

# THE ARGOSY

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## TO THE CAVE!

### A Tale of the Cumberland Mountains.

BY COLONEL ALEXANDER MONTGOMERY,  
United States Secret Service.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE SCENT.

A BUSY official sat in a lofty and gloomy office in one of the public buildings of Washington one morning during the early seventies. Half way to the door a heavy rail divided the room to keep intruders at a distance from the august presence.

The gilt inscription on the outer panels of the door notified the public that this was one of the offices of the United States Secret Service; but the word "private" underneath accounted for the fact that that door was never opened.

To reach the room other and busier apartments had to be traversed, and much red tape had to be unrolled before the unofficial visitor found himself within the holy of holies.

The head of the department was carefully perusing a paper that lay before him and frowning to himself as he read. Then he arose and went to a large map of the United States which hung on the wall and made a tracing with his finger while consulting the letter.

Returning to his desk he touched a bell, while he took up his notebook of assignments and turned the leaves rapidly.

"That is the man," said he to himself at last, and to the messenger who appeared in answer to his call he added:

"Is Crook outside?"

"I think so, sir."

"I want to see him."

The messenger disappeared, and drumming with his fingers impatiently on the document that had engaged his attention, the other awaited the advent of "the man."

He appeared—a thoughtful looking fellow, youngish in appearance, not very tall nor stout.

His movements were deliberate, but two brown eyes moved very swiftly, and rested with a direct and searching glance whenever they took in any object, as for instance, on the face of his superior and on the letter, when that official

took it up and held it before him for reference. The quiet new comer was one of the agents of the Secret Service, men who were required to have the instincts of a ferret, a judgment as quick and sure as a lawyer's, and the courage of a lion.

This one did not stand on ceremony. He removed the basket of letters that lay on the chair beside the desk and took the seat with his eyes fastened on those of the head of the department.

"You will have to go to Lexington, Crook."

Crook said nothing, but waited for further light on the matter.

"Lovell has been writing from time to time that

he thought there was some moonshining being carried on somewhere between him and the Cumberland Mountains."

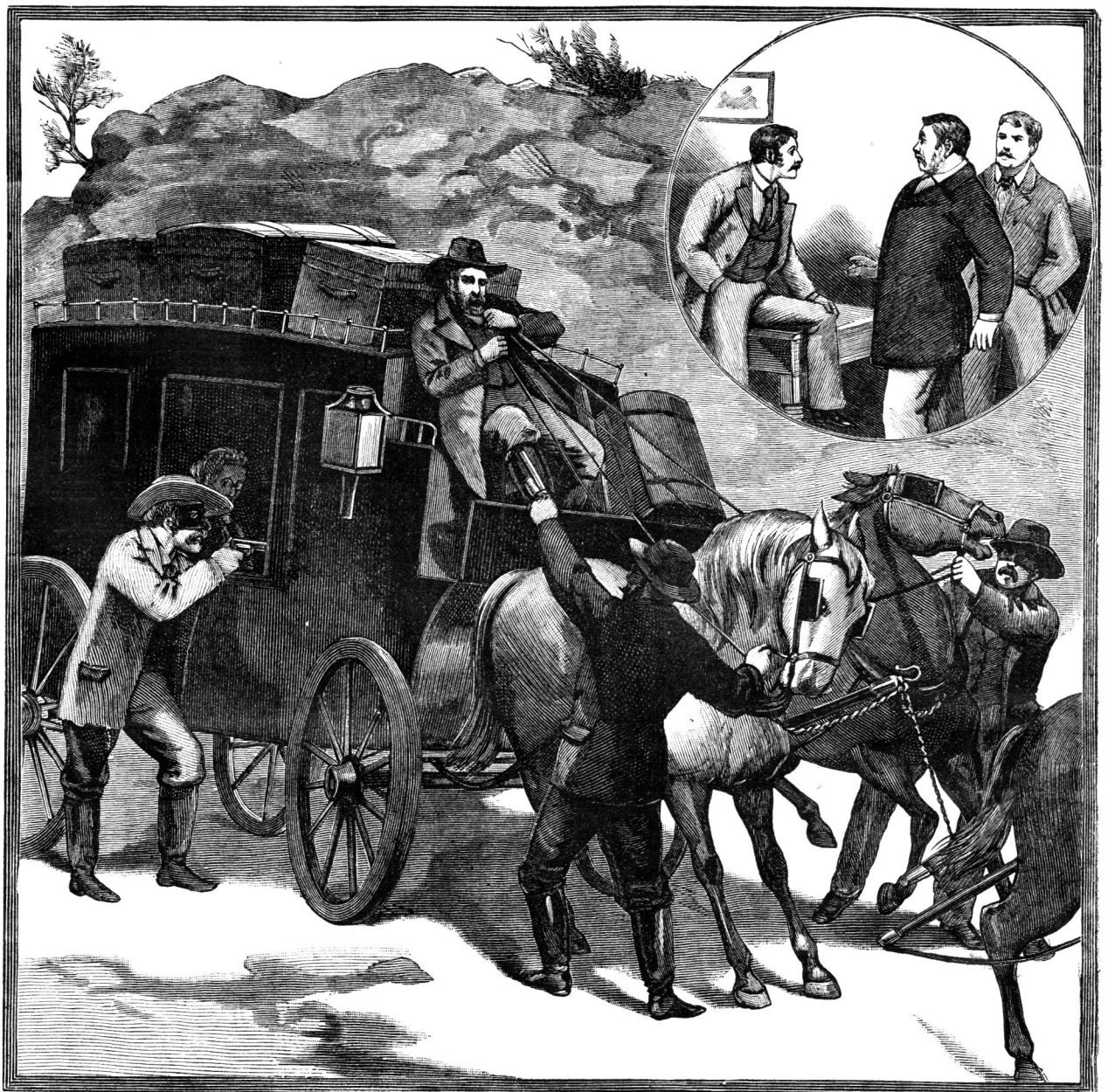
"Further back in the mountains, I should say."

"How's that? You know the country?"

"My first job took me there on a false scent. I thought at the time it was an inviting place for the business."

"Well, then, so much the better. Lovell can't handle it. You take it. I'll have his letters got out from the files in half an hour and you can get the facts. When can you start for Lexington?"

"I'm not sure it would be advisable to go there."



"HALT!" THE SONOROUS COMMAND RANG OUT AHEAD. "HANDS UP!"

"Why?"

"It would be better I think to start for Baltimore and go over the mountains by Upland Road. The western slope has been a hot one for a year past. There was a big stage robbery there not long ago. Other outrages have been reported, and from all the signs I think there is an organized gang there. It can't be far from Spruce Ridge hamlet. Here it is," and Crock led the way to the wall map.

"And here is Baltimore. The thoroughfare to the West runs over the Alleghanies, and, after crossing those, it ascends the Cumberland Mountains. On the western slope, back of Spruce Ridge—about here," and his finger described a small circle, "is a peculiar rocky country, sparsely populated, though the highway does run through it. But it's within easy reach of the Cumberland River and the more settled part of Kentucky."

"But you will need help?"

"Oh, yes; but that is easily had. The sheriff of Spruce Ridge will remember me and he's a right good fellow, though without a particle of head. He owns the men of the lumber camps thereabouts, I should judge. But I won't tackle him till I know my ground fairly well, and that part of the business has got to be done single handed."

The chief, who had settled again in his chair, looked at Crock reflectively for a moment and then said:

"Very well; I will give the matter careful thought. These moonshiners must be caught in any event, and I am inclined to put you on their trail."

With that Crock disappeared to await the decision of his chief on the best method of procedure.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DEMAND.

THE sun shone hot and there was that languor in the air that seemed to invite to idleness the clerks of the Great Eastern Range Coal Company of Baltimore.

They received an awakening shock, however, when the door suddenly opened to admit a portly gentleman of commanding mien. He looked around with a good natured smile, bowing slightly here and there, as his eye caught the glance of one or another of the clerks.

He was Albert Dallas, Esquire, president of the company, a millionaire and a public spirited citizen of the city. Chief clerk Connors advanced to meet him with outstretched hand and said:

"Glad to see you back, sir."

"Thank you, Connors. It is good to get back. Everything is in good shape. I doubt not," and he proceeded to his private office, where a great pile of unopened letters was heaped up on his desk.

"Oh, yes, sir; everything is in good shape, sir, except that several important matters have come up that need your attention. But there is a large private mail for you, sir. I will get it for you."

"Yes, do. By the way, is there anything from my boy? You know his handwriting, I believe. He should have arrived several days ago."

"I haven't seen anything, sir."

"Singular! He promised to write on his arrival. No matter! Ford never breaks a promise without the best of reasons. I'll call you, Connors, when I'm through," and the president settled himself at his desk and began running over the superscriptions of the letters, while the chief clerk retired.

"Nothing!" said the president to himself when he had finished scanning the pile.

A shade of disappointment was on his face, but he banished it, as, with letter opener in hand, he took up the first of the missives.

He had not proceeded very far into the pile when he came to one which, unlike most of the rest, bore no business imprint upon the envelope. He looked sharply at it before using the cutter.

"Familiar, that," he said to himself, as he scanned the address. Then he ran his knife under the flap.

There were two inclosures. He unfolded one and began to read it. At the first line he started.

"What is this?" and he re-read it half aloud:

This inclosed letter of your son's ex-

plains his situation better than I could attempt to do.

He hastily took up the other inclosure, unfolded it and read these words, written in a fair round hand:

DEAR FATHER:

I am in the hands of a party of men who have taken me into the mountains, a prisoner. They say I will not be released unless you accede to their demands. The man who suggests my writing this does not object to my saying that they look like a lot of cutthroats—the most murderous looking villains I ever saw, and I really believe they will carry out their threats to kill me if you do not do as they ask.

Please, father, I implore you, help me out of this as quick as you can. I am in a terrible situation. Even if I could escape I should not know which way to turn in these wild mountains, far from any habitation or trail, alone and unarmed; I would surely die with hunger or fall a prey to the very animals I came to hunt.

I write this to prove to you that what they say is true, and I beg on my knees that you will rescue me.

Your affectionate son,  
FORD.

The letter fell from the reader's hand. He was dazed. After a moment he again took up the unfinished sheet he had first unfolded.

As he read it feverishly, some of its words and phrases escaped his lips.

"Your son," "prisoner," "deposit ransom," "June 6th," "will be shot," "twenty five thousand dollars—"

"Twenty five thousand dollars!" exclaimed the father, rising to his feet in terrible excitement. "Am I mad?"

Again he took up the letter and verified its contents by a second perusal. When that was finished he lapsed into a vacant stare.

He was stunned. By and by his hand stole out toward his son's letter. He took it mechanically and at first gazed vacantly at it, then with more attention.

He read it twice over, then with a gesture of contempt he flung it from him all crumpled up and sprang to his feet and paced wildly up and down the room.

"I don't believe it. It is a trick, a cunning forgery. Ford never wrote that whining letter. No! no! that is not my boy's style! And yet," he stooped and picked the letter up again, "it is his own handwriting. Was he, perhaps at the pistol's point?"

He stopped abruptly in his excited walk and a shudder passed over his frame.

"But no! My Ford has more nerve than that. He must have known they would not dare—they could reach me in other ways.

"And that handwriting! Where have I seen it before? I cannot remember—this has unnerved me so I cannot even think!

"And the date—the sixth—this is the eighth—why was I not here? And my wife—this will kill her!"

He passed his hand over his brow as if to clear away the clouds from his mind; he sat down weak and pale; but gradually an expression of deep thought contracted his brow, his lips grew firm and the strong man became himself again, cool, calm, collected, thoughtful.

He rose, took up his hat and advanced to the door with both of the letters tightly clinched in his hand when Connors appeared in the doorway.

"A man to see you, sir, who—"

"I can see no one. I am going to—"

Connors was firmly pushed aside as a sharp looking man of medium height and slim figure appeared on the threshold.

"My name is Crock, sir, of the United States Secret Service. I came from the Chief of Police, who wishes to see you at his office on important business."

"I was about to start for his office," and the financier pushed past the special agent and the astounded clerk, and abruptly left the office.

At the office of the Chief of Police, Mr. Dallas had no sooner stated his name than the doors were opened to him. He was evidently expected, and he noticed that he seemed an object of interest to the clerks and officials whom he passed.

Arrived at the inner sanctum and closely followed by agent Crock, he found himself in the presence of a strapping man of middle age, who negligently puffed a cigar and seemed to be altogether a most unworried and indifferent sort of personage.

Yet this was the man of iron who held the criminal classes of the large city in

constant fear and dread—he of the eagle eye who could see deeper into the mystery of a crime than any other, who had a hundred hands to reach out and gather in offenders from the darkest nooks of the city's squalid hiding places.

"I am Albert Dallas. I was about to come to you when I received your message."

"You have heard, then?"

"About my son?"

"Yes."

Mr. Dallas silently handed the letter to the chief.

"Take a seat, Mr. Dallas," said the latter negligently.

But that gentleman preferred to pace back and forth from one side to the other of the small room, while agent Crock sat with one leg over the edge of a table, idly swinging his foot.

The utter calmness of these people when a human life was at stake—perhaps already extinguished in blood—was maddening to the father. The chief read the two letters:

"Ah! blackmail!" said he calmly. "A tidy sum, too. They must know you and your standing, Mr. Dallas."

"But is this true? Is my son really a prisoner?"

"Oh yes! The news of the little affair came in by stage this morning. It will be in the papers tomorrow. Er—let me introduce to you agent Crock of the Secret Service. He stopped in here on his way to the very district where this occurrence took place. He may be able to be of some service to—"

"Service! do you see that date, sir? For heaven's sake tell me if it is possible that there are fiends on this globe who could carry out such a cold blooded threat?"

The chief turned to Crock.

"You said you knew something of the people in those parts, Crock. A pretty tough lot, I believe."

"Some of them," answered Crock, "are virtually savages—untutored and wild, defiant of law and order. The hills, too, are the refuge of criminals from both east and west and—"

"But say," interrupted the agonized father, "tell me, do you think them capable of such bloody work?"

He hung on the agent's words. The answer made him stagger back to the wall, groping blindly with the hands for support.

"It is possible."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CAPTURE.

ON the western slope of the Cumberland Mountains and on a highway between the East and the Ohio Valley, stood at the time of this story a tumbledown shanty which served as a road house, where tired travelers by the weekly stage could alight and rejoice over a tough dish of fried ham, with eggs when the fates were propitious, and where the lean but hardy stage horses could slake their thirst after a long pull.

A few days before the event narrated in the preceding chapter the stage stood in front of the door, and the driver was giving a last look at the lynch pins preparatory to continuing the journey.

His passengers stood about the doorway of the house and the group of very common looking people was only remarkable for the presence, a little apart from the rest, of a young girl of twelve or thirteen years of age.

She seemed to be accompanied by a staid matron, evidently in the humbler walks of life; but the girl herself was strikingly different, aside from her youth and pretty face, by reason of her graceful carriage and a delicacy and refinement of feature. Her dress, too, was in quality far above that of her chaperone, which, like that of most of the others, was of the roughest.

The young girl was answering the remarks of a wiry old gentleman with scant gray hair, short beard and sharp features. This individual had been waiting when the stage arrived and he had signified his intention of going on with the party, hinting at mineral deposits and prospecting.

His manner was most fatherly to one and all and he made it a point to become acquainted with everybody in an incredibly short space of time.

At the moment he was inquiring of the young lady how she had borne the journey so far; but he speedily transfer-

red his attentions to the weazened gentleman with a red nose and a shawl wrapped around his shoulders when interrupted by another and striking member of the party, who was bringing a cup of water to the young girl.

The lad was certainly not very much over fourteen, but he had that certain manliness of carriage and freedom from self consciousness before strangers that is so typical of the city boy.

The mere act of handing the cup of water to the young girl was performed with a graceful deference that alone indicated good breeding, but there were other indexes to his condition of life that spoke with equal force—refined features, small and smooth hands, fine, silky hair and other distinguishing marks.

The driver had finished his examination and he began to gather the lines in his hands preparatory to mounting, calling out in a gruff but good natured tone:

"Hi, thar, you 'uns, git aboard, will yer. Thar ain't no more time ter lose, if youse wants to git to the Ridge afore sun up!"

There was a scramble to get into the stage. The fatherly old gentleman helped everybody to mount the high steps of the coach and even made a movement to assist the young fellow when he had let himself down from the box after a last inspection of his traps that were roped to the top of the vehicle.

"After you, sir," said the lad, stepping back. "I am young," and he gave the old gentleman with the sharp features a lift and stepped up nimbly after him shutting the door to with a loud bang.

"G'lang thar, yoi-ah! g'lank!" cried the driver and the whip lash cracked about the ears of the leaders. The stage was off with much creaking and swaying.

It was late that afternoon. In an hour the shadows would deepen into darkness.

The conversation, which had been stimulated most frequently by the old gentleman, who neglected no one in this regard, had at last been allowed to subside through sheer weariness, and some of the passengers were nodding.

The old gentleman moved over to a vacant seat opposite the two young people, who sat side by side and had apparently found between themselves quite enough to keep their attention fully engaged.

"You must be very tired, my dear young lady," he began.

"I do feel weary and bruised from this terrible jolting."

"It is, indeed, a rough road and a wild country. This is your first experience of this kind of travel, I suppose."

"Oh, no, sir. I passed this way last fall on my way to school in the East."

"Ah! indeed! and you are going home for your vacation, of course. You know the road then."

"Indeed I do, too well. It was only a little beyond this spot—at the stream just below—that my father was robbed of almost everything he had in this world, just three months ago."

Everybody was wide awake at once.

"Robbed? Did you say robbed, miss?" asked one.

The young lady was prettily confused to find that her words had gathered the attention of all on her, but she answered,

"Yes, robbed. It was a cruel act to take from him all he had been working and waiting for during the past fifteen years."

"How did that ar come about, miss, if I might make bold to ask?" queried the big red fellow who was going to join the lumber camp.

"Well, he had sold the timber land which he had preempted to the Kentucky Lumber Company, whose camp he manages, and the gold they sent him from Lexington he was bringing east. You see, he thought it was about time that he went back to civilized parts to live on the results of his labor and his foresight. And now—oh! it was too cruel!" and the girl's blue eyes were filled with tears at the thought, and she turned her face to the window.

"Can such things be?" quoth the old gentleman, raising his eyes to the moth eaten ceiling cloth of the coach. "And you said it was on this very road that this deed was done?"

"Yes, sir; at the stream just beyond."

"What might be your father's name be, my poor miss?"

"Harkness, sir. Philip Harkness."



"Harkness, Harkness," he repeated reflectively. "To be sure, the very name. I read about this, miss; the papers were full of it," and he looked at the young girl anxiously. "They stated it was a large sum, too; if my memory serves me it was about thirty thousand dollars in gold—"

He was interrupted. At the first mention of a robbery the weazened little man with the shawl had turned deathly pale and had been staring and gasping for breath. Now he rose slowly in his seat and in a shrill voice almost shrieked out:

"And do you mean to say we are at this moment surrounded by a band of cutthroats and highwaymen—"

"Now, my dear friend, do not, I beg of you!" protested the old gentleman. "Do you carry your wealth about you, that you should be so fearful of a visit from these gentlemen of the road, who, if I mistake not, must have fled far away from the relentless hands of justice?"

