

THE ARGOSY

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BATTLING WITH FORTUNE.

By Matthew White, Jr.

Author of "Norman Brooke," "On Steeds of Steel," etc.

CHAPTER I.

SOME LUCK TESTS.

IT was New Year's Eve, and the young people at the Stebbins mansion had the dining room to themselves. It was not only the thirty first of December, but Jack Stebbins's sixteenth birthday as well. So it had been agreed to hold a grand union celebration.

"Let's make it a triple alliance and have some Hallow E'en tricks," proposed Phil Harley, during a lull in the festivities while everybody was cooling off after a game of Boston. "The last night of the year always seems sort of spooky to me, so I move we have Mollie get us a plate of flour, a knife, and a gold ring, and we'll see who's to have the best luck."

This suggestion was received with favor, and Mollie Stebbins soon produced from the kitchen a plate of the powdery compound, into which Margaret Gray dropped her ring, whereupon Phil stirred the mass briskly around with the knife, and then proceeded to pat it smooth.

"Now, Percy," he said, turning to his neighbor on the left, "you begin. Take this knife and cut two strokes just as if you were dividing up a pie. No, no fair taking such a big slice. There, now poke your knife around in the center of your triangle and see if you feel the ring. No, you're counted out. Now, Bernie, you're next."

Bernard Gray was equally unsuccessful, and the plate was passed to Churchill Webb.

Churchill was the same age as Jack Stebbins, but by reason of being a pronounced dude, seemed much older. As he wore abnormally high collars and was continually adjusting his cuffs, Phil had dubbed him "Collars and Cuffs," the nickname applied to the eldest son of the Prince of Wales. And Churchill, who was a good deal of an Anglomaniac, seemed actually to be proud of the sobriquet.

He smiled when Phil called out: "Now, Collars and Cuffs, put your luck to the test, and remember if you strike the ring you must put your face in the plate and pick it out with your teeth, or the charm is broken."

Churchill gingerly took the knife, but he had not

got half through his first cut when there was a clink, and a great shout went up from the deeply interested onlookers. Young Webb blushed at his success, and then, pushing back his chair, stood up and prepared to carry out with great dignity and grace the second part of the programme.

"Remember to keep your hands behind your back," Phil admonished him, and all leaned eagerly forward to watch proceedings.

Slowly Churchill lowered his head to the plate till at last his nose was buried in the flour. And just at this instant Jack Stebbins wickedly shouted

"Don't forget to mutter your charm," observed Phil, as all watched her in eager expectancy.

"Call upon your fairy godmother to guide your finger aright," added Jack.

"Remember now," explained Russell, "that water means no husband at all, milk a happy marriage, and vinegar a tyrant of a man."

Mollie circled her finger in the air three times over the three "goblets of destiny," as Percy called them, and then plumped it down into the milk. She was about to tear the handkerchief from her eyes when Russell silenced the exclamations of

the others and said: "You must tell us now by the taste which it is."

Mollie slipped her finger into her mouth and then exclaimed in a disgusted tone: "Water."

A shout went up at this and Phil wanted to know if the Stebbins's dairymaid had many pumps on his farm. But the laugh was turned against him when his own finger went into the water.

"I don't care," he cried. "I never did intend to marry." But he looked disappointed, nevertheless.

Bernie and Percy both struck the water, and Margaret had the "ladies' luck" of getting into the milk. Then it was Russell's turn. Nobody had touched the vinegar yet, and all held their breath as Russ's finger hesitated for an instant over the fateful glass. Then he

moved it with a sudden change of purpose till it was just ready to descend into the milk, then changed his mind again and plunged it into the vinegar with a splash.

"Taste it! taste it!" cried several voices at once, and he did so with a wry face.

"Well, it seems a little rough, old man," remarked Jack as he removed the handkerchief, "that the fellow who proposed the test should be the one to suffer the most by it."

"Oh, I don't mind," rejoined Russell. "I don't believe in good and bad luck, except to have fun with, as we've been doing tonight."

"Why, Russ, how can you say such a thing?" exclaimed Phil. "You who just won the prize for speaking at the Gram."

"I hope you don't think that was pure luck, Phil?" returned Russell, while Percy gave the luckless Harley a pinch in the side to remind him that he had put his foot into it.

"Oh, of course I didn't mean that you didn't deserve it," answered Phil, getting red over the wrong impression he had managed to convey.



ALL HELD THEIR BREATH AS RUSS'S FINGER HESITATED FOR AN INSTANT OVER THE FATEFUL GLASS.

"But you know you've had the advantage of taking lessons of Professor Buskin and—and if your father wasn't well enough off to let you do that, you might not have been able to—arrive at such a stage of perfection so soon."

"Your apology is accepted, my dear boy," put in Jack, patting him on the back. "I think I have a faint glimmering of what he is trying to get at, Russ, but then he was unfortunate in selecting his example. What you meant to say, Phil, was that we are all of us lucky not to have been born Hottentots or rag pickers, or—"

"Or Chinamen," finished Churchill Webb. "I've always been so thankful I wasn't one, because they all look alike, and never have any whiskers, and—"

But his further explanations of his reasons for gratitude at not having come into the world an almond eyed Celestial were drowned in the shrieks of laughter that greeted his reference to whiskers, for it was a well known fact that Churchill's one absorbing ambition was to sport a properly pointed mustache.

The striking of the clock on the mantel brought a sudden hush on the party, and all looked at one another solemnly till the twelfth silvery chime had sounded. Then such a babel of "Happy New Year!" as there was, and a confusion of crossing hands as each strove to be first to wish his friend the compliments of the season!

The party broke up soon after that, and as Margaret, Russell and Bernie walked through the quiet street toward their home, Russell was unwontedly silent. He was thinking of what Phil Harley had said. He was "lucky" in one sense of the term. So were all the young people of the company this evening. For had they not all comfortable homes, even luxurious ones, and was it owing to any efforts of their own that they were thus fortunate?

"What a lovely night," said Margaret, looking up at the stars, as they waited at the top of the stoop while Russell got out his key.

"The new year starts in well, doesn't it?" added Bernard.

Then the door was thrown open, and there was their mother hurrying down the stairs with such a look on her face that their hearts stood still for an instant as they went forward to meet her.

CHAPTER II.

A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION.

"YOUR father! Russell, you must go for the doctor at once. I was just about to ring for a messenger."

Mrs. Gray spoke these words with her arms clasped closely about Margaret, who was begging in an entreating undertone to know what had happened.

"We don't know what it is. Don't wait to hear more, but hurry off at once and bring the doctor back with you, Russell."

Almost before his mother had finished speaking Russ had opened and closed the door again and was speeding off through the stillness of the new year's early morn. And his thoughts seemed to keep pace with his feet. He did not recollect ever to have seen his mother so agitated before. What could have befallen his father? Was it an accident?

Dr. Fenner lived not far away, but Russ was obliged to spend a little time at the door before he gained admittance. The doctor put his head out of the window when he heard the ring, then came down himself and let his caller in.

"Mother said I was not to come back without you," added Russ, when he had explained his errand.

"Wait in the parlor then and I will be ready in five minutes," said the doctor.

Russ stepped into the gloom of the great drawing room and sat down on the first chair he stumbled against. He remembered that period of waiting and suspense for weeks afterward. There was a marble figure of Niobe over in the corner by the window. It loomed up out of the darkness now like a ghost, and while he sat looking at it a tall clock just behind him tolled one in a deep, vibrating tone.

How different he had felt when he had last heard a clock strike. What a pleasant evening they had had at the Stebbinses! That was less than sixty minutes ago. If—if anything happened they would recall that he, and Margaret and Bernard were there, and say how dreadful it was, that while—

"I am ready now, Russell."

Russ was doubly glad to hear the doctor's voice. He did not like to carry out the train of thought in which his anxious mind had started him. The two set out and walked quickly through the frosty night. Of course Russ could give no particulars concerning his father's case, and presently the doctor remarked, just as Margaret had done, what a superb night it was. But Russ was not disposed to talk about it. He could only think of his father, and for a minute it seemed to him that Dr. Fenner must be heartless to speak of the weather at such a time. Then he recollected that a physician must live constantly in an atmosphere of trouble in a certain sense, and that he could therefore be excused for wanting to live it up once in a while, especially since the troubles were not his own.

Bernard was watching for them from the window, and he opened the door before Russ could get out his key. The elder brother reflected that the case must be very serious indeed or their mother would have insisted on the fourteen year old boy going to bed.

"Bring the doctor up stairs with you, Russell," Mrs. Gray called down over the bannisters, and without stopping to take off his overcoat, Russ led the way to the second floor and then followed his mother into the room at the head of the stairs.

Margaret sat by the bed, her hat still on, holding her father's hand tightly clasped in hers. He lay there under the covers, but he did not look like a sick man, and yet there was something strange about his face. What it was Russ could not at once determine.

Then his mother said, "Howard, here is the doctor," and Russ thought this was odd, as the doctor was standing directly in front of him when she spoke.

"Ah, doctor," said Mr. Gray, with an effort to assume his usual cheerful manner; "I can't say that I am glad to see—"

Here he stopped suddenly and an expression of intense pain crossed his face. Margaret left her place by the bed and crossed rapidly over the room to her brother.

"Oh, Russ," she whispered, "think of it. Father can't see."

"Margaret, what do you mean?"

Russel looked at his sister incredulously. If he had told her that their father had been smitten with an apoplectic stroke or heart disease, he would not have been nearly so much surprised.

Margaret drew him into Mrs. Gray's dressing room adjoining, and pressing him gently down to a seat on a chair that stood by the window, kept one hand on his shoulder as she went on in a low voice:

"Mother told me about it while you were away. I never heard of anything so sudden. You know papa was perfectly well before we went away."

"Yes, he was reading aloud to mother in the library." Russ mentioned a circumstance which he felt his sister knew as well as he did; but speaking of that happy time seemed the next best thing to bringing it back.

"Well, they went to bed about half past ten, and at twelve the whistle blowing and the bell ringing to greet the New Year woke them both up. Mother's cough troubled her a little and she asked father if he would not light the gas and see if he could find her drops on the bureau. 'Why, it's terribly dark,' he said, as he groped about. 'I can't even see the window.' Mother was worried at once then, for she could see a star off on the horizon very distinctly."

"And didn't father feel any pain?" Russ inquired at this point.

"No, that is the queer part of it. Mother got up right away and led him back to the bed. Then she lit the gas, and oh, Russ, he couldn't see a thing. He can't now. He couldn't see me when I was sitting there beside him."

Margaret broke down here and began to cry softly on her brother's shoulder.

"Don't, Margaret," he pleaded. "It can't be as bad as you think. It may be only a film or something that will go away again. We'll go in now and see what the doctor says. Don't let father see that you—"

Russ caught himself up short. It seemed impossible to realize that his father, however ill he might be, would not be able to look upon his family.

"And can we do nothing, doctor?" their mother was saying as they reentered the room.

"Nothing, Mrs. Gray," was the physician's reply. "It would be cruel to you both to give false hopes. Such cases as these are very rare, when the hemorrhage forms entirely on the inside and results in the sudden shutting off of the sight, but they have been recorded. But you may have this thought to console you; even had you foreknown this there was nothing that could be done to prevent it."

Mrs. Gray started to speak, but Russ saw her reel slightly; then he sprang forward just in time to catch her before she fell in a faint. Under the doctor's instructions she was soon revived, and her first words were: "I am all right now, doctor. I do not need to keep you from your rest longer."

The physician's lips trembled behind his mustache.

"I wish I could help you," was all he said, then with a quick hand grasp to her and Russell, he went out and the family were alone with their great sorrow.

Leaving Margaret with her mother, Russ went over to the bedside. Mr. Gray lay there, his eyes open and roving about the room, deep lines in the forehead that was usually so unruined.

"Father," said the son, "tell me some way I can help you. You know my voice?"

"Yes, Russell my boy. You can help me by helping the others. I can bear it for myself, but with you all depending on me it seems as if I must rebel. To feel so strong, and yet to be so weak, so helpless."

"I am fast getting to be a man, father," went on Russ. "I am sixteen. I will give up anything, everything to be of service to you and them."

"God bless you, my son," and the afflicted one put up his hand, and with a heart almost bursting Russ guided it till it rested on his own brow.

"Now you must all get to bed," went on Mr. Gray after an instant. "It is very late. Ah, I forgot, my children. I haven't yet wished you a Happy New Year."

But the poor man's voice broke in ut-

tering the words which now seemed a mockery, and when Russ and Margaret went up stairs to their rooms a few moments later, the former could not chide his sister for the sobs that escaped her at every step.

CHAPTER III.

FACING THE FUTURE.

THE Grays had lived in New York City since the birth of Bernard.

They came from a town in the western part of the State, where Mr. Gray had formed the acquaintance of Godfrey Ogden, of the wholesale house of Stokes, Ogden & Bock. Mr. Ogden had offered him a fine position with his firm if he would come to the metropolis. So the removal was made, and Howard Gray's abilities had quickly won for him a promotion that within a decade had given him his present post with the house, netting him a salary of eight thousand a year.

But of this there was scarcely anything saved. The Grays had lived well, as good living went in West Bridge-water; they wished to live equally well in New York, and to do so required all the difference in the income. And it was of this that Howard Gray was thinking with wakeful but unseeing eyes through the remainder of that night which had brought to him his great affliction.

What was to become of them all, now that the wage earner had been forced to drop out of the business as completely as if death had cut him down? Aye, if it had been death it would have been better in a material sense, for those depending upon him. His life was covered by a ten thousand dollar insurance policy, which, in the present circumstances, was of course, not available.

To be sure he owned the house, and had—yes, how much would he have left in the bank after all the Christmas bills were paid, he wondered? He must look up that matter the first thing in the morning, he told himself, and then set his teeth together in fierce agony as he realized that he could no longer investigate anything of the sort himself.

"And Ogden must be informed tomorrow," he recalled, and with this reflection he recalled the fact that Mr. Ogden's sister had lately married a man whom rumor had it was anxious to obtain an opening with the house with which his brother in law was connected.

"He can be put in my place now," Mr. Gray murmured, and then he tried again to calculate about how much would be left from his quarter's salary, just paid, after all outstanding obligations were met.

"I must get Russell to do it for me," he decided. "Poor boy, this will be a sad taking into confidence for him, I fear."

As to Russ, he slept but little. He did not feel the need of rest just yet. He wanted all the time of consciousness he could get in which to accustom himself to the dread calamity that had overtaken one so dear to him. But at last he dozed off from sheer inability to resist any longer nature's requirement. He woke with the sunshine streaming into his pretty room, glistening on the binding of the books in his library and dancing in merry flashes on the gleaming metal work of the rifle hung above the mantelpiece.

A bag something in shape like a post-man's, that depended from one end of the gun, reminded him that this was New Year's day, the date of the long looked forward to paper chase. He was to be the hare, and had promised to be at Percy Bender's in season for an early start at ten.

"It must be nearly nine now," he told himself, "judging from that flood

of sunshine," and he turned over to take his watch out from under the pillow. In doing so the recollection of what had happened in the night came over him like the sudden sweeping down in a peaceful valley of a storm cloud, and he dropped forward on his face—suffering for one instant the agony of learning of the thing all over again. Then:

"I must accustom myself to getting up early always now," was the practical thought that caused him to leap out of bed, regardless of the time, and hurry into his clothes—which was not the outing suit he had expected to don.

"I'll call a messenger and send word to Percy, along with the bag, that I can't come," he decided, as he put on his coat. Then he started to reach up for the bag and paused, on tiptoe, his hand lying flat against the chimney piece, while his brows knitted themselves in deep thought.

He had suddenly remembered what his father had said to him in those sad early hours of his New Year's Day; he would no longer be able to go to the office, his salary would cease; they must each learn to wait on themselves, for messengers would be a luxury, and perhaps—perhaps Bernard might have to be one in uniform himself.

Russ suddenly turned away and looked at his watch. It was just nine. He hurried off down stairs and had taken two steps on the lower flight, when he recollected that his father would have to be led into the dining room. He turned back and knocked on the door. His mother opened it. Russ started back when he saw her. She looked ten years older.

She kissed him and then said that "father" had already had his breakfast. "And he wants to see you in the library, Russell," she added, "as soon as you have eaten yours. The others are at the table now."

"Happy New Year, Russ!" was six year old Elsie's greeting, as he entered the dining room.

Of them all she was the only one as yet who did not comprehend the dark shadow which this new year had cast over their lives.

Russell arranged with Bernard to take the bag and explain matters to Percy, and then, after a hurried meal, during which most of the talking was done by Elsie, the eldest son hastened to present himself in the library.

This was the sunniest, the most cheerful room in the house, but when Russ entered it and saw his father seated at the desk between the windows, groping in the pigeonholes, trying to make his sense of touch take the place of sight, he felt that all the sunshine in the heavens could not lighten the real gloom that pervaded the apartment.

"Good morning, father," began Russ. "You will let me help you, won't you?"

"Yes, my son, but I fear that you may be obliged to learn sad news." Mr. Gray dropped a packet of documents on the desk and felt over Russ's coat sleeve till he found his hand, which he pressed warmly for an instant. "I must make a confidant of you in my business affairs from this on. I wish that it were possible to wait awhile—till all of us had in a measure recovered from the shock of my—my setting aside. But that may not be. You will presently understand why. Here, what are these papers that I have just placed on the desk? Are they unaccepted bills?"

