks were alike coated with it, and no sign of sun showed itself through the dull, leaden clouds.

Suddenly, as they came to an abrupt turn in the path, Indian Joe touched Bob's shoulder lightly.

"Look!" he said and pointed backwards.

The burning hut was in full view; and as the boys gazed upon it, the roof fell in with a crash that could be faintly heard, even at the distance at which they were; then the walls swayed and tottered, falling inwards, and a cloud of ashes and smoke alone marked the place where the cabin had stood.

Both Bob and Arthur felt that the old life had indeed passed away, and a new one had begun.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TREASURE OF THE CACIQUE.

FOR more than three days the brothers had partaken of the hospitality of Indian Joe; nor was it the old hunter alone who had shown his sympathy for their loss; the whole of the mining community had displayed the deepest indignation at the treacherous attack upon James Sedgwick's cabin.

For two whole days they had scoured the country round in the hopes of securing Cifuentes and Halfhung Simon, but no traces of them could be found.

Guzman, who had been wounded by a rifle bullet, was found by the miners among the dead, terribly scorched, but still living, and had at once been hung by them, with their rough sense of justice, upon the very tree beneath which reposed the remains of James Sedgwick. But they could

spare no further time, and had to return to their work; and so the chief actors in the sanguinary drama remained for the time unpunished.

It was a bright, clear morning as the two boys sat on a rough bench outside of the hut, conversing on their future plans. Indian Joe was away looking after some traps.

"Bob," said Arthur, "where were you this morning? Just as it was light I woke up, and your place was vacant."

"I went down to the *caché*," answered Bob. "Do you know, Arthur, that father must have made some mistake; there are not more than sixty ounces, so that we can only count upon about one hundred and eighty pounds at the price gold sells for here. I thought he had much more."

"So did I," answered Arthur thoughtfully. "Stay, I have it. Do you not recollect some four months ago he borrowed Sandy's mare and went to Orivada? I've a notion that he sent the greater part of the gold to mother; you know he often said that it was not safe to keep large sums here."

"Likely enough," replied Bob. "If mother has got the gold it is all right, but—" and his young face darkened as he spoke—"if we are to track those who caused our poor father's death, we shall want money, for be sure that Cifuentes and Simon will soon be at the head of another band, and it will require money as well as skill and courage to circumvent them. I am half afraid we shall have to take to gold washing again for a time, though the season is so much against it."

"No," said Arthur, "if you will be guided by me, I think that I can show you a way to get more treasure than you ever dreamed of, and we can then join our dear mother and sister once again."

"You!" cried Bob in astonishment; "what are you thinking of, Arthur?"

"Do you recollect last year?" answered his brother. "The old Indian that I used to be always talking with, and about whom you used to chaff me so much?"

"Certainly I do," replied Bob, "but the poor fellow had hardly a blanket to cover him, and if your hope of getting treasure rests upon him—"

"It does; poor as he then appeared, he was descended from the nobility of the Indians, the Caciques of the Aztecs, and many and many a tale has he told me of their ancient power and prosperity, and the wealth they had amassed. He asserted that hidden far in the hills in the interior of the country a remnant of the tribe still exists, and he told me with the most solemn asseverations that he had vast treasures among them, and that if I gave them a certain sign, which he would place in my hands, fierce and warlike as the tribe is, it would hand the gold—for which they cared comparatively little—over to me without a murmur."

"To you—but why to you?" asked Bob in amazement.

"Don't you recollect his death?" replied Arthur.

"Certainly I do," answered Bob. "You found the poor fellow dying, close to our fence one evening, and father and I came out when you called, and brought him into the hut, but he didn't last long."

"No; but before you came he gave me this," replied Arthur, producing from his bosom a small piece of deerskin exquisitely dressed and covered with strange signs and symbols in various colored threads.

"Well, I am not much the wiser now," said his brother, turning the skin over and over in his hands. "Pray what might this mean?"

"You are clever enough, Bob, at reading Indian signs," said Arthur, with a faint smile, "but you are not good at Indian language. This shows me pretty clearly the route

I must take to get to the Indian city, and will further assure me a safe return with the treasure of the Cacique."

"I say, then, Arthur, we are in for a good thing at last. With this money we can easily organize a band to follow up our father's murderers, and then perhaps have enough to rejoin our mother and Lily in dear old New England. How much do you think it may amount to—perhaps some few thousand dollars?"

"It is difficult to get correct figures from Indians," answered Arthur quietly; "but, as far as I could, from repeated conversations, make out, it was nearer seven and a half millions."

Bob started from his seat in amazement.

"And you have kept all this to yourself, old chap!" exclaimed he. "Well, you are as close as wax. I would have blabbed it out directly."

"It was no good," replied his brother. "Father mistrusted Indians, and would never let us start on the search; so I determined to bide my time. Will you come with me, and search for the treasure? The quest may be long and dangerous, but something tells me that we shall be successful in the end."

"Will I come? Aye, with heart and soul, but had we not better take Indian Joe into our confidence? He is stanch and true, and we shall be the better for an unerring rifle like his, and surely there is enough for all."

"Yes, yes, take Joe, and let Lopes come, too. Remember how he stood by us that night at the hut. As he took part in our adversity, let him have a share in our good fortune. We will tell them all tonight, and if they agree, let us lose no time in starting."

The next morning a little party of four might have been seen descending the mountain road. Bob and Arthur led the way, well armed; Indian Joe followed, leading a mule, upon which the modest baggage of the party was securely packed; while Lopes, whose wound still gave him some trouble, brought up the rear, supporting himself on a stick; then the gaunt hounds, which had aided their master in many a tough struggle with panther and Mexican lion, followed at his heels in a dignified manner; and in this guise they set out to find the treasure of the Cacique.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A QUIET POOL.

IN three days' time the little party were clear of the mountains, and had entered upon the magnificent plains which stretch for hundreds of miles to all points of the compass. Some of these are entirely without trees, while others have large clumps of timber, generally known as "islands," which afford a welcome shelter from the rays of the sun, for now that the mountains were left behind, all signs of frost and snow had disappeared.

The travelers had encamped in one of these islands, having determined to take a couple of days' rest, for the double purpose of recruiting themselves from the fatigue caused by the journey, and of securing a supply of venison, which, dried in the sun, affords palatable nutriment, so well known to the Mexican hunter.

The spot that had been selected for the bivouac was wonderfully picturesque; the island was composed of lofty locust and cottonwood trees, from the branches of which depended long masses of silver colored moss, while the soft turf beneath, smooth and velvety as on a well kept lawn, seemed to invite repose, and the exquisitely tempered light beneath the trees was an intense relief from the hot glare of the sun outside. Far away upon all sides stretched the prairie, the soft grass of which was dotted with flowers of

varied hues, while fifty yards from the island ran the Rio Negro, whose sparkling waters rippled merrily along between steep banks.

Lopes, whose wound still incapacitated him from heavy work, had constituted himself cook to the expedition, and was busy watching an earthen pot which he had placed upon the fire, and which, from the savory odors that emanated from it, appeared to contain something superlatively delicious. Indian Joe was fast asleep upon his back, every now and then startling the rest with the most hideous combination of snort and snore that human ear had ever listened to, while Arthur was poring over the talisman given him by the old Cacique. Bob had taken his rifle and wandered down to the river, whither we will follow him.

He had pursued the winding of the river for nearly two miles, when a fine doe sprang up from the high grass some fifty yards away and made off with a few rapid and graceful bounds. In an instant Bob's rifle was at his shoulder; for a moment the polished tube remained stationary, and then, hardly had the echoes that the report caused died away, than the doe could be seen stretched upon the ground kicking convulsively.

Bob hastened up, intending to finish her with his knife, when, to his surprise, she sprang to her feet, and though she moved her hind legs with difficulty, managed to make for the river bank.

"She must drop now," said Bob to himself, and he followed the wounded doe for some two hundred yards, until he came to a spot where the river made a sudden turn, the elbow of which formed a large pool, with a huge willow tree hanging well over the water.

It appeared to Bob as if there had been several trees of a similar kind round the water, but that they had fallen into it, as he saw what he fancied were trunks floating on the quiet surface of the pool. Feeling that he was now certain of his quarry, Bob deliberated as to the best way of securing it.

"If," thought he, "I walk up to her, the odds are that she'll take to the water, and I shall get wet through in my efforts to secure her, What shall I do? I have it!" he exclaimed, as a thought struck him. "I'll get on to that tree that projects over the pool, whence I can reach her."

tree to steady himself, he prepared to gain the shore with as little delay as possible.

But his adventures for the day were not yet over. As he clasped the branch of the tree he felt some slimy, clammy, substance beneath his fingers, while the sharp hiss which greeted his ears showed him at once that he had unwittingly placed his hand upon one of the many kinds of serpents that infest the plains and forests of Mexico. Strong as Bob's nerves were, and inured as he was to all the perils attendant upon a forest life, this was almost too much for him. Drawing his hand hastily away from the dangerous vicinity, he made a sudden step backwards, and in another second plunged heavily into the water, not ten yards from where the alligators had just been disputing for the body of their victim.

(To be continued.)

#### A PLANT THAT IS SUBJECT TO STOMACH ACHE.

WONDERFUL indeed is nature, and although she is as old as the world, man has not yet got through finding out new and remarkable facts about her and her works. A Washington correspondent of the *Boston Transcript* describes in interesting fashion some plants in the Botanic Garden at the capital that are quite as destructive in their way as the beasts of prey in the wilds of Africa.

A novelty is a plant whose leaf bears a remarkably well executed caricature of the Duke of Wellington, all done in the veining; but in the interest of visitors it does not seriously rival either the "mother-in-law plant," a scrap of which swells up your tongue so that you cannot speak for days, or the famous "butcher plant" of Maryland, that has, instead of leaves, so many pairs of toothed jaws that close upon any insect venturing between to get at the sweetish bait within.

This "butcher plant," which grows nowhere in the world save in the vicinity of Wilmington, suffers from its carnivorous habits, being a chronic victim of indigestion. Each stomach trap, having used up most of the gastric juice which it secretes in digesting the first living prey caught, usually fluids the second victim it captures disagree with it, and the third it is unable to assimilate satisfactorily. Then the trap turns from green to brown and dies, like any leaf, other fresh ones developing, meanwhile, to take up the work of gobbling.

After all, this greedy vegetable is not nearly so bad as the "cruel plant," as it is called, whose flowers wantonly capture unsuspecting butterflies that alight to sip honey, and hold them until they are dead, when the grasp of the ruthless petals is relinquished and the luckless visitor is dropped on the ground.



W. H., Tyrone, Pa. No premium on the dime of 1835.

F. E. J., Bergen Point, N. J. At present there is no premium value attaching to the United States three cent stamp.

A. B. E., Fairmount, Ind. There is no school of photography, so far as we know. All learn the art in the school of experience.

G. B. R., Syracuse, N. Y. We will mail you Nos. 388, 340, and 416 of THE ARGOSY on receipt of the price, 30 cents for the three.

PRINTER, Walpurgus Falls, N. Y. The articles on "American Printing" appeared in Nos. 324-327 of THE ARGOSY, four issues, price 10 cents each.

J. D. W., Chicago, Ill. The standard guide book for all travelers in Europe is Baedeker's, which you can doubtless procure from any bookseller in your city.

G. D. D., Racine, Wis. We know no manual of American butterflies. Good directions for mounting and preserving specimens are given in "Newman's British Butterflies."

A. E. C., San Francisco, Cal. 1. Vol. V can be obtained only in bound form, price \$2. 2. Perhaps some one of our readers may be able to supply you with a copy of No. 244.

P. E. G., New York City. An article describing the making of a house aquarium appeared in No. 328 of THE ARGOSY, price 10 cents. For the kind of cement to be used in constructing one in a garden, consult a mason.

G. F. L., Portsmouth, N. H. 1. "Appleton's Dictionary of New York," obtainable at almost any book store, price 35 cents, is just the book you want. 5. The Metropolitan Hotel is located at the corner of Prince Street and Broadway.

J. B., Rock Island, Ill. There is no time limit set to the period in which a club for the bicycle premium must be completed. It is to the interest of the club raiser, of course, to secure the requisite number of subscribers as rapidly as possible.

WEEKLY ARGOSY READER, Philadelphia, Pa. To become a locomotive engineer you must first serve your time as fireman. Promotion to this latter post is sometimes made from among the "wipers"—men who rub down the iron horse after its run.