"Oh, my!" gasped the little man, as he sank back.

"Dark are the deeds that men will do for gold—dross, mere dross!" the old gentleman remarked at length.

Then he turned to the lad and said: "What might *your* name be, my boy?"

"My name is Ford Dallas, sir."

"Dallas!" and the old gentleman started. Then he explained:

"Er—I know some people of that name—the Dallases of Washington."

"Mine live in Baltimore, sir."

"Oh, yes. You remind me that I have heard that name there, too. Let me see, there is a banker I think by that name, a prominent citizen. Am I not right?"

"I don't know, sir; I never heard of any other of that name in the city besides my father. He is president of the Great Eastern Range Coal Company."

"Yes, yes, to be sure! That is he. I am proud to make the acquaintance of the son of one whom I believe is such a public spirited citizen, sir."

"It was he, I think, who endowed a hospital in Baltimore, was it not? I'll make the guess now that you are not as much afraid of road agents as my worthy friend, here," and he glanced toward the little man of the shawl.

"Well, I don't see what there is to be very much afraid of. There's only one thing I should really mind losing and that's my rifle—it's a beauty, too, I can tell you. It has a carved stock and silver mountings and—by the way, if there's any likelihood of trouble it would be a good thing to have down here."

"I suppose that was it in the gun case I saw on top of the stage," ventured the old gentleman.

"Yes, that's it. I wonder if the driver couldn't hand it down to me. I'll ask—"

"No, no, my dear boy. Don't do that. If we *should* be stopped—"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the little weazened one.

"If we *should* be stopped," and the speaker glanced frowningly in the direction of the interruption, "to resist might only incite these bravos to deeds of blood. I really wouldn't, my dear—"

"*Halt!*" the sonorous command rang out ahead. At almost the same instant another harsh voice cried out:

"Hands up."

In the dim light of evening the gray shimmer of rifle barrels could be seen intruding at either window, and one or two who had reached around to their hip pockets for their revolvers concluded that those cold steel arguments were good and they held up their trembling hands.

"Why did I leave my rifle out of reach?" groaned Ford, as he sprang to the door to get between Miss Harkness and the gleaming rifle barrel pointing directly toward her.

A hand on his shoulder pulled him back. It was the old gentleman's.

"Don't move," said he. "It is better to wait for orders."

"Hand out your guns," was the next command, as a black bearded and masked face appeared in the window.

It seemed that the old gentleman had one in his hand already. Several were handed out.

"Now, pile out, every one o' youse!" and both the doors were pulled violently open.

"Don't you be askeered, Ruth," said

the big boned woman. "They won't be doin' you no sort o' harm."

Even in the excitement of the moment Ford remarked the girl's name, as it was dropped by her companion.

At last all had descended. They were on the bank of a mountain stream which here ran wide but shallow and made a good ford.

Lanterns were lighted now by the attacking party and they revealed a blood-thirsty looking gang of a dozen men, all masked with strips of black over half their faces and most of them wearing grizzled beards.

One by one the passengers were taken aside and their pockets rifled with little ceremony. The old gentleman being led away from the rest was especially pulled and hauled about. One of his captors returned to the stage and whispering to some of his companions, he mounted to the top of the vehicle, pulled out a small and much dilapidated trunk, which was thrown to the ground.

A shriek from the shawled invalid indicated the ownership. He was forced, pleading piteously the while, to hand out his keys, and a roll of banknotes was the reward of their search.

Ford's gun case was next thrown down and appropriated by one of the gang.

At last all was over. Everybody had disgorged and one by one the passengers entered the stage. Ford stepped forward to assist Ruth Harkness. A heavy hand grasped his collar and pulled him back forcibly.

"Take your hands off!" cried Ford.

"We'll see about that."

"What does this mean?" he demanded angrily.

"It means that you are comin' with us, young 'un."

"Not if I can help it," and with a sweep of the arm and a sudden wrench, Ford released himself from the other's grasp.

But he was instantly surrounded and firmly held.

"Will you tell me the meaning of this outrage?" cried the lad, white with anger, while from the stage there were cries of "Shame!" "Bloody rascals!" and the like.

The old gentleman, especially, raised his voice in expostulation.

"See here, young 'un. You better keep quiet. We want you, and if you know your own good, you'll jist shet up an' keep your tongue in your head. Drive on there!" and revolvers were leveled at the driver.

He did not wait for a second command but whipped up his horses. They plunged into the bed of the stream.

As the stage ascended the further bank, Ford, sick with a feeling of apprehension, saw a white face leaning far out of the window sending him a look of piteous farewell.

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#### NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

If I am weak and you are strong,

Why then, why then,

To you the braver deeds belong;

And so, again,

If you have gifts and I have none,

If I have shade and you have sun,

'Tis yours with freer hand to live,

'Tis yours with truer grace to give,

Than I, who giftless, sunless, stand

With barren life and hand.

'Tis wisdom's law, the perfect code

By love inspired;

Of him on whom much is bestowed

Is much required.

The tuneful throat is bid to sing,

The oak must reign the forest's king,

The rustling stream the wheel must move,

The beaten steel its strength must prove,

'Tis given unto eagle eyes

To face the midday skies.

—Exchange. —CARLOTTA PERRY.

[This Story began in Number 482.]

## A Lost Expedition.

### A STORY OF ALASKAN ADVENTURE

BY W. BERT FOSTER,

Author of "Arthur Blaisdell's Choice,"  
"The Treasure of Southlake Farm," etc.

#### SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

PROFESSOR PERRY, of the American Society of Naturalists, takes with him on an exploring expedition to the Alaska glaciers, Allan Percival, son of a friend in New York. Allan has not been well, and it is thought the trip will do him good.

At Port Townsend they fall in with Bart Conover, who after being refused a post among the crew of the ship on which the party are to sail, saves the professor from a runaway team in the street and is then made a member of the expedition, which consists only of Professor Perry, Allan Percival and the new comer, Bart Conover, who is taken along as general helper.

They reach the glacier but have not proceeded far when a slide takes place and they find themselves prisoners on the ice field, huge crevasses separating them from terra firma. What is worse, the sledge containing their provisions is lost in the flight they are obliged to make when the split occurs, and they are left on very short allowance. Finally, in their wanderings, they discover a cave where they take refuge and which is invaded by some mysterious beasts who steal from the larder where they keep the bear meat they have stored up, for they have succeeded in killing two of these animals. Bart goes off one night to try and capture the intruders and fails to return. After searching for him many days the professor and Allan give him up for lost.

#### CHAPTER XXII.

##### ALONE IN THE DARK

AND during all this time, while Professor Perry and his young companion were exploring the gloomy aisles of the cave, where was the object of their search? Had he, as the professor suggested, fallen into some abyss and been crushed to death on the rocks, or drowned in some underground stream?

If he was still alive, why had he not given some sign to his anxious companions? Why had he not heard their shouts or seen their lights flickering through the darkness?

Had he found some outlet to the cavern and deserted his companions? The professor and Allan had not thought of that—and such a suggestion would have been a base insinuation against a character as noble as Bart Conover's, for he was the soul of honor.

No. Bart would not have done that, and therefore some other explanation for his absence must be found. His rashness in following the unknown marauder down one of the side galleries from the pantry was indeed dearly paid for. It was a hopeless chase he realized, yet he followed on and on with his blazing torch, lighting the dark corners and gloomy passages until he stopped fairly exhausted.

The creature had been swallowed up in the darkness, but its mournful cry reached his ears from the far interior of the cavern. It was probably that cry that awoke Allan Percival and started him upon his quest for Bart.

Bart himself, at that very moment, was hesitating at the junction of two galleries, trying to decide which was the right one to lead him back to his friends. In his haste he had passed through the unfamiliar passages without noticing the turns he had made and at this point on his return he was non-plused.

Had he waited there fifteen minutes longer Professor Perry and Allan would have been within hearing and they would have been re-united.

But Bart's torch was fast burning down, and feeling that he would have but a few minutes to find his way out before he should be in the dark, he started off at once. And, unfortunately, he took the wrong gallery.

That was where his trouble commenced, and within five minutes he was hopelessly lost in the multitude of chambers and passages. He could not find his way back to the point where he realized his first mistake had been made, his torch became but a flickering, uncertain light, and losing his usual coolness he rushed about from one chamber to another and through gallery after gallery, getting farther and farther away from his friends each moment. Finally his torch went completely out, and he was left in the dense, stifling darkness.

Still he doggedly persisted in the gloom, groping his way like a blind man, until suddenly he stepped over the brink of a precipice and fell twenty feet to the rocky floor below!

There was nothing to break his fall this time, and he landed with a heavy thud upon the hard rock, striking his head upon a projection. The blow deprived him of all consciousness, and he slipped forward on his face, the blood slowly oozing from the wound and forming a little pool on the floor.

There he lay for hours—perhaps days—unconscious. When at length he came to his senses he had lost all knowledge of the time. It seemed an age—it may have been but a few moments.

He struggled into a sitting position and tried to recall his scattered memories. His hand rested in the pool of blood and he raised it and pushed back the hair from his forehead, smearing his face with the crimson stain. He did not realize it, for all color was lost in the blackness of the cavern.

His head felt strangely dizzy and he quickly found the place where the hair had become matted over a deep and jagged wound. The touch brought a groan of agony from his lips; but it also served to awake his wandering senses. He remembered that he was lost in the cavern!

Drawing a bandana from his pocket, one of those nightmares of cotton print, with horseshoes and cabbage roses and other incongruous representations upon it, with trembling hands he bound it tightly about his head. Allan had laughingly called it a piratical banner when Bart had bought it in Port Townsend, and he smiled a little as he thought of this.

But the smile quickly faded from his features. Would he ever see Allan again? He had learned to love the lad like a brother. And Professor Perry? How kind the eccentric scientist had been to him. He almost wished now that he had confided more in them both, although it was against his nature to confide in any one.

This thought brought him to the secret he had so long guarded in a piece of buckskin. It was a stiff, parchment-like paper, and his fingers left blood marks upon the written page.

"Oh, John! John! if I could only have found you first!" he groaned aloud, and then, his head sinking forward upon his breast, he once more relapsed into unconsciousness.

This time he came back to a realization of his surroundings within a short time. He began to feel more like himself, too. The shock of the terrible blow was beginning to wear off and the spark of hope was ignited in his breast.

He placed the buckskin and its contents inside his shirt again and groped about for his spear. Every movement caused him intense pain in his head. He found the spear after a moment, and his cap, too.

The weight of this latter he could not bear upon his head, however, so he stuffed it into his side pocket. Then, rising with an effort to his feet, he set about finding some way out of his present predicament.

The precipice down which he had fallen presented an almost smooth surface as far up as he could reach with his hands. To return in the way he came seemed impossible. He was likewise unable to discover what manner of place he had fallen into. Perhaps he had not reached the base of the precipice—this might be simply a ledge he was standing upon, with the unfathomable depth of the abyss below him.

The thought made him shudder, and he drew back closer to the wall of rock. Then feeling in his pocket, he brought out a little waterproof safe in which he kept his matches. There were but two lucifers in it. He drew out one of these and hesitated with it in his hand.

Should he light it? When it was gone there would be but one other, and when that last one had been used there would be—darkness! For several minutes he stood undecided, holding the match as though it was a precious gem. And indeed it was to him. He would not have exchanged it at that moment for the Kohinoor itself.

Finally, and with trembling fingers, he rubbed the match along the rock. It did not ignite! It was useless!

A cry of horror escaped his lips as this despairing thought came to him. Had the match become damp? If that was all the matter he might dry it and try again. With shaking fingers he felt the tiny splinter of wood, and suddenly discovered his fear to have been groundless. He had tried to ignite the *wrong end of the match!*

A burst of hysterical laughter followed his discovery. His spirits rose with a bound, and grasping the match firmly between his thumb and finger, he drew the right end across the stone. A tiny blue flame flashed up at once, followed quickly by the bright yellow blaze which plainly revealed his surroundings.

He was at the bottom of a shaft not more than twenty feet long and hardly as wide. The slide down which he had fallen was indeed a sheer precipice and unscalable; but the opposite wall was broken and rent in several places, and a large mass of rock had fallen to its foot. Before the precious flame had expired Bart had chosen his course of ascent and went about it once.

In his present state of weakness the climb was fraught with much danger, but he reached the summit at length, finding himself in a high roofed, narrow gallery leading straight into the rock. Along this he groped his way, feeling with his spear every inch of the floor before him.

Several times a noise which sounded like an explosion reached his ears, but from which direction it came for the life of him he could not have told. He did not once suspect that it was Allan and the professor firing their guns to recall him.

On and on he wandered, now through a great apartment, now crawling almost upon his hands and knees through some low tunnel, but ever keeping in an almost straight course, until finally, exhausted by loss of blood, the pain of his wound and hunger, he dropped into a heap upon the floor of the cave.

His consciousness did not entirely go from him this time. He was sensitive of his condition, yet lacked the bodily power and mental energy to move farther. Hope was gone. He might as well die here as elsewhere in the cave.

Strange fancies passed through his brain as he lay there. He thought he heard footsteps echoing along the gloomy gallery. He heard some one breathing near him, could almost distinguish the heart throbs of the mysterious presence, and two eyes like coals of fire appeared in the darkness and seemed to gloat over his misery.

Without form, only with those glowing orbs fixed upon him, the horrible fancy seemed to stand there waiting for his last breath until, unmolested, it could tear him limb from limb!

The thought aroused Bart, and throwing all his remaining strength into the effort, he staggered to his feet and fled along the passage. The cool current of air fanned his face, growing stronger as he blindly staggered on, until suddenly turning a corner in the passage, he fell forward into a mass of some soft, wet substance.

He gave a weak scream of joy. It was a bank of snow into which he had stumbled, and it was snowing still. He had reached the exit, and it was night!

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### BART'S HEROISM.

THE shock of his fall in the cold snow revived Bart at once. He raised himself wonderingly and looked about. The dark outline of great boulders loomed up near at hand and a clump of low branched fir trees stood

almost before the exit of the cave. The air was full of falling snow.

He had reached an outlet of the cavern; but it was not the one with which he had been familiar! He had gone through the great cliff and come out on the southern side.

A great joy and thankfulness filled his heart as he crept back into the passage out of reach of the snow and lay down upon the hard rock. Exhausted by his injury and the toil of the previous hour, he dropped quietly to sleep, undaunted by the terrible phantoms which had filled his brain a few moments before.

It was broad daylight when he awoke. The storm had ceased and the light shone dimly through the snow that had been massed over the mouth of the tunnel.

Bart was conscious of a terrible gnawing at his stomach. Had he been two, three, or four days without food? He had lost all run of the time. The hours had been simply a long, painful nightmare since his fall down the shaft.

With his spear he punched a hole through the hard packed snow and a flood of Arctic sunlight lit up the tunnel. He was almost blinded at first, but gradually becoming a little used to the glaring rays, he tore down more of the snow and struggled out into the open air.

The air was keen and a brisk breeze was blowing. He missed his heavy seal-skin and his gloves at once. But there was plenty of wood about him, and he had one precious match left.

Above and back of him rose the steep, though not insurmountable mountain, on the other side of which was the glacier. He was at the foot in a little valley, which just beyond him to the west narrowed to a pass hardly twenty feet wide, between two great cliffs.

The opposite wall of the valley was a high, heavily wooded mountain, much higher than the cliffs which shut in the glacier, whose bald summit was always snow covered. Around him on every hand rose the other snow capped spires of the St. Elias range, and, far to the south, its peaks stretching toward the clouds, stood Mount St. Elias itself, 19,500 feet above the sea.

These facts Bart took in during his first hasty glance. But an object quite near at hand interested him far more than the magnificent view.

Just beyond the clump of firs, sitting upon its haunches and sniffing the air suspiciously, though with its back turned toward him, was a plump little Arctic hare. To a person who had not eaten for—one didn't know how long—the sight was a most tempting one. Bart poised his spear, crept forward a little and hurled it from him.

It was the first time he had ever had occasion to use the spear in that way, and he watched the result with breathless interest. The shaft whistled through the air and the keen blade pinioned the little creature to the snow crust. He sprang forward at once, put it out of its suffering and then carried it back to the cave.

Kicking away more of the snow, he widened the entrance, and going to the clump of firs, found plenty of dead branches with which to kindle his fire. He made several trips for fuel, and then finding a sheltered place in the tunnel, heaped up a small quantity of broken twigs and branches, and with great care ignited the pile.

He was cognizant of the fact that this fire, once started, must be kept burning as long as he should need heat and light. Should it any time go out there would be absolutely no way to renew the blaze. Having this ever before him, Bart was careful to have a large supply of fuel near at hand.

He unfastened the knife from the staff of his spear and skinned the hare. So famished had he become by this time that he could hardly wait for a portion of the flesh to warm through before devouring it. After that, however, he had more patience to await the cooking of the remainder.

Half of the animal he put away for his next meal and then brought in more firewood. His only thought now was to get back to his companions in misfortune, Professor Perry and Allan Percival. But how to accomplish this was a puzzling question.

The thought of again plunging into the cavern with no light or means of retracing his steps to this exit was appall-

ing. It would be better to leave the cave, journey to the coast and bring assistance to the top of the cliff from which he could descend to the glacier and reach the professor and Allan in their end of the cave.

Yet he shrank from this ordeal, not out of fear, but because of the uncertainty of his ever reaching the coast now that winter had closed in. And did he reach the sea it was a matter of extreme doubt if he found any one to assist him in rescuing his companions. His total unfamiliarity with the region was the greatest drawback to any such plan.

But how to reach the professor and Allan far in the interior of the labyrinth was a problem that at first seemed incapable of solution. But Bart was a patient fellow and an ingenious one as well. Now that he was warmed and fed he felt able to meet with his usual vigor all manner of obstacles.

The question of light was the first to be considered. In the forest not three hundred yards away were plenty of pine and kindred trees from the pitchy branches of which he could make torches, were they only dry. The first thing to do was to get the torches. The matter of seasoning them would come afterward.

So he sallied forth at once, but the extreme cold drove him back in a couple of hours. However, he brought with him to the cave a couple of dozen torches and a big load of firewood—all he could stagger under.

The magnitude of his undertaking was brought forcibly to him as he sat warming himself over his replenished fire. The galleries and passages of the cavern crossed and recrossed each other so bewilderingly that one might traverse the same portion of the cave a dozen times and not recognize the fact. To conduct his search with any certainty he must have an immense number of torches, or—

"I have it!" he suddenly shouted aloud, and springing to his feet he paced excitedly up and down the tunnel.

After a few moments, having the plan straightened in his mind, he proceeded to put it into immediate execution.

He had already put his torches where they would dry in the heat of the fire, so he could turn his attention at once to this matter. And what was the idea that had come to his mind so suddenly? You could never guess it in the world, and nobody but an ingenious fellow like Bart would have thought of it. In the breast of his shirt he had that ball of coarse, strong twine that had served them so many good turns already. By its aid he would find his way back to the entrance to the cave!