Russell took the package, removed the rubber band, and then reported that all the papers seemed to be receipted ones.

"Ah, then I was at the wrong pigeon-hole," murmured Mr. Gray, with a sigh that was only half repressed. "Perhaps they are on the spindle after all, or in

one of the upper tier of pigeonholes. See where you can find a dozen or so of unpaid bills, Russell," and the father leaned his head back wearily in the great chair.

Russ started on his search and presently found at least a dozen and a half of the papers such as his father described.

"Are there so many?" exclaimed Mr. Gray. "Read the amounts to me, Russell, noting them down to be added up afterwards."

The bills were nearly all for articles for some other member of the family than Mr. Gray himself: furs for Margaret, jewelry for her and her mother, a coat for Elsie, tuition fees for Russell and Bernard. The sum total reached a very high figure, and when Russ had announced it, his father repeated it slowly after him once or twice, then said quietly: "My check book now, Russell. You will find it in that small drawer to the left. I want you to refer to the stubs and see how much I have on hand; then deduct from that amount the total of bills payable. Let me know the difference."

Russ was not long in completing his task and presently announced: "The difference, father, is \$437.46."

Mr. Gray gave no sign of having heard. He sat there with one hand over his eyes, his head slightly bowed as if in deep reflection. There was no sound in the room, but out in the street some boys were blowing fish horns in greeting to the new year.

Russ thought the noise of these might have drowned his voice, so he repeated the figures.

Mr. Gray roused himself suddenly from his reverie.

"Yes, Russell," he said; "I heard you, but I was thinking; thinking that that sum represents all the money we can count on now, with Dr. Fenner's bill not in yet, to say nothing of other accounts. Something must be done, but what, my son, what? This is the sort of rainy day I had not provided for, and it finds me all exposed—all exposed."

Mr. Gray's voice died away to a whisper, and once more he dropped his head on his hands. Russ sat there beside him, motionless, too. What did the future hold for them, he wondered? The outlook was even darker than he had feared.

(To be continued.)

A STATELY TOWN.

In London the streets are not numbered on our system—the even numbers on one side, the odd on the other. They begin at one end on one side and run around to the starting point on the other. Thus No. 1 may be opposite to No. 103. This state of things is naturally confusing to strangers, and Americans tell some amusing stories about their experiences in hunting up addresses.

Speaking of both sides of the street reminds us of what Colonel McClure, editor of the Philadelphia Times, tells concerning his visit to a Southern town.

"I date this letter Bristol, Va., because I happen to be stopping on the east side of the main street of the city. Had I happened to stop at a hotel on the west side of the street I would now be writing from Bristol, Tenn. In point of fact, there are two cities named Bristol—Bristol, Va., and Bristol, Tenn.; but the Tennesseans happen to have the post office on their side of the street, and outsiders know only Bristol, Tenn., although half the population worship at the sacred shrine of the Old Dominion. There are some odd antics inspired by the active and progressive mountain city, with different municipal and State jurisdiction on opposite sides of the same main street. Each city has its municipal authority, enacts its own local laws and enforces them in its own way, and each has different State laws regulating licenses, Sunday observance, schools, elections, etc., and a citizen committing crime on one side of the main street can be reached only by executive requisition warrant from the other State, if the criminal steps across the street and chooses to remain there."

LUCK.

LUCK does not guide the artist's hand
To paint those forms that live for aye;
Nor cause the sculptor's work to stand
Deathless in marble, bronze or clay.

Luck never made a martyr strong
To suffer for the true and right;
Luck never wrote a deathless song,
Or armed a chieftain for the fight.

—THOMAS F. PORTER.

[This Story began last week.]

DIRKMAN'S LUCK.

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT.

Author of "Brad Maltoon," "The Crimson Banner," "The County Pennant," etc.

CHAPTER V.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

"FIRE! Fire!"
The cry rang shrilly out on the still night air, harshly waking the residents of the suburbs of Medford, and rousing them from their beds. A belated fisherman, returning on foot from Barlow's dam first saw the flame, and it was his voice that sounded the first alarm. Another voice, and then a third, took up the cry, and soon the road clear into town was filled with shouting men and boys. Windows and doors opened, shutters and sashes slammed, and people ran hither and with startled faces, crying, "Where's the fire?"

The question was easily answered, for there in the northeast a dull red glow illumined the sky, growing rapidly brighter and fiercer, until, before five minutes had elapsed, flames appeared above the housetops, leaping greedily toward the clouds, shooting upward forked tongues of fire and showers of sparks.

Meantime, with little delay, the engine house had been opened, and the great iron bell clashed out its harsh summons. Medford had no regular fire organization, but the volunteer firemen came running in from every side, hastily throwing on their coats and leather caps. Willing hands seized the ropes, and in a few seconds the men were off down the main road, the heavy engine in tow, and the hook and ladder truck close behind. Followed by an indiscriminate crowd of men, women, and children, who pushed and jostled each other in their haste, the firemen dashed along the down grade at the east end of the town, gaining in speed every second, and, within a few minutes of the first alarm, had reached the Otis cottage and turned into the lane.

As they approached, Duncan came running down toward them and threw open the large double gate to allow the engine to enter.

"It's the barn, fellows," he cried, as the crowd swept up the lane to the back of the house. "I'm afraid there's no use trying to put her out. She makes a regular bonfire with all the hay and straw inside. Just look at that blaze."

The firemen had halted in the barnyard, and were gazing hopelessly at the flames which rose fully thirty feet above the barn roof. The blaze was all at one end, but the rest of the structure was fated, and would soon be enveloped.

It was a striking picture: the firemen with their red shirts and leather caps, leaning on the truck in the foreground; the crowd behind them, rapidly increasing in number, broken up into numerous groups, closely huddled together, the men hastily dressed, and the women with shawls over their heads; and, back of them all, the Otis cottage, where Miss Betty Otis and Patty stood, warmly wrapped, but shivering with fear and excitement—the whole scene brilliantly lighted by the flames, mounting higher

every second, and throwing a lurid glare far and wide over the country.

The captain of the fire company—Rogers—who stood next to Duncan, shook his head.

"You're right," he said. "We can't help you much. There's no use throwing water on that blaze. Hope the place is well insured."

"Pretty well covered," answered Duncan. "We renewed our insurance only a month ago."

"You're in luck. How about your horses?"

"Oh, they're safe enough. I saw to that first of all. There they are, and the cows, too," and he pointed to the woodshed some distance away, where the animals were hitched and covered with blankets. "I got them out without trouble, though I hadn't a minute to spare. I was out before the alarm was given. I saw the blaze just as I was going to bed."

"Well, there's nothing for us to do but to keep the fire from spreading," said Rogers.

Realizing the utter futility of trying to save the barn, the firemen were throwing water on the woodsheds and other buildings that stood in the vicinity, while the crowd stood in awed silence watching the flames surge and spread.

Suddenly cries of horror arose on all sides.

"Look! Look there! Some one is on the roof!"

Duncan looked up in alarm. "Good Heavens, it's Mark! I thought he was safe and sound. I called to him when I first ran into the barn, and I thought I heard him pass me. I heard him shout 'All right'; then the smoke stifled me and I had to bolt."

"Come, quick! Bring a blanket. We can save him yet," cried Rogers.

A pile of blankets taken from the stable lay near by, and one of these was instantly snatched up by several men, who hurried forward to the side of the burning building. Amidst the confusion of cries, Mark Ware seemed to be the only one quiet and cool. As the men approached the barn, he came to the edge of the roof and leaned over.

"Now jump!" cried Rogers. "Jump far out. It's all right. We'll catch you."

"Oh, I'm all right here for the present," he called back. "I can jump when I have to. Get a ladder, quick, and pass up a hose—"

"You must be crazy!" shouted Rogers. "Jump now. Don't wait a minute. Do you want to be burned alive?"

"No; I tell you I'm safe enough for awhile yet. Don't you see there's a stone wall between the stable and the barn. I can keep the fire from passing that if you'll send up a hose."

Rogers looked quickly at Duncan. "He's right," said Duncan. "There's a stone wall there—"

"Pass up the hose, will you?" shouted Mark again.

"You can't save anything," bellowed the foreman, growing more excited. "The roof is all wood, and the fire will be on you in a minute."

"I tell you it won't if you send me that hose," cried Mark.

And Mark was right. The stable proper, an old structure, had been built with walls of stone. The barn, where the hay and fodder were, had been erected later, and immediately against the stable. The barn was of wood only, and it was there that the fire had started and now raged. Mark stood on the roof of the stable, and between the two structures was the stone wall, which formed one of the four walls of the stable, but served also as one wall of the barn. But the foreman would not be convinced.

"I tell you the whole gable and roof are bound to go in a minute," he roared again. "Come down."

"I won't do it," answered Mark stoutly. "If you send up that hose we can save that other building over there, and I'm going to stay here till you do. It will be afire in a few minutes, so you'd better hurry."

Mark had pointed, while speaking, at a large and handsome stable that stood in the adjoining lot to that of the Otises', and close beside the burning barn. From the first many had seen the danger that threatened the structure, and men were now on its roof thoroughly drenching it with water.

"They'll look after Colonel Morgan's stable," shouted Duncan, pointing to these men. "Drop, Mark, while you can."

"They can't reach the place where she's going to catch," answered Mark. "The danger is right down between the buildings where those fellows can't reach with their buckets. Give me a hose and I'll drag it over and play right down into that narrow place and keep this side of that stable wet."

The burning building and Colonel Morgan's stable were so close together as to admit of only a fence to separate them, and the showers of sparks that fell in between the buildings made this a marked point of danger, while the narrowness of the space prevented any one's reaching it with water except as Mark proposed—by a hose from the roof of the Otises' stable, where he stood.

Seeing the force of this, several men hurried forward with a ladder, and one fireman was climbing up, dragging the hose after him. The engine was manned in an instant, and by the time Mark had the nozzle in his hand a stream of water shot up twenty feet into the air.

Turning the nozzle downward he first soaked the roof about him, then hurried across and began playing between the buildings against the side of Colonel Morgan's stable. The cloud of steam which arose showed how clearly Mark had guessed the chief point of danger and also how timely the water was.

"There's a hundred dollars for that boy if he keeps my barn safe," cried an elderly man in a slouch hat who stood near the fence, pulling nervously at his pointed gray beard.

"He'll do it, colonel, don't you fear," answered one of the firemen. "He has the right idea, and he's working it right, too. Who is the youngster anyhow? Don't recall him."

But the situation for Mark suddenly grew alarming. The barn, which had almost burnt itself completely out, now fell with a crash—fortunately in the opposite direction from Colonel Morgan's stable, thus removing most of the danger from that structure. Mark's service was about completed, but, during the time he had stood there playing the hose, the flame had crept steadily over to the roof on which he was standing. Seeing the danger and hearing the warning shouts from below, Mark turned and started back for the ladder.

He had nearly crossed the roof, and was within a few yards of the edge, when suddenly the fire, which had been working its way treacherously along the eaves, leaped up in a sheet of flame directly in his face and completely cut off his approach to the ladder. With a quick cry of pain he fell backward.

Immediately a confused uproar of voices arose.

"He is lost! He has caught fire! He will be burned to death!"

But above the rest Rogers's voice could be heard.

"Here, quick with that iron ladder!" In an instant the wooden ladder, which had already caught fire, was thrown aside, and the iron ladder rested against

the burning roof. Before any one could stop him—could even realize what he was about to do, Rogers bounded up the iron rungs, two at a time, and had dashed recklessly through the sheet of flame. As the fire fell for a moment, and the wind blew the smoke westward, the people, who stood breathless with suspense, could see Rogers stoop down and raise Mark in his arms. Then came the final catastrophe, in which all hope for both seemed lost. The fire, which had been eating its way beneath the roof, had weakened the beams, and the additional weight of Rogers's body proved too much. There was an ominous crack, then came the crash of yielding timbers. The roof suddenly sank, and the two figures disappeared in a chasm filled with smoke and fire.

A shudder of horror went through the crowd. Women screamed; men turned their heads away in sickening dread. A moment later, however, a shout arose. "There he is—at the window—he's safe—and has the boy with him—quick with the blankets."

To the amazement of all, who had given him up for lost, Rogers appeared a moment after the collapse at a second story window of the stable. He must have fallen squarely on his feet on the second floor, which was still sound. He now stood leaning out of the window, blinded by the smoke and half stupefied by the sudden fall, but bravely retaining his hold on Mark. In answer to the calls from below, Rogers lifted Mark upon the sill, and let him drop into the blanket that the men were holding for him. Mark, who seemed quite unconscious, fell like a dead weight, and was caught neatly. Rogers then groped about until his hands struck the iron ladder. Swinging himself boldly out, he let himself down by his arms. No sooner had a full realization of this miraculous escape dawned upon the crowd than a long loud shout of joy arose, and the people came flocking from all sides to congratulate the two fortunates.

Cries of "Keep back!" from the firemen, however, warned them from pressing too close. The men were bending over the blanket.

On it lay Mark silent and motionless, his hair singed close to his head, his clothes burnt and his face and arms blackened. Some one hastily thrust his way into the group. It was Colonel Morgan.

"Is—is he—is it too late?" he asked, bending over Mark.

"No," answered a fireman who was kneeling beside the boy and had his hand over his heart. "Half suffocated, that is all, I think. He is more smoked than burnt."

"Then bring him right up to my house," said the colonel in tones that showed he was accustomed to being obeyed. "I'll look after him. Lift him right up on the blanket just as he is, and one of you see if Dr. Carpenter is in the crowd. Find him and send him up to me."

Duncan Otis, who was a member of group, and also kneeling beside Mark, started up as if to oppose Colonel Morgan's directions. Then suddenly changing his mind, he remained silent.

"Better let the colonel take care of him," he thought to himself. "It may prove a good thing for the boy."

A subdued hush fell on the crowd while four of the men gently lifted Mark and bore him away towards Colonel Morgan's house.

CHAPTER VI. UNDER SUSPICION.

ABOUT eleven o'clock on the morning of the fifth day following the fire, some one knocked at the side door leading into the library of

Colonel Morgan's handsome residence on the hill.

The colonel, who was reading a paper, rose and opened the door.

"Ah, good morning, Duncan," he said, extending his hand. "Come in—glad to see you. You don't run over here as often as you used to when you were a youngster. I suppose your aunt needs you all the time. How is she?"

"Very well," answered Duncan removing his hat and seating himself in a chair which the colonel offered him. "She is still considerably shaken up about our fire."

"Of course—of course," said the colonel sympathetically. "It must have given her quite a nervous shock. But still she suffers no great loss, does she?"

"Not very much."

"I knew she was pretty well insured, and I am glad of it. Your aunt is a shrewd woman, Duncan, and knows how to provide for herself."

"Yes, sir," answered Duncan half abstractedly. "She has made her small property count for a good deal."

"With your help, my boy. She couldn't have done without you."

Duncan sat in silence, twirling his hat. Several minutes elapsed, during which the colonel watched his visitor curiously.

At length Duncan spoke.

"How is Mark?" he asked.

"Doing finely. He is sitting up this morning and will be able to go out doors tomorrow. His burns were not serious; they were chiefly on his arms. It was a lucky escape for the boy. He got off mighty easily, and I'm glad of it, for it gives me an early opportunity to pay up my indebtedness to him. He rendered me a great service that night, and he risked his life to do it. I don't mean to forget that."

"He has lots of grit, colonel, and I am glad he is in such good hands—but—but—well, to come to the point, colonel, I walked over here this morning especially to have a talk with you about Mark—and—and this business of the fire."

"Oh, yes, he told me he was in the loft of the barn. He also told me how he came there, and how kind you all were to him—"

"Yes," said Duncan quickly. "Well I liked Mark from the very first moment I laid eyes on him. I liked his manner, and I made up my mind to do all I could for him. But Aunt Betty for some reason took a prejudice against him. She was suspicious of everything he said and did. As the boy was a stranger, and we knew nothing about him except what he told us, I couldn't prove Aunt Betty wrong when she suspected him of being dishonest. His face and manner were enough for me but it wouldn't convince Aunt Betty. She just tolerated him through the day, and when I talked of giving him a bed over night, she wouldn't hear of it. I urged her about it, and at last we arranged to let him sleep in the barn—that is he proposed it and Aunt Betty agreed."

"Well," said the colonel, wondering where all this was leading to. "I knew this—at least the substance of it from Mark. What else is there to tell?"

"Simply this, colonel. You see Mark was alone in that barn. I left him there and locked the door, so no one else could get in. Half an hour later the place took fire."

"Yes!"

"Well, colonel, Aunt Betty can only see this thing in one way. As she says, Mark was the only one in the barn. No one else was near, and there was nothing around to start the fire except—well except Mark—"

"What!" exclaimed the colonel, knitting his eyebrows.

"Yes, you see Aunt Betty is all worked up about it. She can't get it out of her head that Mark set the barn afire. I've talked with her off and on for the last four days, but it didn't seem to ease her much. Perhaps I might have argued her out of it in time, but this morning Amberg came to see her about the fire, and she told him the whole story. As you know, he has been on the watch lately for suspicious characters, so her talk with him only made matters worse. I didn't hear what was said, for I wasn't in the house at the time, but Patty called me in later and I found Aunt Betty in a terrible state. I don't know what will come of it now Amberg has heard the story."