W. A. L., El Paso, Tex. 1. P. T. Barnum's "Dick Broadhead" appeared in Vol. V. of THE ARGOSY. The numbers of this volume can be had only in the bound form—fifty two of them—price \$2. 2. Current volumes contain twenty six numbers each. 3. An ARGOSY Binder will hold the numbers for one volume. 4. The supply of bound Vol. VI is exhausted.

A. S., New York City. There are business reasons why it is preferable to send THE ARGOSY out with pages uncut. This is the way in which all the magazines are published; when you find them with the leaves cut the work has been done by the newsdealer. Many people prefer the untrimmed page. If carefully cut, there is no reason why the operation should destroy the appearance of the paper.

A CONSTANT READER, Newark, N. J. 1. You will have to take yourself as nature made you. We do not know of any preparation that will cause the skin to tan instead of burn, desirable as this substitution might be. 2. Have you tried pumice stone to remove power marks?

A. B. C., New York City. We should say that in this age of patent leather and russet shoes the calling of a bootblack, particularly at resorts like Long Branch or Newport, would be a most unreliable one. Newspaper selling, in our opinion, is infinitely more promising.

GOLDEN ARGOSY, Philadelphia, Pa. 1. The names of the United States cruisers now built are Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, Dolphin, Yorktown, Petrel, Charleston, San Francisco, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newark, Concord, Bennington, Vesuvius. The torpedo boats are called Cushing and Stilleto. 5. It is scarcely the province of THE ARGOSY to keep posted on the prize ring, so we cannot give you any conclusive information concerning the champion fighter of the world. Indeed, that would be a rather difficult matter for any one to do, as each pugilist has his own circle of adherents who insist on claiming the honor (?) for their favorite.

## ARTHUR BLAISDELL'S CHOICE.\*

BY W. BERT FOSTER.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## AN ACCIDENT.



Heart Bill Olney was a coward and although he enjoyed publishing abroad the tale of woven fact and fiction which he had unfolded, there was no joy for him in a personal encounter to sustain his story. He quailed at every flash of Hal's eye and had his antagonist not been between him and the door Bill would have bolted out into the rain.

"What do you mean by that infernal lie?" again demanded Hal, advancing on the trembling Bill.

"I—I," stuttered Bill, wetting his parched lips with his tongue and trying to give utterance to some sort of a denial.

"I have listened to every word you said," went on Hal fiercely, "and I want to know what you mean by it."

Bill did not reply and that instant a newcomer arrived on the scene. A covered wagon stopped before the post office and a figure dismounted and ran up the steps through the rain. It was Arthur Blaisdell.

He recognized Hal with surprise, and stepping quickly to his side laid a restraining hand on his brother's arm.

"Why, Hal, what is it?" he inquired.

"I was just inquiring into a yarn this—this donkey here has been reeling off about you," returned Hal, still wrathfully. "Why, Art, he accuses you of stealing up at the farm where you board."

"Well, don't touch the contemptible wretch," said Arthur. "Come on, Hal, and let him live."

"I didn't intend to soil my hands with him," responded Hal, with cutting sarcasm; "but I was tempted to boot him out of the shop."

"Don't mind him," returned Arthur hastily. "Is there any mail for the farm, Mr. Arnold?"

"Not a bit," returned the postmaster, finding his voice, for he had been made fairly speechless by his conflicting emotions.

"Then come on, Hal, and let that miserable fellow be," said Arthur, and taking the arm of his angry brother, he led him to the door.

The rain was now falling in torrents and frequently a flash of lightning lit up the sky, followed by a rolling peal of thunder. But hastily clambering into the wagon the two brothers drove away without waiting for the shower to pass.

"Who is that fellow?" demanded Hal, as soon as they had got under way.

"Bill Olney."

"Well, he's a miserable scoundrel," declared Hal. "Do you know what sort of a lie he was telling about you?"

"No—what I expect he was telling was only the truth," replied Arthur quietly.

"It was the truth!" cried Hal. "Why, I don't believe it—I wouldn't believe it if you swore to a stack of Bibles as high as your head."

"I suppose that he said that old man Hart had accused me of robbing him," said Arthur, still calmly.

"Well, he didn't," replied Hal. "He said that you had

robbed Mr. Hart, cheated Hiram out of three or four hundred dollars, assaulted the old man and thrown him down into the cellar, poisoned his pigs, and that you were a dangerous character generally."

"He did!" cried Arthur, and turning his horse's head about he drove back toward the post office at a pace which threatened to wreck the milk team.

On reaching the office he seized his whip and went in search of Bill Olney. But that individual had disappeared.

When the wagon had again driven away Bill appeared from behind a molasses hogshead and said, with a feeble attempt to excuse his action;

"I'm firmly convinced that that 'ere boy is crazy. Why he was fr a'tacking me, tooth an' nail. He'd oughter be put in the insane 'sylum."

The postmaster made no reply. He looked slightly disgusted.

"I expect that scamp will tell his story all over the village," said Arthur angrily, and then at the request of his brother he related all the events which had transpired in the few days since Hi's departure for the West.

"I don't know," he said in conclusion, "just what to think. I don't know whether old Hart has simply put up a job on me so as to get Hi's business into his own hands, or whether Ben Norton committed the robbery. It looks mightily as though Ben did, for he acted dreadfully funny through it all and then went away in such a hurry, I believe that the old man half suspects him, too, but he won't admit it as long as he sees a chance of ousting me."

"Well," said Hal, rather crossly, "you ought to have known better than to stay here and run the old route. If you'd taken my advice and accepted Mr. Davidson's offer, you'd have been all right."

"Don't scold a fellow now, Hal," put in Arthur, "I'm always getting into a muss, while you slide through the world without any trouble at all."

"But I don't," declared Hal, and then he told Arthur of his own trouble and disgrace.

"Well, it seems we're neither of us capable of keeping out of trouble," said Arthur bitterly. "Oh, Hal," he added regretfully, "I could have saved you all that if I'd only seen you before. That Chess Gardner, Raymond introduced you to, is a scoundrel—a regular criminal, I believe," and he told Hal all he knew and suspected in relation to Major Van Slyck's friend.

"But Major Van Slyck vouches for him," said Hal.

"I don't care—more fool the major, that's all. The fellow is a scamp, I believe," returned Arthur. "Now what'll Little Mum do, with both of us out of work?"

"I don't know—I don't know," returned Hal despairingly. "Oh, Art, if you only knew how I *hated* to tell her about my dismissal from the office. Yours isn't so bad; but I have brought my disgrace upon myself."

"I wouldn't feel so badly about it," said Arthur, trying to comfort him. "It will all come out right at last. I shan't let Mr. Hart take the milk route away from me just yet, but shall see Dr. Hoskins, and have him telegraph for Hi. Then I shall make it my point to find Ben Norton—I wish I had never allowed him to go away—and make him clear me from any connection with the robbery. I believe he can do it."

By this time they had arrived at the farm, and the thunder storm had passed over to the eastward.

"Hi will believe in me any way," declared Arthur, springing down from the wagon.

"I hope so," returned Hal doubtfully, following more slowly.

\*Begun in No 439 of THE ARGOSY.

Mr. Hart looked unfavorably on Hal, but allowed the boys to wander about the farm unmolested. The brothers discussed the trials which had come upon them in all their bearings, and endeavored to make plans for the future. At last both agreed that unless something better should turn up they had better sell out their home and go elsewhere—West, perhaps, and start all over again.

With this decision, late in the afternoon, Hal departed for the city, and Arthur watched him out of sight with a heavy heart. The world looked exceedingly dark to the boy just then.

As Hal disappeared from his view, a man with a team turned a corner in the road, and advanced rapidly toward the farm. As he drew near, Arthur recognized Hi's uncle, Mr. Carpenter.

To his surprise, Mr. Carpenter drove right by his own gate and approached the Hart place. He was driving rapidly, and seemed excited, and Arthur decided that something of importance must have happened to cause him to come near his brother-in-law's house. Immediately the boy's mind reverted to Hiram. Something had happened to him!

Mr. Carpenter hardly drew up his horse before he exclaimed, excitedly:

"Arthur, where's Tom?" (That was Mr. Hart's name.) "I've just met Dr. Hoskins, an' he give me a telegram. The train hez been wrecked near Chicago, an' Hi is injured!"

#### CHAPTER XL. THE END OF A FEUD.

"HI been hurt!" cried Arthur.

"Yes—the telegram don't say how badly," replied Mr. Carpenter, drawing the yellow envelope from his pocket. "Take it in to Tom. Dr. Hoskins hez gone ter the railroad station, an' will go ter Chicago, if it's necessary, ter bring him back. Tell Sarah not ter worry, f'r perhaps 'tain't so bad as it looks," and so saying, Mr. Carpenter drove rapidly away.

Hiram injured—killed, perhaps! Then there would be no one to believe in his innocence.

This was Arthur's first thought as he listened to Mr. Carpenter's words. But, receiving the telegram, he turned towards the house. Before he reached the door Mr. Hart came out.

"What was that rascal arter?" he demanded, jerking his head in the direction of his departing brother in law.

"Hi has been injured—perhaps fatally—in a railroad accident," replied Arthur simply. "Here is the telegram Dr. Hoskins received. He has started for Chicago to bring Hi back."

The old man staggered back as though struck a heavy blow. Then, with pallid face and trembling voice, he went into the house to break the news as gently as possible to his wife. For the first time Arthur realized that in his way Mr. Hart cared a great deal for his son.

Mrs. Hart was almost prostrated by the shock, and Mrs. Carpenter was hardly less affected. About midnight, Mr. Carpenter came to the house again. He had seen Dr. Hoskins, and the latter had told him that Hi still lived, and had already started East in charge of the physician who had accompanied the excursion. The sufferer had received a heavy blow on the head, and was still insensible from the shock; but the news was encouraging.

For the two succeeding days Arthur was entirely unmolested by Mr. Hart or any one else. Then the invalid arrived home, accompanied by the two physicians. Both of

the medical men looked grave. Hiram had not spoken since receiving the blow on his head. His skull had been fractured, the broken edge of the bone pressing downward upon the brain, and from the very instant of the blow the man's mind had remained stagnant.

"When he gets a trifle over the exertion of traveling so far, we can perform an operation which may bring him back to his normal state—in fact, it is almost certain to do so," said Dr. Hoskins's confrere, Dr. Hardwicke. "We can raise the fractured skull, and with that pressure off his brain he will undoubtedly become himself at once. At present he is absolutely dead as far as his mind is concerned."

Such was really the case, for the injured man lay on his couch, his eyes closed, his only movement being his hardly perceptible breathing.

Mr. Hart again renewed his demand that Arthur should allow Bill Olney to accompany him on the route and learn the customers, and that he should turn over Hi's business to his care; and Arthur, believing that nothing was to be gained by waiting longer, acceded to his demand, and on the following Monday expressed his willingness to leave, as Bill had sufficiently learned the route to take full charge of it.

It was on this very day that the two physicians had decided to try the operation upon the invalid. In his greatly weakened state the shock might kill him, but they dared wait no longer.

Mr. Carpenter had been back and forth between his house and the Hart place during the past few days, and, although few, if any, words had passed between Mr. Hart and himself, it was noticeable that Hi's father made no remarks reflecting on his brother in law. Both men were too anxious for the welfare of Hi to spend any time in useless bickerings or in digging up the hatchet over the old feud.

This Monday afternoon both remained in the barn while the doctors were performing the operation on Hi. Arthur was there, too, cleaning down Roan Nellie. He had told Mr. Hart that he should leave the following day, and the old man received the intelligence without a word.

"I shan't be doing this for you again," Arthur whispered to the little mare, who arched her neck and threw forward her silky ears as though listening to him. "You and I, Nell, will have to part company."

At that moment a step sounded on the gravel without. Both men sprang to their feet and Arthur came out of the mare's stall as Dr. Hoskins appeared in the doorway.

"We have tried the experiment," said the doctor in a calm voice, "and it has been successful. He has regained consciousness, and we have great hopes that he will be all right in time; but he is very weak," and turning on his heel the physician strode away.

For a moment the two old men remained silent after the doctor had departed.

"I bin thinkin' over a good many things in the past few days," said Mr. Carpenter, with a break in his voice. "You 'n' I, Tom, useter to be terrible good friends when we were boys. We kin let bye-gones be bye-gones arter this, can't we?" and he held out his hand to his brother-in-law.