But how? The cord at the best was not more than five hundred and fifty feet long. Five hundred and fifty feet would reach but a short distance into that vast cavern, which, he was pretty sure, was all of an eighth of a mile from entrance to entrance. If he fastened one end of the cord at this spot and carried the rest with him, paying out as he progressed, he would soon be at the limit and be as badly off as before.

Bart, however, knew what he was about. He sat down at once and cut a piece from the ball of cord about twenty five feet long. This he commenced rapidly to untwist. The cord was made of four strands. Therefore when these were untwisted he had obtained a hundred feet of twine out of one quarter that length.

But he was not content with this. Each strand was capable of being divided several times, and after reducing the entire twenty five feet of cord to a size a little smaller than cotton string he tied all the pieces together and rolled it into a ball. The work had taken him nearly four hours, but he had obtained about *five hundred feet of small twine!* At that rate the entire cord could be made to yield nearly four thousand yards, and four thousand yards would go a long way into the labyrinth. In short he could explore the cave to a distance of more than two miles!

It would be long, tedious work to prepare the string, but once done the finding of his companions would amount to almost a certainty. The thought filled Bart with delight, and the labor connected with it seemed indeed small beside the satisfaction of once again meeting Professor Perry and Allan.

He ate his dinner and continued the

raveling process. Just before dark he went outside and prowled about a bit, being fortunate enough to kill another hare with his spear. He brought in more firewood and after eating the remains of his first hare, went to work again. Before he slept seventy five feet more of the cord had been converted into small twine.

So wearied was he by his labor that it was nearly noon when he awoke the next day and his fire had burned so low that he came very near losing it altogether; but after considerable trouble he brought the dull sparks to life. This day he could hardly stop to eat, so feverishly impatient had he become to complete his work.

Hour after hour he toiled, desisting but once to go out after fuel and once to eat. The ball of twine grew marvelously under his hand. The wound in his head pained him, his temples throbbed, his whole body seemed burning up with an increasing fever. Still he persevered in his task.

That night he slept but little—not more than three or four hours of restless, unrefreshing sleep. The blood in his veins seemed a river of fire. But he doggedly continued the work. Before night five hundred feet of the cord had been raveled out and he had in his possession ten thousand feet wound into balls. The remainder of the cord he decided to save intact.

Another night of suffering was passed. By this time his head was in such a state that it really seemed to Bart as though he should go crazy with the pain. Only the hope of reaching his companions in distress and leading them to the outlet of the cave kept him from breaking down.

Finally, being unable to sleep longer, he arose and prepared to start on his mission. The remainder of the rabbit was cooked and he forced himself to eat a little. He made up his bundle of torches and slung them from his shoulder and lit one at the fire. Then he took the balls of twine and set out along the tunnel.

He felt very confident that he could travel some distance into the cave in a straight line and be sure of the way, and he was not mistaken. His head felt better as he progressed, for he had to busy his thoughts with the course he was following and therefore his mind was taken off his bodily ills.

The way lay almost direct (at least there were but a few cross galleries) until he reached the shaft down which he had taken such an unfortunate tumble. Beyond that place he was not sure of a foot of the route. It could not really be far from where he and his two companions had established their camp, for it had taken him not more than twenty minutes to reach this place when he had met with his accident. But in which direction it lay was a question he was not at all sure of. At this point must commence his real search.

First, however, another problem faced him. It was the open shaft directly in his path and extending from wall to wall of the corridor. To pass this was his first work.

At its narrowest point the gulf was eight feet wide, and it might be possible for him to leap it, if, in his weak state, he could obtain sufficient force to propel him across the abyss.

He tossed the bundle of torches across, and the balls of twine followed them. He measured the distance with his eye, stepped back a few paces and then darted forward. The least slip might hurl him down into the shaft, and he could not hope to escape death this time.

But fortunately he cleared the space, landing with a terrible shock upon the other side. For a few moments he could not stand erect, so great had been the strain on his enervated body. But he shut his teeth together to stifle down the cry of pain which rose to his lips, and staggered to his feet.

Could he go farther? His limbs almost refused to bear him up. His hands trembled as though with the palsy as he adjusted his bundle of torches. Lights danced before his eyes and for a moment he felt as though his reason was deserting him with his consciousness.

But the thought of his unfortunate friends who knew nothing of the other entrance to the cavern, and, unless told by him, might never find it, nerved him



on. He must save them if he spent his last breath in the attempt!

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## A WHISPER IN THE DARK.

BART CONOVER had made a noble resolve to save his companions from a long and hopeless sojourn in the cavern; but whether he could in his weak state of both mind and body carry out this purpose, was another question. For a few moments after leaping the chasm he felt as though his entire strength was deserting him.

The jar had started his wound bleeding afresh, and the handkerchief about his head was rapidly becoming saturated with blood. The bundle of torches, slight though their weight was, seemed to drag him down. He waved the one in his hand into a blaze, and by its light found the balls of twine he had thrown across the crevasse.

A projection to which to fasten the end of the twine was easily found, and carefully unrolling the ball he started away from the spot. He allowed the twine as fast as he paid it out to lie loosely upon the floor, as he passed from corridor to corridor of the labyrinth.

He felt that he could not be far from his companions, but it might take him hours to find them in the multitude of cross galleries and chambers shaped so much alike. Once he shouted, but his voice was weak, and the walls of the cave simply echoed back a hollow mockery of his cry.

Several times he came to a corridor which, he knew by the twine, he had already traversed. In such cases he retraced his steps and took the nearest unexplored one. When the first ball of twine was used up he attached the end of another to it and went on.

Blindly, almost unconsciously, he staggered through the seemingly endless galleries, fighting back the terrible lethargy which was creeping over his brain, and pressing onward with feverish impatience, for fear that his strength might not last to his journey's end.

But even his resolute will could not keep his weakened body up forever. His weary steps lagged more and more, a great weight seemed pressing down upon his head. The perspiration started out all over him, so great became the exertion to keep upon his feet, until at last, still struggling to stand erect, he sank down against the wall of one of the galleries, unable to go farther.

He did not lose consciousness, and although his head felt very heavy he realized his condition. A cold, unnatural, paralytic feeling seemed slowly binding him. First his feet were attacked, and then the strange dead feeling mounted his limbs higher and higher. He wondered vaguely, and without fear, if this was death. How easy it seemed to die!

Suddenly he was roused from this dreamy state. The palsied feeling left him in an instant, his blood coursed excitedly through his veins. A sound had reached his ears, that awoke him more surely than anything else would have done. It was the low murmur of voices!

He started up to a kneeling posture close against the rock. The voices sounded plainer. It was not a fantasy of the imagination, but a reality.

Strange thoughts flashed through his brain as he crouched there listening to the mysterious sounds. They seemed distant, so distant that he could not understand the words, but that they were voices of men conversing he had no doubt.

He remembered the unknown marauder that had troubled their larder, and how certain Allan had been that it was not a wild animal. Had he been right, and were there other inhabitants of the cave beside themselves? Why had he not come across any trace of them, if it were so. And above all, where were they now that he could hear them so plainly?

He almost shouted aloud, but hesitated before the sound left his lips. Suppose the strangers should be unfriendly? They must be unfriendly or they would not have plundered the pantry. It would never do to draw them to him now that he was so helpless.

Still the whispers continued, wafted by some mysterious channel to his ears. They might be distant or near at hand. He had discovered one of those curious phenomena of subterranean formations,

a whispering gallery. He had heard of them, in fact he had heard Professor Perry speak of them and give his opinion of the reason for their wonderful properties. He wondered if he went along the passage whether he would fall in with the owners of the voices.

Then the speakers came nearer, for he could distinguish words and parts of sentences. Finally he plainly heard the following remark:

"It will be a long, dreary winter without him."

He leaped to his feet with a startled, yet delighted cry. His weakness seemed to have departed so excited had he become. He had recognized the voice. It was Allan Percival, and he was speaking of him, he was sure.

This thought came to him instantaneously with the sound of the words. If their voices could reach him why could not his reach them? Placing his lips close to the cold stone he cried:

"Professor Perry! Allan!"

There was no reply, but the other voices had become suddenly silent. He called again and faintly heard Allan's startled question: "What is it!" and the professor's command, "Listen!"

"Professor! Allan! It is I—Bart Conover," cried Bart, his voice hoarse with emotion. "Where are you? How can I get to you?"

He plainly heard the wondering ejaculations of his friends, and then the professor's voice reached him distinctly: "Bart, my boy, is it really you? Are you hurt?"

"Yes, but I can travel," replied Bart, feeling at that moment that he could do his long journey all over again now that hope was once more alive.

"What part of the cave are you in?" asked the professor. "We are at the fountain."

"I don't know," was Bart's reply, "unless I am somewhere above you. I'm not far from the pantry. I have a torch."

He heard wondering exclamations from the others, and the professor spoke again.

"We will come and look for you. After a little while shout to us. Perhaps we can hear you."

"If you find a cord running through any of the galleries follow it till you find me," said Bart. "I am at one end."

Such a wonderful conductor of sound was this gallery that Bart could even hear the footsteps of Allan and the professor as they hurried away from the wall. Then followed what seemed to Bart an eternity of waiting. He shouted once in a while, at first receiving no answer, but finally a distant halloo echoed through the corridors.

He responded with all his waning strength, and soon a light flashed faintly at the further end of the passage in which he was waiting. With a joyful cry he staggered forward toward the flickering torch.

Professor Perry and Allan saw him coming, his clothing in tatters, his face and form emaciated as though he had been imprisoned in the dark dungeons of the cave for years instead of for a week, and a blood stained handkerchief about his head. He looked more like a dead man than a live one.

"It is he—it's Bart!" cried Allan, until that moment almost doubtful that such a thing could be possible.

The professor ran forward to meet him, and Bart fell forward unconscious, into his arms.

*The continuation of this story will be found in No. 490 of THE ARGOSY, ready on all news stands Saturday, April 16.*

## WHAT MOVES THE EMPEROR.

WHAT long petitions of influential names will not do, what pressure will do nothing for, is often accomplished by some subtle but humble influence that touches a heart's chord and moves perhaps a mountain. An example of this is given by the New York World in the following.

A wealthy farmer of this country went to Germany last year, to visit his old home, and was arrested for deserting the German army thirty years before. The matter was placed in the hands of the United States Minister in Germany, but all efforts to secure the prisoner's release appeared fruitless. His eleven year old daughter, however, wrote a letter to the Emperor of Germany from her home in this country, setting forth in a childlike manner the facts in the case and asking for her father's release on her birthday, which came in a short time. The letter so touched the Emperor that he issued a pardon for the father who was speedily on his way home.

## A PRESCRIPTION.

My pallid friend, is your pulse beating low? Does the red wine of life too sluggishly flow? Set it spinning through every tingling vein By outdoor work, till you feel once again Like giving a cheery school boy shout; Get out!

Are you morbid, and, like the owl in the tree, Do you gloomily hoot at what you can't see? Perhaps, now, instead of being so wise, You are only looking through jaundiced eyes; Perhaps you are bilious, or getting too stout; Get out!

Out in the air where fresh breezes blow Away all the cobwebs that sometimes grow In the brains of those who turn from the light To all gloomy thoughts instead of the bright! Contend with such foes, and put them to rout; Get out!

—Medical and Surgical Reporter.

[This Story began in No. 483.]

## The Order of the Mummy.

BY ALEXANDER C. DURBIN,

Author of "Held in a Distant Land," etc.

## SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

BRIDGE BLAKESLEE, a pupil at Fondale Hall, receives, instead of his own box, one that contains an Egyptian mummy, which his cousin George meant to be a present to Professor Littler; with Ruskin, Jagger, Tom Peebles and Jim Frazer he organizes over the ancient coffin the secret Order of the Mummy. That night the relic is stolen, presumably by Bartlett and his crowd, who try to "run" the school. At a political meeting in the town theater to "boom" Mayor Vendex for re-election, the mummy suddenly appears for a moment dangling over the stage to the confusion of the speaking candidate. Blakeslee and Ruskin, who are present, join the search for the practical jokers and lead the pursuit of two figures seen to steal out of the adjoining house carrying an oblong burden. The four give chase, but fail to overtake the fugitives. They are picked up by the wagon of Peter Carlile, and carried to Jenkinville, several miles from Fondale, before they are aware of it. Mr. Carlile invites them to spend the night at his house, and shortly afterwards, he having driven further down the road on an errand, they discover that the mummy has been in the Carlile wagon all the time. In the effort to cover it as quickly as possible, Tom and Bridge take a short cut across a cornfield and are captured as two trespassers by Hoorah Tetly and his son Nehemiah, who keep them prisoners overnight. Meantime Jim and Ruskin cannot imagine what has become of them. In driving them to the station the next morning they find the Tetly hogs in the Carlile garden, and a battle at once ensues, in the middle of which Bridge and Tom are discovered by their friends.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE ENEMY IS ROUTED.

THE sight of their friends dancing about a grunting hog was an absurd spectacle as well as a welcome one, to the captives. The comic element, however, was quickly eliminated, for old man Tetly was so enraged at the sight of his neighbor—enemy attacking his hog that he lost all command of himself.

It was owing to Bridge's presence of mind that a fatality did not occur. The moment he had rounded the corner of the lane and witnessed the antics of the other party he appreciated the fact that there was going to be a fracas unless something was speedily done to prevent it.

The sound of the lock clicking on old Tetly's musket confirmed his suspicions and wheeling alertly around he saw the vindictive farmer in the act of raising his weapon to his shoulder. With a cry of horror Bridge sprang upon him and beat the heavy weapon to the ground, while Tom Peebles clutched him like a vise from behind.

The musket went harmlessly off and buried its contents in the hog, which was about making off scot free, but now dropped in its last struggle, slain by the hand of its own master.

It was a bad move on the part of the old man, for now that the weapon was discharged with no damage to the other side, he was like a hawk with his wings clipped.

"Kim to my resker, Nehemiah!" he wheezed. "They air a-chokin' of

me. Run fer the Scatchums and ask em fer to help we uns."

"Yes, do run for the Scatchums, Nehemiah," advised Bridge ironically; he had wrested the gun from the old fellow's hands—"run for them or anybody else and I'll send the other barrel of the Gatling after you."

Nehemiah couldn't have moved a foot if a bison had been charging upon him. He stood cemented to the road with fear, unable to speak, much less to stir.

His father nevertheless upheld the honor of the house of Tetly. No sooner was he released from the embrace of Tom, who, by the way, had made the pressure severe, to partly compensate for the night's experience, then he shouted defiance to his adversaries.

"I call you uns all to witness," he wailed, "that I've been assaulted while pursuin' of my legal right—" "Don't witness nothin' nobody," advised the man John. "Jest shet yer eyes as if ye wuz asleep, and yo won't be subpoenaed, and you won't swear to no affidavit, and ye won't have no trouble. Take my advice."

"You've been assaulted?" put in Tom. "Why that's not so. You began it yourself, Mr. Tetly."

"I'll have the law on you, Peter Carlile!" shrieked the latter. "I seen you uns with my own eyes killin' of my pigs. You uns got to take the consekenses."

"Consekenses nothin'," said John. "We won't take no consekenses, and we laid four of 'em on the ground and they ain't wuth a levy a head. Come on and have the law on us."

"Ye ain't content with killin' of my hogs," vociferated Mr. Tetly shrilly, "but you uns go trespassin' over my property 's if ye owned it. I caught these two young fellers in my cornfield last night and I'm goin' to take them to Squire Nikles fer to have them fined."

"Not much," muttered Bridge grimly, as he fondled the weapon.

"And yer foolish if ye go," began the irrepressible John, when Mr. Carlile came to the front, his face red with passion. Shaking his fist at his opponent, he bellowed:

"Hoorah Tetly, between you and that scarecrow, I've stood this tantalin' beyond all endurance. Ever since you come to these parts it's been nothing but fight, fight, all the live-long time and I'm tired of it. Them hogs of yours are a nuisance and you know it and when my case agin' you for the damages they've done comes up in court you'll see if you're allowed to do as you please."

"Why, gentlemen," he went on, appealing particularly to the boys, "he makes a big racket because once in a while some of my boarders cut across his fields, but that's nothing to the torments I've suffered from them hogs. They're the most gormandizing, pestiferous beasts I ever came across."

"For an actual fact without exaggerating, only last spring six of 'em at one time raided my place and devoured twenty gallons of soft soap, seven bushels of apples, same of potatoes, and then finished off with forty pounds of red paint which they found in the barn."

"Hull lot—Tetly's and all ought to be slaughtered," put in John.

"Tain't so, tain't so, it's a lie," squeaked the other. "Them hogs is gentle as lambs, ain't them, Nehemiah?"

Nehemiah was dumb and lost in a fog of mixed ideas. He struggled weakly to regain his voice but no sound would come.

"If I were you, Mr. Carlile," said Bridge, "I would sue him for the damage his hogs have done."

"Tain't no piace for you uns to

talk," snapped old Tetly. "I'm holdin' the rod of lor over your heads."

"I have sued him," asserted Mr. Carlile, "and that's what makes him desperate and spiteful. And I haven't told you yet what else the hogs have done. For the last ten months or a year they occupied any part of my farm they took a notion to; they foraged in my corn, potatoes, rye, oats, garden, orchard and medder, and as if that wasn't enough they pillaged my spring house, upset my milk crocks and wallered in the spring. Oh, them hogs are possessed of the Evil One."

"Tain't so," expostulated Mr. Tetly. "Them air hogs is as gentle as a breeze, and I allers keep them shet up."

"Keep 'em shet up," John put in derisively. "Haw! haw! And they root out the fence chunks and go under, and they butt down the fences where they're weak, and as to gettin' into the garden blest if I don't think they work the combination on the gate. Most aggravinatin critters livin', them hogs."

"I should think it was pretty good evidence of what you say, Mr. Carlile," remarked Tom, "to see two of the porkers lying in the road here."

"You uns got nothin' fer to say," commanded Mr. Tetly sharply. "I'm takin' you uns to the pennytenchy where you belong."

"Don't make any mistake on that score," retorted Bridge. "We have a better cause of action against you than you have against us. We don't propose to go to the penitentiary or to Squire Nicholas's either, for that matter."

"No, sir," spoke up Ruskin. "We're going back to Fondale, and that pretty soon, or we'll miss the train."

"Did you get it?" asked Bridge eagerly and mysteriously.

"Yes," replied Rusty. "We got the mummy—oh, it's no secret now, I assure you—and it's safe and sound at Carlile's."

The quartet exchanged joyful glances. A heavy weight of anxiety was now removed from their minds.

At this point Nehemiah found his voice; he must have had a long hunt after it.

"Run, paw, run fer yer life!" he whimpered. "They'll be arrestin' of you uns fer shootin' at them."

"And the baby calf is right," remarked John promptly, as he rested complacently on the axe handle, "and ye shot at Peter Carlile fer to kill him, and ye killed your own razor-back. Haw! haw! Intention's the same, though."