"But it is absurd—simply absurd!" exclaimed the colonel, who was now greatly excited and pacing hastily up and down the room. "To think that a boy who had worked all day to earn a comfortable place to pass the night in, should deliberately set fire to it before he had rested an hour. Why, it would be insanity!"

"I know it, colonel. It doesn't seem reasonable."

"Reasonable! Why, only a madman would play such a trick. And then to think that that boy, who has an honest face if there ever was one—who has told me a plain, simple, straightforward story about himself—to think that that young hero, who risked his life to save my property is nothing but a malicious rascal who would set fire to the property of those who have befriended him—" here the colonel became too excited to speak.

"Yes, colonel," answered Duncan. "I thought of all that—and told Aunt Betty, too, but nothing would convince her after her talk this morning with Amberg. I don't know how it will end now. I am mighty uneasy about it."

"Go back to her, and wait till she is quieter. She may be only a little nervous. Wait till tomorrow, and then tell her what I have said."

Duncan shook his head.

"I know Aunt Betty too well, colonel. You see I am not master at our house. I can sometimes argue Aunt Betty out of her notions, but if she makes up her mind to stick to her point, I can't budge her, and her will is law with us. There isn't a kinder hearted woman alive than Aunt Betty, colonel, but when she has a suspicion well set in her mind, a team of horses couldn't pull it out. Besides, you see, the loss of the barn and stable is a serious matter."

"Doesn't the insurance cover it?"

"Not all."

"What is the actual loss?"

"We calculated it would be about two hundred dollars."

"Duncan," said the colonel, laying his hand on his visitor's arm. "I will go over tomorrow morning and see your aunt. I am one of the directors of the Medford branch of the Continental Fire Insurance Company, in which her property was insured. I had supposed that the buildings were fully covered, but since you say not, I will see that your aunt's loss of two hundred dollars is made up—yes, even if I have to pay it out of my own pocket. I can easily stand it for the boy that saved my stable. I know the boy is innocent and I want to hush these suspicions at once."

Duncan shook his head again.

"Your offer is very kind, colonel, but she wouldn't take it from you."

"From me! It shouldn't come from me. It would come from the insurance company."

"Well, but even that wouldn't prove to her that Mark was innocent, and I am afraid you couldn't convince her."

"Well, I will, if it takes me all day," said the colonel decidedly.

"But how about Amberg?"

"I'll quiet him too. I can talk him into reason easily enough."

Duncan looked doubtful.

"It seems all right to us, colonel, who believe we know Mark, but I'm not so sure about Amberg—and in fact the rest of the town. You see Mark tramped it here, and he is a stranger to every one."

"That makes no difference. He tells a clear story, and he will be trusted."

"But the circumstantial evidence—"

"Will be nothing when he states his case. Here, we can get all the facts at once. Come up stairs, and we'll question him closely about it."

Colonel Morgan opened the door, and led the way up to the second floor. Opening the left hand door at the front of the hall, he first looked in to assure himself that Mark was alone, then motioned Duncan to enter.

Mark, who was sitting in an easy chair by the window, turned his head and uttered a glad exclamation as he saw who his visitor was.

Greetings had hardly been exchanged when Colonel Morgan said abruptly:

"Mark, Duncan has called here this morning to make inquiries concerning the origin of the fire."

Mark gave both of them a queer look. "I was asleep," he said.

"And you knew nothing until you arose in the midst of flames," said the colonel with satisfaction. "It was so, wasn't it?"

Mark was silent.

Duncan looked surprised.

"Were you asleep when the fire started, Mark?" he asked.

Mark looked him steadily in the face. "No, I was not," he said.

The colonel was now surprised.

"Then why didn't you tell me this?" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell me what caused the fire?"

Mark was silent again.

"Do you know the cause of it?" urged the colonel.

"Yes," answered Mark very deliberately.

"Then why haven't you spoken?" exclaimed the colonel somewhat impatiently. "Did you suppose it was a matter of no importance? What started the fire, then?"

At this moment a voice was heard in the hall outside. Mark could hardly avoid a start of surprise. Where had he heard that voice before? Somewhere—and very recently. The doubt was settled a second later, for the door, which stood ajar, was pushed further open, and Colonel Morgan's son, Herbert, entered. It was the first time Mark had seen him since the fire, but one glance sufficed to recall him. The voice and the figure were unmistakable. The whole truth suddenly flashed through his mind.

"The Grand Master—he is the Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Sylvesters."

Colonel Morgan and Duncan stood with their backs to the door, and did not hear or see Herbert enter. The latter was about to come forward, but stopped abruptly when he saw the group at the window.

Colonel Morgan spoke again, this time quite sharply.

"Mark, answer my question at once. This is a very serious matter and must be cleared up. What was the cause of the fire?"

Mark looked away from the colonel to the door, where Herbert stood. The latter shifted uneasily and dropped his eyes.

"It was an explosion," said Mark.

"An explosion!" exclaimed Duncan. "What sort of an explosion?"

"An explosion of some kind—I don't know what. I only know something exploded, and then the fire began."

Duncan looked uneasy.

"Mark," he said in a strange tone, "I don't know what to think of this. There was nothing in the barn that could explode. You must have dreamed it."

Mark was silent.

"Is that all the explanation you can give?" asked the colonel in a colder tone.

"That is all," answered Mark. "There was an explosion on the first floor—that was the cause of the fire. I can't tell you anything more."

Herbert Morgan looked greatly relieved, and, turning, slipped noiselessly out.

"Mark," said the colonel firmly, "this won't do. We want the whole truth of this, and your answer is not satisfactory—in fact I can't believe it. I am sorry to say this, for I thought you honest—"

"What I tell you is true, colonel," interrupted Mark. "That fire was caused by an explosion."

"But the explosion—what was it? How was it? There must have been something there to explode."

"I cannot tell you that."

The colonel looked quickly at Duncan. The latter's eyes were wandering uneasily about the room.

"And this is all you have to say?" asked the colonel.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know what this means—that you are bringing suspicion on—on yourself?"

"Why should it? I didn't have anything to do with the explosion."

"Then why are you silent? Your whole manner shows that you are holding something back. Why do you not speak out?"

Mark was silent.

"Have you nothing further to say—no further explanation?" asked the colonel, straightening up.

Mark shook his head.

The colonel closed his lips tightly and turned away. Mark made a motion to detain Duncan, but the latter's gaze was on the floor, and he did not see it. A moment later the two had left the room and their footsteps sounded on the stairs.

CHAPTER VII. IN TROUBLE.

THAT was a hard afternoon and evening for Mark. The colonel did not come near him again; and, with the exception of the servant who brought him his meals, he saw no one, and had nothing but his thoughts for company. These were disturbing enough to keep him awake far into the night.

What should he have done or said? Had he made a mistake in remaining silent? His first intention had been to speak more fully, but the discovery that Herbert Morgan was the Grand Master of that night's proceedings had decided him.

"Why should I get those fellows into trouble? They were up to a little fun and didn't mean mischief. Now it's turned out so seriously I can't give them away, especially this young Morgan, the only son of the old colonel, who has been so kind. Shall I get him into disgrace simply to avoid suspicion myself. They can't prove anything against me, and as to being suspected or getting a bad name, what does that amount to in comparison to the trouble these fellows would have? I can stand the bad name I suppose—at any rate if I can't. I can go away to some other place and make another start—only I wish Duncan and—Miss Patty wouldn't think me bad," here Mark gulped. "Well, it's an ugly looking business I'm in anyhow, and I'm afraid I couldn't blame even them for suspecting me. I'll be able to go out tomorrow, and I think I'd better

clear out as soon as I can—and yet that will only make it look worse. No, I'll stay and face it out."

And it was with that determination that he rose on the following morning. His breakfast was served in his room, but immediately after, he determined to take advantage of the permission granted him to go down stairs. His own clothes having been burnt, he donned a suit of Herbert's, which had been brought to him, and walked down to the first floor. At the foot of the stairs he met the colonel, who was about to come up.

"Good morning," said the latter. "I was just going up to your room. Will you come into the library? I want to speak to you."

Mark followed him in silence.

Motioning him to be seated, the colonel began:

"Young man, I am very sorry to say that you have disappointed me. I had begun to think a great deal of you, and I was determined to prove myself a good friend. You have no one but yourself to blame if that becomes impossible. You have placed yourself in a very suspicious light, and you refuse to clear yourself. If you are what I believed you to be, you would have only a clear, satisfactory explanation to give. Instead of that you persist in concealment."

Mark almost began to wish that he had told a falsehood at the start, and denied all knowledge of the cause of the fire. It would have shielded the real culprits even better. But this was only a passing thought.

"It is very hard, Colonel Morgan, to have you suspect me," he said. "I told you the truth, and I told you all I could."

"Mark," exclaimed the colonel, "I have been thinking the matter over since yesterday, and I am half inclined yet to think you innocent. Now I can't forget that you have done me a great service, and I want to do you full justice. I am sure you are either concealing something or misleading me—in other words that you are not honest with me, and I am disappointed to think that of you. I had begun to believe in you fully—I thought you were honest."

"And I am, colonel," burst out Mark. "You have been a kind friend to me these past six days, and I will never forget it. I would not deceive you if I could help it. What I told you was true."

"If you could help it! There it is again. Mark, I know you are holding something back. Now, my boy, why do you do that? I can be a good friend to you if you'll let me. Come now, speak out."

But Mark was silent.

"See here, young man," continued the colonel after a short pause. "I don't believe you realize the seriousness of this affair. You are under suspicion of setting fire to a barn. Do you know what that means if you are convicted? It means close confinement for a long time."

Mark started violently, and his face grew pale.

"There, I thought that would bring you to terms. Now, my boy, don't you think you'd better speak out?"

But Mark had regained his composure again.

"They can't convict me," he said. "There is no proof. I told you the truth. I hadn't anything to do with starting the fire."

"Well, circumstantial evidence is strong against you," said the colonel gravely. "Now see here, Mark, I won't hurry you. I'll give you a little time to think it over. Just consider it awhile, remembering how serious a matter it is, and then see if you can't make up your mind to give me an explanation. Sup-

pose you take a walk out of doors this morning. You need it anyhow, and if you come back with the right determination, you will find it has done you good in more ways than one."

The suggestion struck Mark favorably, though not quite in the way the colonel intended. It had occurred to him that it would be well to go to Duncan.

"I'll find Duncan and have a talk with him," he said to himself. "Maybe I can give him an idea how the land lies without telling him everything, and it may help things into better shape—I'll try it anyhow."

His mind made up, he rose to his feet. "All right. I'll go out and take a walk," he said. Then coming nearer, he added, looking earnestly at the old gentleman: "Do you suspect me, colonel?"

The colonel shook his head.

"If I really, seriously believed you set fire to that barn do you suppose I would let you go scot free out into the country? No, Mark, I believe you are innocent, but I am sure you know more than you say. Now, make up your mind to tell it all."

Mark shook his head and turned away.

"The old colonel is too sharp for me," he said to himself, as he left the house.

"He has guessed half the secret now, and I'm afraid he'll never rest till he knows all of it. Well, he won't get it out of me, that's all—and as for Duncan, on second thought, I'm afraid I'd better not talk about it to him either. No, I've made up my mind not to give those fellows away, so the only thing for me to do is to keep my mouth shut to everybody."

It now seemed best to Mark not to seek out Duncan, for he hardly dared trust himself to the sharp cross questioning which he knew he would have to face; so, with no particular purpose in view, he walked slowly off down the road.

He had not gone more than three or four hundred yards when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder.

Turning about he found himself face to face with a large, powerful man, well dressed and carrying a cane. His face was heavy, almost brutal, the most noticeable features of it being a pair of cold, searching gray eyes, and a large mouth, beneath which grew a short, thick beard.

He eyed Mark sharply for a minute.

"I think you're the young man I'm looking for," he said.

"What do you want?" asked Mark.

"Isn't your name Mark Ware?"

"Yes."

"I thought so, and you're the young man who came so near getting caught in that fire the other night."

"Yes, but—"

"Well, I'm glad to find you, that's all. I didn't think you'd have the nerve to hang around here after you were up and out. I wasn't counting on laying hands on you so easy."

"Why, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mark angrily.

"That we have a few questions to ask you about that fire. I want you to come along with me. Now don't make any trouble," he added, as he saw Mark start to remonstrate. "You can do all your arguing later when the time comes. All you're to do now is to follow me."

Mark stood perfectly still.

"And suppose I don't choose to follow you?" he said.

"Well, I might have to arrest you then, and run you in by force."

Mark was dumfounded.

"Arrest me—for what?" he exclaimed.

"For setting fire to the Otises' barn—you know that well enough."

"What right have you to arrest me?" asked Mark, with serious misgivings.

The man turned his coat back, displaying a policeman's badge on his vest. "And who—who are you?" stammered Mark.

"My name is Amberg. I'm the constable here."

(To be continued.)

(This Story began in No. 466.)

BLAZING ARROW.

A TALE OF THE FRONTIER.

BY EDWARD S. ELLIS,
Author of "Boy Pioneer Series," "Deerfoot Series," etc.

CHAPTER XXIX.

RED CROW.

THE boys kept such a close watch on the Shawanoes that the moment he signalled to them to stop, they obeyed. Although he assumed his favorite attitude while doing so, he instantly faced about so that his back was toward them. There could be no doubt that he had made some important discovery.

The youths stood still in the trail, Wharton slightly in advance, but Larry was near enough to his side to note every movement of the singular being who had been acting as their guide ever since the rise of the sun.

"I wonder whether he means us to stand right here or to dodge behind the trees as he did before," remarked Larry.

"We shall know, for he will tell us. There it is!"

Arqu-wao at this moment made a peculiar sweep of the hand holding the bow, which was interpreted as an order for them to screen themselves from sight. They did so with the cleverness of a short time before.

Nothing to explain the cause for this caution appeared and the lads kept their eyes on the Indian in whose hands they had placed their lives before this critical moment.

The tree trunks which sheltered them were not more rigid and motionless for the next five minutes than he. Then he was seen to take a single step forward, when he again paused. A second followed with the same deliberation as before, and the advance continued, foot by foot, until the intervening trees and the turn in the trail shut the guide from sight.

"We're near the clearing where I had my race with Blazing Arrow," remarked Wharton in a guarded voice.

"Ye may have another one with him."

"It isn't likely, but I believe he isn't far off."

"And the others are with him."

"Of course, and more than likely father and mother are near. Oh, I do hope that they will find out their danger soon enough to save themselves, but I fear the worst."

"Do ye hear that?"

The faces of the youths blanched, for at that moment the sharp crack of a rifle rang out in the stillness. It was near at hand, and was followed by a wild cry, which, echoing through the forest arches, left the silence more oppressive than before.

"Somebody is killed!" whispered the frightened Wharton.

"I don't doubt ye, but that yell wasn't a white man's."

"Then the shot must have been."

"I don't know the same; mebbe Blazing Arrow has found out what Arqu-wao has been doing and shot him."

"I believe that is what has happened; they had a quarrel when they met in the trail; why didn't Blazing Arrow kill him then?"

"He didn't know as much as he does now; he has seen the tracks of ourselves along the path, after the two

parted, and thin the whole thruth come upon him."

"I wish we could have the chance to save the poor crazy fellow, for he has given his life for us, that is if he has been shot by any of his people."

"We don't know that he is dead yet; mebbe he managed to use his bow and arrow and didn't miss, while the other chap as used his gun did, so the yell was the other fellow's."

"We ought to have given him back his knife and tomahawk; I didn't think of it or we would have done so."

"It couldn't have done him any good in this sort of rumpus."

Some tragedy had been enacted so near them that the youths might well shudder for themselves as well as their friends.

The sultry summer day was well along. The sun, high in the sky, penetrated the woods with its warmth, and, in the broad open plain, the heat must have been oppressive. Here and there, a tiny bird fluttered among the trees and suddenly a noble buck came striding along, as if he meant to follow the trail to the falls for a drink, but catching sight of the two young men standing beside the trees weapon in hand, he wheeled and was off in a twinkling, though not before either one of the lads could have gained the best kind of a shot had he dared to fire.

Minute after minute passed and still there was no sign of the returning guide. The young friends would have been glad to believe he had escaped, but the fleeting minutes caused their hope to sink lower and lower until at last it was gone.

"It seems to me," said Wharton, "that we are throwing away time by staying here; we shall never see Arqu-wao again."

"I agree with ye; the rest of 'em are miles off, and we might stay here till the sun went down, and that's all the good it would do us."

Thump! something struck the ground beside them, and the startled boys, turning their heads, saw a stone, weighing fully a pound that must have been thrown by some person at them.

This was a curious proceeding by whomsoever done, but the explanation came the next moment, when a tall, finely formed figure, clad in the costume of the border ranger, stepped from behind a tree and motioned to them to make no noise.

The astonished and delighted boys recognized the individual as Simon Kenton, probably the most famous scout, not excepting Daniel Boone, known in Ohio and Kentucky. He had approached them from the rear and announced his coming in this characteristic manner.

"Ye needn't be afeared, younkers," he said as he came up, "pervided yer don't speak too loud. The varmints are powerful plenty yarabouts. Howdy?"