"I guess we kin, Henry," was the quick reply, and the two old men shook hands on it and walked away from the barn, talking earnestly.

Arthur went back to his work and finished rubbing down the roan mare. He was glad—very glad—that there was a possibility of Hi's getting well. But his mind quickly wandered off to his own troubles. Tomorrow he would leave the farm, still under the shadow which it seemed impossible for

him to remove without finding Ben Norton and forcing him to confess.

"I'll find him if I have to follow him all over the country," he muttered.

He could not help wondering if Annie Remington knew about his disgrace. Hé could hardly hope that Bill Olney had left her uninformed. Bill seemed to consider it his especial duty to tell every one far and near of the robbery. Truly, he was having his revenge.

Arthur was glad that Flossie Davidson and her aunt had gone back to the city, so Mr. Davidson would not know about his trouble.

"I suppose I did wrong in not accepting the position offered me on the *Journal*, but it didn't seem right to me then to leave Hi," thought Arthur. "I felt as though I must stay as long as I had promised to see him through; but it did no good—only brought me into this trouble."

However, this was only the short sighted reasoning of a mortal, and somehow he could not help feeling that it was all to come out right at last.

The roan mare laid back her ears and snapped at him playfully, while he combed out her mane. He threw his arm over her neck and with the other hand stroked her nose.

"You wouldn't try to play if you knew you would never see me again," he said.

She threw her ears forward and whinnied gently, licking his hand with her warm, soft tongue, as though to tell him that she *did* understand and was trying to comfort him. And somehow, although she was only a dumb brute, it did him good.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### BACK ON THE "JOURNAL."

FOR the remainder of the week after his visit to the Hart place Hal Blaisdell roamed uneasily about the house, from room to room, or took an occasional short walk in the suburbs of the city. Little Mum had received the intelligence of his dismissal, together with that of Arthur's trouble, much more calmly than he had expected. In fact, she had tried to comfort him: but he, feeling that he alone was to blame for his disgrace, was not to be comforted. All he hoped now was for Arthur to come home and for them to sell their little stock of furniture and go to some other city.

Little Mum was not greatly pleased with this plan; but both boys favored it so strongly that she was convinced against her will. The weather was bad, and it looked as though the usual "line storm" had set in. This could not do aught else than add to the depression of Hal's spirits.

On Monday morning he arose, feeling as moody as ever. About half past eight there was a sharp ring at the door, and answering the summons, he received from the postman a letter addressed in an almost undecipherable hand to "Mr. Hal Blaisdell." Opening it, he was surprised beyond measure to read the following hastily penned lines:

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Sept. 12, 187-

HAL BLAISDELL, ESQ.

SIR: Call at my office immediately on receipt of this.

J. W. DAVIDSON.

Hal was stricken positively dumb by the message. He was utterly at a loss to know what Mr. Davidson wanted of him, and he had half a mind not to answer the summons.

"You had better go, Hal," advised Little Mum. "Mr. Davidson is an eccentric man and does not like delay, so I would go at once. Perhaps he intends taking you back. If he does, my son, I hope this trial will have been a lesson to you."

"It will, mother," returned Hal, and hastily donning his hat and coat, he departed.

He felt shy and awkward on approaching the *Journal* office and mounted the side stairway, earnestly hoping that he would meet none of the reporters. But he did meet Horatio Guelph at the very door of Mr. Davidson's private office.

"Hollo!" exclaimed Horatio, holding out his hand cordially. "You vas pack again? De oldt man sent for you, eh?"

Hal nodded.

"Dat vas goot? He will gif you your place pack, I know," and with rather a lighter heart Hal went into the presence of the proprietor.

Mr. Davidson was alone in the room, and immediately on sighting the young man, he whirled about in his chair and exclaimed:

"Ah-h—prompt, as usual, eh? Now look here, my boy, just how much di'l you have to do with that unfortunate affair?"

The question was put so kindly that Hal was rather doubtful if this was the same Mr. Davidson who usually spoke so gruffly. But without hesitation or reserve he recounted the incidents of his acquaintance with Mont Raymond and all he knew of the supper at Blanks's, which had ended so disgracefully.

"H'm—made a fool of yourself and willing to own it up, eh? That is not so bad as it might be," said Mr. Davidson reflectively. "Well, I've made the *Telegraph* people eat their words and correct the impression they gave through their columns as to *your* being the leader of the affair. In fact, they have come right down on their marrow bones and it's 'most broken their hearts," and he laughed. "Now you didn't get into such terribly bad company, after all, for the Happy-Go-Lucky Club is composed of well known business men, for the most part. However, I could never afford to join a club of the kind myself, and I should advise any young man to fight shy of them. It was simply your familiarity with that Raymond that brought you into trouble. You've acknowledged that you did wrong, and that goes a long way towards making it right in my estimation. Under the circumstances I think I shall order you to report at once to Mr. Coffin for work."

"Thank you, Mr. Davidson," said Hal gratefully. "I shall remember your kindness—to both me and my brother. I've had a lesson which I don't think I shall forget."

"Perhaps it's been the best thing that could happen to you," said Mr. Davidson briskly. "Who knows? We're never entirely satisfied until we get taught by experience. And how about your brother," he added, a shadow crossing his face. "Has the young rascal determined to be a farmer all his days?"

"I don't think so, sir," replied Hal doubtfully, wishing that he might tell the gentleman of Arthur's trouble as well, and enlist him in his brother's behalf.

"To think of him—a born newspaper man, if ever there was one—throwing away his talents on a milk team."

"He won't be there only a day or two longer," said Hal.

"He won't? Why, he told me that the man who employed him was sick, and he was determined to stay until he was well again. I wasn't particularly pleased, but I did honor the young rascal for sticking to what he considered his duty. Why does he leave there now?"

It took little urging for Hal to sit down and relate all the indignities which had been heaped upon his brother by old Mr. Hart, and when he had finished, Mr. Davidson was as wrathful as Hal himself over the matter.

"Zounds!" exclaimed the old gentleman, pounding on the desk with a heavy ruler wrathfully. "To think of their accusing that boy of anything of the kind, after all he had done! Why, it's the most contemptible thing I ever heard of! So Arthur will be in town in a day or two?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll—h'm, I'll drive out there tomorrow morning and bring him in myself. I'll teach those country louts to ruin a boy's character that way. I put a pretty high value on character myself, for when I started in the world I had little else for capital, and if there is one thing a young fellow needs to keep clean in business life, it's his character."

"It is hard for Art," responded Hal, whose spirits had now risen a great many degrees.

"Of course it is, of course it is," said Mr. Davidson. "I'll bring him in town, and we'll see if we can't find something for him to do on the paper."

"It's coming out all right, just as Little Mum said," thought Hal, as he mounted the stairs to the city editor's office.

Mr. Coffin seemed to have been expecting him, for as soon as he entered the room he exclaimed:

"Just the man I want, Blaisdell. Go and look up this report at the central station," and he handed him a crumpled telegram.

Some of the reporters seemed rather surprised to see him back again, but the eccentric Horatio favored him with a prodigious wink, and nodded his head knowingly.

Hal hurried away to do the editor's bidding. On his return, just before entering the door of the *Journal* office, he came face to face with Mont Raymond.

"Hullo, Blaisdell!" exclaimed that worthy, stopping before him and holding out his hand. "Where you bound?"

"To the office," responded Hal, shaking hands with rather less warmth than did Mont.

"Is that so? Why, I thought you were fired along with me. I heard so."

"I am still at work there," returned Hal shortly.

"Lucky dog," was Mont's comment. "Well, I jumped into a fat posish on the *Telegraph*. Old Davidson was a fool to bounce me. I was on the lookout for a place on the *Telegraph* for you."

"Much obliged I'm sure," replied Hal coldly.

"Say!" exclaimed Mont, detaining him as he was about to pass on, "you don't think I was the cause of your name's getting into that piece in the paper, do you? It wasn't my fault, 'pon honor. 'Twas that thick headed Johnny Bull up to Blanks's. Don't hold any hard feelings against me, do you?"

Hal could truthfully answer "No" to this query.

"That's right," continued Mont. "The reporter who wrote the thing up got the bounce. If we are on different papers we needn't be sore headed about it. Come up to the club some night. We'll be glad to see you. I suppose you've heard about the major, haven't you?"

"Major Van Slyck!" queried Hal.

"Yes. Been robbed. Most mysterious thing that's happened in Providence in a dog's age. His library vault was opened while he and Chess were at Newport last week, and everything completely cleaned out!"

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Hal, his mind reverting to what his brother had told him about Chess Gardner. "Have they got any clew to the thieves?"

"Nary a one. The police are all broken up. Don't know what to do about it. Chess thinks he's got a clew, and he and I are going to follow it up. If we are successful the *Telegraph* will get the glory and your old *Journal* will get left 'way in the rear," and Mont laughed.

"When did they find it out?" Hal asked, taking mental note of all the other said.

"The major and the girls and Chess all came up from Newport Saturday. The bad weather drove them away from the water. They found the vault rifed, all the silver gone and the servant in charge strapped to a post in the cellar.

"The poor fellow was 'most dead, they say, for he'd been without anything to eat or drink since Tuesday night when the robbery was committed, It's doubtful if he recovers at all. The old major's most crazy, for Chess says he's lost something like three hundred thousand dollars in money, papers and the silver. The burglars made a big haul, now I tell you, although they'll never be able to use a great many of the papers."

"How many men were there?" inquired Hal, deeply interested in the recital.

"Well, the servant says he only saw one, but there must have been a number of them, half a dozen at least," replied Mont.

"I should think somebody would have heard the noise when they opened the safe."

"They didn't make any noise, I reckon. Opened it as far as can be learned by the combination, although old Van swears none but he knew it. He didn't even have it written on a slip of paper. As I said, it is the most mysterious affair going. They've been keeping it dark until now, but tomorrow the *Telegraph* will be full of it," and so saying Mont departed.

As Hal mounted the stairs to the reporters' room he could not help wondering if Chess Gardner did not have something to do with the mysterious burglary. In some way Chess might have obtained the combination of the vault and if he was hand and glove with Ben Norton, as his visits to the Hart latter would suggest, it would be an easy matter for the latter to commit the robbery while Chess was at Newport. If Ben Norton would steal from the Harts' why would he not assist Gardner in a larger affair?

His first question on reaching the city editor's desk was in relation to the burglary.

"Yes, I've heard of it, and Horatio's gone up to interview the major," said Coffin. "It's a big case and thus far the police have been utterly at fault. Not a trace of the burglars has been discovered. The chief has been keeping it out of the hands of the newspaper men until today. It would be a fine feather in the *Journal's* cap if we could get ahead of the detectives on this. Such things have been done before."

Hal kept his suspicions in relation to who the burglar *might* be to himself. He wanted to talk it over with Arthur first of all.

(To be continued.)

#### SLIPPED STRAIGHT INTO THE TRAP.

THE insane are proverbially known to be excessively cunning, and if men would feign madness successfully they must needs be exceeding wise. At the same time it requires an expert to detect, in many instances, the real from the genuine. Such an expert was the professor who figures in the following incident, which the *Philadelphia Ledger* notes as having occurred in Berlin:

A man who was accused of theft set up a plea of insanity, thereby hoping to escape punishment. Professor Mendel, a noted specialist, was deputed to examine the prisoner and report on the state of his mind. He found the man lying in bed. To all questions put, such as how old he was, where he lived, what he was called, the prisoner invariably answered, "I don't know."

Then the professor took a mark out of his purse and asked how much it was. "I don't know," he answered, as before. The professor then asked for the prisoner's purse, out of which he took a mark, and once more the man declared that he didn't know its value; whereupon Professor Mendel put a groschen into the prisoner's purse, transferring the mark to his own. "Why, doctor," said the patient hastily, "you have made a mistake!" The imposture was made bare and the impostor convicted.



## PRESENT DAY HISTORY PAPERS.

## VI.

## SPAIN.

OF all the countries of Europe Spain is, with the exceptions of Russia and Turkey, the least prosperous, enlightened, and advanced. For one brief period of history—the early part of the sixteenth century—she stood first among the powers of the earth. From that proud rank a long series of disasters reduced her to the condition of weakness, poverty, and ignorance from which she is now beginning to make efforts to rise.