"Tain't so, tain't so," protested Hoorah Tetly, again on the defensive. "That young feller which is holdin' of the gun knocked my arm up and the trigger fell down of its own will, and I never tetched it."

"I saw him deliberately pull the trigger, and the hammer fell on the cap an instant after I struck his arm," vowed Bridge hotly. "I call it an open attempt to shoot Mr. Carlile."

"It couldn't a hurt him if it had hit him," announced old Tetly. "That there wuz bird shot; th'ain't no bullet in it. I knowed what I wuz doin'."

"And it laid out the hog," said John wisely.

"That hog never died from lead," retorted the old man. "He was near dead when you uns was a-chasin' of him, and the explosion of that there musket giv him such a shock that he jist dropped over."

This explanation was too much for the gravity of all concerned, and they burst into peals of laughter.

Bridge took the weapon and discharged it into the air, and threw the old iron over into the neighboring field, despite the shrill protest of the old man.

While the timid Nehemiah urged him to leave the field of battle without delay he nevertheless hung around uttering dire threats until at last his voice grew so weak that he was forced to suspend his remarks and betake himself off, leaving them to fix the wagon in peace.

"Well, of all the events I ever heard of—" began Ruskin.

"This beats," laughed Tom, heaving a big sigh of relief at getting rid of such a troublesome character.

"Oh, don't say another word on that score," said Bridge. "Tell us about the mummy."

"Safe and sound," replied Jim. "Let's go back to Fondale. Our absence will cause a big row."

They accompanied Mr. Carlile back to the farmhouse dragging the reconstructed market wagon at the rear of the buckboard. The boarders were not yet out of their rooms, and Mrs. Carlile was the only one to greet them. She held a paper in her hands.

"Here's the *County Recorder*, Peter," she said. "Ike Dummerly brought it over from Jenkinville for you."

"Got no time for it now, Sally," returned the farmer. "Let the young gentleman read it—there's Fondale news in it."

Ruskin seized it with eagerness and scanned its columns. "Listen!" he exclaimed, when they were alone. "Listen to this."

"The miserable attempt of the arant demagogues composing the Boliver crew," he read, "to interfere with the rights of Fondale's citizens and wreck a public meeting in favor of our popular and respected townsman Mayor Vendex, resulted in utter failure. More of this in our special campaign issue of Monday next. The late hour of its reception prevents our setting the whole plot in cold type. Enough to say that we are on the villain's tracks."

"Great goodness!" exclaimed Jim, "What a stew they're in."

"Yes, and there's going to be more trouble over this matter, too," declared Bridge sagaciously and with a ruffled brow.

He prophesied wisely, for ere the day was over the trouble came and from a quarter not imagined and least expected.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### NEWS FROM FONDALÉ.

THE freshly printed news page of the *County Recorder* possessed an irresistible attraction for the boys. They scanned it again and again, as if the cold type could tell a fuller story.

Farther down the column in an odd corner was another important item.

That dread scourge diphtheria is making such headway in upper Fondale that Dr. Coke is seriously considering the advisability of closing his school until the disease abates. There are no cases as yet among the newly assembled pupils, and it is hoped the opening of a prosperous year will not be marred.

"I knew there was something wrong around the Hall," observed Jim. "I saw Dr. Coke consulting with several of the tutors."

"It's the cold and damp weather that caused it," remarked Ruskin. "If it ever starts among the boys—good by."

"Was there any reply to that telegram you sent last night to Teddy Darrach?" interposed Bridge at this point.

"Not that I heard of," replied Ruskin. "Let's ask Mr. Carlile."

The farmer crossed the yard at that moment and they hailed him.

"Was there any answer to our telegram we sent last night in Jenkinville, Mr. Carlile?" asked Ruskin.

"Guess not," was the reply. "Leastwise none came here. You'd better take the buckboard and drive over and find out for yourselves. You've got near an hour yet."

The boys, for want of something else to do, jumped into the wagon which was standing in readiness at the front gate and drove rapidly off to the town.

It was a mortification to the citizens of Jenkinville that the recently constructed railroad did not pass through their town, but seized with some spirit of contrariety kept two miles to the eastward direct to Fondale. An effort was being made to build a branch road which should partially atone for this slight.

It was yet early morning when the four arrived, but the main street of Jenkinville was alive and bustling with infant metropolitan energy. They went direct to the telegraph office. Upon inquiry they found there was a message for Bridge received but a few minutes previous.

"Eighteen cents on this," announced the operator.

"That much from Fondale?" remarked Ruskin. "Teddy must have written a letter."

Bridge handed over a silver quarter, and made the discovery then that he hadn't another cent in his pocket.

"Teddy says the following," he told them. "'I got your telegram. I ain't told no one. I wish you would come back. We don't have any recitations today. I'll wait at the station for you, Diphthery is bad. I hope you caught it.'"

"Well, that's a pious wish," remarked Tom.

"Talks like a heathen," added Jim.

"He means the mummy, not diphtheria," explained Bridge. "I'll bet the little runt is completely rattled. We must take the next train back to Fondale and come to his rescue or he'll break down and make a mess of it."

"No recitations today," mused Ruskin. "Why, that leaves us with a whole twenty four hours on our hands."

"Yes, and that reminds me," said Bridge, as they stood in a group on the curb, "how much money does this crowd own?"

It was funny to see each one dive for his pocket, and it was equally laughable to see each face take on a rueful expression.

"Forty two cents," announced Tom. "One dime and a big cent used as a pocket piece," said Ruskin pathetically. "I wouldn't part with that for a mint."

"Seventy five cents," added Jim triumphantly.

He was the Dives of the crowd, and the others thronged about him.

Bridge held out a nickel and two pennies. He was the Lazarus and was an object of sympathy.

"Forty two, ten, seventy five and seven," counted Ruskin. "One dollar and thirty four cents to pay the crowd's way to Fondale and settle for our board."

"The fare is four cents a mile," said Tom, "and it's a good fourteen miles according to the railroad's scale."

"As far as Mr. Carlile's board is concerned," observed Ruskin, "I think he would trust us for that, because we helped him in the Tetly fracas, and you must remember that it was partly his fault that we came so far from home."

"Certainly he'll trust us," asserted Jim. "Hasn't he got a hostage for our board in the mummy?"

"We won't leave it there," vowed Bridge. "I'll take no further risk with it. It may be worth considerable money, and I want to keep it safely until I hear from my cousin."

"It's worth money to everybody but us, it seems," observed Ruskin. "And it's cost us a pretty sum in money and time—to say nothing of further trouble it may bring."

"The sole resource left is to walk to Fondale," declared Tom. "It's half past seven now. Let's take Mr. Carlile's team back, explain matters, gather up the mummy and foot it to the Hall. The whole day is before us."

The quartet mournfully climbed into the wagon, and with Bridge holding the reins, they went despondently down the main thoroughfare—their faces as long as their arms.

"And just to think," remarked Jim. "I've got eight dollars in my trunk in my room. Don't I wish I had them."

"I've got two nice green five dollar bills too," stated Tom.

"Well, they're not here where they can do most good, and—ow! what was that?" Ruskin ended abruptly.

Some object, which looked like a tin plate, came flying through the air and struck him on the side of the head, taking his hat along with it. An instant later another flat tin pan skimmed across the street and hit the horse on the flank, causing that noble beast to rear in sudden pain.

Bridge pulled him up while Ruskin looked around for his hat.

"Somebody's bombarding us!" exclaimed Tom. "And with dish pans and kettles! Looks as if some people were breaking up housekeeping."

He had not completed the last sentence when an oddly attired individual darted from the open doorway of a long, low wooden building on the eastern side of the street and made a run in a zigzag fashion after the two missiles.

He picked them up while running, and was obliged, in order to get the second, to pass by Ruskin, which he did in the very direct way of leaping over his bended back. Quickly recovering himself, he made Ruskin a profound bow, a pan in each hand.

The whole party was too much surprised at his appearance to make a suitable response, so he bowed a dozen times in mock courtesy, still standing in the middle of the road.

Then they saw that he was a young man, barely twenty one perhaps, dressed in the most gorgeous costume ever seen on the stage. The larger part of his equipment was a loosely fitting tunic of some light blue material, which came down from his shoulders to his knees; a pair of pink tights covered his limbs and formed a startling contrast to his upper garment.

Tattered black silk buskins lent a novel appearance to his ankles, and a crown of artificial laurel set off a head of startling crimson hair. He was a perfect imitation of a Grecian athlete, but spoiled the effect by his simpering attitude.

Ruskin was in the act of picking up his hat, and when half erect, was astonished to see a broad and painted face looking into his. The other three boys were watching the new comer from their seat in the buckboard.

"How are you?" said Ruskin awkwardly, as he straightened himself up and put on his hat.

The only reply of the other was a clashing together of the pans like a pair of cymbals and a gyrating movement in the middle of the road. The quartet burst into laughter.

"Ave done with that, Festus, 'ave done, I say."

The voice came from a stout man who was standing in the door of the building from which the first one had emerged. He shook his fist and gesticulated violently at the harlequin in the road.

The latter ceased his clownish antics and walked up to the wagon.



"Where are you fellows from?" he asked.

Then, without pausing for an answer, he went on, smiling familiarly: "I know you're not from this part of the country; you don't look like the fellows around here. I am from England. Lower portion of Sussex. Father, mother and myself have been doing the small towns in this country since March last. We're in the professional line."

"What's that?" demanded Tom, looking upon the artistic garments of the other with a suspicious eye.

"Why," was the response, "hall of curios—busts of famous people, wax works, feats of strength and dexterity by the celebrated Græco-Roman athlete myself—Festus Spriddle—and every now and then we give a stage play; for instance, 'Lady Audley's Secret,' 'The Hollow Heart,' or the Phantom Countess."

"We've been here in Jenkinville for two days. Business is mighty poor. You can't rouse the people up. Wax works is played out."

"Why did you send those tin plates skimming out into the road?" asked Rusk.

"Oh, he! he!" laughed Mr. Spriddle. "You saw them, did you? It was only a little practice of mine on my famous feat entitled 'The Slaughter of the Innocents.' Hope none of them hit you. But his! Here comes father. He'll talk you deaf, dumb and blind."

*The continuation of this story will be found in No. 400 of THE ARGOSY, ready on all news stands Saturday, April 16.*

#### A TWELVE MILE WHISPER.

It is stated that there is a natural telephone line between two mountains in the Black Hills range near Rapid City. On each side of a valley twelve miles in width stand two high peaks, which tower above the other mountains and have long been known as landmarks.

Some weeks ago a party of tourists decided to make the ascent. They divided into two parties, one for each peak, taking with them heliographs for the purpose of signaling to each other across the valley. The ascent was made, and, so the story goes, while the members of one party were preparing to signal to those of the other, one of the party on the north mountain was surprised to hear voices which apparently came out of the air. By changing his position several times he discovered that at a certain spot of the mountain he could hear the voices, and it was not long before he discovered that they proceeded from the party on the other mountain.

He called the attention of the others to the phenomenon, and when the attention of the opposite party had been attracted it was found that an ordinary conversation in an ordinary tone of voice was plainly heard from one mountain top to the other. There was only one place in the mountain where it could be heard, and this appeared to form a natural telephone.

No shouting was necessary, and the words were perfectly distinct. Assuming this story to be true, an explanation may be sought in the form of the mountains, which might serve as elliptical reflectors of sound (the speakers placing themselves in the foci at each end of the ellipse) and in the low density of the atmosphere at the altitude at which the phenomenon was observed.

The only possible explanation of the above described phenomenon (if it be true), is the sound reflection theory. The journal—*Electricity*—from which the above is taken, makes a mistake that is remarkable for a scientific publication. So far from the low density of the atmosphere promoting or helping to account for the phenomenon, it should act against the transmission of sound. The rarer the air the fainter the sound, until in a vacuum no sound can be made.

#### CULTIVATING DEFORMITY.

The following skit, from the *Boston News*, should be accepted rather as a specimen of an ingenious American humor than as a verity:

A chicken fancier was troubled exceedingly by the propensity of his brood to scratch up his garden, so he set to work to solve the problem of prevention. After elaborate experiments he succeeded in crossing a breed of long legged brahmas with short legged bantams in such a way that the chickens had one long leg and one short one. When they attempted to scratch they lost their balance and fell over, which, after a few trials, was sufficient to show that scratching was impossible, and they gave it up.

#### THE MYSTERY OF LIFE.

OUR birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The soul that rises with us, our life's  
star,  
Hath had elsewhere setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter darkness,  
But, trailing clouds of glory, do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.  
—WORDSWORTH.

#### WHITE ELEPHANTS.

BY H. GRISWOLD GOVE, PH. D.

ONE of the commonest subjects in the early Chin-India traditions is that of the white elephant or

*Chang Ponk*, and even in Chinese works we find mention of it, showing that the animal has been revered and respected from the earliest times. As early as 1600 the counties of Pegu were at war about it, and in one contest five kings and twenty thousand soldiers were slain. In another, the King of Siam, upon the refusal of the King of Pegu to relinquish his claim upon a white elephant, captured the entire kingdom, rendering it ever after a dependency to him.

The *Chang Ponk*, as it is called, is sacred perhaps because all white animals are considered pure enough to be the abiding place of the divine Budha; so also white monkeys are esteemed, and always kept in the same place with the white elephants to keep away evil spirits.

We often hear of unfortunate possessions being termed a white elephant, and how this came about was well illustrated in olden times. It is said if a king wished to ruin a man in a polite way he presented him with one of these creatures, and as the latter require many and noble attendants, a vast amount of care and attention, and the recipient could not sell or give away a king's gift, could not kill it, as it was the residence of a Budha and a God, and could not let it go loose, as he would be responsible for the damage it did, he was soon reduced to poverty and utterly ruined—in short he had a white elephant.

White elephants, however, are not often given away. In 1352 years, between A. D. 515 and 1867, only twenty four of the elephants have been found, making one in about every fifty six years. When a native discovers one of these creatures he is made for life.

The act of securing it makes him a mandarin at once, insures him from all taxation for the remainder of his life, besides bringing from the king a purse of \$1,000 and innumerable gifts; consequently, the natives are continually on the alert for the spotted animals. When one is secured the news of the capture is immediately forwarded to the king, and a posse of nobles with gifts and robes are at once dispatched to the scene of capture. The ropes that the captors have used in binding the royal victim are replaced by stout cords of scarlet silk.

Mandarins attend to the slightest wants of the animal. Rich feather fans with gilt handles keep the insects from it during the day, while a silk embroidered mosquito net is provided at night. To remove it to the capital a boat is especially built for the purpose, and a canopy of the greatest magnificence erected over it, bedecked and ornamented as are the king's palaces. Silk draperies, heavy with gold and silver, inclose the royal prisoner, and in this state he floats down the river, receiving the acclamations of the people.

When near the city it lands, and the king and his court come out to meet it and escort it to the city, where a place has been built for it within the royal palace grounds. The house is generally a shed with a golden roof decorated with great richness.

A large tract of land is now set apart for his country place, chosen

from the best the kingdom affords. A cabinet of ministers is appointed, and a large retinue of other nobles, to attend to his wants. The priest of the king is ordered to attend to its spiritual needs, and it has physicians to see to its physical well being.

Gold and silver dishes are supplied to feed it from, and every want attended to as becomes one of the royal family. The city devotes three days to festivities, and the rich mandarins make it rare presents.

When a white elephant dies the ceremonies are the same as those for a king or queen. The body lies in state for several days, and then is placed upon a funeral pyre and cremated.

This pyre often costs thousands of dollars, being made of the choicest sandal, sassafras, and other valuable woods. After the body has been thoroughly cremated it is allowed to remain three days more; then the ashes are collected and placed in costly urns and buried in the royal cemetery, a magnificent mausoleum being erected over the spot.

A friend of the writer, who visited the land of the white elephant a few years ago, states that when he observed a white elephant about twenty natives were standing around, whom he was informed by the guide were mandarins and nobles of the highest class, that formed the cabinet of the elephant; in fact, they were a body selected for their dignity and rank, and served the animal just as the cabinet does our president at Washington; that is, they stood in that light.

One was chief minister of the cabinet, and the others held different offices. Other nobles were attached directly to the person of his Celestial Highness. One fed him with bananas and rare fruits that it was difficult to obtain; another gently brushed away the flies from his head and created a breeze.

About the room were various objects that bespoke its royal nature. The ropes, umbrellas and blankets were all of the richest description, many being ornamented with what appeared to be gems. While he was there my friend said the animal was presented with some water in a large basin that was evidently gold, and chased in an extremely fine manner.

Later, he witnessed the ceremony of the bath, and no ceremony, he said, that he had ever seen in America, began to compare with it. The entire city seemed to turn out and make a holiday of it. When the march was taken up the elephant stepped out heavily caparisoned.

Elegant silks, trimmed with scarlet, silver, white and gold, depended from his back; over his head was held the royal umbrella—a gorgeous affair, supported by gilded rods held in the hands of eight mandarins, four of whom marched on each side. On the animal's tusks were bands of solid gold, and, as he moved solemnly along, surrounded by other nobles, his ministers and attendants, all in rich garbs, with a shouting but respectful crowd all about him, it was certainly an impressive and wonderful sight.

At the river the trappings were taken off, and the elephant plunged in and enjoyed himself after the manner of his kind. When the bath was finished his feet were re-washed and dried on a silken towel; the silks and rich stuffs were then replaced, a band of music struck up, and the procession took up the return march.

Until within a few years it was thought impossible to obtain a white elephant, but in 1883 Mr. Barnum succeeded in securing one, that was exhibited about the country to probably as great a throng of admirers as ever crowded about it in the East.

## CORRESPONDENCE

E. E. A., Allegheny, Pa. We have none on hand.

CONSTANT READER, Rahway, N. J. The coin bears no premium.

D. L. W., Jr., Flushing, N. Y. Our mission is to sell, not to buy.

H. R. G., Philadelphia, Pa. We do not publish or know of these books.

HAROLD J. PEEVY, Ogden, Utah, would like to hear from boys in his vicinity who desire to form a canoe club.

J. P. C., Red Bank, N. J. We shall endeavor to procure full name of correspondent and forward your communication.

S. C., Nevada City, Cal. THE ARGOSY was formerly THE GOLDEN ARGOSY. See reply to P. C. and read the current issue.

C. N. H., Albany, N. Y. We regret to say that your proposition comes under the head of advertising. Our business department will quote advertising rates on application.

P. C., Chicago, Ill. Watch announcements. We give news of our intentions as early as we think expedient, on the editorial page.

W. D. C., Cleveland, O. Bound volume VII will be found to sell at \$2 per copy by referring to the advertisements of our volumes elsewhere.

G. B. S., Tompkinsville, N. Y. Please forward your full name and address to the editor of this department, who holds a communication for you.

F. R. L., Philadelphia, Pa. We hope we may be able to oblige you in the future, after we have given our readers the delectable offerings already planned.

M. T. N., Pawtucket, R. I. You have asked us what we have no knowledge of, to wit: How to make lemonade as sold in bar rooms, hop beer and pale ale tints in the same.