He shook the hand of each in turn and Wharton asked:

"Where did you come from, Kenton?"

"The block house."

"How long ago did you leave?"

"Shortly after sun up; it isn't very fur and I've traveled powerful fast."

Wharton yearned to ask the question that was on the tip of his tongue, but an awful fear held it back.

"We heard a rifle awhile ago; do you know anything about it?"

"I reckon," replied the ranger with a significant grin, "being as I was the chap that touched her off."

"At whom did you fire?"

"Why don't ye ask who did I hit, for when that piece speaks I reckon some one is hit; did you hear him yell?"

"We might have heard the chap a mile off," replied Larry. "Was the same Blazing Arrow?"

"No; I'm sorry to say he kept out of

the way, and I picked off the one that was nearest to him."

"Did you see anything of an Indian with a bow and arrow?"

"You mean Arqu-wao, or as we call him, Red Crow."

"That must be the one; why does he have such a strange name?"

"Did you ever see a red crow, younkers?"

"No; and I never saw a person that had seen one."

"And you never will; such a thing would be powerful qu'ar, but he wouldn't be any qu'arer than the varmint that Boone, McClelland, the Weitzel boys and some of the others have give that name to. He's a bit off, ain't 'zactly right here," added the scout, tapping his forehead. "Have you had anything to do with him?"

Wharton related in as few words as possible their experience with the strange creature and asked:

"Has he always been that way?"

"No; his brother and him had a big fight when they were on the war path. His brother was older and stronger and threw him down among the rocks in such a way that his head was hurt and he was never right afterwards. He has lived by himself along that lake over yender for ten or a dozen years. He won't have anybody with him; you know how the Injuns look on such a person; they think he's a little different and better than other folks and none of 'em will harm him. Of course none of the boys would hurt a hair of his head, though he's quick enough with his bow and arrow to shoot any one that comes pokin' round his place. It's powerful qu'ar that he acted the part of a friend toward you, but that's no sayin' what crank may come into the head of such a person."

"But he had a quarrel with Blazing Arrow, who seemed on the point of striking him."

"That's nateral, for you know that you hate a person that you've already done an injury to."

"Has Blazing Arrow ever injured him?"

"Why he's the one that throwed him over the rocks; him and Blazing Arer are full brothers."

This was surprising news to both and Larry said:

"He once mitioned the name of that chap as his brother, but I didn't think it was that what he meant."

"I don't think the Red Crow loves his brother any more than his brother loves him. Some time thar'll be the biggest kind of a fight between 'em. They don't often meet, but when they do they alters strike fire."

"How was it, Kenton, that you came to shoot awhile ago?"

"One of the varmints got in my way, and if you know of any better plan for heavin' him out, let me hear it."

"But you don't explain; did you see anything of Red Crow?"

"You asked me awhile ago, and I beg pardon for not answering. No; I haven't seen him lately, that is, for the last few weeks, but while I was out yender, just on t'other side of the ravine, whar the trail makes a sharp turn, I caught sight of one of the varmints stealin' along as though he was lookin' for something. He caught sight of me at the same time. We hadn't time to dodge behind anything and it was a question which could aim and fire the quickest. Wal," added Kenton, with a sigh of complacency, "mebbe thar's a varmint somewhat that can do that thing quickern me, but I haven't met him yet."

"But you say you saw Blazing Arrow."

"Yes, and another of the redskins; they war some way ahead and the trees war so plenty that we couldn't

draw bead. I waited for 'em to come nigher, but they didn't seem to be lookin' for that sort of thing just then and they scooted t'other way. I 'spect I'll meet 'em agin purty soon and I'm ready."

CHAPTER XXX.

GOOD NEWS.

WHARTON EDWARDS could not keep back the question any longer.

"Kenton, why was it you were in such a hurry to get along the trail when you left the block house?"

"I wanted to catch up with your father and mother that left before sun up this morning."

The poor lad staggered back and, had he not caught hold of a sapling, would have fallen to the earth.

"There is no hope for them?"

"Who said there wasn't, younker?" demanded Kenton sharply.

"I can see none; do you?"

"It looks purty bad, I'll own, but Brigham Edwards and his wife are no fools unless they've become so since they left the block house."

The words of the great ranger lifted part of the weight from the shoulders of the boys (for the grief of Larry was almost as deep as that of the son), though they were still in anguish of spirit.

"What led you to follow them in such haste? How did you know they were in so great danger?"

"I got in late last night to the block house; I had been out on a scout for Colonel Quimby and was gone more than a week. The Shawanoes and Wyandots are raising the dickens and I knowed thar war lots of 'em hanging round the settlement. I told your father bein' that war so, he had better wait whar he war for a few days or until we could spare several of the boys to go with him."

"Howsumever, instead of that leadin' him to do as I wanted, it made him and your mother twice as determined to be off. They wouldn't wait at the block house for you younkers to come in as they order done, and made up thar minds to start the fust thing in the mornin'. I talked so hard with your father that I war sure he would change his mind, and so, being powerful tired, I went to sleep. I slept so late that when I woke up they'd been gone an hour. I swallered two or three mouthfuls and started after them."

Wharton explained what he had seen for himself, all of which indicated that Blazing Arrow and his two warriors had laid an ambush for the boys.

"Thar ain't no doubt of that after what you tell me. They larned that you war goin' to make a start for the block house, so they went a good long way along the trail and waited for you to walk into thar open jaws."

"Which we might have done, had we gone further; but, that being so, how was it father and mother rode this way without harm when they must have passed the very spot where Blazing Arrow and the rest were waiting for us?"

"I came by 'em," said Kenton with another smile.

"You could go by any number of them, for you know how. You were on foot and were prepared for them, but they were on horseback."

"Which leads me to say agin that Brigham Edwards and his wife ain't any fools, unless they've become so powerful sudden. Your father knowed thar war three places whar, if thar war any ambush laid, it was sartin to be in one of 'em. Countin' from the settlement, the fust was whar the path goes close to them falls, for the lay of the land jes' invites it; the second ar at the ravine down thar, only a little way beyond whar you are standin' this minute, and

the third or ten miles this side of the block house, whar the trail goes through that swampy spot and the branches are so thick over it that they almost sweep you off the back of your hoss. If he could pass them three places without runnin' agin the varmints, he would be safe."

"And where were Blazing Arrow and the rest in waiting?"

"At the swampy place I war speakin' of; the varmints made up thar minds that they would be sure of you by goin' close to the block house."

"And how came father and mother to miss them?"

"Jes' before reachin' the spot, they turned out of the trail and went 'round it. It war powerful hard work, pickin' thar way with thar hosses among the trees and around the rocks, but they managed to do it and did not come back to the trail till they war a half mile this side the spot whar the varmints war waitin' for 'em."

"And ye musn't forgit," said Larry, "that the spalpeens warn't looking for thim, but for us."

Wharton's eyes kindled with pride at this proof of the wisdom of his parents. It made clear that which had been so mystifying to him.

"Bein' as your folks had done that,' continued Kenton, "why I thought it only perlit to do the same."

"Why didn't Blazing Arrow and the others wait for us to come?" asked Wharton.

"They got tired, though an Injun has more patience than a white man, but they begun to think that mebbe they war too late after all and they set out to meet you."

"But you say we are close to the second place, that is the ravine where I got my rifle back from Blazing Arrow."

This was the first reference the fleet limbed youth had made to his great race with the champion of the Shawanoes, though he had told almost everything else. Remarking that the parents were safe for the present, Kenton demanded an account of the contest and expressed the greatest delight, declaring that he would have swapped his favorite rifle for a powder horn, could he have stood where he might have witnessed the wonderful burst of speed on the part of the youthful runner.

But Wharton was impatient. All his thoughts were with the folks and, though quite certain from the words and manner of the scout that there was no cause for immediate alarm, he could not be denied fuller information.

"We are near the second place that you say would be used by the Shawanoes for ambush. Have the folks passed that yet?"

"No; they ain't two hundred yards off from you this blessed minute."

Wharton bounced from the ground and could hardly repress a cheer in the excess of his delight.

"Why, Kenton, didn't you tell me this before?"

"What war the hurry? They'll keep."

"When did you overtake them?"

"Some distance back along the trail; I give a signal to your father and he waited for me to come up. I told him the varmints had set the trap close to the swampy spot that he had sarcumvented, for I had seen their tracks along the trail, and, onless they came trottin' after us, we must look out for that ravine next. It's purty hard work sarcumventin' that, but leavin' them to do it, I sneaked back hyar to keep a look-out for the varmints."

"Where does father intend to return to the main trail?"

"A little way beyond the clearin', but the varmints will find out that he ar ahead of them, and, havin' slipped up once already, they may try some trick;

they'll be powerful careful now that they know your folks ain't alone."

CHAPTER XXXI.

RED CROW'S ERRAND.

THE Shawnoe Indian known as Arqu-wao, or Red Crow, had come in sight of the ravine, which was the scene of Blazing Arrow's mishap the preceding day, when he halted with the abruptness described, for he had caught sight of the three Indians, with his detested brother at their head.

They were walking rapidly, and when Red Crow stopped, they soon passed beyond his sight again. Looking for them to halt, and half expecting them to turn back at any moment, he signaled the youths to hide themselves while he advanced in the cautious manner known to the reader.

Sure enough, he had gone but a little way when he observed the three standing in a group and discussing some question with great earnestness. Quite sure that it had something to do with the action of the couple who had passed that way a short time before, he stealthily watched them.

The truth was, Blazing Arrow, probably suspecting the identity of the couple, was giving his attention to them. They were sure to run into danger if they kept on to the falls, but they might escape unless he took a hand in the business.

Almost on the edge of the clearing, in sight of the ravine, the hoof prints showed that the horses had turned off from the trail, and with the evident intention of coming back to it at some point further on. The result of the conference was that Blazing Arrow and one of his warriors continued in the direction of the natural clearing, while the third was sent to track the horses through the rough wood and to signal the results to his leader.

Red Crow cautiously followed the single warrior to learn how he made out. No doubt the latter would have done well had he not run against an unexpected obstruction in the person of Simon Kenton, who, having accompanied Mr. Edwards and his wife a part of the way, turned back with the intention of acting as a rear guard.

The meeting was as much of a surprise to the white as to the red man, but, as has been intimated by the famous scout himself, he was just too quick for the Shawnoe. With characteristic bravery, Kenton leaped behind a tree, reloaded his rifle and coolly awaited the attack of Blazing Arrow and his companion, but they proved their cowardice by slinking off toward the clearing, across which they made their way, in the hope of gaining a better chance at the couple who could not be far off.

Red Crow now kept well out of sight of Kenton, as well as of his brother, not stirring from his hiding place until the way was cleared. Then he spole along the tracks made by the horses. These were so clearly defined that a child would have had no difficulty in following them.

He knew that the couple were the parents of the young man whom he had set out to serve. The course of the great white hunter made it clear that he would soon join the youth, while the route of Blazing Arrow showed that they were in no present danger from him. Accordingly, without taking the trouble of telling the boys his intention, he hurried over the broken ground, anxious to reach the man and wife before they penetrated too far.

Red Crow had formed a plan the moment he fully understood what was going on, and he knew the need of haste.

Despite the almost marvelous cleverness he had displayed from the beginning, he narrowly escaped making a

fatal error. In his eagerness to reach the couple, he forgot that he was in war paint, and resembled in every respect, except one, the Shawnoe whom the settler was trying to circumvent.

It was that one point of difference which saved Red Crow's life. Brigham Edwards was picking his way as best he could, when he caught sight of one of the Shawanoes hurrying along the trail, as though intent on overtaking him at the earliest possible moment.

Before the Indian knew his danger the vigilant settler had his unerring rifle at his shoulder, and his keen eye was running along the barrel. But he noticed that the Indian carried a bow and arrow instead of a gun. This was so unusual that he hesitated. At the moment of doing so Red Crow stopped short and looked up with a startled look, as though recalling his forgetfulness. Despite his pain, Edwards recognized him as Arqu-wao, whom he had often seen when he was actively engaged in scouting along the frontier.

The pioneer had stopped both horses, and he and his wife were on foot when this little episode took place.

"By George!" he exclaimed to his companion, "I came within a hair of killing that poor crazy fool, Red Crow."

"What can be his business with us unless it be unfriendly?" asked the wife, who also held a weapon in her hands. "He may have been sent forward by some of the others."

"I don't think we have anything to fear from him. I have never heard that he harmed those who did not interfere with him. I will see what he wants with us."

As Red Crow approached, Mr. Edwards addressed him by name and repeated his own, but the Shawnoe showed no sign of recognizing it.

"Why do you come here?" asked the white man sternly.

"Shaw'noe dere and dere and dere," replied Red Crow, pointing toward every point except that of the block house; "if go on path, Shaw'noe kill white man—kill white woman."

"Do you want to help us?"

"Me show way—Shaw'noe not see—not find."

This promise was received with a good deal of skepticism, but the feelings of the parents were greatly stirred by the next words that were quickly uttered:

"White boy Wart'n—white boy Larry—dey come wid Arqu-wao."

"What!" exclaimed the father, recognizing the names, and striding in front of the Indian; "do you know anything about those two boys?"

Red Crow nodded his head several times with vigor.

"Where are they?"

"Up dere," he replied, pointing in the direction of the point in the trail where he had left them but a short time before.

"What can this mean?" demanded the agitated parent; "I must investigate it. We will leave the horses here while we go back with him."

The mother was as anxious to meet her son and Larry, and they quickly made ready to start.

Red Crow was glad to guide them, but at the moment of setting out a signal was heard, which the pioneer identified as coming from Simon Kenton.

(To be continued.)

THE REASON FOR RIGHTEANEDNESS.

Did you ever wonder why it is that you use the right hand more easily than the left? Is there any physical reason for it or is it the result of custom and training? A book has recently been written on the subject by an Englishman, Sir Daniel Wilson, from a review of which by *The Critic*, we make a few extracts that will doubtless prove of interest.

The right lung is more capacious than the

left, having three lobes, while the left has only two. The liver, the heaviest organ of the body, is on the right side, overweighing the heart on the left. The center of gravity is decidedly on the right side, requiring for this side a larger supply of nerve force than for the left. As the nerve force on the right side of the body proceeds from the left hemisphere of the brain, this hemisphere, by natural correlations, contains the larger, heavier, and more active of the two.

The centers of nerve force for speaking, writing, and other higher exertions of the mental faculty are found to be especially strong in the left hemisphere; and when its powers are disabled by injury, the sluggish and untrained right hemisphere, which actuates the left side of the body, can but feebly and imperfectly supply its place. From the results of this greater supply of nerve force to the right (*dexter* or *droit*) side, we get the origin of the meaning of such words as "adroitness" and "dexterity."

Occasionally, however, the right hemisphere is the larger and more active. The man is then left handed. How this exceptional state is caused we do not know. This, indeed is the real riddle which yet remains to be solved. Yet it is no more mysterious than any of the other variations of structure which continually occur, and on which the Darwinian system of development and progress is built. Why in the same family is one child tall and another short? Why has one a large and long head and another a small and round head? What, in brief, is the origin of the immense variety of physical and mental traits and endowments in the people around us?

This is a question which cannot be answered as yet, whatever the future of science may have in store for us. We can only recognize the differences, and make our social and educational arrangements to correspond with them. Among these educational provisions is one of much importance, which has been hitherto almost universally neglected—the ancient Greeks alone seemed to have had an idea of its value. This provision is the proper education of the two hands, an education which, by its reflex influence would stimulate both hemispheres of the brain.

Our author's own experience, as a left handed man, whose right hand has been trained to the pen, while as an artist (and one of no mean rank, as the charming illustrations of his "Old Edinburgh" and other works show) he holds the pencil or crowquill in the left, has taught him the great importance of this two sided training. Many remarkable examples in the character are given, from the left handed Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest of Italian artists and mechanicians, to other hardly less notable instances of our own time.

The conclusion to which we are thus brought is of serious moment. Throughout Christendom the age of militarism and brute force is passing away. The era of industrialism is taking its place. The manifold and incessant work of the inventive brain and the executive hand is rapidly transforming the world. It may reasonably be assumed that the nation which first realizes, and enforces in its schools and workshops, the principle that the whole brain should be equally active, and its hands be specially trained for this work, will be apt to take the lead in the future of civilization.

LITTLE RAILWAY ROUTES WITH BIG NAMES.

"What's in a name?" Certain lines of railroad appear to think that there is a good deal—at least they put a good deal of name to some very insignificant roads, as witness the following paragraphs, clipped at different times from exchanges.

"It isn't always easy to judge of a railroad's importance by its name," says a railroad man. "What do you know about the 'Pittsburg, Chicago and Great Western Railroad.' The name is imposing, isn't it? Well, the road itself was built years ago by Judge White, of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, who sunk a quite fortune in it. It ran from New Galilee, Pennsylvania, a place which never saw more than 200 inhabitants, to East Liverpool, Ohio, an aggregate distance of twenty one miles."