The year 1492 marked the commencement of Spain's most glorious era. In that year she became a united country for the first time since the days when she formed a province of the Roman Empire. Ferdinand of Aragon had married Isabella of Castile, thus consolidating the two chief states of the peninsula, and in 1492 he drove from their last stronghold in Granada the Moors who for seven centuries had ruled all or part of Spain. In the same year Columbus, sent westward by Ferdinand, discovered America, and opened to the Spaniards a dominion that brought them an immense increase of power and prestige.

Under Ferdinand's grandson and successor Charles, who was King of Spain and the Netherlands by inheritance, Emperor of Germany by election, and ruler of Sicily and Naples by conquest, the power of Spain reached its highest point. The revolt of the Netherlands and the destruction of the armada sent to conquer England commened the exhaustion of her strength, which was continued during the eighteenth century by a succession of unsuccessful wars. In the Napoleonic wars Spain figured ingloriously. Her fleet, while allied to that of France, was shattered by Nelson at Trafalgar. Her king was deposed by Napoleon, who placed his own brother Joséph upon the throne. An insurrection followed, which was aided by the British, who finally, under Wellington, succeeded in driving the French out of the peninsula.

The monarchy was now restored, with its old autocratic powers. But the spirit of popular liberty, which had burst forth in America's declaration of independence and the French Revolution, was now making itself felt throughout the civilized world. In Spain it found expression in a rebellion which was suppressed by the aid of French armies, and in Spanish dominions abroad it resulted in a series of revolutions which led to the loss of the entire mainland of South America, leaving to Spain, of her former possessions in the New World, only the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, which she still retains.

On the death of Ferdinand VII, in 1833, seven years of civil war ensued between his daughter Isabella and his brother Don Carlos, each of whom claimed the throne. Isabella's adherents were successful, but after a turbulent and discreditable reign of thirty five years she was expelled from the country. The crown was then offered to a German prince—Leopold of Hohenzollern—an offer that led to the Franco-Prussian war. Leopold declined, and the Cortes, or Spanish Congress, elected to the vacant throne Amedeo, duke of Aosta, a younger brother of the present King of Italy. After two years of vain attempts to reorganize a demoralized government, Amedeo resigned in despair, and chaos ensued. A republic was proclaimed in Madrid, while the Carlists, or supporters of Don Carlos, raised the standard of revolt in the northern provinces. Civil war raged for two years, when most of the warring factions combined to proclaim Alfonso, son of the exiled Queen Isabella, as King of Spain.

Alfonso XII began his reign in 1875, and succeeded in suppressing the last of the revolted Carlists in 1876. From that time the sorely troubled country has enjoyed general tranquillity, and, as a natural consequence, has given some signs of returning prosperity. The Spanish peninsula is naturally well fitted to be the home of a great industrial and commercial nation. Its soil is exceedingly fertile, it is rich in metals, and its long coast line has good harbors on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, to which the trade of the East and the West might flow now, as it has done in the past. Its climate is good, though in the mountainous central districts, where Madrid lies, the extremes of heat and cold are severe. But the people want those qualities that have pushed the Anglo Saxon race to the front place among nations. They lack energy, are grossly ignorant, and have throughout their history displayed that inability for free and stable government which has so often proved detrimental to the Latin races, and is so terribly exemplified among their offshoots in South America. Two thirds of the population of Spain are unable to read and write. Even this showing, however, poor as it is, is an improvement upon the state of affairs that existed until within recent years. It is to the credit of the existing government that an earnest effort is being made to strike at the root of Spain's evils by the extension of public schools.

Alfonso XII died, after reigning ten years, at the end of 1885, and was succeeded by his son and namesake Alfonso XIII, who was a posthumous child, born six months after his father's death. The present King of Spain is a bright little boy, who was five years old on the 17th of May. The duties of his royal office are performed by his mother, who was the Archduchess Maria Christina of Austria before she married the late Alfonso.

The little king is thus described by a French newspaper: "He is small, very small, but sinewy, restless, full of fun, and precocious. He dreams of uniforms, flags and battles. He will not have toy horses, but for two years has desired a live horse, in order to run races. When he does not get what he wishes at once, he grows exceedingly angry, and can be quieted only by the soft words of the Queen Regent. He is stubborn. He speaks excellent English already. What offends him especially is the knowledge that he is still a child. He would like to grow large at once, be a man with a great mustache without delay. He cannot understand how the King of Spain can be so small."

The chief statistics of Spain's condition may be briefly summed up thus: her area is 195,774 square miles—a little less than France or Germany, or a little more than that of the State of California. Her population is much less than that of other European countries of similar size, being only about eighteen millions. For this reason, combined with her poverty, Spain does not rank as one of the great military powers of Europe. She maintains an army of 85,000 men, and a navy with thirteen ironclads.

Her system of government is based upon the constitution framed after the accession of Alfonso XII. It is a constitutional monarchy, not unlike that of Great Britain. The legislative power is in the hands of the Cortes, or Congress, which consists of a chamber of deputies, who are elected by the people every five years, and a senate whose members are partly hereditary, partly named for life by the crown, and partly elected. The government's finances, as might be expected after such a record of civil war, are in bad condition, and the national debt is very heavy in proportion to the wealth of the country, amounting to more than a billion and a quarter of dollars.

Upon the continuance of peace and public order Spain's prospects of national advancement mainly depend.



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\* \* \* \*

NORMAN BROOKE;

OR,

BREASTING THE BREAKERS.

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.,

will commence next week.

Mr. White's new story is of an entirely different nature from "On Steeds of Steel." It deals with summer life in the metropolis, and tells of the experiences of a young New Englander who comes to New York to make his own way in the world. What brings him to do this, what happens to him on the journey, the friends he wins and the enemies he meets with—all this is described in realistic fashion, calculated to make the reader feel personally acquainted with Norman Brooke, bringing him thus to feel an intense interest in all that befalls him.

\* \* \* \*

WE print this week another article in our valuable series of Present Day History Papers. Spain is the country treated on this occasion—a nation whose history, linked so closely as it is with the early annals of America, should possess for us all an extraordinary interest.

\* \* \* \*

NEWS comes from Oldtown, in the State of Maine, that the Indians who reside on a certain island near the town, have a law which forbids white men being found within their territory after a fixed hour in the evening. This piece of information ought to deal a crushing blow to the Westward emigration of the bloodthirsty small boy. By boldly advancing into the forbidden regions in Oldtown "after hours" he can gain a reputation for courage and recklessness which a year's experience on Texas plains and Colorado ranches could not hope to give him.

The newspaper item from which we gain our information does not announce what punishment is meted out to the midnight trespassers, but of course this is a matter of supreme indifference to the youth whose sole ambition is to rid the country of the only real natives it possesses. We would suggest to our savage brethren in Oldtown, however, that a shingle judiciously applied would fill the bill at less expense and with more satisfactory results than a Winchester or a tomahawk.

WILLIAM D. BYNUM,

CONGRESSMAN FROM INDIANA.

AMID the uncertainties of politics in a State where the opposite parties are evenly balanced, Congressman Bynum, of Indianapolis, has steadily made his way toward the front rank of public life, and has won a reputation as one of the ablest among the younger members of the national legislature.

He is a native of Indiana, having been born near Newberry, in the Hoosier State, on the 26th of June, 1846. As a boy he attended the common schools, and took a classical course at the State University at



WILLIAM D. BYNUM.

From a photograph by Bell, Washington.

Bloomington, where he graduated in 1869. In the same year he was admitted to the bar, having studied in the office of a prominent lawyer of Terre Haute. He began the practice of his profession in the town of Washington, Indiana, and with such success that in two years he became City Attorney. After serving in that capacity for four years he was elected Mayor of Washington, holding the office for four years more.

In 1881 Mr. Bynum moved to Indianapolis, and found in that rapidly growing city a wider field for his talents. A year later his fellow citizens sent him to the State Legislature, where for one session he acted as Speaker of the Assembly. His next promotion was his election in 1884, to the Forty Ninth Congress—the beginning of his successful career at Washington. He has been thrice reelected, in 1886, 1888, and again last November—each time by a majority that attested his fellowcitizens' appreciation of his services.

Mr. Bynum is a speaker of marked ability, a strong partisan, and a ready debater. He is a man of culture and information, and sets an admirable example to those who consider their "education" completed at the moment when they leave school or college, by his continued studies of the best literary models. "In early life" he once said, "I had not the opportunities for reading that I could have wished. I grew up in a little country town where there was no library, and no facility whatever for obtaining books. I think the first copy of Byron I ever saw was one my father brought me from New Albany or Louisville when I was twenty years of age. I never saw a copy of Shakspeare until I was twenty." Thus in Mr. Bynum we find another proof of the fact that early difficulties and discouragements cannot debar from the path of advancement an aspirant possessed of earnest thirst for information and a determined ambition to rise.

## THE CHINESE CONSPIRACY;

OR,

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

BY ENRIQUE H. LEWIS.

## CHAPTER VII.

LAWRENCE MEETS WITH A SURPRISE.

A LOW murmur ran through the group collected around the Chinaman as he made the terrible accusation, and one or two stepped forward to seize the middy. But Travis, his face aflame with rage, dashed them to one side.

"Keep your hands off him!" he shouted. "It's a villainous lie! This gentleman was seated on that bench with me when the thing occurred, and had no more to do with it than the Emperor of China."

Lawrence had remained in his former position, at the injured man's head until now. The charge was so unexpected, and preposterous on the face of it, that he hardly believed his ears, and he stared helplessly and in deep amazement from the accuser to those around him. But when several officers of the vessel, the captain among them, actually made a movement towards him, he sprang to his feet, and supplemented his friend's words with a contemptuous laugh.

"Why, the man's crazy!" he cried, walking up to the commander. "I try to kill him? Why, the idea is utterly absurd! My friend and myself were sitting here, quietly talking, when we heard the sound of a struggle, and then discovered this Chinaman lying on the deck. He must be out of his mind to utter such a falsehood."

As he concluded, Lawrence turned to the man, and bending over, looked at him sternly for a moment.

"Do you mean to repeat this infamous accusation?" he demanded, speaking slowly and with determination.

The Mongolian had evidently recovered somewhat. The peculiar pallor had disappeared, and he was now sitting up, partially supported by one of the officers. The flow of blood had been stopped, and the only indications of the sanguinary attempt was a dark red stain on his blouse, and the little pool on the deck.

He had not uttered a word during Coleman's indignant denial, but now when the latter asked him the question, he half closed his beady eyes, and with a dramatic gesture of the right arm, cried:

"It was you who tried to take my life, and you know it, villain! You thought I had money, and would have killed me but for my valorous defense."

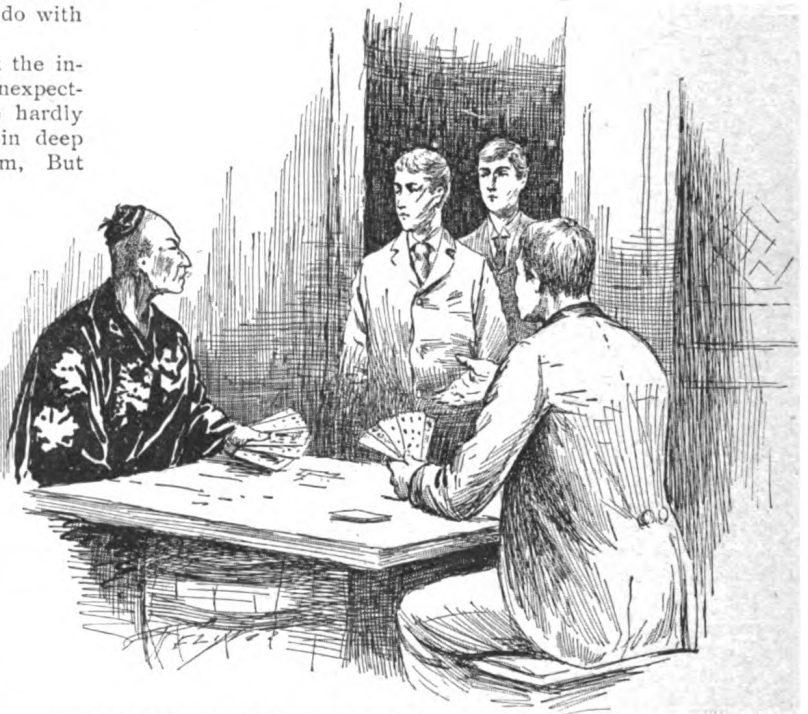
Lawrence gazed at him in speechless contempt for a brief space, and then haughtily drawing himself up, again addressed himself to the captain of the steamer.