C. N. R., Camden, N. J. We hope to have one, but must refer you to the announcements made from time to time on the editorial page for the earliest news of future productions.

C. I. Q., Newburgh, N. Y. For one complete unbound volume of THE ARGOSY, in perfect condition, together with \$1.00, we will forward a bound copy of the same volume, receiver to pay all transportation charges.

B. O. S., Frankford, Pa. A suitable button for your organization could be made cheaply of silver, having engraved or enameled upon it a deer's head, a brace of antlers, a wreath of oak leaves, an acorn, a crossbar or any device suitable to the sylvan character and origin of the fraternity. You might "quarter" the button, and in each division place one of the above devices. We cannot better suggest a form of initiation than is explained in "Dirkman." Your own ingenuity must devise modifications. The costumes and the "effect" there suggested it would be difficult to beat.

W. H. R., Watertown, N. Y. You can waterproof your cloth or canvas in this way: In ten gallons of boiling water dissolve 2 1/4 pounds of alum. In a separate vessel in the same quantity of boiling water dissolve 2 1/4 pounds of sugar of lead. Mix the two solutions. Soak canvas in this and work it to insure the most thorough saturation. Then wring it out and dry in a warm room. If you wish saturate again and dry as before. Then wash in cold water and when dry, it is ready for use. Sugar of lead is poison, taken internally, so be very careful while operating this process.

E. S., Jamestown, N. Y. 1. Horatio Alger, Jr., has written juvenile stories almost exclusively for THE ARGOSY throughout the nine years of its existence. 2. Watch announcements. 3. "True to Himself" was first announced as "Fighting for Honor;" they are one and the same story. 4. Full information about the new navy will be found by referring to No. 470 of THE ARGOSY, in your files. 5. Not in book form. 6. Some of the authors named write exclusively for THE ARGOSY. 7. The standing army of this country is supposed to number 25,000; actually, it is about 20,000 strong. With the State militia and calls for volunteers, there is no knowing how many men could be put into the field. 2,700,000 troops were mustered by the Federal government during the late war.



PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

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FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY,

Publishers,  
155 East 23d Street, New York.

### NEXT WEEK

*we shall begin another new serial. It is of domestic character and is entitled*

### THE OAKVILLE MYSTERY.

BY E. E. YOUMANS.

*This story, while in marked contrast to the one begun in this issue, is strong in dramatic situations and in its delineations of human nature. Now is the time to begin taking THE ARGOSY, with the commencement of these two powerful serials.*

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

### TO MAKE MILLIONS IN A MONTH.

A MAN approached the proprietor of a restaurant recently and offered to work as a waiter for one month at a salary of one cent for the first day, two cents for the second, four cents for the third, and double wages in this way for each succeeding day. The proprietor jumped at the bargain (so it is alleged); but when the waiter on the twenty third day demanded that day's wages on account, and stated them to be \$41,943.04, he was promptly discharged.

When he brought suit in the courts for his wages for twenty three days, the employer found his liabilities for the full term of thirty days would have been over four millions of dollars. The suit has not yet come to trial and probably never will.

This incident has been paralleled in the past, and it is worthy of notice as an example of the wonderful progression secured by "doubling up."

### A STRONG AMALGAM.

THE most remarkable country in the world is England—in one particular. Compared to her small size she has a vaster power and greater riches far than any country on the globe; and in the same relative way she has more within her insular borders than any other single power; more people, more business, more land under cultivation, more shipping, more railways, and so on.

Considering the very little acorn from which the great British oak has grown and branched out and the tremendous spread of the oak's limbs, one cannot but see in it the result of the force of Anglo-Saxon character, and marvel much thereat.

It is largely to the same blood that this country owes that pertinacity and progress which the whole world admires; but there is also a liberal infusion from other races which has made it, perhaps, all the better.

Copper and brass each has its separate use and suitability; but making statues

is not one of them; but copper and brass together make durable and costly bronze and out of that was formed the colossal statue of Liberty enlightening the world.

### THE BEST OF MATERIAL.

NO sooner is our Chili war scare over than comes the portent of a difficulty with England on the Behring seal fisheries question.

A few years ago we were in a position to be snubbed with impunity by the diplomatic offices of foreign nations.

Now, no sooner do we get into a tight place that the orders fly around among the navy yards and several trim little ships (they look very small in the distance) get a new coat of white paint, a great pressure of steam and—the other party backs down when he sees we mean business.

We are a little out of practice in the matter of fighting, but we have the best material in the world in the shape of brain and brawn and courage and patriotism.

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.

### WE ARE NOT HARMLESS.

WE observe this statement among some zoölogical items, to wit:

Of the six hundred and fifty seven kinds of reptiles that exist, four hundred are harmless.

The question suggests itself: Can the highest order of the animal kingdom show an equal proportion of harmlessness?

The murderer is, according to the law, the most harmful of our kind and his class is limited in numbers. The harms that we can commit range downward from this point through innumerable grades of felonies and misdemeanors; there are, besides, some which the law never touches.

Who stops to think when he is on the point of wounding the feelings of another? Who considers the harm he does in the ever widening circle of human action when he tells a lie to save himself from a just punishment?

There are infinite ways in which harm can be done and not one of us but is able to diminish the sum total.

### TO NEW READERS.

THIS number of THE ARGOSY is submitted to you as a sample in the hope that you may become a permanent patron and enjoy, in common with thousands of others, the cargo of treasure it will bear into your port every Saturday. Among the attractive features to be provided next week will be an illustrated paper on a subject which these spring days bring uppermost in many minds.

### THE SUCCESS OF MUNSEYS.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is forging straight to the front. Its sales are steadily increasing and already far exceed the fondest anticipations of the publishers. Here are a few of the latest notices of the press.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE in beauty of typography and the variety and interest of its articles makes a claim for recognition among the best of our monthlies. It has already won an assured position.—*Christian Intelligencer*.

THERE is not an unreadable paper in the whole magazine.—*Omaha Bee*.

THE latest and greatest success in publishing circles is that of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. It is full of snap and sparkle from the first line to the last.—*New York Commercial Advertiser*.

The April number is now ready, one of the best yet issued. See table of contents on next to last advertising page. MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is for sale by all newsdealers, price 25 cents.

### NELSON DINGLEY, JR.,

EDITOR OF THE "LEWISTON JOURNAL."

NELSON DINGLEY, JR., editor of the *Journal of Lewiston, Maine*, is almost as widely known, probably as a journalist as he is as a legislator, but his record in either field is a good one.

He was born at Durham, Androscoggin County, Maine, on the 15th of February, 1832. Nelson Dingley, his father, gave his son an admirable example of

in politics, having been one of the founders of the Republican party in Maine; and now his editorial position brought him more prominently forward in the political field.

His fellow citizens elected him to the State Legislature in 1861, and again in 1862. In the House his talents made him conspicuous from the first, and in 1863 he was chosen Speaker. In that year he moved from Auburn to Lewiston, on the opposite bank of the Androscoggin River, and at the next session of the Legislature he represented the latter city. In 1865 he declined the speakership, preferring to lead his party on the floor of the House.

In all, he served six terms in the Legislature, and the energy, probity, and ability he displayed enabled him to do good service to the State. His speeches were short, earnest, and to the point, and helped to pass many useful measures.

Higher honors now awaited him. In 1873 he was nominated by the Republicans for the office of Governor of Maine, and was elected by about ten thousand majority. The next year he was re-elected by a still more handsome figure; but in 1875 he declined a third nomination.

He first entered Congress in 1881, being elected to fill a vacancy in the second district of Maine, which he still represents.

His effective and business-like oratorical methods created a favorable impression at once, and he has long been reputed as one of the ablest debaters of his party.

He has served in each successive Congress, from the forty seventh to the present (the fifty second), and has paid especial attention to measures connected with the currency, the tariff, the liquor traffic, and above all American shipping—a subject of vital importance to his constituents, and on which Mr. Dingley is recognized as an authority. He has constantly and earnestly labored to stay the decline of the American merchant marine, and to remove the various causes which have combined to hamper the shipowners and shipbuilders of this country.

The oft debated fishery question, too, has been discussed by Mr. Dingley both in and out of Congress.

### GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

THERE are but few thinkers in the world, but a great many people who think they think.—*Longfellow*.

THE only people who are not made better by giving are those who do not give half enough.—*Ram's Horn*.

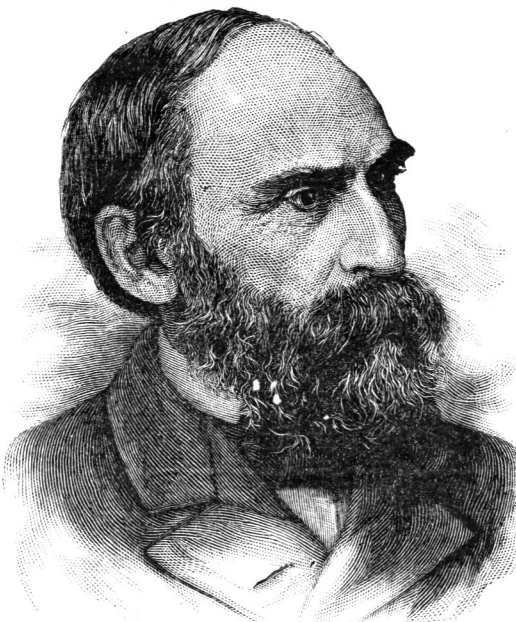
THE way to keep your credit good is never to use it. It is one of the few things in this world that get brighter and more valuable with disuse.

WHAT you keep by you, you may change and mend; But words once spoken can never be recalled.—*Roscommon*.

THE great thing is the sense of having done the best—the sense which is the real life of the artist and the absence of which is his death, of having drawn from his intellectual instrument the finest music that nature has hidden in it, of having played it as it should be played.—*Henry James*.

WHAT is time?—the shadow on the dial—the striking of the clock—the running of the sand—day and night—summer and winter—months, years, centuries? These are but arbitrary and outward signs—the measure of time, not time itself. Time is the life of the soul. If not this—then tell me, what is time?

PATIENCE makes the soul to be of one mind with God and sweetens all the ills of life. It casts the light of heaven upon them, and transforms them into good.—*Dr. Pusey*.



NELSON DINGLEY, JR.

industry and thrift, as he raised himself from poverty, and gained the respect of his fellow citizens, who, though politically his opponents, elected him to the State Senate.

Young Dingley attended the village school, and in his vacations worked on his father's farm and in a store also owned by the latter. He made rapid progress with his studies, and at twelve years of age he went to a high school which was three miles from his home, walking to and fro each morning and evening.

When he was sixteen he organized a society among the young men of the village which did good work in the cause of temperance—a cause which Mr. Dingley has always warmly upheld.

During the following winter, and with one exception, the four subsequent winters, he taught a school at China, fourteen miles from Unity. Meanwhile he pursued his studies at Waterville, Maine, first at the academy, and later at Colby University, which was then called Waterville College.

In 1852 he entered Dartmouth College, and graduated with distinction in 1855. Then he studied law for a year in an office at Auburn, Maine, where his parents had now made their home.

Here he was brought into connection with the *Journal*, published in Lewiston, Auburn's sister city. He had just been admitted to the bar when he decided to abandon the law, and permanently take up journalism as his profession.

He invested his capital in acquiring control of the *Lewiston Journal*, and set diligently to work to develop his property. The paper had been a reputable and fairly successful weekly, but Mr. Dingley pushed it rapidly toward the front. He added a daily edition, and, assisted by his brother, Frank L. Dingley, raised the character and influence of the *Journal* till it became the foremost Republican paper of the State.

He had already taken a strong interest



## A RETREAT CUT OFF.

BY CRESTON CROSS.

THE stream that ran by Cloverbank was one of the prettiest in the world—at least so Tom Deckert thought it must be. It curved in and out and every which way and it was full of the most picturesque wooded islands, great and small, some so close to one bank or the other that you could almost jump ashore, and others clear out in the middle of the river, cleaving it into two narrow streams.

Tom Deckert had business up stream one afternoon at a spot on the shore opposite Huckleberry Island, which was so long and narrow that it looked like the westward bank of the stream instead of the island that it was. Tom's little matter of business was a couple of traps that were responsible for many a rabbit stew in Cloverbank.

Tom accordingly took the miller's rowboat, of which he had free use, and up stream he pulled very slowly, for it was the drowsiest of soft spring afternoons.

As his landing place was only a quarter of a mile away it did not take Tom long to scull the distance, lazy as he was. He ran the boat's nose up against the bank in a deep pool and, springing out, he gave the painter one of his own peculiar hitches around the mooring stake and was off into the shadowy depths of the woods. But he did not go far. Hardly had he started when he heard a most violent crackling of twigs and bushes and leaves directly ahead of him.

It was only a man, but he strode so fast through the brush and had such a mingled look of wildness, exhaustion and despair that Tom shrank to conceal himself more effectually behind the trees. The man rushed by, looking neither to the right nor left, and he had disappeared in an instant.

Tom let out a pent up breath, which was really a sigh of relief, and he was on the very point of continuing his journey when

"Crickey! the fellow is making directly for the boat," he thought.

Quick as thought Tom turned and retraced his steps. As it happened he was walking on the turf when he arrived at the edge of the woods and consequently his footfalls made no noise.

He stopped short when his first glance told him his worst fears were being realized. The wild looking man was bending over and tugging at the hitch in the painter.

It was well tied and the rope was wet; the man became impatient. He whipped out a most formidable knife and bent the rope over its edge.

Two leaps carried Tom down to the water's edge, and before the stranger could straighten up Tom had him by the shoulder:

"What are you doing there?"

The man fell back as if he had been struck, at the same instant raising the knife threateningly as if to defend himself; then seeing it was only a boy and taking in Tom's slight figure, he lost his tremors and assumed an air of boldness. "Where'd you come from?" he asked, eying Tom menacingly.

"That's not the question! What were you doing with that boat?"

"None of your business!" and the man again took the painter in hand.

"Excuse me, but it's my boat and my business. Drop it, will you?" for the other had again begun to use the knife on the line.

With a final tug the wild eyed stranger cut the painter in two; then raising his knife threateningly against Tom, he leaped into the boat, nearly upsetting it, and began to pull hastily toward Huckleberry Island.

All this was the work of a moment and then Tom found himself wondering why he had stood stupidly by and let the stranger get off so easily with the miller's boat.

The recollection of the shining knife and those wild and glittering eyes answered the question.

The stranger pulled straight for the

island. Landing thereon he drew the boat up a little on the bank, then glancing back to where Tom stood, he gave a short laugh, waved his hand at the boat as if to say, "Here it is; it's yours if you can get it," then plunged straight into the woods. They were denser here than he had expected to find them, but that seemed to please him the more, for he chuckled to himself as he pushed his way with difficulty through the tangled bushes.

He waved his hand toward the boat as recorded, an idea occurred to Tom, and he proceeded to put it into execution as soon as he satisfied himself that the stranger had plunged in toward the interior of the island.

It took just about forty five seconds for Tom to throw off all of his clothing. Then, with a decisive scanning of the empty island shore, he plunged into the stream and made toward the boat with sweeping, but silent overhand strokes.

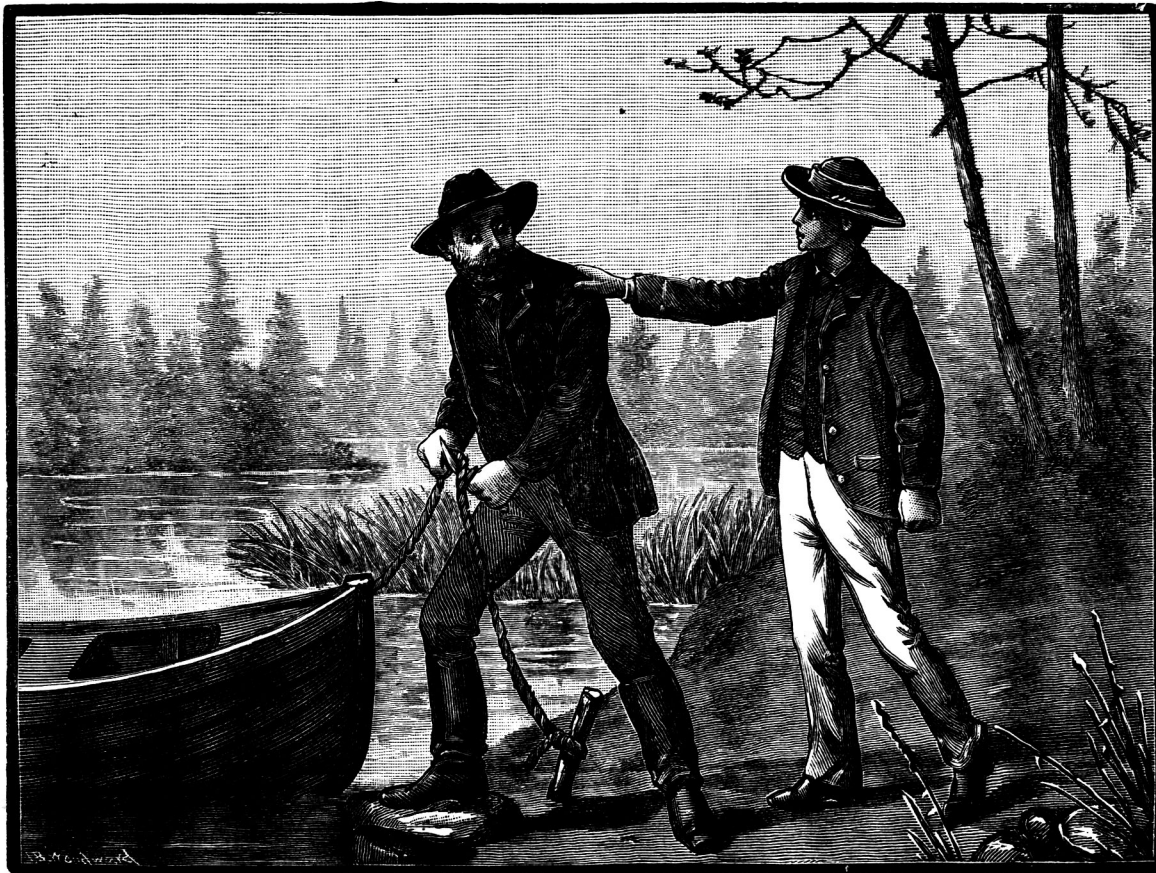
the leader of the trio disgustedly. Then, turning to his dog: "You ought ter be sot to chasing chickens in a barn yard—that's all you're good for!"

"What's the trouble?" asked Tom.

"Why, we've been trailing a gentleman friend of ours," with a wink at his companions, "who's wandered away and got lost, and this here dog has—"

"What kind of a looking man was he?" asked Tom quickly.

"Why? You seen any one? Which



"IT'S MY BOAT AND MY BUSINESS! DROP IT, WILL YOU?"

A change came over him, however, when he suddenly burst out on the further bank and saw that he had been traveling between two bodies of water.

Down stream it was clear the land on which he stood came to a point and the waters before and behind joined, but up stream the island so curved around as to appear to touch the mainland, forming the margin of a circular bay.