The railroad of which Mrs. Hattie N. Kimball, of Harrisville, West Virginia, was recently elected president is called the Pennsboro and Harrisville Railroad, and it is about as long as a good after breakfast walk. Its business and its importance in the commercial world are proportionate to its length. One day I received a typewritten letter on a beautiful lithographed letter head, asking for passes for the "Cleveland and Southern Railway Company." I knew nothing of the railway, but the lithographed stationery informed all to whom it might come that the "Cleveland and Southern Railway" was "the shortest line between Chicago and New York." I immediately forwarded the usual certificates, and a few weeks later, as I chanced to be in Cleveland, I made inquiry concerning the new corporation. I learned that "the shortest line between Chicago and New York" is just four miles long, and that it runs from Chargin Falls, Ohio, to Solon, Ohio. There can be little doubt that the road is all that is claimed for it on the stationery of its officials.



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155 East 23d Street, New York.

A TRULY NOBLE EXAMPLE.

ONE of England's titled dames, Lady Henry Somerset, has chosen as her life work the amelioration of the poor and degraded, and after no little crusading in London against the liquor evil and other crying iniquities, has transferred her work for a time to this country.

This example of a woman, high born and cultured, stooping to reach down a helping hand to fellow creatures immeasurably below her in enlightenment and morals, offers great temptation to pen a homily on that practical charity which is not content with stirring the bright coals on the family hearth and murmuring:

"What a cold night it is, to be sure! I'm so glad I put a dollar in the plate last Sunday. It will keep a few poor people warm. My dear, I paid that bill of Skinner's today for that new sealskin cloak of yours. I think he's rather high, don't you? Two hundred and fifty dollars strikes me as just a leetle bit above the mark, you know? Ugh! don't you feel that draught, my dear? Positively, this is the worst night we've had since the blizzard! So glad I made it a dollar!"

But homilies are not readable, so we refrain.

The Argosy at Three Dollars for two years is less than three cents a week. See standing notice at the head of this column.

FOR DUMB CREATURES.

THOSE who do not live in the largest cities would be surprised and interested to see one phase of the work of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—their ambulance service.

If a horse becomes so injured in the streets that he is unable to return to his stable, a telephone message brings a clattering red box wagon along, the floor down near the ground, into which the horse is led and in which he is carted off.

If one of these animals falls down one of the street excavations, life saving apparatus is brought by the society's officers in the shape of derrick and tackle.

The organization employs a number of uniformed men to police certain districts for the detection of instances of cruelty to horses. These officers are granted certain powers by the city whereby they can command any driver of an injured or sick animal to stop, unhitch, and lead his horse back to the stable, or they can direct a policeman to arrest any man for an act of aggravated cruelty.

Another work that this humane society oftentimes allows to be thrust upon it is the killing of diseased or useless animals for their owners. This they do instantaneously and painlessly but only in such instances as make the act one of mercy.

WHY HE FAILED.

A DAILY paper some time since asked in its columns that people who had failed in business write and give the causes of their failures. Many answers were received and published. They made not only interesting reading, but also a mine of valuable information and warning. The next

best thing to knowing what to do is knowing what not to do.

One reason given was this: "I have been too impatient of serving and too ambitious to be my own master." A good cause for failure, indeed!

Every command given to an employee is a lesson in business, if he only looks at it with intelligence, and a realization of this should tame the soaring ambition of young men while they are accumulating their capital of experience as salaried servants.

Some sage has said that, to command, one must have learned to obey. He who is impatient of control is usually unable to govern himself—others, much less—and here is a fruitful source of failure.

The price of Munsey's Magazine is \$3 a year. But to any reader of The Argosy who will send us \$2 for a year's subscription and \$2 additional—\$4 in all—we will send both Argosy and Magazine for one year.

THE JANUARY MUNSEY.

THE current issue of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE presents an even more attractive table of contents than has signalized the three preceding numbers of this popular periodical. The leading article, "Journalists and Journalism in New York," is written by Mr. Munsey himself. The paper is accompanied by the latest portrait of Dana, Reid, Shepard and other leading editors.

A unique contribution is Mr. R. H. Titherington's account of the "Heirs to European Thrones," in which some very entertaining chat is furnished concerning future monarchs across the water, many of them now children. In "The Home and Home Life of Chauncey M. Depew," Miss Mattie Sheridan has a theme in which every American is intensely interested. The pictures accompanying her description were made expressly for MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and represent faithful interior views of many of the rooms in the famous railroad president's house in Fifty Fourth Street.

There are other illustrated papers, short stories, poems and editorials. The complete novel is by William Murray Graydon, author of "Vera Shamarin," and is another thrilling narrative of Nihilistic Russia, under the title, "The House of Orfanoff."

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is issued the first of each month and is for sale by all newsdealers at 25 cents a copy. Subscription price \$3 a year.

WHAT IS THOUGHT OF THE ARGOSY.

THE best New Year's card THE ARGOSY can send out is a collection of the good words its readers have recently said about it. We print herewith extracts from some letters received during the past few weeks.

THE BEST OUT OF SEVEN.

GENEVA, N. Y.
In our family we take seven papers and magazines and I like THE ARGOSY better than any other paper that I read, and I read most all of them. I have taken THE ARGOSY for a year or more, and I used to think the ——— was great, but THE ARGOSY is the best by a great deal / think.

WILL R. ZOBRIST.

THE BRIGHTEST OF THEM ALL.

P. O. BOX, 295 TRENTON, N. J.
I have taken very nearly all the weekly papers for boys published and among them THE ARGOSY, and I find it the most entertaining and the brightest of them all. I have taken it for three years and I hope I will have the pleasure of taking it for a great many more years to come.

BENJ. GODESKALK.

AT THE TOP OF THE LADDER.

BOX 619, PORTLAND, OREGON.
THE ARGOSY is at the top of the ladder of publications of its class.

C. A. TOWNSEND.

WOULD BE AT A LOSS WITHOUT IT.

147 NORTH ELLIOT ST., BROOKLYN, N. Y.
I do not know what we would do without THE ARGOSY, it is such a good paper.

CHARLIE CONKLIN.

THE PRESENT FORM THE BEST.

152 JEFFERSON AVE., ROCHESTER, N. Y.
I like the new form of THE ARGOSY better than any of the others. I have taken the paper a long time, but this is an improvement on any of its previous forms.

FRANK STRONG.

THE BEST OF STORIES.

NEW RICHMOND, OHIO.
Permit one of the many thousand admirers of THE ARGOSY to give his opinion of the paper you issue. I think THE ARGOSY is the best paper I ever read, and I have read many different periodicals. Its stories are the best of stories and I admire it on account of the nice paper it is printed on.

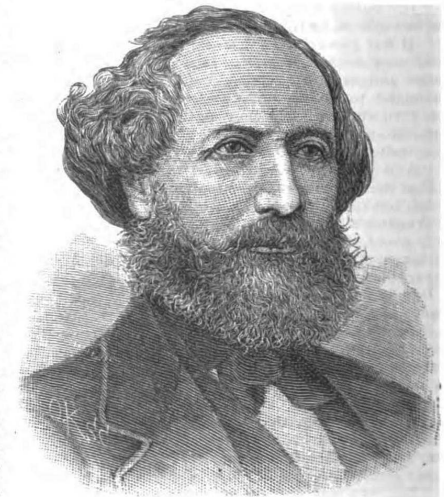
JOE F. MORELAND.

CYRUS W. FIELD.

THE FOUNDER OF THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH.

TWENTY FIVE years ago Cyrus W. Field was undoubtedly the most celebrated citizen of New York. He had just accomplished after a dozen years of toil and difficulties, a colossal enterprise, destined to be of immense value to the world at large. The name of the man who had conceived and brought into existence the first ocean telegraph was on every one's lips.

He was born and educated at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, but at the age of fifteen he left his country home and went to New York, with twenty five dollars



CYRUS W. FIELD.

in his pocket, to seek his fortune. Beginning very near the foot of the ladder, he found a place in the great dry goods store of the late A. T. Stewart. His salary for the first year was but fifty dollars.

After three years in the Stewart store, Mr. Field went to work for one of his brothers, who had a paper factory at Lee, Massachusetts. Two years later, having gained a thorough knowledge of the business, he became a partner in the firm of E. Root & Company, of Maiden Lane, New York. This undertaking proved a failure, and Mr. Field left it to start on his own account. This was in 1841, and during the next twelve years he was very prosperous, accumulating a considerable fortune.

Then occurred to him the idea which was to make him an immortal figure in the history of the world's progress—the joining of the Old World and the New by means of a telegraphic cable under three thousand miles of hitherto unfathomed ocean. He succeeded in enlisting the aid of Peter Cooper, Marshall Roberts, and several leading New Yorkers, as well as British capitalists. Next he procured from the Newfoundland legislature the privilege of laying cables between that island and the American continent on one side, and Ireland on the other, and in 1865 the huge steamer Great Eastern was chartered to carry over the ocean a mighty coil of telegraph wire, paying it out as she progressed. Mr. Field himself was on board the vessel, to witness the snapping of the cable when twelve hundred miles of it had been laid. The following year a second attempt was made. It succeeded without mishap.

Mr. Field has since been connected with many other gigantic enterprises and has been counted among the millionaires of the country. But readers of the newspapers have recently been shocked to learn how, at an advanced age and when the burdens of an honorable career should be put aside, domestic affliction and financial disaster have come upon this man of colossal achievement, of such extent as to bid fair to require another start upon the rugged road of fortune.

But whatever happen his fame is imperishable as the promoter of a great enterprise that has made the world a debtor to America.

Mr. Field's way of life is simple and regular. He rises and retires early; every day he goes to his down town office, and generally takes a very plain lunch in the Western Union building. His home, a handsome but not ostentatious house, is on Gramercy Park.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Up to the gate of the closing year
Creepeth the monarch, gray and old;
Out in an instant, with hearty cheer,
Cometh the monarch, young and bold,
And the bells from a thousand steeples ring,
"The king is dead, long live the king!"
—H. Hastings Weld.

The Man in the Yellow Ulster.

BY EDWIN T. CLOUGH.

THE more I think about it the more it seems to me that my exciting experience during the last Thanksgiving holidays would make a good story, and the temptation to write it out is so strong that, though this sort of thing isn't at all in my line, I think I'll try to put it down as briefly and as clearly as I can.

In the first place I live, when at home, in Westchester County, New York State, but, as I am in the Freshman class at the Stevens Institute of Technology, in Hoboken, New Jersey, I board in that town during the sessions, and, of course, make a bee line for Westchester whenever any holidays come around. But, as they had elected me captain of the Freshman football eleven and put me in as quarter back of the regular 'varsity team (not a very good team, I'm sorry to say—like myself, much under weight) I was very anxious to get all the points I could about the game and, therefore, decided to miss my Thanksgiving dinner at home by stopping over in New York to see the great Yale-Princeton match.

That being settled, I also concluded I might as well put in an evening at the theater; so, on the afternoon before Thanksgiving day, I went over to New York and registered at the Hotel Rivoli, being assigned to room 146 on the sixth floor.

About six o'clock I came down stairs to dinner, first stopping at the hotel news stand, where they sell theater tickets among other things; there I bought a good seat for Daly's and then went to the dining room. As I handed my hat and coat to the man who attends to the hat rack, my eye was caught by an overcoat that lay folded up on that extensive piece of furniture; it was what I call a blonde coat, that is, a light yellow; and it had very marked stripes or bars of some darker color running through it crisscross. It was not only very cheap cloth, but it was so vulgar in color and pattern as to excite remark at a hotel patronized as a rule by people who wore better and quieter clothes than this queer garment. It was still there when I had finished dinner.

On the street the newsboys were crying the evening papers; I lacked over half an hour to theater time, so I bought a copy and took a seat in the lounging room to read the predictions and so forth of the next day's game. While I was reading I became conscious of the appearance of that peculiar coat at the doorway of the reading room. I glanced up and saw a fair complexioned man of medium height with a peculiar thin face, that seemed puzzlingly young and old at the same time; on his arm hung that nightmare of a coat, a sort of ulster.

I could take only a glance at him, for his remarkably sharp little eyes, which were swiftly traveling all over the room, suddenly caught my own and I let my gaze fall at once to resume my reading of the paper. But I could still see him move past me, and I judged it was he who shifted a chair quite close behind my own and sat down. I heard the crackle of a cigar as he bit off the end; then it seemed he was fumbling in his pockets, and in a moment he said to some one:

"May I trouble you for some fire?"

"Let me give you a match," answered

a deep voice, also quite close behind me.

His cigar lighted, the man of the dreadful coat opened this short conversation:

"Looks a little like rain, I think."

"Ah! does it?" The answer was rather curt without any questioning inflection. Nothing daunted, the first speaker continued:

"In town to see the game, I suppose?"

"I believe everybody goes," after a hardly perceptible hesitation.

"Any idea who has the best of it?"

"Really, I can't say."

"I just heard a man outside offer ten to five on Yale. Strike's me it's about

No one who was there will ever forget that drenching rain that began to pour in torrents about the middle of the game, soaking everybody not under cover; nor that almost fatal jam that occurred on the way to the cars when it was all over. I was not surprised to read next day that women had fainted in that fearful crush; for my part, it took me over an hour of the most frightful squeezing I ever endured to get over the few hundred feet to the station and up the stairs into the train; and at one time, indeed, when the tremendous pressure was jamming me tighter and tighter against one of the pillars of the Elevated road, I really believe I would have been crushed to death had

Mechanically I glanced up at the number on the door. It was 147.

"Pshaw! I'm as bad as a hammer without a head just now." As I opened my own door I noticed that one of the chambermaids had been coming toward me as I was apparently spying at the other door. I was too tuckered out to give it a thought.

"It's lucky I'm so done up," I reflected, as I threw myself into bed, "else the thought of that unsightly coat for a neighbor would give me bad dreams."

As I was packing my handbag before breakfast next morning I could faintly hear the sound of voices in No. 147, and I was almost ready to leave my room when there came a sharp knock at my



I WAS ABREAST OF HIM LIKE A FLASH. ONE SPRING, AND I HAD HIM BY THE COLLAR!

an even chance for Princeton. What do you think?"

"Really, I have no opinion," and I heard the last speaker get up abruptly and, as he left the room, I saw the broad back of a massive man of about thirty years of age.

This attempt at conversation did not impress itself particularly on my mind at the time, though I did think it singular that any one who claimed to know anything at all about the matter should think it an even thing for Princeton.

What I did in the succeeding twenty-four hours has nothing to do with this story, excepting that, of course, I saw the game—and what a great game it was, too! What a splendid defense of Princeton's that was in the first half! and what a beautiful game McClung did put up with his terrible rushes, one after another, smash into the middle of the orange-and-black rush line! Then there was that superb, cool headed punting of Homans that—but there! I must stop short, else my enthusiasm will run wild and ride right over the story.

not an immensely tall fellow behind me cried out to the crowd to push backward, and with all his strength pulled me out from the pillar by the collar of my overcoat. I heard his companions call him "Doc," and, whoever he is, I wish I had a chance to thank him.

That was a tough six hours, and you may be sure it was a pretty bedraggled and worn out chap that got out of the hotel elevator at the sixth floor at half past six that evening, long after dark.

"No going home tonight," thought I. "If I don't get to bed pretty quick something's going to happen!"

My head felt heavy and dull as I went toward my room, No. 146, reaching down into my pocket for the key. I inserted it in the door, unlocked it, turned the handle and—the door would not open! At the same instant I thought I heard a sound within the room. I pulled out the key and looked through the keyhole; the inside tag over the hole was up or missing; through the small aperture I saw in the middle of the gaslight a little patch of a blonde and striped overcoat and—out went the light.

door. On opening it I found to my surprise three people—the hotel clerk, the chambermaid and a tall, broad shouldered and gentlemanly individual of about thirty odd, whose face was strange to me. The clerk pushed into the room, followed by the others, and it was he who spoke.

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mr. Clough, but this gentleman, who occupies the next room, has had his trunk broken open and some valuables taken out. Unfortunately the chambermaid here says she saw you looking into the keyhole of that room last night—"

"You are mistaken!" said I quickly, looking the girl in the face and flushing indignantly. "You saw me at the door of No. 147, not 145. The way to—" "No. 147 is the room we refer to," interrupted the clerk.

"A short, thin man, with a yellow overcoat, occupies the room on that side," I protested.

"What do you mean? I have occupied No. 147 since Tuesday night."

It was the heavy gentleman who spoke, and I instantly recognized the

voice as that which had rebuffed the queer customer two nights before. But I *did* see that same coat through the key-hole! and I told them all about my mistaking the room and what I had seen—the coat robed body in the middle of the room, blocking my limited field of vision and the sudden going out of the light; and I ended by saying:

"Now, here is my card, and I wish you would send for my uncle, Howard B. Clough, of Clough, Smedley & Brewster—"

"My bankers!" broke in the tall gentleman. "I do not need that reference, though. Your face and appearance, Mr. Clough, are quite enough, and your story gives us an indubitable clew. Now, sir," turning to the clerk, "this man—skipped, I suppose, eh?"

"Paid his bill at seven o'clock—half an hour after you saw him last night, Mr. Clough; asked me as he went out what car to take for the Erie Railroad ferry. 'Stickney' is the name on the register—'Harrisburg, Pennsylvania,' I think. Occupied 148. Said he was going up State somewhere. Had no luggage but a large satchel."

"Pure bluff, doubtless!" returned the victim. "I don't propose to let this drop. What he took does not amount to much, except the watch—an heirloom. I left it in my trunk with some other jewelry when I went to the game yesterday for fear of being robbed, and—"

"The hotel safe—there is a notice on your door, Mr. Zebley," insinuated the clerk.