"This nonsense has gone far enough, sir," he said proudly. "I am an officer of the American navy, attached to the flagship, Benton, and entirely responsible for my actions. This scoundrel is lying for some foul reason of his own, and if you care to harbor his ridiculous story, I will meet the charge before the American consul at Shanghai." Then taking Travis by the arm, he walked aft, leaving the

commander and those around him, staring at each other in amazement.

"A plucky youngster, that!" exclaimed the officer at last, then turning his attention to the injured man, he ordered him to be placed in a berth on the lower deck, and the wound examined. After talking it over with the first officer and the purser, the captain saw that the accusation was rather absurd, and holding the entire Chinese nation in contempt in the good old way, as he did, he resolved to drop the matter, if every one concerned was agreeable.

If the easy going skipper had seen the Chinaman's face as he was assisted below, he would have been extremely doubtful as to the smooth working of his well meant resolution. But, as it was, he ordered the ugly spot on the deck swabbed up, and laid out the course for the night in blissful



DALTON WAS PLAYING CARDS WITH A RICHLY DRESSED CHINAMAN.

ignorance of the dark passions and crafty intrigue lodged in the breasts of some of his passengers.

Lawrence and Charlie went directly to the former's state-room, and after entering, closed and locked the door.

"Well, in the name of Buddha!" Travis broke out, taking a seat on the one by three lounge. "This is a pretty go! What in the deuce does it mean?"

The middy did not reply at once, but, throwing himself on the bed, lay with closely knit brows, thinking.

"I say, Charlie!" he exclaimed at last, suddenly turning on his elbow, and looking him full in the face; "could you make out any of that conversation up there?"

"Well, I hardly know whether I did or not, to tell you the truth," slowly replied Travis, reflectively biting his finger nails. "You see, they spoke pretty low, and I could only catch a word here and there, until the last, when one of them called out your name, and swore that mighty oath, I'll tell you just what I did catch, and if you can make head or tail of it you beat me.

\*Begun in No. 450 of THE ARGOSY

"First," the speaker touched his left thumb with the fore finger of his other hand, and keeping tally as he went along, resumed: "I heard them say something about the Pagoda Arsenal, and then they mentioned a big sum of money. I think it was one hundred thousand taels, or thereabouts. After that the confounded wind blew too hard, but what I heard next attracted my attention at once. It was quiet for a minute, and then they commenced to quarrel. One said: 'You shall not kill the boy,' and the other replied that he would, and then your name came in. What does it mean?"

Lawrence had gradually raised up in the bunk as his friend continued, and now he sat on the edge, and looked at Charlie with startled eyes.

"You are certain of this?" he asked slowly.

"Why, yes. As certain as information derived under such circumstances can be. But why? What's up?"

Lawrence answered by asking another question: "You are a good friend of mine, Charlie, and I want you to promise to keep anything that passes between us, to yourself. Will you do it?"

"Certainly," replied Travis, very much interested.

"Well, did the voice of either of those men sound familiar?"

"Yes."

Their eyes met, and nothing more was said for some time.

Travis was still slightly bewildered, but his natural shrewdness made him see that he was on the edge of some queer mystery. As for Lawrence, he sat on the bed, and nervously plucking at the overhanging counterpane, battled with a growing suspicion, the very idea of which filled him with horror and an overwhelming indignation. At last he jumped to the floor, and unfastening the door, said curtly: "Come on, I want to find Dalton."

As they passed out of the saloon, Charlie touched him on the shoulder.

"By the way, Larry," he said, in a voice just above a whisper, "he wasn't in that crowd up there."

Lawrence made no reply, but kept on. There were five or six persons in the cabin, and as they walked past them, they were stared at with evident curiosity. The middy drew himself up stiffly, and without glancing to the right or left, continued on until he arrived at a stateroom near the after end. His quick rap at the door was answered by a summons to enter, but as he opened it, he stopped with one foot over the threshold. The sight was unexpected, to say the least.

Dalton was sitting at an improvised table, playing native cards with a stranger, a richly dressed Chinaman, who, as Lawrence paused, looked up and revealed a face blemished by an unsightly red scar!

"Come in, Coleman," called the ensign pleasantly; "and you, too, Travis. Come in and close the door. We're having a little game here to pass away the time. This is a new acquaintance of mine. Allow me to introduce you. Mr. Chung, Messrs. Coleman and Travis. I don't know whether you can find seats or not, gentlemen. These rooms are not very large. What is the good word?"

Lawrence glanced from Dalton to the stranger in bewilderment, and tried to answer, but the words stopped in his throat. His embarrassment was so apparent that Dalton noticed it, and looked at him in evident surprise.

At last Coleman blurted out: "How long have you been playing here, may I ask?"

"Why, since dinner time," was the reply.

"Then you haven't heard of my adventure tonight?"

"Adventure?"

"Yes; there was a native stabbed up on deck, and he accuses me of doing it!"

"What!" exclaimed the ensign, rising to his feet. A curious pallor whitened his face, and he cast a startled glance at the middy. Then, with a forced laugh, he added: "Well, this is the best joke I have heard on the station. You stab a man? Ha, ha!" But Dalton became serious when Lawrence explained, and said that it might have turned out an ugly matter.

"The whole thing is simply preposterous," he added, eying Lawrence from under his heavy black brows, "and we will have it looked into at Shanghai. The fellow must certainly be insane."

"Only explanation I can see," answered Coleman shortly. "Well, I will say good night. Am going to bed to think this matter over. Good night, sir."

The stranger, who had listened quietly, with an immovable face, rose and bowed politely as Lawrence, followed by his friend, left the room.

Once outside, Coleman turned to Travis, and, extending his hand, said: "Please excuse me, Charlie, if I leave you now. I want to retire, and try to straighten out this affair. By Jove! My head is in a hopeless muddle! Good night!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ARRIVAL AT SHANGHAI.

LAWRENCE slept but little that night. After partially disrobing, he threw himself on the bed, and tried to unravel the skeins of his tangled thoughts. But look where he may, conjure up what explanation he would, the first gray light of day found him still struggling with ugly suspicions.

He went over the whole category of events that had crowded the brief hours of the last few days, and tried to piece a connected whole out of the scattered parts, but without avail, and he acknowledged, with a sigh, that the evident mystery was greater than he could penetrate.

Since arriving on the station, the cruise had developed no more interesting or diverting incidents than generally fill the humdrum existence of the defenders of America's waning argosies. But now here was he, a naval cadet, launched on a journey rich in promises of thrilling adventures, and opening the door of a startling conspiracy, for so he felt it to be.

As has been said, Lawrence was romantic. Not more so, mind you, than the generality of lads—nineteen, and of stirring nature, and we must excuse him if he allowed a tinge of anticipated pleasure to creep over the current of his thoughts, as he groped through the mazes of this mystery.

It has been said that romance is the useless froth floating on the staid river of life; that it is a thing unnecessary, and of little worth. But the froth gets the sunbeams, and the silent depths all the cold and gloom. However, this is a digression.

Lawrence recalled the interview at the Consulate, and the startling information elicited therein. The first breath of suspicion concerning Dalton, and his own indignant disbelief in the same. Then the ensign's vehement objections to having a companion on the journey—a fact which, according to their test, made the case look darker. And now, the most startling part of the chapter, the incident of that night! He pondered deeply over this.

"That familiar voice I heard in the dark," he mused. "It could have been no other than Dalton's. Charlie recognized it, and so did I. But then, when we went to his room he said he had been playing cards since dinner, *and with the native I met at the consul's, who accused him!*

"If it really was the ensign," he continued, half aloud, "why did he try to kill that Chinaman? Yes, and, by the way, why did the Chinaman accuse me? Great Scott! The more I look into it, the more puzzled I get. I wish I had been born in Philadelphia, and had followed the law. But I have started in on this thing, and I am going to carry it out, or perish in the attempt, as they say on the stage. The only thing that can be done now is to keep a careful eye on Dalton and—"

Rat-tat, rat-tat!

"Come in!" shouted Lawrence. The handle turned and twisted, but the door refused to open.

"Which way? Through the keyhole?" demanded a cheery voice from outside. "Get up, you lazy marline-spike! It's seven o'clock, and the quadrant is caught in the fore yardarm!"

The middy laughed, and, jumping out of bed, let his friend in. Charlie's face wore a rosy tinge, and he puffed and blowed like the winner in a foot race.

"Why, hello!" he exclaimed, glancing at the bed, "You haven't turned in yet. What on earth have you been doing?"

"Thinking," replied Coleman briefly.

"About that affair last night?"

"Yes, and other things."

"Well, I have been down to see that Chinaman this morning, and he is as right as a trivet. A little sore and weak, of course, but that is all. He has finally concluded that you are not the man, and says he will tell the captain so. But he also refuses to say another word. I tried to pump him, but it was like working the handle of a Kentucky pump—useless."

"I am glad that is settled," replied Coleman, "because it might have delayed us in Shanghai a day or two, and it is necessary that we arrive in Japan as soon as possible. It was a case of mistaken identity, I suppose?"

"Cannot think of any other reason," answered Charlie. He noticed that his friend was inclined to be reticent on the subject, so he did not pursue the conversation. He had his suspicions, and confessed to a very lively curiosity, but he possessed a generous slice of that charming virtue called "minding your own business," and therefore said no more.

Nothing further of interest occurred during the rest of the voyage. Dalton spent the greater part of the time in his room, claiming he had a voluminous correspondence to prepare, and Lawrence did not disturb him, preferring to watch and wait.

Of course he had left all details of their expedition to the ensign, but he determined to take advantage of a necessary delay at Tien Tsin, on the Pei Ho River, where they were to leave the steamer, and obtain all the information possible concerning the route to Peking; also the exact state of affairs in the disaffected Provinces.

He was perfectly aware of the enormous difficulties before him, if he was compelled to travel alone; and the great danger he would run, but of the latter he thought not, being a youth prone to valor, and fearless withal. He knew not the language, nor the country. He expected to make his way, if Dalton failed, through a land teeming with cutthroat bands of a strange race, and he relied on the strength of his good right arm, eked out with a couple of revolvers! Oh, the courage of youth, and its foolishness! But it sometimes succeeds, where knowledge fails!

The aristocratic Mongolian, Chung—he of the scar—also remained in seclusion, and, although Lawrence when he met him at the table or on deck, tried to inveigle him into a conversation, for certain reasons of his own, the attempt invar-

ably failed. Chung would parry with monosyllabic answers, and beat a retreat to his stateroom.

Charlie was to stop at Shanghai, a fact he deeply deplored, as the great liking he had for Lawrence, and that grain of mystery attending his friend's journey, which he was shrewd enough to discern, made him long to accompany his friend further, but the sordid demands of business compelled him to relinquish the idea, albeit with much internal rebellion.

It is hardly a three days' run from Foo Chow to Shanghai by steamer, if the wind is fair and danger lurks not in the path. But short as was the time, our voyagers hailed the sight of the Yangtze Kiang river, that mother of waters in China, with loud acclaim.

When the steamer passed Woosung, the outer haven of Shanghai, the sun was just sinking into the smoky haze of the west, and, as if in friendly farewell, its softened rays touched with a magic brush the shores and ships and level plains of the little river leading up to the city. The broad reach of water just here, where foreign vessels, rusty and worn with the strife of waves, hobnob with native junks of clumsy build, had lost its identity and, under the kindly glow of that golden sun, bore on its rippling bosom, a fleet of fairy craft, wondrous in shape, and varied of color.

But it was not for long. The light faded away, and the glow disappeared. The old angularity of shape again came out, uglier and more hideous than ever. The windows of the native house boats were grimy, and the seamy sides of the taol barks were streaked and bare, just as before. Only the gilded ball at the mast head shone and sparkled in the last beam of the setting sun. It too went out by and by, and there was darkness.

The busy stream was filled with junks of all sizes, from the huge hulk of the coastwise traders to the bobbing sampans of the solitary fishermen, and as the Tartar Khan edged her way through the tangled maze, her warning whistle was constantly sounding.

Here too they have a "bund", a foreign settlement, but its miles are generous, and the mighty trade of gathered merchants has wrought quays innumerable, and ample wharves, lining the banks of the yellow river. At one of these she docked, and the journey was over for some.