"Just my luck to strike a neck o' land," the wanderer muttered. "Wish I could find another boat on hand here, instead of following this here inlet."

So he began to push northward to compass the bay as he supposed. He was unable to follow close on the margin of the stream, so he made his line of travel a little inside the woods, and thus he pushed on for a quarter of an hour. When he again emerged on the margin and looked to see how close he had come to the head of the bay, what was his dismay to see no bay but a further reach of water where he had thought the shore to be, with every appearance of making his neck of land an island.

At this discovery he exhibited in turn the signs of fear and rage, and lost no time in plunging into the woods again on a line which he calculated would bring him back to the boat which had brought him into this *cul de sac*.

It was over an hour after his arrival on the island that he again came in sight of the spot where he had drawn up the boat. He was panting with his exertions, which he had kept up unremittingly, and it was with a staggering uncertainty that he plunged down the bank to reach the boat.

Horror! It was gone!

When Tom saw the stranger pulling for Huckleberry Island he wondered within himself what could be that murderous looking person's business in that isolated spot. Then, as that person

He slowed up as he neared the shore, so as to be able to reverse his direction and get out of range at an instant's notice. Nothing appeared to molest him, however, and he was quickly in shallower water, wading toward the boat. Reaching it, he tugged at the stern until she floated. Then he leaped in and rowed away in great glee.

"And now if he wants to get off the island he can swim for it, as he made me do!" chuckled Tom as he leaped out where the boat had originally been moored, and put his head into his undershirt. "I wonder if he is angry." He put his head into his shirt. "He certainly looks as—great Caesar! ouch! get out!"

While Tom's head was still entangled in the folds of the last named garment he felt something cold touch his bare legs at several points. Deprived of sight, he could not see that it was a harmless setter dog which had leaped out of the woods and was sniffing around his discovery; instead, Tom fancied snakes and other horrible things, until he poked his head through the proper place, and, looking down, saw the red fellow with the feathered tail circling around on an investigation from every point.

At the same moment three men appeared, all armed with guns. They seemed in great haste to keep close at the heels of the dog. When the leader saw the water, Tom and the dog, he looked from the first to the second, to the third, and then at his companions, and an expression of disgust came over his face.

"That blamed dog ought to be shot if he's gone and been at fault again. Say, boy, did you come out of these here woods?"

"Yes. I was in the woods a little while ago," answered Tom wonderingly. "There! just as I thought!" exclaimed

way'd he go?" was the confusion of questions with which he was assailed.

"I saw a dark man, middling tall, with black whiskers all round his face and—"

"That's the one! which way's he gone?"

"He stole my boat and crossed over yonder about half an hour ago and—"

"Out o' the county, by gum!" exclaimed one of the two.

"Excuse me," put in Tom, "but Huckleberry Island's in this county."

"What's Huckleberry Island?"

"That—over there where your friend has gone."

"That an island? And Smirkett over there? Say, young fellow, it'll go worse with you if you're trying to fool us. I'm the county sheriff, I am and—"

"Truly! he stole my boat and disappeared over there and I just got it back by swimming for it."

"Well, that was a smart thing for Jack Smirkett to do, when to my own knowledge he can't swim a stroke. He's on this here island yet!"

Without further words the three piled into the boat and for the second time Tom saw himself relieved of his borrowed property.

The peculiar wanderer perceived that the boat was gone. Had he looked amongst the grasses a few feet further up stream he would have seen it, but he did not have time. There was a rush and three men were on him, rolling and plunging on the ground, in the water and out.

And when the three came back bringing a fourth in the bottom of the boat bound hand and foot, Tom learned that he had materially assisted in the recapture of an escaped prisoner from the county jail—one of the most desperate characters that had been known in these parts for years.

**NOBODY KNOWS BUT MOTHER.**

NOBODY knows of the work it makes  
To keep the home together,  
Nobody knows of the steps it takes,  
Nobody knows—but mother.

Nobody knows of the lessons taught  
Of loving one another;  
Nobody knows of the patience sought,  
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the anxious fears,  
Lest darlings may not weather  
The storm of life in after years,  
Nobody knows—but mother.

Nobody kneels at the throne above  
To thank the Heavenly Father  
For that sweetest gift—a mother's love;  
Nobody can—but mother.

—Exchange.

(This Story began in No. 486.)

## JED, THE POOR HOUSE BOY.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

Author of "Ragged Dick," "Luck and Pluck,"  
"A Debt of Honor," etc.

### SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

JED has been an inmate of the Scranton poor house since he was two years old, where he was left one night by a woman who went off and never came back. While Mr. and Mrs. Avery are in charge, he is treated well, but they have been displaced by Squire Dixon, Overseer of the Poor, in favor of Mr. and Mrs. Fogson, who sting the food and are otherwise careless of the comfort of the paupers. Jed makes up his mind to run away, and chancing to fall in with a young actor, Harry Bertram, he accepts the latter's invitation to join him at the neighboring town of Duncan, five miles distant. Jed has a friend in Scranton—Dr. Redmond—who makes him a present of five dollars and a suit of clothes, and an enemy—Squire Dixon's son Percy—who loses no opportunity to taunt the poor house boy with his poverty. But Jed succeeds in getting away from the town—the Fogsons compel him to do the chores and do not want to lose his services—and on the road is picked up by a gentleman in a carriage, who turns out to be John Mordaunt, manager of the Gold King company, to which Harry Bertram belongs. He gives Jed a pass to the performance, and carries him with him to Duncan.

### CHAPTER XI.

JED MAKES HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON ANY STAGE.

SEVERAL gentlemen were sitting on the piazza in front of the hotel. Among them was Jed's acquaintance of the night before, Harry Bertram.

When he saw Mr. Mordaunt in the buggy he advanced to greet him.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Mordaunt," he said. "I wanted to consult you."

"Any hitch, Bertram?" asked the manager.

"Yes. Young Clinton is sick and can't play tonight."

"What's the matter with the boy?"

"He is threatened with fever."

"Couldn't he play tonight? His part is a small one, but it is important."

"The doctor absolutely forbids his appearing on the stage."

"That is awkward. If we were in the city we might get a substitute, but a common country boy would make a mess of the part."

"You have a boy with you. Do you think he would do?"

"You have known him longer than I. I refer the matter to you."

"Why it's Jed!" exclaimed Bertram, examining our hero closely.

"Didn't you know me, Mr. Bertram?" asked Jed, smilingly.

"Who could with such a change of dress? You must have met some good fairy. And how did you fall in with Mr. Mordaunt?"

"He kindly offered me a ride."

"Then you have left Scranton for good?"

"For good, I hope. If I can help you in any way I will do my best."

"Try him, Bertram," said the manager. "He is very presentable. Take him in hand and see if you can't get him ready to take Ralph Clinton's place."

"Then no time is to be lost. Come

up to my room, Jed, and I will tell you what you are expected to do, that is, if you have had supper."

"I ate my supper on the road before I fell in with Mr. Mordaunt."

"Follow me, then, Jed."

Harry Bertram led the way to a comfortable chamber on the second floor.

"Now sit down, and I'll tell you what you will have to do. First, do you think you have the nerve to stand before an audience, and play the part of a telegraph boy?"

"Yes, sir. I am not troubled with bashfulness."

"Have you ever spoken in public?"

"Yes, at school examinations."

"Then I think you'll do. Here is your part."

He handed Jed a small manuscript book containing the lines of his rôle, with the cues.

"You see it isn't long. I may be able to give you a little rehearsal as you appear only in the first and last acts."

The next half hour was devoted to teaching Jed his part. Bertram was delighted with the aptitude shown by his pupil.

"Have you never attended a theater?" he asked almost incredulously.

"Never, Mr. Bertram."

"Then I can only say that you have the dramatic instinct, luckily for us. If you are sure you won't be afraid before the footlights, you'll do."

"Then I shall do," said Jed. "I never should think of being nervous."

"One thing more, nothing will be said of any substitution. To the audience you will be Ralph Clinton, as put down on the bill."

"That will suit me. I am afraid if I were announced as JED, THE POOR HOUSE BOY, it wouldn't help you," continued Jed with a smile.

"You may have to continue in the part a week or more. As to the pay I can't speak of that yet. Mr. Mordaunt will arrange with you."

"If I can earn my board I shall be satisfied."

"I can promise you that, and fully as good board as you have been accustomed to."

"I hope it won't be worse," said Jed laughing.

"When you go to the theater I will see if Ralph Clinton's uniform will fit you. I haven't much doubt on that point, as you seem to be about the same size."

The performance was to commence at eight. Harry Bertram and his protégé went to the hall, which was to be used as a theater, early, so that Jed might be introduced to his fellow actors and receive a little instruction as to the business of his part.

He was very quick to comprehend, and forgot nothing, so that Bertram felt quite easy in regard to him, though it was his first appearance on any stage.

Jed was very well received by the other members of the company, all of whom expressed satisfaction at having the gap so quickly filled.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, my boy," said George Osprey, the leading man. "Where have you played?"

"Nowhere, sir. This is my first appearance."

"I hope you won't funk."

"If that means break down, I am sure I won't."

"Good! Confidence will pull you through."

"Mr. Osprey, introduce me, please," lisped an elderly young lady, of affected manners.

"This is Miss Celesta Raffles, Mr. —, I don't think I know your name."

"Jed Gilman, but I believe I am to be billed as Ralph Clinton."

"I am delighted to meet you, Mr. Gilman," said Miss Raffles. "I am sure

you will be an honor to our noble profession."

"I hope so, Miss Raffles," said Jed smilingly, "but I shall be able to tell better tomorrow."

"I always sympathize with youth—with impulsive, enthusiastic youth," gushed Miss Raffles.

"If they are of the male sex," interpolated Mr. Osprey. "Mr. Gilman, I must warn you that Miss Raffles is a dangerous woman. She will do her best to make an impression on your heart."

"Oh, you wicked slanderer!" said the delighted Celesta. "Mr. Gilman, I am not dangerous at all. I will merely ask you to look upon me as your sister—your elder sister."

"Thank you, Miss Raffles," said Jed, showing a tact and self possession hardly to be expected of one with his training. "Is Mr. Osprey one of your brothers?"

"Yes, she told me that she would be a sister to me. I have never—never recovered from the blow."

"I may change my mind," said Celesta, who admired the handsome leading man. "If you try again, you may meet with better success—"

"No," answered Osprey warily. "I never ask the same favor a second time. I leave you to Mr. Gilman. May you be happy, my children!"

As Celesta Raffles looked to be thirty five, and Jed was but sixteen, he was a good deal amused, but Miss Raffles was disposed to take the matter in earnest.

"Don't let him prejudice you against me, Mr. Gilman!" she murmured. "We shall soon be better acquainted, I am sure. Do you know, I am to be your mother in the play? It is a little absurd, as I am only twenty three, but we have to do strange things on the stage."

"She's thirty six if she's a day," whispered Osprey, "but if you want to keep in her good graces you must believe her own reports of her age."

"Time to dress, Jed!" said Harry Bertram. "It will take you longer than usual, as it is the first time. Your nerve won't fail you, will it?"

Jed shook his head.

"I feel as cool as ever I did," he answered.

Fortunately the telegraph boy's uniform fitted him exactly. He hardly knew himself as he looked at his reflection in the little mirror in his dressing room.

"I wonder if Mr. and Mrs. Fogson would recognize me if they should see me on the stage?" thought Jed.

Then it occurred to him that Percy Dixon and his mother would be present. He smiled to himself as he thought of Percy's bewilderment when he saw him under such a strange change of circumstances.

It is not necessary to give the plot of the Gold King. It is sufficient to say that Jed, the telegraph boy, had been stolen from his parents in early life, the Gold King being his father. He is obliged to earn his own living as a boy, but in the last act he is restored to his friends and his old station in life.

In the first act Jed appeared in his predecessor's uniform. In the last he wore his own suit, this being quite as well adapted to the character as Ralph Clinton's street costume.

Mrs. Dixon and Percy occupied seats in the third row from the front. They always paid the highest prices, and secured the most eligible seats.

At the end of ten minutes Jed's cue was called and he appeared on the stage. Percy, who was watching the play with the greatest attention, started in amazement when he saw the boy actor.

"Mother," he whispered, "that boy is the perfect image of Jed, the poor house boy."

"Is he indeed? Very singular on my word!"

"And he has the same voice," continued Percy, still more excited.

"But I suppose it can't be he!" said Mrs. Dixon inquiringly.

"No, I think not," answered Percy. "Jed doesn't know anything about acting, and this boy is perfectly at home on the stage."

This was indeed true. Jed was quite self possessed. Moreover, he never hesitated for a word or stumbled, but was letter perfect. His scene was with George Osprey, as member of a fashionable club, who had inquired into his history. "'Yes,' said Jed, repeating his part, 'yes, Mr. Glendower, I am a poor boy, but those who look down upon me will one day find their mistake—they may find that the poor telegraph boy whom they once despised is able to look down upon them.'"

As he uttered these words, Jed, perhaps intentionally let his glance rest on Percy Dixon, while the latter gazed at him open mouthed.

"I believe it is Jed after all, mother!" he ejaculated.

### CHAPTER XII.

PERCY DIXON IS BEWILDERED.

AT the end of the first act Jed and George Osprey were called before the curtain. Jed had been instructed to bow his thanks and did so. Percy watched his face eagerly, for this brought Jed within a few feet of him.

"Mother," he said, "if that boy isn't Jed, it is his twin brother."

"But, Percy," said his mother, who was a practical woman, "I never heard that the boy had a twin brother."

"Oh pshaw, I meant that he is exactly like him."

"But this boy is Ralph Clinton. The bill says so."

"I know it," said Percy, with a puzzled expression. "I don't understand it at all."

"The boy you mean is probably in bed at the Scranton poor house."

"Perhaps he is. I don't see for my part how he could be here, or know how to act."

The play proceeded. It was in five acts, and Jed was not called upon to appear again till the last one. He proved himself up to the requirements of the part, and evidently produced a favorable impression on the audience.

"Mother," said Percy, "I would like to wait at the stage door till the actors come out."

"But, Percy, it is already late. We ought to be starting for home."

"But, mother, you know father is Overseer of the Poor, and if this boy is Jed, he has run away from the Scranton poor house, and father will be held responsible."

"Why should he?"

"Because the paupers are under his charge. If one of them runs away he will be blamed."

"Well, if you think we ought to stop," said the lady undecidedly. "But I don't see what you expect to accomplish."

"I want to see that boy face to face. I want to speak to him, and find out for certain who he is."

"Well, don't be any longer than you can help."

"I won't."

Meanwhile Jed and Harry Bertram were conversing in the green room.

"You did yourself proud, my boy," said Bertram. "You acted as well as Clinton, and in some respects better."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Mr. Bertram," said Jed gratified.

"I could hardly believe that this was your first appearance on the stage. Weren't you frightened at all?"

"Not a bit. I enjoyed it."



"Did you see any of your Scranton friends in the audience?"

"I saw none of my Scranton friends," answered Jed, "but I saw two Scranton acquaintances."

"Who were they?"

"Percy Dixon, son of the Overseer of the Poor, and his mother."

"Where were they sitting?"

"In the third row from the stage."

"Do you think they recognized you?"

"I saw Percy watching me very closely. I am sure he noticed my resemblance to his old acquaintance Jed, but he couldn't understand how it was possible for me to be the same boy."

"Then you baffled him?"

"I don't know. I shouldn't wonder if he would be waiting outside to get a view of me."

"And if he does?"

"He will do all he can to get me back to the poor house."

"Then I'll tell you what to do. Go out of the stage door arm in arm with me, and I will address you as Ralph. If he speaks, appear not to know him."

"That will be a capital joke," said Jed, taking in the humor of the situation.

"Between us, I think we can bluff him off."

Jed had appeared in the last act in his street costume, and had no preparations to make, but Bertram had to exchange his stage for his ordinary dress. When they were ready they emerged from the stage door arm in arm. A glance showed Jed that Percy was waiting to intercept him. He did not appear to notice Percy, but passed on.

Percy hastened forward, and touched him on the arm.

"Look here, I want to speak to you," he said.

"Speak on, my boy," said Jed, assuming the style of his new profession.

"How did you come here?" demanded Percy bluntly.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you are Jed Gilman."

"My dear Ralph, what does this person mean?" said Bertram.

"He evidently mistakes me for some one he knows," said Jed coolly. "May I ask your name, young man?"

"You know me well enough," said Percy angrily, for Jed had not tried to change his voice. "I am Percy Dixon."

"Percy Dixon!" repeated Jed. "Where have I met you?"

"Where have you met me?" retorted Percy. "At the Scranton poor house."

"Do you reside there?" asked Jed with admirable composure.

"Do I live at the poor house?" repeated Percy, exasperated. "Of course I don't."

Mrs. Dixon had heard this colloquy, as she was sitting in the carriage only six feet away.

"Percy," she said, "I told you you had made a mistake."

"I don't believe I have," said Percy in a sulky tone.

"For whom do you take me, Mr. Dixon?" asked Jed.

"For Jed Gilman, a poor house boy."

"I feel very much complimented," said Jed smoothly. "I hope Jed is a nice boy."

"No, he isn't. He is an impudent young rascal."

"Then how dare you compare my friend Ralph to a boy like that?" demanded Bertram savagely. "You must be crazy, or do you mean to deliberately insult him?"

Poor Percy was overwhelmed. He wasn't half so certain now that he was right. True, there was a wonderful resemblance between the young actor and Jed, but then it seemed impossible that Jed should have left the poor house suddenly (and Percy remembered seeing him that very afternoon at his own

home) and developed into a member of a dramatic company.

"I may have made a mistake," he said doubtfully.

"I am glad you realize this possibility," said Bertram. "Did you witness the play this evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you think your friend Jed—"

"He is not my friend."

"Well, do you think that Jed, whatever he is, could act like my friend Ralph?"

"No, I don't think he could," Percy admitted.

"Probably this Jed is a very ordinary boy?"

"I should say so. Ordinary is no name for it. He is stupid."

"Then you will see for yourself that it is not very likely that he should become an accomplished actor all at once. If it were you it might be different. You are evidently a young man of social position, while this Jed is a poor boy, and I presume without education."

"Yes, he is very ignorant," answered Percy, falling into the trap. "Is it—hard to learn to act?" he added.

"Not if you have talent and education. Do you think of trying the stage?"

"I might some time," said Percy, flattered by the question.

"If you do I hope you will succeed. Now, Mr. Dixon, I must bid you good night, as my friend Ralph and myself are fatigued with our acting, and must get to bed."

"Good evening!" said Jed, raising his hat gravely.

"Good evening!" returned Percy, more puzzled than ever.

He jumped into the carriage and started to drive home.

"Then it wasn't Jed?" said his mother.

"I suppose not," answered Percy, "but I never in all my life saw such a resemblance."

"Very likely," replied Mrs. Dixon placidly. "There was a woman in Trenton who looked just like me, so that no one could tell us apart."

"Yes," admitted Percy; "I must be mistaken. This boy had a very nice suit on while Jed was dressed in rags."