"Yes, I know; I ought to have known better. But I shall see Inspector Byrnes at once. Hang it! the fellow braced me only the other night and tried, as I thought, to rope me into a bet. I remember he asked me if I was going to the game, too. You say he had the room next to mine?"

"No, 148," answered the clerk.

"He used the fire escape and came in through the window, I suppose."

I ran to my window, and, looking out, saw that a fire escape balcony covered two windows on each floor—on this one, Nos. 147 and 148.

"Now, Mr. Clough, I will be obliged to you if you will write your address on your card and hold yourself ready to testify if need be. I'm in your debt already for the clew, and I hope you'll pardon our suspecting you. The chambermaid, you know—"

I interrupted him with a protestation, and we exchanged cards.

Then I got a hurried breakfast and started to catch my train. As I rode in the car it recurred to me that when I had unlocked No. 147 the night before the door would not open, yet Mr. Zebley had said nothing about being unable to get into his room. I concluded that the thief had kept the door latched on the inside while he was in the room and had unlatched it on finally leaving by the window.

When I stepped off the car at the Grand Central Station it wanted ten minutes of the time for the departure of my local. I bought my ticket, and as I strolled toward the gate I thought to myself:

"At last! There was a time this morning when I thought I would not see home at all this vacation. Now, thank my stars! I'll be there in an hour."

I was mistaken.

"All aboard for the Boston Express!" cried the gate keeper.

I heard hasty footsteps behind me, and a belated passenger hurried by me toward the gate. As my eye lighted upon him I felt a shock like that of an electric battery. It was the man with the striped ulster!

I was abreast of him like a flash. One spring, and I had him by the collar! The suddenness of my attack took his

breath away—his color also, I noticed. Then some women began to scream and scramble away, and at the same time my man started to let out some bad language to the general effect that I should let him know who I was, what was the matter with me any way, and what did I want.

"What I want is a policeman," and I looked around at the gathering crowd.

"Will somebody go for one, please?"

"Drop it, you imp!" and with that he gave me a terrific push that sent me off my feet; but as I held on tight to his coat, the buttons flew off in every direction.

"Will you?" and he struck at me, giving his coat a wrench at the same time that tore it from my grasp as I hung to it and let me down on the floor with a thump.

I was up and on his shoulders in the wink of an eye.

"I don't play football for nothing, old man," I cried, in a voice pitched high with excitement. "You can do that as often as you please, but, by George, I'll keep on tackling you from here to Boston!"

He had just got a hand on my throat when a rough voice said:

"Break away, there!" and a big policeman pushed through the now large crowd.

"What's all this here row, heh?" he demanded, looking from my man to me as if he were just *itching* to strike somebody with his club.

"This young ragamuffin has assaulted me, officer. My train is just going or I'd make you take him in." Of course this wasn't his *exact* language—oh, no!

"Officer, I demand that you take *him* in," I cried. "He's wanted for robbery at the Hotel Rivoli where he stopped last night—"

"You lie! you imp. I stopped at the Grand Union."

"Did he rob *you*?" demanded the policeman.

"No, but—"

"Say, get out! or I'll run you in. See?" and the bully of a policeman put his hand on my chest and gave me such a shove that I made a hole in the crowd. I sprang forward again like a tiger and had that yellow collar in my grasp.

"No, you don't!" cried I. "He's my man and I'm going to have him."

The officer grabbed me by the collar now, gave me a pull that broke my grip, and raised his club high in air as if to strike me.

"Shame! shame! A mere boy!" was the chorus from the crowd. He thought better of it, and lowered his arm and released me.

"Say!" said he, "you'd better git, or—"

My man meanwhile was elbowing his way toward the gate. Must I lose him after all this? The policeman's advice I no more thought of than the sound of the wind. I was just about to plunge right into the crowd after the retreating ulster when something happened which put a new complexion on matters.

A tall, slim, keen eyed man had come into the crowd about the time the policeman arrived. He had been narrowly watching "yellow coat" and myself during the whole performance. The sneak thief, pushing toward the gate, had to pass this man. That individual put one hand on the fellow's chest and said calmly:

"Hold on a bit."

"Who are *you*, I'd like to know? Make room will you? My train is going."

"Boston Express just left, sir," said the gateman. The thief gave me a look (I was right by him again) that did not need the words he audibly muttered to strengthen it. He started to pass the

stranger again, but the hand was still on his chest.

"Just step this way, will you?" said the tall man to my prey. "I want you, too, young man," to me; and to the policeman he gave a look that plainly meant "you, too."

The latter individual looked a little scared, as though he knew the man, and he meekly followed us, keeping a hand (a gentle one now) on my shoulder. The crowd broke away as we went toward the door of a private room at the end of the one we were already in. The tall man closed the door, and looking both his prisoners in the eye as if drawing comparisons, said to me:

"You say you have a charge to make against this man?"

"See here! Who *are* you? What right have you got to interfere?" interposed my man, excitedly. "I don't propose to have any more bluffs worked on me."

The tall man did not even glance at the speaker; he kept his eyes fixed on mine and simply opened his coat. On his vest, close to the armpit, was a detective's badge.

"Yes, I have!" I answered sharply. "This gentleman," handing him Mr. Zebley's card, "is seeing Inspector Byrnes this morning about tracing this fellow. He rifed a trunk of his last night at the Rivoli and I saw him doing it. Take us down there now," I continued. "That'll prove whether I know what I'm talking about or not."

"We'll soon settle that," said the detective. "Say, Bill, mind your eye," and he went out, while the policeman leaned his back against the door and occasionally glanced rather fearfully at me. As a matter of fact, I think I had good grounds for a charge against him for his conduct, but I had something else on my mind then.

Perfect silence reigned. My man seemed changed somehow; he was no longer impatient; he did not even look at me, but seemed to be thinking very hard as he walked up and down the room smoking a cigarette. In ten minutes the detective returned. He closed the door behind him and said to my man:

"Will you come quietly or do you want to make a fuss?"

"Where is it?" asked my man calmly, as if he knew just what his captor meant.

"Jefferson Market."

"All right. As long as I'm in it, I'll see it through." They looked at each other steadily for a couple of seconds; then the detective gave a little laugh and said:

"You'll do!" There was a sort of freemasonry in all this, quite beyond my comprehension, and from that moment they seemed to understand each other perfectly and chatted pleasantly all the way down town. Before starting, however, my "angel unawares" said to the policeman:

"That's all right, Bill; you stay on your beat. I'll take another. But you want to look sharp another time." Bill had not a word to say. Then it was my turn:

"They want you, too, young man."

"Who?" I asked.

"The hotel people."

"How do you know?"

"Telephoned 'em."

"All right, I'm right with you," I replied cheerfully, for I felt that this was my affair, in view of the fight I had made, and I wanted to make sure it went through. "But you must stop at the telegraph desk. I've got to wire home."

We found the hotel clerk and the proprietor at the court when we arrived, and in a very few minutes Mr. Zebley rushed in, followed by a lawyer. He had a short talk with the detective and

then rushed over to me and nearly shook my hand off.

"By George, my boy, you are a brick! You have got sand! I'm glad to know you—indeed I am! I like nerve above all things, and you've got it!"

"I think 'nerve' is generally considered one of the *bad* qualities of all college freshmen," I answered, laughing at my own play on the word.

But I must cut this short or I'll never finish.

After the lawyer had a little confab with the judge, we all went into the private room. My man had little to say; he threw his hat on a side table and negligently sat on one corner of it. I thought the whole majesty of the law would fall on him when he calmly lit a cigarette in the judge's presence, but that seemed to raise no objection.

"Rufus Stickney, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania," were the name and address he gave. The hotel people said that no less than four other complaints of the loss of small articles from rooms had been made after I left. My man denied his guilt in every case. Telephoning, on my suggestion, to the Grand Union Hotel, revealed the fact that a man answering his description had arrived there about nine o'clock the night before and put up over night, leaving just about two hours previous. The loss of an overcoat from the hat rack was the only complaint they had received. He had left, as he came, with a large grip-sack.

The lawyer was busy for over half an hour drawing up affidavits, which were signed by Zebley and the hotel people as complainants, and by myself as a witness in the case. The man was thoroughly searched, but absolutely nothing was found on his person to indicate his identity, much less to incriminate him.

"Held for trial at General Sessions!" finally decided the judge, and the prisoner was being led away to the prison when Zebley cried:

"Hold on a minute! This man had a gripsack when he left the Grand Union this morning. Where is that now? I want my property back! Where have you left that handbag?"

"Say, what do you take me for?" was the thief's answer. "If you want to ask any questions, ask 'em of Rowe & Rummel, my counsel."

"All right, my smart fellow!" was Zebley's rejoinder. "You've got a good one to deal with this time, and he'll see you sent up—make no mistake!"

I looked at my watch and found I had just twenty five minutes to catch the 1:10 train home. So I asked if I was wanted further and being assured I could do nothing more at that time, I snatched a hat from the table and rushed out of the private room. Clapping the hat on my head, something seemed wrong! It did not fit. I took it off and looked inside—it was not my hat.

Again, I must miss a train! Is it any wonder I was getting out of patience? I hurried back to the judge's room. As I carried the hat in my hand I felt something under the lining of it, but at that moment I entered and found the prisoner and the court officer hunting around the room.

"Is this your hat?" I asked of my man.

"Yes, it is," and he reached so eagerly for it that it flashed across me—!

I pulled down the sweat band, pulled up the lining, and pulled out therefrom a piece of paper folded. It proved to be an Adams Express Company receipt for one package, dated November 27, and made out in the name of "H. Simonson, Boston, Mass. To be called for."

"I will take charge of that!" said the detective, interposing his body as the

prisoner seemed to be about to spring on me. He took it, and I have since learned that the detective stopped the package before it could get out of New York. It was my man's satchel, and all of the stolen property was found therein, including an overcoat, identified by a guest of the Grand Union.

I am subpoenaed as a witness against Mr. Rufus Stickney, of Harrisburg, Penn., and the trial comes off in a week's time. There is not the slightest doubt that he will then exchange his striped ulster for stripes of another and a broader kind.

I might add that I caught the 2.42 train.

* * * * *

(Postscript.)

THE ALBEMARLE,
Madison Square,
New York.

Editor THE ARGOSY.

My Dear Sir:
My friend Clough, a bright fellow, as you can see, sends me this story in the hope that I may be able to place it for him where it will do most good. That means with THE ARGOSY, of course—if you can use it.

The morning papers enable me to add that this man Stickney was yesterday sentenced by the Recorder to two years and six months. He was found to be a noted Chicago sneak thief, and they wanted him there on several charges.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,
OWEN HACKETT.

December 14, 1891.

[This Story began in No. 43.]

TRUE TO HIMSELF;

OR,

ROGER STRONG'S STRUGGLE FOR PLACE.

BY EDWARD STRATEMEYER,

Author of "Richard Dare's Venture," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MRS. AGATHA MITTS.

I COULD not help but wonder as I sat in the parlor with my friend Mr. Harrison, waiting for the appearance of Mrs. Agatha Mitts, what kind of a person the keeper of the boarding house would prove to be.

For some reason the name suggested to me a tall, gaunt female with sharp features, and I was taken by surprise when a short, dumpy woman, with a round face, came wobbling in and asked what was wanted.

"This is Mrs. Agatha Mitts?" asked Mr. Harrison, as he arose.

"Yes, sir. And you are Mr. Harrison, I suppose. I don't remember you." "I didn't think you would," laughed my friend from Chicago. "I am from the West, and have never before been in Brooklyn."

"Yes? Then your business with me is—? Perhaps you desire board?" and she smiled; first at him and then at me. "No; we do not wish board," was the quiet reply. "We come to see you on business."

"And what is it?"

"We would like to see you privately." "Certainly. Pray take a seat. I will close the doors."

She shut up the folding doors leading to the sitting room, and then the one to the hall.

"Now I am quite at your service," she said, and peered at us rather sharply.

There was an awkward pause for a moment, and then Mr. Harrison went on bluntly:

"Has Mr. Aaron Woodward or Chris Holtzmann been here since yesterday, madam?"

Mrs. Mitts started at the mention of the two names. Then she recovered herself.

"Whom did you say, sir?" she queried innocently.

Mr. Harrison repeated his question.

"Why, I really haven't heard of those two gentlemen in so long a time. I've nearly forgotten them," she said sweetly. "They weren't here yesterday?" I put in.

"No." And this time her tone was a trifle cold.

"Do you expect them today?" I went on.

"No, I don't. She paused a second. "Is that all you wish to know?"

"No, ma'am," I replied promptly. "There is a good deal more I wish to know."

"Who are you, if I may ask?"

"My name is Strong."

She looked puzzled for a moment.

"I don't recognize the name," she said, and then she suddenly turned pale.

"I am the son of Carson Strong who was sent to prison for alleged forgery and the passing of worthless checks," I continued. "I suppose you remember the case."

"Har—hardly," she faltered. "I—I—heard something of it, but not the full particulars."

"That is strange when you were so interested in it."

"I?" she repeated, in pretended surprise.

"Yes, madam," said Mr. Harrison. "You were very much interested."

"Who says so?"

"I say so," said I.

"You! You are only a boy."

"I suppose I am, but that doesn't make any difference. You know all about the great wrong that has been done, and—"

"It is false! I know nothing!" she cried in anger.

"You know all, and we want you to tell us all you know before we leave this house."

Mrs. Agatha Mitts arose in a passion. "I want you to get out of my house at once!" she ejaculated. "I won't stand your presence here another minute."

"Excuse me, madam; not so fast," said Mr. Harrison calmly. "My young friend Strong is quite right in what he says."

"I don't care what you think about it," she snapped.

"Oh, yes, you do. Perhaps you don't know who I am," went on my Western friend deliberately.

The sly insinuation had its effect. Evidently the woman had a swift vision of a detective in citizen's clothes before her mind's eye.

"You come in authority," she said faintly.

"We won't speak about that now," said Mr. Harrison. "All we want you to do is to make a complete confession of your knowledge of the affair."

"I haven't any knowledge."

"You have," I said. "You know everything. I have papers here belonging to Woodward, Holtzmann and Ferguson to prove it. There is no use for you to deny it, and if you insist and make it necessary to call in the police—"

"No, no! Please don't do that, I beg of you," she cried.

"Then will you do as I wish?"

"But my reputation? It will be gone forever," she moaned.

"It will be gone any way, if you have to go to prison," observed Mr. Harrison sagely.

"And if I make a clean confession you will not prosecute me?" she asked eagerly.

"I'll promise you that," I said.

"You are not fooling me?"

"No, ma'am."

She sprang to her feet and paced the room several times.

"I'll do it," she cried. "They have never treated me right, and I do not care what becomes of them so long as I

go clear. What do you wish me to do, gentlemen?"

I was nonplused for an instant. Mr. Harrison helped me out.

"I will write out your confession and you can sign it," he said. "Have your ink and paper handy?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Mitts brought forth the material and we all sat down again.

"Remember to give us only the plain facts," I said.

"I will," she returned sharply.

In a rather roundabout way she made her confession, if it could be called such. It filled several sheets of paper and it took over half an hour.

It contained but little more than what my readers already know or suspect. She knew positively that Mr. Aaron Woodward was the forger of the checks, Holtzmann had presented them, and Ferguson had so altered the daily reports that my father had unwittingly made a false showing on his books.

About Weaver she knew nothing, when once explained the whole matter was as clear as day.

When he had finished the writing Mr. Harrison read the paper out loud and after some hesitation the woman signed it, and then we both witnessed it.

"I guess our business here is at an end," said my Western friend.

"I think so," I replied. "But one thing more, Mrs. Mitts." I continued, turning to her. "If Mr. Woodward or Chris Holtzmann call I think you will find it advisable to keep this affair a secret."

"I will not be at home to them," she replied briefly.

"A good plan," said Mr. Harrison. "Now that you have done the right thing the less you say about the matter the better for you."

A few minutes later, with the paper tucked safely in my pocket, we left the house. Mrs. Mitts watched us sharply from behind the half closed blinds.

In half an hour we were down town and across the ferry once more.

"I suppose you wish to get home as soon as possible," said Mr. Harrison, as we boarded a horse car to take us to his hotel.

"Yes, sir. My sister and the rest will be anxious to hear how I've made out, and besides I'm anxious to learn how things have gone since I have been away."

"I've no doubt of it."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I hardly know. I have some business, but I am quite interested in your case and—"

"Would you like to go along? You'll be heartily welcome, sir."

"Thank you, I will. I want to see how this drama ends," said Mr. Harrison.

A little later I procured my valise, and we set out for Darbyville.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WIDOW CANBY'S MONEY.

I AM sure my readers will well understand why my thoughts were busy as the train rolled on its way to Newark. I could hardly realize that I held the proofs of my father's innocence in my possession, and I was strongly tempted several times to ask my kind Western friend to pinch me to make sure that I was really awake and was not merely dreaming my good fortune.

Mr. Harrison probably guessed what was passing in my mind, for he placed a kindly hand upon my shoulder, and said with a smile:

"Does it seem almost too good to be true?"

"That's just it," I returned. "The events of the past week have so crowded

on each other that I'm in a perfect whirl."

"You will have a little more excitement before it is over."