Bulletin boards, writ in familiar English and also the uncompromising hieroglyphics of the Chinese language, were posted up, announcing that the steamer would linger until the small hours of the morning, so Lawrence decided to go forth with his friend and see the last of him.

"It might be some time before I see you again, old boy," he said, assisting Charlie to collect his scattered luggage; "so I will spend a couple of hours ashore with you. I want to mail a couple of letters to the flagship any way. Have you attended to your trunks yet?"

"I was on deck a few minutes ago," replied Charlie, "and saw one of them, but the other has not appeared yet. Confounded nuisance the way they manage these boats. Wait, I'll run up again. Just see if you can find my hair brush while I am gone. I missed it this morning, and have looked everywhere except in the bed."

Lawrence was industriously searching for the missing article when his friend returned, and announced with a growl that the trunk was nowhere to be found.

"Have to wait until they overhaul a lot of cargo," he added. "I will not leave the ship until they find it, as there are some important papers in the till, which I wouldn't care to lose. I met Dalton up there, on his way ashore. He bid me good by, and said he had some business at the American consul's to attend to. Rum fellow that."

"Decidedly so!" thought Lawrence, grimly,

It was almost an hour before the Chinese porter came down and announced with a salaam which required all the spare room in the little cabin to execute, that the missing piece of luggage was at last discovered.

After Charlie had stated his opinion of the whole vessel, from the captain to his present auditor, in terms shorn of flowery rhetoric, the two friends collected what hand luggage he possessed and started for the upper part of the bund, where lived an acquaintance of his with whom he lived when in Shanghai.

At the head of the wharf, where the sedan chairs generally wait for passengers, they found but few on account of the lateness of the hour. Charlie, who was a connoisseur on such subjects, immediately selected two, which, from their appearance, gave promise of some comfort, and also because, as he tersely expressed it, "they are almighty cheap in their rates," a circumstance which travelers in the flowery kingdom (if there are such among my readers) will learn with incredulity.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A FIGHT IN THE DARK.

"FIRST time I ever ran across a cooly who didn't strike for a higher fee," chuckled Travis, as they climbed into the chairs. "These fellows don't know their business, or else they have made so much money off the 'fankwei' that they are carrying them cheap now as a sort of salve to their conscience, but that— eh, did you speak?"

Charlie turned quickly to one of the men, but the fellow looked at him in apparent surprise, evidently not understanding the question.

"By Jove!" muttered Travis, half to himself, "it sounded as if he had answered me. Must have been mistaken."

"What is the matter?" called out Lawrence from his rickshaw, which had already been lifted from the ground.

"Oh, nothing. Thought I had met an English scholar in the person of one of my men." As he spoke, he glanced keenly at the fellow, but saw nothing save that impassive countenance only to be encountered among his race.

The streets of the foreign bund at Shanghai are wide and easily traversed, so the chairs were carried side by side, and the two friends commenced a desultory conversation, the only fault of which was the extraordinary derangement of syllables, due to the uneven nature of the ground.

After the conventional topics had been exhausted, Charlie, with malice prepense, and slyness much to be deplored, started the thread of a new subject.

"Your last remark reminds me of a lad I knew once," he commenced, shifting about until a projecting knob pressed on his seventh vertebrae, instead of the sixth, and mentally resolving to give every one in his backbone a fair chance. "A lad who used to go round saying to fellows: 'speaking of monkeys, how is your grandmother?' and he thought it was smart. But, one day, a man who didn't see the fun of the joke, kicked him into a tree, and, as he fell back through the branches, he heard a voice asking: 'speaking of monkeys, don't you wish you had one of their tails now?'"

The sounds of hearty laughter came from the other chair so hearty that even one of the carriers caught the infection and almost let go of the handle. But Charlie only smiled grimly to himself and winked one eye in pleasurable anticipation.

"Now, speaking of grandmothers," he resumed, "I wonder how Miss Fanny Monroe is?"

"Oh!" came through the darkness, and the sounds of merriment died away.

"I don't know why grandmothers should remind me of her," continued Charlie, giving his voice a reflective tone; "but I suppose it is because she has one."

"How much farther is this place we are going to?" asked Lawrence a little indignantly.

"We must be near there now," answered Travis, looking hastily around. Then he suddenly gave an exclamation of surprise and shouted to his carriers to stop.

"Why, this is not the road to Rodger's hong (factory)," he continued, springing out of the chair and glancing on all sides in evident bewilderment. Coleman followed his example and walked over to his side. The coolies stood quietly looking at them for a moment, and one of them stepped forward and answered in Chinese:

"It is only around the corner, gentlemen. We have brought you by a new route. If you will kindly get in again we will carry you there."

The street they were standing in was quite narrow for the bund, and was almost in darkness, only a faint flickering light being visible some distance away. The houses were of a poor class, and seemed to be like those occupied by Chinese servants and the coolies employed at the hong. It was a disreputable quarter, and appeared untenanted except by the present party.

"I don't like this for a cent, Larry," muttered Travis in an aside to the middy before answering the cooly. "Just keep your eyes peeled, understand?" He then turned and said in an authoritative voice: "You had no right to bring us by another route. I told you to carry us straight to Rodger's, and you have disregarded the order. What do you mean?"

The fellow did not reply, but made a barely perceptible movement of his hand. At the motion his comrades commenced shifting their positions from where they had been standing near the chairs, and, with a sudden rush, closed in on the two youths.

The movement was not entirely unexpected, but it happened a little earlier than they had anticipated, so the first result was that Lawrence found himself pinioned by two burly ruffians, one on each side. One grabbed him by the legs and the other held him around the waist, with both arms clasped in a tight embrace. Then they tried to throw him to the ground, but it was a decided failure.

The middy brought forth all the cunning of his athletic training and wriggled in their clutches like an eel. He tugged and jerked at the restraining arms with such rapidity of motion and herculean power that in far less time than it takes to tell it he found himself free and raining such sturdy blows on his assailants that they turned with one accord and fled, howling with pain.

Meanwhile Charlie had also found himself in a tight box. The onslaught of the four natives had occurred simultaneously, and two sprang on Travis at the same time and the others tackled the middy. Charlie had never undergone such a thorough training in the art of self defense as his friend, and was, moreover, a trifle short in the wind. But what he lacked in science he made up with a peculiar pugilistic style of his own, which consisted of threats and yells— threats in both languages and yells which echoed and reverberated through the little street in a manner very discouraging to thugs wishing to execute their business in a quiet, genteel way.

The first man that neared him received a lusty blow in the eye which eventually closed that optic, and the second just dodged in time to escape a similar misfortune. Then

they both rushed on him with one impulse and managed to press him against a wall. He struggled manfully in their grasp and dealt them sundry kicks in various spots, but they were slowly wearing him out, and would have finally succeeded in overcoming the brave lad if there had not occurred a fortunate diversion just then.

Lawrence at that moment was giving his last compliments to the two with whom he had been engaged, and after seeing their agile forms disappear around the corner in hasty flight, he turned to the aid of his friend and saw that he was just in time. Charlie was almost prostrate. One of his foes had caught him by the throat and was fast changing his torrent of words into a series of spasmodic gasps, with every prospect of its ending in a final rattle.

Coleman gave a shout of encouragement, and with a prodigious leap landed squarely on the back of the garroter, knocking him flat on his face. The force also caused the middy to fall into the mud, but he was up instantly. The other cooly started to run when he saw what had befallen his companion, but Charlie, with rare presence of mind and a quick movement, jerked his feet from under him, and he rolled head over heels against the wall.

Of their late opponents, two had fled from the scene of action and the other two were prostrate at their feet, conquered, and groaning in anguish of spirit. But they were still in danger and it behooved them to leave such a disreputable neighborhood with all haste. There was no telling whether the fleeing half of their foes had gone for good or to speedily return with reinforcements, a fact which struck Lawrence at once.

"Let us get out of here, quick!" he exclaimed, glancing around to see if the coast was clear. "Those villains may come back with a lot of their kind any moment, and we haven't a gun to defend ourselves with. After this I am going to carry a revolver to church. I thought you said this was a quiet, respectable settlement?"

"It is. You don't see anything to the contrary, do you?" replied Charlie, with delicate sarcasm, at the same time wiping a piece of mud out of his eye. "This is only their peculiar way of receiving strangers. But come on. We'll make tracks the other way."

After taking a last look at the two natives on the ground, who were both industriously playing 'possum, they started off down the street at a rapid walk, but had not gone twenty steps before Charlie stopped.

"By Jove! My luggage! he exclaimed, looking back towards the chairs. "I don't want to lose those two bags. We had better go back and get them."

"Let us hurry up, then," cautioned Lawrence, starting to return with his friend. But they had hardly reached the place where the chairs lay, before a shrill whistle sounded, and a dozen coolies rushed around the corner upon them.

"Run for your life, Larry!" yelled Travis, dropping a satchel he had picked up, and darting down the narrow road at full speed. But the middy was too late!

He had stooped to drag a small hand bag from under one of the chair poles, and, ere he could recover himself, or start to run, eight or ten of the newcomers jumped on him, and, despite his frantic struggles, he was quickly overpowered.

Charlie had not gone many feet before he noticed that Coleman was not with him. Glancing hastily back over his shoulder, he saw the middy fighting for life in the midst of a whole host, and being rapidly borne to the ground.

He did not stop to reckon on the fearful odds, nor did he waste precious time, but, with a roar like a young bull, he landed in the midst of the astounded coolies, and bit, and fought, and kicked, and scratched until he actually cleared

a space around his prostrate friend. But what avails one man against twelve, even though he be strong of purpose, and uses the weapons of the feline tribe. A cruel blow from a stout bamboo staff, handily wielded, caught the valiant youth on the head, and he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Mixed with the roar and din of startled blood in his brain, sounded the echoes of a long, wailing cry, and then came—oblivion!

(To be continued.)

## ON STEEDS OF STEEL:

OR,

THE TOUR OF THE CHALLENGE CLUB.\*

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I RIDE AWAY TO THE RESCUE.

WE stopped talking, and without knowing exactly why, I felt that that on coming murmur of voices boded ill for the cottage and its occupants.

"What is it?" I said then to Mills; but he had risen and gone to the end of the porch nearest the road.

I followed him, and this brought me so close to the approaching throng that there was no need to question further. I could hear only too plainly the words they were muttering:

"Darling! Darling Where is the scoundrel that has stolen our money? We want something for that of which he has robbed us. If we can't find—why— Here the words changed into a threatening mumble, and the next instant the cottage was surrounded by some fifty people, I should think.

They were nearly all men, rough looking characters, too, and it's my opinion that the majority of them weren't depositors in the bank at all; only tramps who had joined the mob for the sake of any pillage that might fall in their way.

"Quick, Hasbrouck." Mills whispered to me as soon as we became convinced of the meaning of the visit, "run in and telephone to Bolton for the police. You'll find the 'phone under the stairs, and see that Marian keeps out of sight."

I wondered if the cottage would be blazing before I succeeded in ringing up "central," but I didn't hesitate by reason of the possibility. I found the instrument, and then without waiting to hunt for the book, told "central" to give me the police headquarters at Bolton at once.

While I stood waiting for the answer, I heard a heavy step on the piazza outside and a gruff voice talking to Mills, for every now and then Jack would say: "Mr. Darling is not here. This is no way for you to do. You are law breakers yourselves now."

Then the gruff voice would go on and say something more in a threatening tone, out of which I would catch the words: "Justice," "hungry children," and "paying back."

But now I realized that I had waited for a long time for an answer and rang "central" up again. No response.

"The wire must be cut!" was the thought that flashed into my mind, and with it came the recollection of my wheel.

It was out in the stable, where Mills had left it. If I could get to it and manage to reach the road without being intercepted, I might yet be able to bring help in time from the neighbors, if not from the police.

\*Begun in No. 443 of THE ARGOSY.

I had always been boastful of the utility of the steed of steel in moments of emergency, and here was an opportunity to prove my point.

Hurrying back to the dining room I reconnoitered the approach to the kitchen to see if that side of the house was unguarded. No; there were four or five men watching the two doors there. I wondered if they really thought Mr. Darling was concealed about the premises; and, if he was,

must have been the servants' quarters. Just outside the window of this was a shed supported by two posts, forming a sort of porch in front of the kitchen door.

"Do you think you can get to the ground from here?" the old lady whispered, as we peered cautiously out at the crowd below.