When they reached home Squire Dixon was abed and asleep. Percy came down late to breakfast.

"By the way, Percy," said his father as he helped him to breakfast, "Fogson has just been over to report that the boy Jed has mysteriously disappeared. He never went back after bringing me the message yesterday afternoon."

Percy dropped his knife and fork and stared at his father in open eyed amazement.

"Then it was Jed after all!" he exclaimed.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### FOGSON IN PURSUIT.

"WHAT do you mean, Percy?" asked Squire Dixon, referring to his son's exclamation at the close of the preceding chapter. "Do you know anything of Jed?"

"Yes; I saw him last evening at Duncan."

"But what took him there? What was he doing?"

"He was on the stage. He was playing in 'The Gold King'."

"What do you mean by this absurd statement?" demanded his father angrily.

"It is true. Ask mother if it isn't."

"I think Percy is right," said Mrs. Dixon. "The young actor bears a wonderful resemblance to the boy Jed."

"But Jed doesn't know anything about acting."

"That is why I thought I was mistaken. But if Jed has run away it must be he."

"Why didn't you manage to speak to him after the play?"

"I did, and he denied that he was Jed. He calls himself Ralph Clinton."

"Really, this is a most surprising circumstance," said the squire. "The boy is a hardened young villain. His running away from those who are lawfully set over him in authority is a most audacious and high handed outrage."

"That's what I think," chimed in Percy. "What shall you do about it? Shan't you go after him?"

"I think it my duty to do so. As soon as breakfast is over, ask Mr. Fogson to come round here. Tell him I have news of the fugitive."

Three quarters of an hour later Simeon Fogson was admitted into the august presence of the Overseer of the Poor.

"I hear you have news of Jed Gilman," he said. "That is what your son Percy tells me."

"It is true, Mr. Fogson. The young scapegrace has joined a company of actors. What is he coming to?"

"To the gallows, I think," answered Fogson. "But how did you learn this?"

"Percy saw him on the stage last evening."

"And he actually played a part?"

"Yes."

"In his ragged suit?"

"No," answered Percy. "He had a telegraph boy's suit first, and afterwards a nice brown snit—as nice as mine."

"Where did he get 'em?" asked the perplexed Fogson.

"That's the question!" returned the squire solemnly. "There is a strange mystery about the boy's goings on. Have you observed anything queer in his conduct of late?"

"I have noticed that he has been unusually impudent. Ha, I have it!" said Fogson, suddenly slapping his thigh.

"What have you?" asked Percy.

"There was an actor stayed at the poor house night before last, an actor named Bertram. It is he that has lured Jed astray."

"There was an actor by that name in the play last evening."

"Then that settles it. Squire Dixon, what shall I do?"

"I think, Mr. Fogson, you had better go at once to Duncan—I will lend you my buggy—and secure the boy, tying him hand and foot, if necessary, and take him back to the poor house."

Simeon Fogson smiled grimly. It was an errand that suited him.

"I will do so," he said, "and I will lose no time."

"Don't ask for Jed Gilman," suggested Percy. "Ask for Ralph Clinton. That's the name he goes by now."

Mr. Fogson drew out a stub of a lead pencil and put down this name. In twenty minutes he was on his way, and an hour later he drew up in front of the hotel in Duncan.

He left the buggy and entered the public room of the inn.

"Is there such a boy as Ralph Clinton here?" he asked the clerk.

"Yes; do you want to see him?"

"I should like very much to see him," answered Fogson grimly.

"He is in No. 12. Jim, show the gentleman up. He is sick."

Fogson nodded.

"I dare say," he added significantly.

"I guess his acting made him sick."

"Yes, that's what I heard. Is he your son?"

"No, but I am his guardeen."

Fogson was quite elated at so easily getting on the track of the fugitive.

"Sick!" he repeated to himself as he ascended the staircase. "I guess he'll be sick before he gets through with me."

The servant knocked at No. 12, and a boy's voice was heard to say: "Come in!"

The door was opened, and Fogson,

rushing in, grasped the arm of a boy sitting in a rocking chair.

"I've got you, you young rascal!" he exclaimed.

*The continuation of this story will be found in No. 490 of THE ARGOSY, ready on all news stands Saturday, April 16.*

(This Story began in No. 474.)

## DIRKMAN'S LUCK.

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT,

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

### CHAPTER XLIV.

#### DECATUR'S STORY.

THOUGH the night was cold and windy, Duncan's face was flushed and perspiring, as he stepped quickly into the room, and sat down on the bed.

"Jerusalem crickets, but I've had a queer night of it!" he exclaimed, taking out his handkerchief and mopping his forehead.

"I was afraid you might have gone to bed. I ran all the way over to tell you the news—"

"Well, quick, what is it?" cried Mark impatiently.

Duncan stopped mopping, and leaned forward impressively.

"Mark," he said, "do you know, that was Decatur you saw that night you walked across the fields from Mr. Lewis's house?"

Mark nodded.

"I felt sure of it when I saw Decatur this evening," he said, "but how do you know it?"

"Decatur has confessed."

"Confessed?"

"Yes, confessed everything."

"Confessed everything? Why, what has he to confess?"

"It's quite a story, and I'd better begin right at the beginning," said Duncan. "When Mr. Lewis and I got Decatur home we carried him up stairs and put him to bed. The doctor came shortly afterwards, and when he had examined the old dandy, he shook his head with a very serious look.

"He's had a very bad shock," said he. "What happened to him?"

"Then Mr. Lewis explained. 'It's no mere fainting spell,' said the doctor. 'It's a very severe shock—fright must have caused it. He must have been startled by hearing everybody calling his name. You know he was very weak, and with these heart failures there's always great danger from any kind of a shock.'

"Old Decatur was coming to then, but as he opened his eyes and saw Mr. Lewis, he gave a big start, turned over on his side with his face to the wall, and fell to trembling like a leaf. I never saw anything like it. He seemed to be going all to pieces.

"He was humped up in a ball, and shaking so that the bed rattled. His teeth clicked as if he had a chill. The doctor watched him carefully; made out a prescription for Faber to get in town; and then gave the old fellow something out of one of the bottles in his case.

"After a while he grew quieter, and lay perfectly still. He seemed to be asleep. The doctor then gave a few directions, and left. Mr. Lewis and I sat down to keep watch.

"Do you know the doctor had scarcely got out of the house when Decatur turned over and looked at Mr. Lewis in a half dazed way for a minute. Then he reached out his hand toward him. It was trembling so he could hardly hold it out. Mr. Lewis moved nearer.

"Well, old man, what is it?" he asked.

"I'm agoin' to die," said Decatur in a sharp, husky voice.

"Mr. Lewis tried to cheer him up, but it was no use.

"'I'm a goin' to die,' the old fellow kept repeating. 'I'm a goin' to die, Mass'r Lewis, and I've got somethin' on my mind I must tell you first. It's a heavy load for a sick ole nigger to carry all alone—and it's a killin' me—I can't stan' it no more.'

"Well, he went on that way awhile, losing his head every two or three minutes, and then rousing up with 'I'm a goin' to die!'

"We knew something strange was weighing on the old fellow's mind, and we were afraid he'd never get rid of it. Suddenly I suggested giving him some more brandy.

"We dosed him a little, and then, after a minute or two, he braced up and started off. There's no use my giving you his whole rigmarole way of saying it, so here's the sum and substance of it. That old darky has been a confederate of Dirkman—"

"What!" cried Mark in astonishment, springing from the chair in which he had been sitting and taking a place by Duncan on the bed.

"Yes—a confederate of Dirkman—the thief who shot himself at Mr. Lewis's house."

"And the night I saw him he was—"

"On his way down to Dirkman's hiding place, carrying food to him in a basket," supplemented Duncan.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed Mark. "And to think that I should have stumbled right into the heart of the whole mystery, and then have walked coolly away without doing anything! Why didn't I follow that old darky?"

"It's all the better as it is," answered Duncan.

"You would have only armed Dirkman and given him a chance to dodge away before the detectives were ready for him."

"Well, go on—tell me all about it," said Mark eagerly.

"It seems that Dirkman made Decatur's acquaintance last year when he was out here on a thieving enterprise, and the old darky told of the spring house down in the meadow. The two of them worked there at night until they had excavated a regular cave underground, with the foundations of the old spring house for side walls. No one suspected the place at all, for everybody had forgotten about it after it was filled in.

"You remember Herbert Morgan and I didn't even think of it when we passed over the place that afternoon in October and heard that curious rapping sound underground. Just think, we were standing right over the cave in which that precious rascal was hiding, and it was his hammering that we heard. You remember how quickly it stopped as soon as I tapped on that iron pipe.

"The pipe must have run right through his cave, somewhere near the ceiling of it. He was as snug as a bug in there, and when we had gone on he crept out to see what had caused the noise. He saw that crack in the ground, and filled it up and covered it over so neatly with sod that we could hardly find the place when we got back—you remember that?"

Mark nodded.

"Yes; but Decatur," he said. "Tell me more about him."

"Well, as I said, Dirkman made friends with him last year. He offered to pay him well if he would give him all the information he wanted about the town. Decatur didn't realize at first how bad a customer he had struck. He thought Dirkman was crooked, but didn't know what a tough case he was till later.

"Decatur only intended at first to give Dirkman information, but after he had kept company with him awhile he got

dragged into the trouble, head and ears. He couldn't back out then. Dirkman told him that exposure would bring as much trouble on one as the other, and so Decatur saw when it was too late.

"The old darky helped him through all his robberies last year, and helped him escape when he had finished. Then he thought it was all over, and thanked his lucky stars for a good riddance.

"But this fall Dirkman turned up again, full of business, and the old darky was nearly scared out of his wits. He didn't want to help him again—he wanted to shake the whole thing, but Dirkman had him in his clutches now and wouldn't let him go. So Decatur had to feed him down there and bring him the information he wanted.

"He was on pins and needles night and day for fear Dirkman would be detected and give him away too. He was worrying himself into a regular fever—you remember how sick he fell just at the time of the Turner robbery. Mr. Lewis thought he was sick before that, and the night you saw him, you remember, they said the old fellow was in bed.

"Well, he was only playing sick then, for he got up that night and carried that basketful of things down to Dirkman, and told him how to get into the Turner store. But after that, what with the worry and anxiety, the old fellow did really get sick. He was a regular nervous wreck, and that, together with the heart trouble he has always had, laid him pretty low for a while.

"By the time he got well Dirkman was in an awfully tight hole. The detectives were all around him, and Decatur hadn't been near to help him. As soon as he was able, the darky slipped down there and had a talk with him.

"Now comes the cream of it all. Dirkman, seeing it was useless to try to carry away all that stuff he had stolen, and afraid that the detectives might light on his hiding place, made up his mind that Decatur should hide the jewels somewhere else—"

"Yes, yes," cried Mark excitedly, "and where are they?"

"Decatur carried the whole swag up to his room, and those jewels—everything in fact that Dirkman stole this year has been in Mr. Lewis's house, right under his nose, for days and days."

Mark's eyes were opened wide in astonishment. A long, low whistle escaped his lips.

"And you have found the things?"

"Everything. Decatur showed us where to look, and there, under a plank of the floor, in the space between that and the ceiling of the room below, lay a box with the whole plunder in it—jewels, rings, silver, everything. Jerusalem, what a dazzle the pile made!"

"What did Mr. Lewis do?"

"Sent out for officers at once and gave the stuff up. He had taken down what Decatur had told him, but he made him repeat a part of it to them. Oh, I tell you it was an exciting time there for a while. I stayed as long as I could. I did not want to miss a word.

"I never saw such a thing in my life. Mr. Lewis was almost excited himself, and you know what that means for him."

"Well, I should think he would be. It's the most unexpected turn of luck I ever heard of. It's regular Dirk—" Mark suddenly caught himself.

Duncan laughed.

"No. Dirkman's luck is no good any more. You'll have to find some other expression."

"Well, it's mighty queer—that's certain," said Mark.

For half an hour more they talked, forgetting time entirely, so absorbed were they, until the striking of a clock warned them that it was early morning.

"Here, we've got to go to bed mighty soon if we want to sleep at all before breakfast," exclaimed Duncan, rising. "There will be plenty of people to talk with during the day. It will be all over town before noon."

"It will go terribly hard with poor old Decatur, won't it?" said Mark. "It seems a pity that the real thief should escape justice and leave the sick old darky behind."

Duncan's face grew graver.

"It's my opinion he won't stay long," he answered. "If ever I saw the face of a dying man I did tonight. I don't believe Decatur will last out the month. He went all to pieces again after he had told his story, and I shouldn't wonder if he never picked up."

#### CHAPTER XLV.

##### CONCLUSION.

DUNCAN'S surmise was not far from right. Poor old Decatur never lifted his head again from the pillow, and scarcely two weeks elapsed when he expired.

All pitied the old darky, looking upon him more as a victim of Dirkman's—a poor tool of the criminal's, rather than a criminal himself, and no one regretted that death had mercifully intervened to save him from imprisonment.

The stirring incidents connected with the death of Decatur, from his paroxysm of fright at the minstrel entertainment to the finding of the booty beneath the flooring, added another and final chapter to the exciting history of the Medford robberies. The newspapers of the State and country eagerly caught up the particulars, and for a while it was the talk of everybody. Then all quieted down, and only in the town itself occasional references were made to the exciting events that constituted Medford's one great public sensation.

The jewels were found in good order. A few of the diamonds had been removed from their settings and had disappeared, but Mr. Turner was too glad to get back the great bulk of his property to complain of a comparatively slight loss.

And now, as winter had advanced, and all thought of sports was laid aside, Mark found himself with ample opportunity for laying the foundation for his college preparation. Recognizing that the offer of Colonel Morgan was the chance of his life, he lost not a minute during the short winter days and long winter nights.

Nearly every evening at eight found him hard at work over his Latin, Greek, and mathematics, sometimes by himself, sometimes with Herbert's tutor, Mr. Tripp. Mr. Lewis allowed him to use the spare half hours during the day also for his studying, and these opportunities served him well for refreshing his mind preparatory to the regular recitation hour with Mr. Tripp at four o'clock.

Two evenings of the week, Wednesday and Saturday, as well as Saturday afternoon, Mark kept free, and on those occasions he made the most of the pleasant acquaintanceship he had formed in Medford. He was by this time one of the most popular boys in town—a position he had earned, in spite of his dependent position, by the display of his own true worth.

Had his time been more his own he could have had no end of fun, but on the other hand, it would no doubt have only spoiled him, for the town boys, even the older ones, treated him with every possible kindness, and paid him every attention.

But Mark had set his face toward that one dazzling goal ahead which the colonel had opened up to him, and, as he expressed himself, "he was going to

kick himself over that goal if hard study would do it." So, with the exception of the weekly jollifications on Saturday night with the Sylvesters, and a pleasant evening at the Athletic Club Wednesdays, Mark kept aloof from society, and stuck to his books.

"Time enough to talk about enjoying myself when I've got into college," he would say. "It will be a tight enough shave for me, and I've no time to waste."

Even these two evenings Mark would have denied himself had not Aunt Betty insisted on his taking recreation. The old lady kept a sharp watch on Mark, and often would rise at a late hour on hearing him moving in his room, to order him to close his books and go to bed.

Patty said but little, knowing his disposition well and respecting it thoroughly, but she used to watch him sympathetically when he was hard at work, and always tiptoed softly about for fear of disturbing him.

Now and then she would ask him how he was getting on; and when he would show her what progress he was making, she would bend her head over his books, knitting her brows, and pursing up her lips over the big Latin words and algebraic signs until her face was all in a pucker, and Duncan would jokingly say that she had got too close to the algebra and swallowed a "cube root" by mistake.

Mark's progress was really remarkable, and it showed clearly what a boy of no more than ordinary capacity could do, simply by setting himself sternly to the accomplishment of a definite purpose. Often during the long evening's work, when he would feel tired and listless, the bare thought of Belmont College and the life awaiting him there, ~~would rouse and spur him to renewed endeavor~~—eager to hasten the realization of what was still but a beautiful dream.

He lived almost constantly in anticipation of the future and the happiness it promised him. He purposely and frequently sought out Baker on the evenings he spent at the athletic club, in order to ask him questions about Belmont, and to draw him into talking about student life at the college; and many a pleasant hour was passed in this way, Baker being as glad to revive reminiscences of his college course as Mark was to hear them.

Mark experienced a pleasant surprise shortly after the beginning of the new year. One Saturday morning a quiet, pleasant faced young man walked into Mr. Lewis's outer office and asked Carr if young Mr. Ware was in.

Scarcely had the words passed his lips when Mark glanced up, and then hurried forward with hand extended, and a glad cry of welcome on his lips. It was Reuben Cross, whom Mark had not seen since leaving New York months before.

Reuben had come out purposely to see Mark, though he made it an excuse to visit also the town, where he had several good friends. He remained over Sunday, during which time Mark was constantly in his company, and together they took long walks by day and sat by the cozy fire in Mark's room during the evenings, talking over the many interesting events of the past fall—events of such importance in Mark's life—and discussed happily the bright future laid out before him.

Reuben's visit, reminding Mark as it did of the sad and lonely days he had left behind him, made his future seem brighter still.

The winter waned, and the spring came in, finding Mark well advanced in his studies, and eagerly pressing on. Some doubt had been expressed at first



by the colonel as to whether he would be able to get himself ready to enter Belmont the next year, but by May this doubt had been entirely dispelled.

"I'm heartily glad you've done so well," said the colonel, in talking with him about it, "for I was very anxious to have you enter the same class as Herbert. I wanted you two boys together, and now, if you keep steadily at it, you'll stand as good a show as he does of passing the examination in September."

We leave Mark for the present then, with the full realization of his purpose directly before him in the near future—the prospect of being enrolled a member of Belmont College within three short months.

He talks no more of "Dirkman's Luck" now, for his long and hard winter's work has taught him something besides Latin, Greek and mathematics. It has taught him that definite purpose is most important in life, and that sturdy resolution, backed by good, hard, earnest work is worth more to a boy than all the luck in the world.

THE END.

(This Story began in No. 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 LVI.

ST. CYR REACHES THE END OF HIS ROPE.

FORTUNATELY nothing occurred to menace or interrupt the expedition's return to the schooner. After the expenditure of a great deal of patience and care, Fernando was got on board the yacht and finally deposited on a mattress on the floor of the cabin. It had been found unwise to attempt to place him in one of the contracted berths.

Ralph immediately got out the schooner's limited medicine chest and applied himself to the restoration of the victim, and the alleviation of his sufferings.

His efforts were soon rewarded, for Fernando finally opened his eyes and looked up in a weary way. Then an eager, anxious look appeared on his face, and he whispered;

"Treasure."

"We have got it," returned Ralph. "But how do you feel? Are you in much pain?"

Fernando gave a faint smile and shook his head. He then glanced inquiringly about and looked at Ralph in a doubtful way.

"Frank, have those boxes brought below," said Ralph, turning to Manly, who was present. He quickly understood that Fernando would not be satisfied till he saw them.