"I suppose so. But now that I know it is all right I shall not mind it. I wonder if I couldn't send my father the good news by telegraph?"

"You can easily enough. But don't, you think you had better wait until all is settled. You might raise false hopes."

"No fear, Aaron Woodward is guilty beyond a doubt. But I will wait if you think best."

It was not long before the train rolled into Newark. On alighting Mr. Harrison insisted on hiring a cab and in this we bowled swiftly on our way to Darbyville.

As we passed out of the city and upon the country road I wondered how matters had progressed during my absence. Had the merchant returned home?

At Darbyville a crowd of men gazed at us with curious eyes. Among them was Parsons the constable and others who knew me.

"Hello, you back again?" shouted Parsons.

"Yes, indeed," I replied. "I suppose you didn't expect me so soon?"

"I'll allow as how I didn't expect you at all," he returned with a grin.

"Well, you were mistaken. I'm back, and back to stay," said I.

My heart beat high as we turned into the side road that led to the Widow Canby's house. I strained my eyes to catch sight of the first one who might appear.

It was my Uncle Enos. He was doing a bit of mending on the front fence. As soon as he saw me he threw down his hammer and ran towards us.

"Well, well, Roger, struck port again, have you? Glad you're back."

And he shook my hand right hard. "My friend Mr. Harrison, from Chicago," said I. "This is my uncle, Captain Enos Moss."

They had hardly finished hand shaking, when Kate and the Widow Canby came out of the house.

"Oh, Roger, I'm so glad you're back!" cried Kate.

And then she looked earnestly into my eyes. "Did you—did you—"

"Yes, Kate, I've succeeded. Father's innocence can be proven."

"Oh, thank God!" cried my sister, and the tears of joy started from her eyes.

I felt like crying, too, and soon, somehow, there was hardly a dry eye in the group.

"You must have had a hard time of it," said the Widow Canby.

"My good friend here helped me a great deal," I said.

Mr. Harrison was introduced to the others, and soon we were seated on the piazza and I was relating my experiences.

The interest of my listeners grew as I went on. They could hardly believe it possible that Mr. Aaron Woodward, with all his outward show of gentleness, was such a thoroughly bad man. When I came to speak of John Stumpy, alias Ferguson, Kate burst out:

"I declare I've almost forgotten. I've got good news, too. This very morning I went hunting again and picked up the paper that was lost. I was trying to read it when you drove up. Here it is."

And my sister handed over Nicholas Weaver's dying statement.

"It is hardly of use now," I said.

"Still it will make the evidence against Mr. Woodward so much stronger."

"I've discovered that this Nick Weaver was a chum of Woodward's," said Uncle Enos.

"A chum?"

"Yes. He came from Chicago."

"From Chicago!" I ejaculated.

"Exactly."

Meanwhile Mr. Harrison was examining the statement, which Kate had produced from her dress pocket.

"I see it all," he cried. "Nicholas Weaver was the man who concocted the scheme whereby a relative in Chicago was supposed to have died and willed Aaron Woodward all his money."

"I see. But why did he leave the statement?" I asked.

"Because, he says here, Woodward did not treat him right. This Ferguson or Stumpy was a friend to Weaver, and the paper was got up to bring Woodward to terms."

That explanation was clear enough, and I could easily understand why John Stumpy had come to Darbyville, and how it was the merchant had treated him with so much consideration.

"And there is another thing to tell you, Roger," put in the Widow Canby. "Something I know you will be greatly pleased to hear."

"What is it?" I asked, in considerable curiosity.

"I have evidence to show that this John Stumpy was the man who robbed me of my money. Of course I knew it was so when Kate and you said so, but outsiders now know it."

"And how?"

"Miles Nanson saw the man running from the house. He was hurrying to get a doctor for his wife, who was very sick, and he didn't stop to question the fellow."

"But why didn't he speak of it before?" I asked. "He might have saved us a deal of trouble?"

"He never heard of the robbery until last night; his wife has been so sick. He can testify to seeing the man."

"I'm glad of that," I said. "But unfortunately that doesn't restore the money."

"No, I suppose not. This Stumpy still has it."

"No; he claims to have lost it," I returned.

And I related the particulars as I had overheard them in the boarding house on the opposite side of the Passaic.

"I wish I could find it—the money I mean—as I did the papers," put in Kate.

"Where did he jump over the fence?" I asked suddenly.

"Down by the crab apple tree," said Uncle Enos.

"Have you looked there?" queried Mr. Harrison.

"No," said Kate, "you don't think—?" she began.

"There is nothing like looking," said my Western friend slowly.

"I guess you're right," I replied, "and the sooner the better."

In a minute I was out of the house. Kate was close on my heels, and together we made our way to the orchard.

"It hardly seems true that papa is to be free," said Kate, as we hurried along.

"But it is, nevertheless," I rejoined.

In the orchard we made a thorough search, but it seemed of no use. The money was nowhere to be seen.

"I guess it's gone," said Kate.

"I'm not going to give up so easily," I returned. "Two hundred dollars and over is no small sum."

I believed I kicked over every stick, stone and clump of dead leaves within a hundred feet of the spot without success. Then Uncle Enos and the others joined us.

"Any luck?" they asked.

"Not yet," I replied. "Now let me see," I went on. "If he went over the fence here he must have vaulted over. I'll try that and note how the money might have dropped."

I placed my hands on the top rail and sprang up to vault over. As my head

bent over my eyes caught sight of an object lying in the hole of the fence post.

I picked it up. It was the Widow Canby's pocketbook.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

OF course I was highly delighted with the success of my search, and as I brought forth the pocketbook all the others gave a cry of surprise.

"You've got it, Roger!" ejaculated my uncle. "You've got it just as sure as guns is guns."

"So I have," I replied, as coolly as I could, though I was at the top notch of excitement.

"Better examine it," put in Mr. Harrison cautiously. "It may be empty." "Empty!" cried Kate in dismay and the word sent a chill through my own heart.

With nervous fingers I tore the pocketbook open. I suppose I ought to have given it to the widow, but I was too excited to think of what was just right and what was not.

"The money was in a piece of newspaper," said the Widow Canby. "I had—ah, there it is!"

And sure enough, there it was—nearly three hundred dollars—safe and sound.

I almost felt like dancing a jig, and could not refrain from throwing up my hat, which I did in such a way that it caught in the limb of a tree and forced me to climb up to recover it.

As I was about jumping to the ground I heard a buggy pass on the road. Looking up I was surprised to see that it contained Mr. Aaron Woodward and Chris Holtzmann.

On seeing the party on the ground below the merchant stopped his horse and jumped out.

"How do you do, Mrs. Canby?" he said, as he came over to the fence without catching sight of me.

"Pretty well, Mr. Woodward," was the widow's reply.

"Have you heard anything of your money yet?" went on the merchant, with apparent concern.

"Oh, yes—" and the widow hesitated.

My sister whispered something in her ear.

"It was just found," said Kate. The merchant gave a start.

"You don't mean it!" he cried.

"Oh, yes, I do."

"Where?"

"Down here by the fence."

"Who put it there?" asked Mr. Woodward sharply.

"No one. It was dropped by John Stumpy."

"Humph! Perhaps so!" sneered the merchant.

"It's true," exclaimed Kate stoutly. "More likely by your brother Roger."

"Avast there!" cried Uncle Enos. "You're saying too much."

"I don't think so," replied Mr. Woodward in deep sarcasm. "Of course you want to shield the boy all you can, but I'm sure in my mind that he is guilty."

"And I'm positive in my own mind that I'm innocent," said I, and I jumped to the ground.

"Roger Strong!" he cried, stepping back in surprise; and I saw Chris Holtzmann give a start.

"Yes, sir. And as I said before I am innocent."

"Where did you come from?" went on the merchant sharply.

"I came from—up a tree," I returned lightly, and I may add that never before had I felt in such particularly good humor.

"Don't trifle with me," he cried in anger. "Answer my question."

"I will when I get ready."

"You'll answer me now."

"Perhaps I will."

"You refuse?"

"Oh, no. But I'm not compelled to answer, understand that, Mr. Aaron Woodward. I'll answer because I choose to do so."

"Never mind," he snapped. "Where have you been?"

"To Chicago—as you know—and to Brooklyn."

"To Brooklyn!" he cried, growing pale.

"Yes, sir, to see Mrs. Agatha Mitts."

"And did you see her?" he faltered.

"Yes, sir."

"And she—" he began.

"What she said or did will be produced in court later on," put in Mr. Harrison.

"Eh?" the merchant wheeled around.

"Who are you?"

"My name is James Harrison. I am from Chicago. I am this boy's friend and I am here to see justice done."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you and your colleagues—Chris Holtzmann there, John Stumpy, alias Ferguson, and the late Nicholas Weaver—have foully wronged this boy's father."

"It's a lie!" cried Aaron Woodward, with a quivering lip.

"It's the truth," I said. "The plain truth, and I can prove every word of it."

"Prove it!"

"Yes, in every detail, Mr. Aaron Woodward. I have worked hard fighting for honor, but I have won. Soon my father shall be free, and for aught I know to the contrary you will occupy his place in prison."

"I!" cried the merchant in horror.

"A likely thing."

"We shall see," I said. "In the meantime be careful of what you say against me, or I will have you arrested before sundown."

Mr. Woodward gave me a look that was savageness itself. Apparently he was on the verge of giving way to a burst of temper. But he seemed to think better of it and turning he jumped into his buggy and drove away.

It was the last time I ever saw him. On the following day Mr. Harrison, Uncle Enos and myself drove down to Newark and engaged a first class lawyer to take up the case. This legal gentleman pushed matters so fast that on the following Monday all the papers necessary for Woodward's arrest were ready for execution.

The officers came to Darbyville late in the afternoon to secure their man. They were told that Mr. Woodward had gone to New York on business. They waited for him the remainder of the day and all of the next.

It was useless. The highly respected head merchant of Darbyville did not appear; and an examination showed that he had mortgaged his house and his business and taken every cent of cash with him.

It was an open acknowledgment of his guilt, and Kate was for letting it go at that. But I was determined to bring the man to justice, and set a detective on his track.

The search was successful, for in a week Aaron Woodward was caught in Boston, preparing to embark for Europe. He was brought back to Newark, to await the action of the grand jury. But he never came to trial. In less than a week he was found in his cell one morning dying. Rather than face the humiliation of going to jail he had taken his life. What became of Duncan I do not know. He had the making of a good fellow in him, and I trust that he became one. Chris Holtzmann also disappeared, and his Palace of Pleasure is a thing of the past. John Stumpy went to Texas, and I heard that Pultzter went with him.

It was not long before my father received his pardon and came home. I cannot express the joy that all hands experienced when he came forth from prison, not only a free man, but also bearing the proofs of his innocence. We were all there to greet him, and as my sister Kate rushed into his arms I felt that fighting for honor meant a good deal.

Five years have gone by. My father and I are now in business in Newark. We live in Darbyville, along with my uncle—who married the Widow Canby—and my sister Kate.

Holland & Mack have recovered all that was stolen from them. They were profuse in their apologies to my father, and offered him a good situation, which he declined.

We are all happy—especially Kate and I. During off hours we are all but inseparable. I like my work, and expect some day to be a leading merchant. The clouds that hung over the family honor have passed, and sunshine seems to have come to stay, and that being so I will bid my readers good by.

THE END.

[This Story began in Number 469.]

A SPLIT IN THE CLUB;

OR,

RALPH MORTON'S MUTINY.

BY EDGAR R. HOADLEY, JR.,

Author of "The Cruise of the Bianca," "One Boy's Honor," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

RALPH MORTON'S MUTINY.

"THE Ulysses is gaining on us, Ralph," interrupted Barry Oakes.

"So she is," returned Ralph, but there was no anxiety in his voice. It was only what he and the others had expected, but he appeared to have some resource held in reserve that they did not know of.

As he looked back at the steamer, there was another puff of white smoke from her bow, followed by a dull rumbling boom, and another shell fell to the windward of the schooner, this time a little nearer than the first one.

"Shall we go on, fellows?" demanded Ralph, as he turned to note the effect of the shot on his companions. "That's only bluff, you know, and there's no danger."

"If you think we can get away from her, I say go on," spoke up Jack Neil.

"Yes, yes, go on," chorused the balance of the crew.

"Put the prisoners in the cabin, Barry," ordered Ralph, as he took the latter's place at the wheel.

"Get out the spinnaker and bind it on," he continued, when the mate had disposed of the three captives.

This was a huge triangular sail which is bent to a boom extending at right angles to the hull of the yacht from the base of the foremast, and is used only in running before the wind.

It was soon in position, on the opposite side to that on which the fore and mainsails were swinging. The great belying sail gathered in the wind like an enormous scoop. The schooner's speed was greatly accelerated, and notwithstanding her long sharp prow, the waves were piled up in front of her in great foaming masses.

The Ulysses still gained on her, but not so rapidly as before.

"Now I guess we can make it," observed Ralph, as he bent down and looked ahead under the swinging booms and then glanced back at the steam yacht.

For a few minutes there was silence with Ralph and the crew, as he watched

the fleeing schooner and her pursuer, and they watched him. Captain Carbine appeared as much interested—if not more so—as the young yachtsmen themselves.

When the Stars and Stripes had passed Fort Point and was heading over toward the Bolivar Point jetty, Ralph broke the silence.

"Take in the spinnaker, Barry; we've got to come around against the wind a little," he ordered.

"What's that for?" demanded Captain Carbine, in vigorous protest. "Let it alone, or they will catch you sure."

"You think so; as I said before just wait and see. I want to get over near the east jetty, and by the time we get there, you'll see that steamer come to a dead stop and give up the chase."

Captain Carbine and Barry Oakes looked at Ralph incredulously, and then gave their undivided attention to watching the Ulysses.

Sure enough, but before the time Ralph had predicted, the steam yacht slowed down and then became stationary.

The skipper of the Stranger and the mate turned to the sailing master with a mystified and questioning look on their faces.

"I told you so," laughed Ralph. "As we draw only a little over six feet, and the steamer draws nearly twelve, we slide across the bar while she has to stop or stick her nose in the mud. There's only thirteen feet of water at best over the bar, and at the present time the bed is at its lowest ebb."

"You're a sharp one, young man," commented Captain Carbine, "and know a thing or two by keeping your eyes open."

"Nearly as much as Captain Carbine, who knows all about Galveston Bay and the advantages a yachtsman can avail himself of," chuckled Ralph, immensely pleased with himself.

"I must admit that that was one of the advantages that escaped me," returned the captain good naturedly at this fling back at himself of his own words. "But why are you going so near the east jetty?"

"To put some of our prisoners ashore on the extreme outer gabion," replied Ralph, as the schooner neared the jetty work, and he ordered a letting out of sheets to go before the wind as before.

"And now that the excitement is over and you have given the schooner the slip, perhaps you will oblige me by telling me what it all means," smiled Captain Carbine.

"Certainly; you wanted your stuff taken to the Bahamas, and offered a thousand dollars for the use of one of the club's schooners to carry it there. The club refused the proposition, and a number of my friends and myself decided that, as we already had the cargo in the hold, we would seize the opportunity to make the thousand dollars without the other fellows' consent. Besides, it had all been arranged that the club should make its cruise to the Bahamas this year, before this trouble with Cuba came up, and I, and the fellows with me, were not satisfied to give it up on that account."

"But how did you know it would suit me to have my stuff go this way when I had arranged for it to go by steamer?" continued the captain.

"We had to chance that," replied Ralph, slightly disconcerted; "but we felt pretty sure, after the offer you had made, that this plan would suit you better."

"I don't care about being a party to the piratical seizure of a vessel, though, you know," smiled the captain.

"Oh, you can't call it that, for the Stars and Stripes belongs to us as much

as to any of the fellows; she's the joint property of the club."

"What are you going to do for stores and water for the voyage? You haven't laid them in," pursued the captain, who did not seem inclined to return to the question of whether the assuming of the mission by Ralph and his friends suited him or not.

"We've got that all arranged," replied Ralph. "We telegraphed to Bayou City to a party there to have all ready this evening. It will be some time after dark when we get there, and we will load and get away in time to be out of sight of any pursuers who may be after us in the morning."

"You've got everything planned well; but it was a pity you had to give up the enjoyment of your triumph at the finish of the regatta."

"Oh, we don't mind that; it was such a dead sure thing, and such a bad beat, that there wasn't much to be proud of. Besides, what's the first prize to a trip to the Bahamas, and a thousand dollars in addition. Is it all right?"

"I suppose so," replied the captain, slowly.

Ralph accepted this as sufficient assurance that the other was satisfied, and did not think that it was necessary to ask for a repetition of the captain's offer for taking his cargo to Nassau.

During this conversation with Captain Carbine, Ralph had kept the schooner parallel to the Bolivar Point jetty, and was running out towards its extreme end, which was a little over a mile and a half from the shore.

As they were now rapidly nearing the outer gabion, he gave up the wheel to Barry Oakes again and said:

"Bring her up to the wind when you reach the end of the jetty, Barry, and make fast to the gabion. I'm going below to see Manly and Fulwood, and tell them we are going to put them ashore."

When he descended the cabin steps he found Manly and Fulwood talking. They were no doubt discussing the situation. St. Cyr was in a listening attitude, misery and disgust depicted on his countenance.