"I know I can, as far as the climbing is concerned," I answered. "But for the matter of that I might just as well



"THAT'S WHERE THE FAMOUS BANK ROBBERY WAS," I HEARD THE OLDER MAN SAY.

and they caught him, if they believed he carried the stolen money sewed up in his vest and would hand it over then and there.

But such surmising wasn't going to help me find a way out, and while I was debating just what I had better do, I ran against some one in the dark, for all the lights in the cottage had been put out.

It was a woman, and the next minute I found it was Mrs. McDowell.

"Oh, Will Hasbrouck, is this you?" she whispered. "Isn't this fearful? Marian wants to go to a window and speak to the people, but Jabez and Mr. McKie won't let her. They say they might shoot her. And what we shall do I don't know. I heard the telephone bell—did you send for the police?"

"I tried to," I answered, "but some one must have cut the wire. If I could only get out I'd jump on my wheel and—"

"Let me think if I can't help you, young man," broke in the old lady. "Come up stairs with me. You can—can shinny down a post, can't you?"

"Try me," was my confident response, and we went up to the second floor together.

Arrived here, she led the way to a room in the wing that

walk out of the front door down stairs. They can capture me in the one case as easily as in the other."

"Not if we carry out my plan properly," was the prompt answer.

"And what's that?" I demanded, considerably mystified.

"Why, you must get out on the shed here and act all the time as if you were trying to get in. I'll keep forcing you back with—with—yes, with the broom. Wait a minute till I get one," and the old lady disappeared, leaving me quite dazzled with the brilliancy of her scheme.

She was back in a minute with the broom, and then seizing an opportunity when the attention of the crowd below seemed attracted momentarily to the front of the house, I scrambled out on the roof of the shed, and at once began to make apparently frantic efforts to get in at the window.

"Halloo," prompted the old lady, flourishing the broom stick; "that will throw them off the track still more."

So I began to shout: "Open up there," "I've got you now," while Mrs. McDowell laid about her with the broom in such realistic fashion that more than once I received a crack on the head, but fortunately only with the bristles.

It was no easy part I had to play: making seemingly frantic endeavors to get back in the window and yet eager to slide down the pillar and be off after help. But that broom



was a wonderful help and finally I allowed myself to be forced back to the very edge of the shed.

Then a happy thought struck me,

"We'll try it on the other side of the house, men," I called down to the crowd below, and hugging the post with my knees, I slid quickly to the ground.

Without giving anybody a chance to examine me very closely, as indeed it was rather difficult to do, the moon not having yet risen, I dashed off around the corner, and as about fifteen or twenty others did the same thing, it was easy for me to fall back and slip off to the barn when I had got them well started.

There was nobody around the stable and remembering where I had seen Mills leave my machine, I went straight to the spot, managed with some little trouble to get it out by the back door and then run it down the hill to the road alongside the hedge through the tall grass, now saturated with dew.

I rushed in through the break in the hedge made by the fallen tree and mounting in a trice, was off like a shot in the direction of Bolton.

I hadn't ridden that day, so I felt quite fresh, and made my wheels spin over the ground at a better rate than they had gone thus far during the tour.

"I wonder if it will do me any good to stop in at any place on the road and let them know what is going on at the Darlings'?" I asked myself.

I speedily decided that it would not. Even granted that anybody would be willing to interfere, under the circumstances, one family could not do much and I would only lose time. So I decided to press on to Bolton and secure the services of the police.

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

I HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN MAKING MYSELF UNDERSTOOD.

IT was lucky I was riding a Safety. So intent was I on reaching my destination in the shortest possible order, that I paid no heed to ruts or stones, and although I didn't time myself, I don't believe it was much beyond fifteen minutes after leaving the Darlings' that I sighted Dr. Bemis's house in Bolton.

"And now to find police headquarters," I told myself.

Deciding to ask the location of this department of the city government of the first person I met, I presently ran my wheel in toward the curb and dismounted just in front of a man who was coming towards me along the left hand sidewalk.

"I beg pardon sir," I began, "but can you oblige me by telling me where I can find the station house."

The man reeled off towards the fence as I mentioned the locality, and not till then did I notice that he was drunk.

"Do—do you wish to in—in—sult me, sir?" he demanded, straightening up with that sudden assumption of dignity that would be funny if it were not so utterly pitiable.

"No, of course I don't," I replied. "I didn't ask for the station house for you, but for myself."

"Don't you go home till morning; take my advice; I've been there," and with this friendly admonition, the intoxicated individual continued on his devious way.

"This won't do," I reflected. "There's three minutes gone, and nobody else in sight. Never saw such a quiet town. I'll go in here and inquire."

"In here" referred to a gate that opened into the garden of a modest little house in front of which I had had my encounter with the drunken man. Pushing my wheel in ahead of me, I hurried up the flag walk and pulled the handle of the bell, which was placed in the center of the

door. The latter was opened so suddenly that I impulsively started back.

There was no hall; the entrance led right into the sitting room, in which a woman of about forty five was pacing, holding an open letter clinched in one hand, and apparently in no very amiable frame of mind.

"Ah, ungrateful one, I thought you'd come round," she was saying, and it was evident she was addressing me, as there was nobody else in the room. "But I opened the door simply for the pleasure of shutting it in your—"

She had suddenly come straight towards me, just as I took a step forward into the light. Then she saw who it was and gasped—"Oh, it's not you, Gustave!" and sank down on an ottoman, all of a tremble.

"No, it's not Gustave," I replied, "and I beg your pardon for disturbing you, but I only wanted to know if you could tell me the way to the nearest police station."

"And you ask this of me?" She had risen to her feet with a return of all her angry animation. "What reason have you to suppose that I have dealings with the police. This is—"

I didn't stop to find out if she agreed with the intoxicated gentleman in thinking it an insult. Both from considerations of time and personal security, I turned about and hastened back to the gate, where I was lucky enough to run into a policeman who was talking to the kitchen maid in the next house.

I ascertained from him that I could leave my message in the next street, and was soon mounted again on my wheel, trying to make up for lost time.

"I wonder what that woman's Gustave had done?" I asked myself as I glided along. "I think any way he must have written that letter. Guess he was a lover who'd thrown her over, and she thought he'd repent."

But now I reached the police station, and found the sergeant to be a benevolent old gentleman, who took down in writing my statement about the condition of affairs at the Darlings' without any of the excitement I had pictured to myself would wait on the reception of the news.

"They will not dare resort to violence," he said in answer to my query as to whether he did not think the case a very urgent one. "They only want to show their feelings, that is all. But I will send down a couple of officers," and he turned to give the necessary orders.

I wanted to ask if any late information had arrived concerning the whereabouts of Mr. Darling, but thought it would be wiser in me not to mention the matter. Besides, I was eager to get back, so I hurried off and was soon in the saddle again.

In spite of the police sergeant's reassuring words, I looked fearfully ahead of me on the road back, dreading to see a bright glare lighting up the heavens, betokening the firing of the Darling cottage. They say all things come to those who wait, and, although I didn't do any lingering, my heart suddenly popped into my throat, when, rounding a turn, I saw a glare on the edge of the horizon.

"They've done it!" was my despairing thought, and I had awful visions of poor Hugh roasting alive from inability to leave his bed.

"And of course I'll have to be the one to break it to the family," I went on reflecting, and then I guess I became kind of hysterical, for the next minute I found myself laughing over the story of the Irishman, who, being requested to break the news gently to the wife of a fellow laborer concerning her husband's death, did so by offering to bet her five dollars that she was a widow.

The next instant I had an actually present cause for mirth,

as I discovered my conflagration to be nothing but the rising moon.

And now I began to pass many groups of pedestrians on the road, wending their way back towards Bolton.

From the appearance of some of them, and from snatches of conversation I overheard from others, I presently arrived at the conclusion that they were members of the mob I had left besieging the cottage.

They were quiet enough now, however, and I wondered greatly what had wrought the change.

When presently I reached the house on the hill again, I found all still about it. There were lights in two or three of the windows, and Mac was waiting up on the piazza for me.

"Didn't you get the police?" he asked.

"Yes; but there's nothing further to do now, is there?" I answered. "How did you get rid of that crowd?"

"Miss Marian did it," explained Mac. "You know she was anxious to go out and talk to them all the time, but we wouldn't let her. But soon after you went away they began to hammer at the doors in awful fashion, and somebody broke a window, and then that girl said she must speak to them; that they couldn't do much worse than they'd done already, and that she felt she might be able to quiet them."

"And did she go out right among them?" I asked, breathlessly interested.

"No, we wouldn't let her do that," answered Mac, "so she stood on that little balcony in the second story on the front. And by Jove, Will, you never saw a girl look as pretty as she did, standing there in her white gown, with her golden hair blowing in the wind, and such a look of courage and confidence on her face!"

"What did she say?" I demanded, wishing I had been there to hear.

"She said she was sorry for them, even though she knew it wasn't her father's fault. Oh, she just stood up for him, I tell you! And she told them that everything that was right would be done by her family, and she wound up by asking them if they wouldn't go away quietly for her sake."

"And did anybody answer her back?" I inquired.

"Not a man, except to say now and then, 'Yes, that's so, or 'That's fair enough.' But put your wheel away and come on up to Hugh; he'll want to hear all about your adventures."

"Somebody's got to wait up for the officers, though," I objected, wondering if there was any penalty attached to sending policemen on a wild goose chase.

"Oh, I guess they'll go away of themselves when they see it all quiet," rejoined Mac, adding significantly: "Hugh's feeling a good deal better tonight, and I've got a plan for getting away tomorrow that I think it would be wise to carry into effect."

"I'm ready for a move at any time," I responded, as I ran my machine into the hall.

Then we bolted the door and went up stairs, for it had been arranged that Mac and Steve were to stay at the cottage all night.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW DRESS.

WHETHER the officers from Bolton arrived that night or not, I never knew. We certainly heard no signs of them before we went to bed, and after that, nothing roused any of us until Mrs. McDowell went through the hall at eight o'clock the next morning ringing the bell vigorously. My impression is that they fell in with the dis-

persed mob, and concluded that they might as well return to the station house.

Hugh insisted on getting up and going down to breakfast, declaring that he felt all right. This was joyful news to the rest of us Challengers. We felt that we ought positively not to stay any longer with the Darlings', and had planned to take the Albany day boat up the river when she came along about ten o'clock.

"That will give Hugh a chance to keep on resting, and yet we shall be continuing on in the direction we had planned the tour would take us," was the way Mac had argued.

Marian did not appear at breakfast, but I was glad to notice that old Mr. McDowell was very cordial to us all. He had evidently given up the notion that we were newspaper reporters in disguise.

There was no word from Mr. Darling; only a telegram from his wife, stating that she had gone on into the northern part of the State to find some friends she remembered having heard her husband speak of years before, but whose exact address she did not know.

The doctor arrived about half past nine, and after examining Hugh's ankle, gave his permission to our departure by steamboat.

"But don't let him attempt to ride his wheel before tomorrow," he cautioned us.

Dinsmore paid the fees, and then we began to get our things together preparatory to departure. The river was close by, and there was a landing not over half a mile from the cottage.

"I declare for't I'm sorry to see you go," said Mrs. McDowell, when we came to bid her good by.

I couldn't truthfully say I was sorry to leave. Under the circumstances the house had a depressing effect on one's spirits, which made you feel all the while that you had no business to be there.

Just as we were going out of the door Miss Marian came half way down the stairs. She looked so haggard and despairing, and yet with that sweet beauty showing through it all, that I felt like taking a vow, in the style of the old time knights, to serve her.

But none of us did anything so foolish. We simply took the hand she held out to us, thanked her for her generous hospitality and then went off quickly. And none of us said a word till after we had trundled our machines down the hill and had reached the road.

"I'd give my wheel to be able to get that girl out of this awful trouble," declared Steve, and as he was an ardent cyclist and was universally supposed not to care two straws for the fair sex, this was certainly an indication of strong feeling.

How much further the rest of us would have gone in the same direction there is no telling, but just then I caught sight of the boat rounding a point not quarter of a mile away, and for the next five minutes all our faculties were absorbed in the endeavor to catch it.

I relieved Hugh of his wheel, thereby nearly causing a fatal delay, for in rushing down the hill with a machine on each side of me, I became confused in guiding, the bicycles came together in front of me, leaving me to sprawl on top of them before I could stop myself or let go. Mac came to disengage me, while Steve kept on with Hugh, to beg the captain to wait.

As I said afterwards, you would have thought the fate of a condemned criminal depended on our getting that boat.