In a few moments the boxes were deposited on the cabin floor at the foot of the companion. Fernando's face lighted up when he saw them, and his voice was much stronger when he said: "Open one of them, and you will see that the contents are as I said."

"I believe you; it is not necessary," protested Ralph.

"But I want to see them," persisted Fernando, with an impatient wave of his hand.

Willing to gratify the whim of a dying man, especially as it was the sight of what he had fought, dared and suffered so much for, Ralph secured a screw driver and began work on one of the boxes. After the expenditure of considerable muscular energy, as the screws were rusty and had been sunk deep, one of the end pieces was removed.

Ralph moved the box near Fernando, where the latter could see him as he unpacked the contents. The wounded man watched the process with eager eyes, and the sailing master was fairly fascinated himself before he got through.

Everything had been carefully packed in chamois, silk or cotton, and as each article was brought to light it elicited fresh surprise and admiration from Ralph and Manly, who were the only ones present.

There were two or three rich vases covered with gems, several rare candlesticks, a number of pieces of jewelry studded with precious stones, and three bags, two filled with gold and silver coins, and one with finely cut diamonds, rubies and sapphires.

The sight of the latter almost took the yachtsmen's breath away. If one box had given up such a valuable treasure, how much would there be in the whole five boxes? The question startled them, and their heads almost swam when they attempted to estimate the amount of wealth that lay before them.

Fernando had been so interested in watching the unpacking of the box that he had actually raised himself on one elbow. When the last article had been removed he sank back exhausted. He was paler, and was evidently suffering from his wound, but he appeared more contented.

"What are you going to do with all this, Fernando?" gasped Ralph, as he regarded the valuables spread out before him.

"Get pen and ink—you write what I tell you," replied the sailor, with an effort, but as though he was determined to carry out one final object.

Ralph did so, and also provided himself with a sheet of writing paper. Manly replaced the contents of the box and put on the cover without fastening it.

"All ready, Fernando," announced Ralph, seating himself at the cabin table near the wounded man's head.

"I give and bequeath," began Fernando in due form, "unto Richard Malcolm Morton—"

"Suppose he is dead after all," interrupted Ralph.

"Didn't I tell you young Fluster Fulwood was the boy?"

"Yes, but—"

"Write out what I say, Mr. Morton, and you will understand."

"All right; I have got that. Go ahead."

Fernando followed with a declaration that the contents of the five boxes should irrevocably go to the son of Richard Morton, of Morton's Cove. Then he added a brief history of the treasure, to substantiate his ownership of it as the sole survivor of those who put it on Crocus Island.

When the paper was finished it was passed to the recumbent man for his signature. The lid of the treasure box was used as a rest, and in a moment he had written his name.

"Fluster Fulwood!" exclaimed Ralph, looking at the subscription.

He was not as much surprised as would naturally be supposed he would be. He had long had a vague suspicion that Fernando was not what he represented himself to be—that he might possibly be the mate of the Malabar—and this suspicion was strengthened almost to a certainty when in the dictating of the will no mention had been made of Fluster Fulwood, the elder.

The man's remarkable explanation of his recognition of young Fulwood (which Ralph could not bring himself to believe), the readiness with which he declared the latter to be Uncle Dick's son, and St. Cyr a fraud (even before he had heard on what grounds the exquisite

based his claims), all indicated that he knew more than a mere shipmate of the mate of the Malabar would know.

His final assertion that the elder Fulwood might possibly be found on the treasure island had been accepted by the sailing master with a great deal of doubt. The latter possibility had been realized, but not in the way Ralph had contemplated.

As Ralph reviewed the sailor's story of his wanderings, the burial of the treasure and the attempts to recover it, the whole thing, as it had been told, now seemed too wonderful for belief. It was exceedingly improbable that two men should have been so inseparable for ten or twelve years, and passed through so many changes of fortune, hardships and perils without disaster to one or the other; and now Ralph wondered that he had so readily believed it, and had not had a suspicion that it was the story of one man.

Then, for the first time, Ralph noted that the initials of the name Fulwood had assumed were the same as those of his *bona fide* name.

"Yes; Fluster Fulwood," repeated the wounded man; "once mate of your uncle's ship Malabar."

"How did you get hold of Uncle Dick's son?" asked Ralph, going at once to the dark and unexplained portion of the child's mysterious disappearance.

"Call young Fulwood below and I will tell you all," was the reply.

Ralph glanced at Manly, who started on deck to summon the mate of the Ulysses.

"Hold on," interrupted Fulwood; "bring St. Cyr with you."

Manly nodded and disappeared. In a moment the exquisite and Fluster were standing about the wounded man.

"This is Fluster Fulwood, once mate of my uncle's ship Malabar," announced Ralph, glancing at the two youths, and particularly at young Fulwood.

"My father!" cried the latter, an odd mixture of eagerness in his tones. He dropped on his knees beside the recumbent man.

St. Cyr received the announcement with an expression of dismay and looked about him uneasily, as if anxious to get away.

"No, not your father," responded Fulwood, taking one of the young man's hands, "but one who tried to be so when he could, and who has done you a great wrong. You are Richard Malcolm Morton, and Captain Richard Morton is your father!"

Young Fluster gazed at those about him in bewilderment. Doubt and the light of happiness were in his looks. He had dreamed of such a result, but the reality could hardly be credited.

"Then who is he?" he stammered, nodding toward St. Cyr.

"He's an impostor—a rank fraud," replied Fulwood with energy, almost raising himself upright and sending a look of denunciation at the exquisite. "His name is Jimmie Pitney, the son of the woman I left you with."

"The man is mistaken—he don't know what he's talking about," said St. Cyr weakly, turning pale.

"I don't?" repeated the prostrate man angrily. "You miserable fraud! I suspected who you were when I heard your story, and when I was told about that letter to Mary Pitney I had no more doubt about it. Search him and you will find the letter—it will prove who he is in his own writing."

"Let us have that letter, St. Cyr," demanded Ralph sternly.

St. Cyr made a show of objecting, and even of resisting, but when he saw the determined looks and attitudes of those about him, he reluctantly produced the letter and handed it to the sailing master.

A hasty glance was sufficient—it was addressed "Dear Mother" and signed "Your son James Pitney." But if this had not been conclusive, the body of the letter would have condemned him.

It detailed his success in palming himself off on Uncle Dick as his son as far as he had gone in the deception.

St. Cyr tried to say something, but with a look of anger and disgust Ralph motioned him up the steps.

### CHAPTER LVII.

FULWOOD'S CONFESSION.

THERE is one other thing, and it is very important," continued Fulwood, when the unmasked pretender had departed, "Bare your right arm, Richard, and let me look at it," he added to Fluster, addressing the latter by his real name for the first time.

The young mate did so. Ralph and Manly stepped closer to see what was to be revealed.

"What do you see?" asked Fulwood, pointing to some blue marks well up on the young man's forearm.

"I don't know what they are, and nobody could ever tell me. I don't know how they came there," replied Richard, as we must in future call him.

"They look like Chinese characters on a tea chest," added Ralph.

"They are an exact *fac simile* of some Japanese letters which are on the reverse side of the piece of coin Jim Pitney brought to your uncle, and which should have been presented by Richard here," explained Fulwood. "I put them there with a pigment that needs little or no pricking of the skin as does tattooing."

"I suppose Mary Pitney would have eventually given it to me if I hadn't run away from her when I was about twelve years old," observed Richard; and he added a brief account of his life with, and separation from, the woman, and an outline of his subsequent career.

"And you will forgive me for it all, Richard?" said Fulwood, when he concluded.

"With all my heart; I'm only sorry for you," responded Richard; and there could be no doubt of his sincerity. He was quite ignorant of Fulwood's magnificent act of restitution in willing to him the entire treasure of Crocus Island.

When Richard had received the hearty congratulations of the two yachtsmen, and Ralph had greeted him as his cousin, Fulwood told those portions of his story that had not been touched upon. As he did so in a disconnected way, we refrain from giving them in his own words, and will relate the facts as briefly as possible.

Drink was his worst enemy when he was dismissed by Uncle Dick from the Malabar at Yokohama, and had been ever since. However, he had succeeded in getting a ship back to the United States immediately, and arrived there before the Malabar.

When the latter reached New York, he accidentally learned, from an employee at quarantine, even before the ship had come up to her anchorage, that the captain had been presented with a boy baby on the voyage.

Being of a most implacable and unforgiving nature, the news of this event suggested a terrible means of revenge for his fancied wrongs, and of carrying out his threat to "get even" with the captain of the Malabar.

Securing as a confederate a young woman by the name of Julia Brown, he quickly arranged everything for carrying out his heartless scheme. The woman had no trouble in getting the position as nurse for the baby, and then the culmination of their plot was effected.

On a favorable dark night, when the deck was deserted, the nurse brought the child there from below. Fulwood was in a boat alongside ready to secure

it. The baby was handed down to him, and he rowed off in the darkness.

Then the woman dropped an iron pulley block overboard, to imitate the splash of a body, and rushed below, with well feigned terror and grief, reporting that the child had slipped from her arms into the water.

When the woman rejoined Fulwood afterward he found that she had exceeded instructions and had stolen the souvenir coin. And when he discovered this and saw what it was, he paid her something for it, and retained it in his possession.

The boy was cared for by the Brown woman for about four years, during which Fulwood became strangely fond of him, and gave him his own name. When the child was transferred to the care of Mary Pitney, he carried into effect his idea of dividing the souvenir coin, sending half to Uncle Dick and retaining the other half for the boy's future identification. He did this, not only to make his revenge more keenly felt, but to give the boy a chance of finding his own, in case he (Fulwood) died.

As intimated in his letter to Uncle Dick, he had even thought of returning the boy to his father before that event. For two years after taking up his quarters at Mrs. Pitney's he was an officer on a ship in the South American trade.

On his departure for each voyage he was careful to leave with Mrs. Pitney a package containing the piece of coin and a note stating who the boy's father was, and that he was to be found in the State of Texas, without giving a definite address. These were to be used by the boy, or in his behalf, in case he never returned.

At the end of two years, as already stated, his vessel had been wrecked on the coast of South America. He had not been able to find Mary Pitney when he again managed to reach New York, and had never seen the boy again till he accidentally met him on the Stars and Stripes.

He recognized Fluster then so promptly because he bore such a remarkable resemblance to Captain Morton's wife, as he remembered her, and not on account of the strange reason he then gave.

Why the Pitney woman had said nothing to the boy about the packet in her possession from the time of the wreck of his vessel, when the lad was not six years old, till he ran away, and was twelve years of age, he could not understand. And why she had waited so many years before putting her own son forward as the stolen boy, and had assumed the name of St. Cyr, was equally incomprehensible.

Right here Richard remarked:

"Do you know, when that Pitney letter was found, and St. Cyr claimed it as his, I had a suspicion that he was Jim Pitney. I watched him closely after that, and fancied I could trace a resemblance to the freckle-faced boy of twelve that I had known."

Coming down to later events, Fulwood explained that after he had been picked up by the Ulysses, he said he would have given his name to Captain Andy had not the latter preceded his question by calling the ranchman by name. He was startled and filled with fear by hearing him called Morton, and a close scrutiny told him that his old captain of the Malabar was before him.

On the spur of the moment he gave his name as Felix Fernando that being the name of a shipmate who escaped from the insurgent steamer the same night. More from a fear that Uncle Dick would recognize him than from that of arrest in Galveston as a deserter, he insisted on being put ashore on the jetty.

When he was being taken off the gabion by the Stars and Stripes, he was again startled to discover that the schooner's skipper was named Morton. He would have gone ashore in obedience to the latter's orders had he not previously recognized Richard, almost declaring himself his father in his astonishment.

Then it was he resorted to the explanation that he was the boy's father's old shipmate, and had recognized him by a remarkable resemblance to his father. And then, in order to remain on board with the boy, he had intimated in a whisper to Ralph that he knew something about his uncle's lost son.

"Why, I was just going ashore then myself," interrupted Richard at this point, "and would have gone if I hadn't met you and heard what I did."

"Is that so," commenced Fulwood. "Well, perhaps it is best as it is."

When he had learned the condition of affairs on the schooner Fulwood had changed his mind about revealing his name, or telling anything conclusive about the identity of Fluster Fulwood, the young mate. When he gave his reasons for this, he made a confession that he was not called upon to make, and which astonished his auditors.

He had told Ralph what he had about the young mate and St. Cyr to encourage him, and hoped, by leading the sailing master to believe that Fulwood would most probably be there to get him to go to Crocus Island for the treasure. When the latter had been recovered, he intended to desert the schooner, taking the wealth and Fluster with him. He had hoped to reach a far-off country with both, where he could enjoy his abundant means and never be found.

#### CHAPTER LVIII.

##### THE REFITTING OF THE SCHOONER.

IT was all over. Fulwood had lingered during the night, and had breathed his last just before the dawn of another day. Bradsaw had fashioned a rude coffin, from some wreckage that had been thrown on the outer reef. In this the sailor had been lowered to his final resting place.

He was buried under the banyan tree, with the carved skull, in the same spot whence the treasure had been taken. It seemed the irony of fate that the grave of his wealth should prove to be his own sepulcher.

He little imagined, when the symbol was cut in the tree, how truly it indicated his own fate, almost in the same spot, and that it would mark his grave.

The young yachtsmen had been deeply impressed by the solemn presence of death, and little was said by them about the events and revelations of the night before till Fulwood had been laid away.

All of them had joined in the burial of the sailor except St. Cyr, and he had been left severely to his own resources. As the latter continued to prefer the name he had assumed we will continue to call him by it till we have parted with him for good.

Fortunately none of the natives were encountered, and the yachtsmen hoped they had left the island, as Bradsaw said they had expected to do.

When they returned on board Ralph made known to those of the crew who had not heard of it, the will Fulwood had executed just before his death. Their amazement at learning young Fluster Fulwood had been conclusively proven to be Uncle Dick's son was little short of that felt by Richard himself when he found that the valuable treasure had all been left to him.

Congratulations were showered upon both him and Ralph, and tongues were

let loose with redoubled energy when they were told all the details of Fulwood's story and his revelations. St. Cyr was condemned in no unmeasured terms, and he felt the scorn and contempt of all on board.

Some were in favor of putting him on the island and leaving him to shift for himself. And this would have been done, had not Richard interceded for him. He was permitted to remain, but he was ignored as completely as if he had ceased to exist.

An after event made the yachtsmen wish they had gotten rid of him and even caused Richard to regret that he had spoken in his behalf. But we will not anticipate.

The work of refitting the schooner was immediately begun by Bradsaw and his two companions, assisted as much as practicable by the crew.

The hull was first warped close in shore, so that it would be mostly out of the water at low tide. All seams below the water line were carefully examined and those that had been sprung were tightly calked when the tide was out. They had no oakum or tar to do this with, but Bradsaw found a substitute for both in the forests of the island.

During this work, as the schooner's deck was at anything but a comfortable angle, the crew set up a large tent, made from one of the old sails the insurgents had used, and encamped on the shore of the lagoon.

All of the crew were kept busy and the work progressed rapidly. St. Cyr was not assigned to any task and he did not proffer his services. He seemed entirely satisfied to remain by himself, and would wander off into the woods, sometimes being absent almost the entire day. But he never failed to put in an appearance for at least one of the meals.

He might just as well have been a lonely castaway on the island for all the companionship he derived from those he was with.

When the work on the lower part of the hull was finished, and the schooner was hauled into deep water again, the yachtsmen decided to remain in their quarters ashore till the Stars and Stripes was ready for sea.

The bulwarks and deck were then thoroughly repaired and the stumps of the two masts removed to make way for new ones. These latter were to be fashioned from trees selected from the tropical forests.

This work was skillfully done by Bradsaw and his mates, and the two new masts were finally hoisted into place.

Bradsaw's ingenuity had been able to supply all their needs up to this point, but when the new masts were stepped the necessity for strong stay ropes presented itself. All of the available cordage on board was small and would have to be used as running rigging; that is, for binding on the sails, raising and lowering and maneuvering them.

Still, the carpenter thought he would be able to find something that could be made into stay ropes to answer the purpose, though it might take considerable time to make them. Any way, he went ahead, getting out the other spars, booms and gaffs for the fore and main sails, satisfied that the problem would be solved by the time they were finished.

Fortunately, before the latter had progressed very far, the needed spars were supplied, and the stay rope problem was solved in an unexpected manner.

The dismantled and deserted hulk of a large ship drifted upon the outer reef. A number of her spars hung over her sides in the midst of a mass of tangled wire rope and cordage.

There was sufficient material in the

wreckage for all purposes. The spars would need very little alteration for use on the schooner.

Bradsaw hailed the appearance of the wreck as a great piece of good luck. He and his mates immediately set to work to get out the stuff they needed.

The yachtsmen went out to look over her, and as they roamed about her decks and rummaged below in the cabin they wondered if she was the ship they had seen just before the cyclone came on.

Fortunately quite an abundant supply of provisions was found on board the derelict.

The addition to the crew of the Stars and Stripes, and the prolonged stay at the island, had made alarming inroads in the schooner's supplies. The yachtsmen had begun to look forward to a diet of game and tropical fruit secured on the island before they could reach a port. Therefore, they immediately transferred, with a great deal of satisfaction, their lucky find direct to the schooner.

Many other necessary and useful things were found on the wreck, which were appropriated by the yachtsmen. Among them was a small iron safe, which fortunately was open, and an extra key for it was discovered inside.

Ralph instantly decided that this was just the thing in which to stow away the treasure of Crocus Island. He argued that it was just as well to have the stuff where it could not be easily got at, as there was no telling what might happen before they got it home.

Accordingly the safe was taken, not without considerable labor, to the cabin of the schooner. The contents of the treasure boxes were transferred to it, and it was found a tight squeeze to get them all in. When the safe was locked the key was given to Richard, as the owner of its valuable contents.

Finally the work on the Stars and Stripes was finished, and though she looked far different from the natty yacht that had started in the memorable regatta amid flying flags and enlivening music, she was in good serviceable condition.

During their stay at the island the yachtsmen had not seen a native since the burning of their village. And neither did any of the convicts put in an appearance, though Brad had assured them that they had quite a settlement on the other side of the island.

On the carpenter's advice the yachtsmen had been very careful not to approach anywhere near the penal settlements in their rambles about the island.

The last rope was knotted and spliced, the old suit of sails were all bent on except the one that was serving as tent ashore, and the water barrels were filled and put aboard. The next day they were to break camp and sail away.

The yachtsmen were looking forward to their triumphal return home and thinking of the marvelous story they would have to tell their friends which would cast in the shade anything of the kind in the annals of the club.

They were in good spirits at the approaching end of the split in the club which had been productive of so many exciting, perilous and wonderful results. Though they would not care to go through them all again, there was not one among them who regretted his experience or would have sold it at any price.

They little imagined that there was one more chapter yet to be added to the story of their cruise. And if they had been told it, they would have considered it an exaggerated culmination of the already wonderful chain of events and as almost too improbable to be believed.

*The continuation of this story will be found in No. 490 of THE ARGOSY, ready on all news stands Saturday, April 16.*



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