"Frank, we will be at the end of the jetty in a few minutes, and if you won't join us, we'll put you off there," began Ralph.

"Look here, Ralph Morton, I won't join you in this crazy venture of yours, and I won't go ashore either, to let you do things you will be sorry for," was the young skipper's determined reply.

CHAPTER XIX.

TO THE OUTER GABION.

"OH, pshaw, what's the use of cutting up so about a little thing like this," responded Ralph to his captain's objections. "Come along and join us. We're only going to—"

"I don't call it a little thing, and I know what you're going to do without your telling me. You're going to run that stuff in the hold to Nassau, with the expectation of making that thousand dollars, but you'll run yourself and the schooner into serious trouble and peril, and maybe never see a cent of the money. Besides, what do you know about this Captain Carbine? Nothing. It seems to me he falls in very easy with countenancing a mutiny."

"But you know how anxious he was to get one of our schooners, and I suppose he feels as if he can't be too particular when he has the opportunity of getting one. Besides, you can't call our taking the schooner a mutiny in the true sense of the word. We all have an equal interest and ownership in her."

"I'd like to know what you'd call it, then?" demanded Manly.

"Well, you can call it that if you like," laughed Ralph; "but if you had your

freedom and your pistol would you cow your crew into submission at its muzzle, in the true conventional style, and if necessary shoot a couple of them?"

"I don't know as I would," replied the young skipper, not able to suppress a smile at the idea; "but I tell you what's a fact. I'd try to do something to make you fellows realize what you are doing and turn back."

"Then this isn't a mutiny in the true sense of the word, Frank. The fellows have made up their minds to do this thing, and have arranged everything for it. Anything you could say or do now wouldn't turn them from it. Come, now. You'd better join us. We'll have a glorious trip, going far to the south to avoid the Dons and the insurgents, and we'll return and present the thousand dollars to the club."

"It's no use, Ralph. I won't do it," repeated Manly decidedly. "Another thing. It seems rather odd to me that Captain Carbine should be so willing to fall in with you and pay a thousand dollars when he had already arranged to have his cargo go by steamer, and was to pay you only two hundred and fifty dollars."

"He will have to answer that; but I suppose he has urgent reasons to influence him."

"If you are so bound to go on in this wild venture, why in the world didn't you wait till we had crossed the line at the judges' boat, and enjoyed the triumph we had justly earned?" asked the skipper, in keen disappointment.

"Because the circumstances would not have been favorable. By the time we had got through the ceremonies at the finish, the tide would have been high enough for the Ulysses or some other steamer to follow us over the bar," explained Ralph. "Besides, we calculated that it would be such an unexpected and puzzling thing to those who saw us, that it would be some time before any one started after us."

"Those on the Ulysses did not seem to lose any time in deciding what you were up to," observed Manly, who had not before understood how the schooner had avoided being overtaken by the steamer.

"No; and that's what I don't understand. Not one of the fellows on board has ever whispered to any one what our intentions were."

"How do you expect to make such a long voyage without laying in a store of provisions and water?" asked the young captain, no doubt trying to think of something to baffle his subordinate officer's plans.

"I tell you everything is arranged. We have ordered supplies at a place where we are to call tonight. You had better go along with us."

Ralph was careful not to say where they were going to stop for their stores, for in case Manly was put ashore he knew means would immediately be taken to stop them.

"I am going with you," responded Manly unexpectedly.

"That's a good fellow. I knew you were the right sort," exclaimed Ralph.

"But I shall do all in my power to turn you back, or put a stop to your wild scheme," added the skipper.

"Then we'll have to keep you a prisoner," concluded Ralph, disappointed; then seeing the prospect of Manly joining them was hopeless, he added: "but rather than take you along that way, we'll put you ashore."

"I refuse to go ashore or be put ashore," exclaimed the skipper.

"I'd like to know how you're going to help yourself."

"I will try to if you will untie me."

"That's just what we won't do. We'll put you off as you are, and, if necessary, tie your feet, too."

"You surely wouldn't leave me bound and helpless, where no one would be liable to release me very soon?" said Manly, in some astonishment and apprehension.

"Well, no, I should say not," smiled Ralph. "My piratical instincts have not reached that stage yet. Mr. Fulwood, here, I suppose, will not object to being put ashore, as he no doubt wishes to return to the Ulysses. He will go with you and will give you your liberty."

"I don't see why you made a prisoner of him, or that either," observed Frank, nodding toward St. Cyr. He saw that his plan to remain with the mutineers, without joining them, was thwarted, and made the observation in order to gain time to think of some other resource. For a moment he thought of asking the support of Fulwood, but when he remembered that the return of the latter to his position on the Ulysses meant bread and butter to him, he gave it up; and as for St. Cyr, he would have sooner asked the assistance of a school girl than his. Then it occurred to him, he could consent to join the runaways, and when a favorable opportunity offered, turn against them and effect a defeat of their plans. But such a false and traitorous action (for such he regarded it) was distasteful to him, and besides, it was not according to a certain "code of honor" among the "fellows," though perhaps the circumstances, warranted it. He finally dismissed that plan, too.

"We did not know who would be neutral, or for or against," responded Ralph to Manly's question; "and in case of doubt it is always best to take the safe side."

"What are you going to do with me, Mr. Morton?" asked St. Cyr, in a vacant, pitiful way, that almost made Ralph laugh.

"You!" exclaimed the latter. "Why, my jolly nautical tenderfoot, we are going to take you with us."

"Good gracious! To the Bahamas! What for?" gasped St. Cyr.

"Yes; we're selfish enough to want to take you along for the sake of your society," replied Ralph gravely.

"You surely don't mean that, Ralph," interposed Manly.

"Of course I do," asserted Ralph, who did not care to explain his motives for taking the exquisite with him, especially as St. Cyr was present.

"I demand to be put ashore, Mr. Morton," cried St. Cyr, with as much spirit as he could pluck up. "This is an outrage, and you have no right to tie me up in this disgraceful way."

"Softly, my hearty; let not your angry passions rise. You're going with us, and that's the end of it."

"But I protest. I'll report you to your uncle. I'll—I'll prosecute you for abduction," spluttered the exquisite.

"We're at the end of the jetty, Ralph," interrupted Barry Oakes, shouting down the companionway. "Are you ready with the prisoners?"

"In a moment," replied Ralph; and then, turning toward his skipper again, he said:

"Once for all, Frank, will you join us?"

"Once for all, Ralph Morton, I tell you I won't do anything of the kind and I tell you again, you're running yourself into trouble and you'll be sorry for it."

"Then will you walk ashore, or shall we have to tie your legs and carry you there?" continued Ralph without noticing the other's predictions.

"As you have fixed it so I can't help myself, I prefer to walk, replied Manly."

"There, Mr. Fulwood, you are at liberty, and I beg your pardon for abjecting you to the annoyance," said Ralph, as he severed with his knife the bonds that held the young mate's wrists.

together behind his back. "When we leave you and Manly on the jetty, you can do the same for him, and then both of you can make your way to the Boliver Point light."

Meanwhile, as the Stars and Stripes approached the end of the jetty, Barry Oakes was somewhat surprised to see a man standing on the extreme outer gabion.

Before the schooner came up in the wind, to approach and make fast to the jetty, the man hailed them.

"On board the schooner!" he shouted.

"On the jetty," responded Barry.

"Please take me off."

Barry did not know about "taking him off," and he made no reply. But when the schooner was luffed up, and rounded to towards the gabion, the man no doubt accepted the action as a compliance with his request. As soon as the yacht was made fast he stepped on her deck.

"Can I see the skipper?" he asked walking toward, and speaking to, Barry.

"Mr. Morton will be on deck in a moment," replied the man.

"Morton!" repeated the man, with a motion as if he had been struck in the face. "What's his other name?"

"Ralph—Ralph Morton."

"Any relation of Richard Morton, of Morton's Cave?" he continued.

"Yes; why? Do you know him?" asked Barry.

"I've heard of him quite a good deal," replied the other slowly.

"Here's the skipper now," announced the mate, as Ralph stepped into the standing room, followed by Manly, with his hands fastened behind him; and then Fulwood bringing up the rear, in case the deposed skipper needed any assistance coming up the steps.

The stranger must have felt some surprise and curiosity, if he noticed the prisoner, but it is doubtful if he did so. As soon as Fulwood appeared, he sprang toward him with an inarticulate cry.

"Is your name Fulwood—Fluster Fulwood?" he cried, grasping the young man by the shoulder.

"Yes," replied the latter curiously, and somewhat startled.

"I am your father—father's old shipmate, my lad," stammered the man.

"Is he alive?" asked Fluster eagerly.

"He was only a short time ago."

"How did you know me, when I cannot remember ever having seen him, and he certainly hasn't seen me since I was almost an infant?"

"Why—why, my lad, you're almost the exact image of him. He will be happy now—he has great things to tell you, and I know he will be glad to have me tell you some of them."

"Hullo! here comes something down the bay," exclaimed Jack Neil, who had not been near enough to hear what was passing between Fluster and the stranger, and therefore had not become interested and oblivious to other things as most of the crew were. "And I believe it is after us."

"It is after us," added Ralph excitedly, after glancing at the approaching craft, "it's the revenue tug."

"Hurry up there, and get ashore," he continued, addressing Fluster and the stranger, as he turned to help Manly over the rail.

"I want to go with you," said the stranger.

"You can't do it, my man; we're full, and can't need you. Get ashore lively now."

The man stepped over quickly to Ralph's side, and whispered something in his ear.

"All right, stay on board," said the latter promptly.

"And with your permission I will remain with you for the present," spoke

up Fluster. "I want to talk to this man."

"Very well," replied Ralph quickly, as the tug was rapidly approaching, and there was no time to lose. "Put the skipper back in the cabin, fellows, and get away from here as quick as you can."

In the excitement of the moment he forgot that Manly, if he was left alone on the gabion with his hand tied, would be released almost as surely as if Fluster was with him, as those on the tug would no doubt see him and take him off.

Notwithstanding Ralph's efforts to get rid of them, the three prisoners were still with him, and one more had been added to the complement of the crew; but he determined that all of them, except St. Cyr, should go ashore at Bayou City, if he could elude the approaching tug and reach that point. He little imagined that before that time came some things would happen that would make him glad they were with him.

CHAPTER XX.

ON BOARD LA LIBERTAD.

"THEY don't seem to pay any attention to it," remarked Captain Andy, referring to the solid shot that had been fired within the vicinity of the fleeing Stars and Stripes. "She fell off a little, but I presume the fellow at the wheel was so startled he forgot his duty."

Uncle Dick had an anxious look on his face and Brandon was tremendously excited, as they both closely watched the schooner through glasses.

"But we are gaining on her," added the latter.

"Yes; but we've got to overhaul her faster, or we'll not catch her before she gets outside," said Andy, who immediately noted the unusual speed of the schooner and thought of the low tide and the liability of a lack of sufficient water to take the Ulysses over the bar at the entrance to the harbor. However, he said nothing about it to the other two.

"We must catch her if we have to follow her to Cuba or South America, Captain Andy," cried Uncle Dick.

"We'll do the best we can, Mr. Morton," responded the young captain, though he began to have some doubts of their success.

"By the great Sam Houston!" exclaimed the ranchman, "I do believe that is Ralph at the wheel—the uneasy young rascal. I might have known it."

"It is," added Brandon excitedly; "and I declare, Manly, Fulwood and St. Cyr are close together in the standing room, with their hands tied behind them. The rest of the crew are at liberty, and Captain Carbine does not appear to be taking any part in the affair."

"What does that crazy youngster mean?" demanded Uncle Dick, more of himself than of any one in particular, as he gesticulated wildly with the telescope in his hand and walked up and down. "Is it possible he has been foolish and reckless enough to league himself with that filibuster? I just know he's running his head into the worst scrape he ever was in in his life."

"I don't believe Captain Carbine has anything to do with it," responded Brandon quickly. "Ralph and the crowd were dead set on having our cruise to the Bahamas this year, notwithstanding the trouble in Cuba and all the rest of the club could say, and Captain Carbine's offer of a thousand dollars to take his cargo to Nassau gave them the opportunity and excuse they wanted for going off on their own tack. The fact of Manly, Fulwood and St. Cyr being made prisoners proves this to me. Ralph knew Manly would not join him, and as the other two were uncertain, he took the precaution to secure them, too."

"He might as well be in with the insurgents hand and glove," growled Uncle Dick in disgust; "he's playing right in his hand, and no doubt the Cuban captain is laughing in his sleeve at the way those youngsters are doing just what he wants done."

"I'm sure Ralph would never do it, if he were aware of the true state of affairs," said Brandon, reiterating his confidence in the sailing master's non-complicity with the filibuster captain. "If he knew the nature of his ballast, I'm confident he would not go another foot unless he was compelled to do so by force."

"No doubt," returned the ranchman dryly; and then he added in anxious tones: "When he finds it out it will be too late to do anything, unless we are able to catch the schooner."

"We'll catch her, never fear, Uncle Dick," asserted Brandon, who never dreamed that there was any obstacle that could stop the steamer's pursuit.

"It's rather odd, isn't it?" he added, in a low tone, "that Fulwood and St. Cyr should both be with Ralph."

"Yes; what do you suppose Ralph intends to do with them?"

"Put them ashore some place with Manly, at a favorable opportunity, no doubt."

"I doubt if he will part with St. Cyr," smiled Uncle Dick, as he remembered his nephew's significant words about leading the exquisite "a dance"; and he repeated the talk he had had with Ralph about getting rid of St. Cyr.

"We are still gaining on her," announced Captain Andy, "but not so rapidly as at first, as she is now running dead before the wind and going faster."

"Send her another messenger, Captain Andy," suggested Uncle Dick, "but be careful not to hit 'em."

In few moments the Ulysses again shook from the discharge of one of her guns, and the missile from it dropped to windward of the schooner this time.

"I wonder how Ralph likes that," said the ranchman grimly.

"He doesn't seem to mind it," observed Brandon, who was watching the sailing master of the schooner through his glass. "If he does not know the nature of his cargo and is not in with Carbine, he doubtless thinks we have discovered his intentions and want to scare him and his friends."

"Hullo! there goes her spinnaker up," exclaimed Andy, as the large sail was hoisted on the schooner. "They're going to make a hard race for it."

"They must be idiots to think they can run away from a steamer," observed Uncle Dick.

"Not such great idiots as you might think, Mr. Morton," responded Andy. "What do you mean?"

"Wait a few minutes."

After the sail had been hoisted in place on the Stars and Stripes the Ulysses only a little more than held her own, and Uncle Dick and Brandon anxiously watched her progress.

When the steamer approached Fort Point, a man was put in the fore chains to make soundings. The uncle and nephew then realized what Captain Andy had meant, and waited in suspense the report of each cast of the leadsmen.

When the Ulysses reached a point through which would pass a straight line drawn from Fort Point to Bolivar Light, the water rapidly shoaled, and a moment later the gong rang to stop her, followed by two bells to back.

In a few moments the steamer was stationary, and the schooner continued to fly on her way toward, and down along, the east jetty.

"We cannot go any further until the tide rises," announced Captain Andy. "What's to be done, then?" demanded Uncle Dick.

"If we don't catch those reckless youngsters some of them will never get back with whole skins, and perhaps not at all. They'll never see Nassau or the thousand dollars either."

"The only thing to do is to return to the city as soon as possible and dispatch a lighter draught vessel to catch the schooner," interposed Marshal Guard.

The Ulysses was immediately backed and turned toward the city. Before she got well under way again, Brandon, who had continued to watch the Stars and Stripes, discovered the man on the outer gabion, though he was too far away for his features to be distinguished.

"Suppose that fellow is Felipe Fernandez, and that he is really Fluster Fulwood, your old mate," suggested Brandon to Uncle Dick, who had called his uncle's attention to the figure of the man on the jetty. "If the fellows on the schooner should pick him up, there would probably be some pretty conclusive evidence developed as to which was your son—young Fulwood or St. Cyr."

(To be continued.)

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A. P. G., Brooklyn, N. Y. The coin is of no value.

H. F. S., Malden, Mass. "Under Fire," by Frank A. Munsey.

G. E. R., Strathroy, Ont. We do not have an exchange department.

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J. E. P., York Beach, Me. 1. Edison was born in Ohio. See article on Edison, his home and his work in the November issue of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. 2. We do not know the whereabouts of the gentleman. See editorial in No. 471—"A Target for Questions."

B. M. S., Bath Beach, N. Y. 1. The origin of the American flag is not unanimously settled. Its germinal idea is seen in the arms of Washington's family in England, which probably gave the suggestion. 2. As to Jules Verne's name—the last e is not sounded at all.

S. R., R., Elgin, Ill. 1. We have not met the anecdote referred to. 2. For beginners, a microscope of low power—100 to 200 diameters—is best. Such will reveal objects invisible to the naked eye. \$25.00 or less will furnish a trustworthy instrument. 3. The whale is from 60 to 75 feet in length—the largest of living animals.

E. B., Brooklyn, N. Y. Have you read the editorial in No. 471 entitled "A Target for Questions?" "What do we think the best business for a young man?" Why, to go to work, to be sure! Let him follow whatever his aptitude seems to impel him to; if he has no special aptitude let him go to the first employment he can get, and then the young man's most important business is to see that, by hard work and intelligence and faithfulness, he begins to climb the ladder.

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