"Why under the sun didn't you fellows ride those things if you were in such a hurry?" the captain wanted to know as, breathless and dust covered, we crossed the gangplank.

"Because one of us couldn't," I replied briefly, disdaining to explain further.

The weather was pretty warm, and after our scramble to catch the boat we were warmer.

"Don't you get cold, above all things, Hugh," I said, as we stowed our machines away on the lower deck, and then looked about for a spot in which to settle ourselves.

"How can a fellow catch cold in his ankle?" Dinsmore returned rather scornfully.

"I don't say you *can*, but you *might*," I rejoined, and then I proceeded to pick out a nice warm nook in the upper cabin where we could find our choice of seats, because nobody would stay in the stuffy place.

The fellows rebelled, but I was firm.

"You and Steve, Mac, can go where you like," I told them, "but I'm going to stay here with Hugh till he gets cooled off."

"Cooled off!" echoed poor Dinsmore, "Bring a fellow to a roasting pan and tell him you're going to keep him there till he cools off!"

However, I noticed that he was glad enough to sit down anywhere to rest, and we presently became so interested in watching the passengers on the deck that we forgot about the state of the temperature.

There was a couple, who were evidently bride and groom, that afforded us no end of entertainment; they tried to appear utterly indifferent to each other till they forgot about it for a time, when a soft light would come into their eyes, and they would draw close together, so close that Hugh and I nudged one another and held our breath in expectation of what might happen next. But they would always recollect where they were just in time and draw away with such a funny jump that once Hugh laughed out, and two or three people looked in at the window to see what the fun was.

Then there was a little girl who ate candy and then pawed her sticky fingers all over her mother's gayly striped silk dress as she sat in a rocking chair, reading "Married for Spite," and paying no more attention to the child, or not as much probably as if she had been a character in the novel.

Steve and Mac promenaded the boat from end to end and then came and sat down by us. We told them what we had found to watch, and we were lying in wait for the next juxtaposition of the lovers when Mac suddenly pulled me by the arm and whispered:

"Who's that young fellow, Will, standing there in a derby hat with his overcoat over his arm? See, he's talking to a man who's pointing out the beauties of the scenery to him. I'm sure I've seen the younger one somewhere before, but I can't possibly place him."

It was the same with me. Then we referred the matter to Steve and Hugh. The former didn't remember him at all, but Dinsmore exclaimed at once: "Why, it's the peddler!"

We all recognized him then, though he was dressed so differently.

"He seems to have exchanged one sort of tin for another," remarked Hugh facetiously. "I wonder if he remembers us?"

"I'll saunter past him and see," I rejoined. "You remember, Mac, you thought his peddler rig was only a disguise."

I strolled out on the after deck, but just then his eyes were turned towards the shore. We were passing Bolton at the time, and the older man was speaking about the town.

"That's where the famous bank mystery is," I heard him say. "Very queer, too, that a man like Darling should go off and leave his family and go off that way. I'm more than

half inclined to believe that office boy of his—ah, my friend, does the motion of the boat make you ill?"

I turned quickly and saw our tin peddler clutching at a post, his face as white as the foam our paddles churned up.

"Ye-yes," he stammered. "I think I'll go inside," and he disappeared on the instant.

I hurried back to the boys.

"Fellows," I announced in a husky whisper, "I believe we can clear Marian Darling's father if we go about it carefully."

(To be continued.)

#### PUTTING A PEN TO BED.

We read the other day of a pearl that became sick, and, on the recommendation of a jeweler, was put into retirement until it recovered its luster. It seems that pearls are not the only inanimate objects subject to the failing of mortals. According to the *San Francisco Post*, gold pens get weary of work, and are benefited by being laid off for a while:

"There, that pen is tired, and will have to rest a month or so."

The speaker was the mortgage clerk of one of the principal savings banks in this city, and as he spoke he carefully wiped a large gold pen and put it away in a case.

A *Post* reporter, who had just entered the bank to have some back dividends entered in his book, overheard the remark, and smiled.

"Oh, you needn't laugh," said the clerk, "for it is the true business I am telling you. Gold pens have to rest now and then. Here I have, I suppose, two dozen gold pens. If I use one for several weeks or so, I find it will not write to my satisfaction. Sometimes it is too soft and sometimes it is too hard, or the ink does not seem to flow well.

"For a long time I could not find out what the matter was, but at last I went to a jeweler, who, after examining my pens, said, 'Give 'em a rest, and they will be as good as new.'"

He then explained that the constant use of the pen had the same effect on the metal as is the case when a razor is used with great frequency.

"Some sort of electro-magnetic action takes place in the metal, which has a tendency to bring into parallel lines all the particles, and in that condition a razor cannot be made to hold edge, and a pen is equally refractory.

"If the razor is laid aside for a time, the particles of metal gradually resume a more or more or less confused arrangement, and the razor takes on and retains a keen edge.

"It is the same way with a gold pen. Now if, when one of my pens gets to acting badly, I lay it aside for a month or so, it will be all right again. That's why I said that pen was tired, and wanted a rest."

#### THE WEATHER DRAWS THE LINE.

In these days of scientific wonders it seems strange to read of the failure of attempts to coerce nature. We have compelled her to tell us, with more or less accuracy, when she is going to smile and when weep upon us, and great hopes have been entertained that a method would be discovered by which the weeping could be done to order. But an article in the *Boston Transcript* gives a discouraging account of a recent attempt in this direction:

The initial experiments at Washington to compel the clouds to weep when they don't want to, do not appear to have been attended with success. Three balloons were exploded at an altitude of five hundred feet, by means of an electric spark transmitted through eight hundred feet of wire connected with them. The interesting fact that balloons can be exploded by electricity may be considered as established to scientific satisfaction. But the rain would not fall, and the heavens were as much like brass after the explosions as they were before. Perhaps the scientists didn't explode balloons enough, but at all events the experiment did not throw much light on the practicability of Senator Farwell's project for compelling rain by the firing of explosives in mid air, to test which Congress appropriated \$7000.

#### SHOULD HAVE BEEN JAILED FOR THE PUN.

GIBBONS—"I say, Hanks, did you take in the balloon ascension while in Paris?"

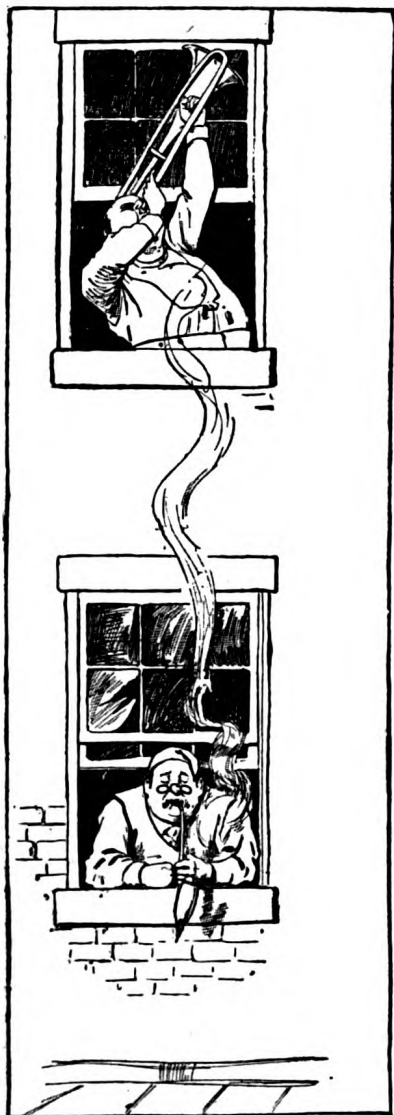
HANKS—"No. Did you?"

GIBBONS—"Yes; and, with my usual luck, I fell out and landed in the river. Then I was arrested and sent to the lunatic asylum.

HANKS—"Lunatic asylum! for falling out of a balloon?"

GIBBONS (smiling)—"No; for being in-Seine."—*Smith, Gray & Co.'s Monthly*.

## THE POSSIBILITIES—



I.

HERR BLOWLOUD plays the trombone on the third floor, while Haus smokes his pipe at the window below.

## A HINT AT 12 P.M.

MAUD—"Do you feel the cold?"

CHOLLIE—"No, why do you ask?"

MAUD—"O, I don't know. I was just wondering whether you do or not, as it is very cold outside."

## THE GROSS MATERIALISM OF OUR AGE.

SHE—"Ah, Mr. Bussett, there is one thing that money can't buy."

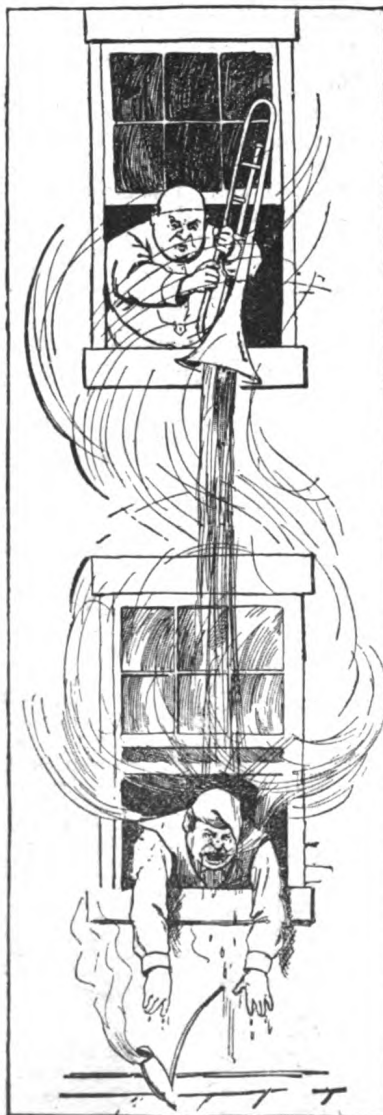
HE—"What is that—a girl who has plenty of it herself?"

## A MISTAKE.

HER words were fraught  
With—so I thought—  
Meanings sweet as honey;  
I loved her so  
Like Romeo  
When she called me "sunny."

But, oh! my eyes!  
Disgust! Surprise!  
(You may think it funny)  
She turned me off,  
It was a scoff.  
She had called me "sonny."

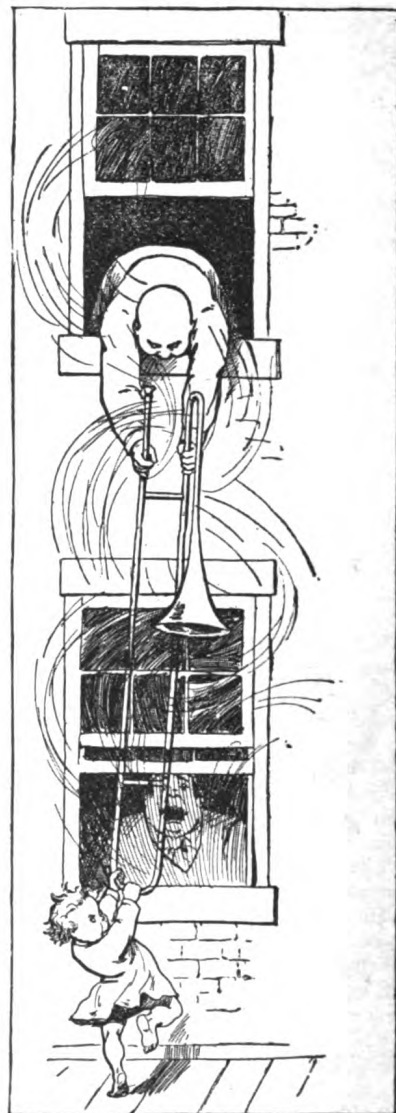
*Tom Hall.*



II.

Herr Blowloud is alarmed at the quantity of smoke, and takes prompt measures to put out the supposed fire.

## —OF A TROMBONE.



III.

Then with great presence of mind Herr Blowloud proceeds to lower his offspring to a place of safety.

## PRACTICAL PHYSIOGNOMY.

GRIGGS—"Why, that fellow's face would carry him anywhere."

DIGGS—"Yes, indeed. You know he got into jail last week."

## A SUDDEN MOVE.

STRANGER (in Iowa)—"Does a man named Stackhouse live here?"

RESIDENT—"No. He moved into the next State."

STRANGER—"Well, I never. Told me he had settled here for life. Must have moved on an impulse, didn't he?"

RESIDENT—"No. On a cyclone."