

# THE ARGOSY

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## Lester's Luck.

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"Ragged Dick Series," etc.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A NIGHT ADVENTURE.

LESTER was tired out. He decided he would stop at the next house he came to and ask if they could not give him a night's lodging, even though he had but little more than a dollar out of which to pay for it.

"It's almost too nice a looking place to take a tramp like me," he said to himself. "But I guess I'll have to try it. I can't walk all the way to Shelby to-night."

He entered the gate and rapped at the door.

A pleasant faced woman opened it for him.

"Can I—would it be too much to ask," Lester began hesitatingly, "if you could give me a night's lodging? I can pay for it. I don't know where to find a hotel."

The woman looked at him closely before replying. Lester did not drop his eyes before hers, and this seemed to reassure her.

"Yes, you can stay and welcome," she said. "I don't want any pay. I—had a boy like you once—and her voice trembled—and I'll trust you. Come in. How far have you come?"

"From Harper's Mills."

"Is that where your home is?"

A shadow crossed Lester's expressive face.

"I have no home now," he said in a low tone. "My father has just died."

The woman said nothing, but let her hand rest on Lester's shoulder for an instant with a gesture of sympathy. Then she told him to follow her up stairs and showed him into a neatly furnished room.

"But this is too nice for me," Lester protested.

"No; I wish you would sleep there. I am all alone in the house tonight. The rest of the family are away. My room is just across the hall, and I feel a little nervous. There have lately been some robberies in the neighborhood."

This eased Lester's mind a little. If the woman felt that way, he would be making in some sense a return for her hospitality.

"Have you had your supper?" the woman asked, as she was about to go down stairs again.

Lester hesitated an instant. "Yes"—he answered finally. "That is, I had something to eat."

"Come right down as soon as you wash your face and eat some more," said Mrs. Marvin promptly.

"Well, if Cousin Peleg treats me half as nice," mused Lester, when he was left alone, "I shall think I was born lucky."

It was already nearly nine o'clock, and soon after Lester had disposed of the cold tongue, with the bread and jam his hostess had set before him, he said he thought he would go to bed, he was so sleepy.

He was on fire to prove to his hospitable entertainer that her confidence in him had not been misplaced.

He opened the back door softly. The stable was close at hand.

All seemed quiet there, but Lester could see that the door was ajar.

called up to Mrs. Marvin, who now appeared at one of the upper windows of the house.

"No, it's almost morning now," was the reply. "I don't imagine they will come back after the good scare you gave them. You are a brave boy."

Lester wasn't sure whether he had been brave or not. Now that he looked back upon it, it did not seem to him that he had done very much—only shown himself to the thieves.

But the old lady thought differently.

When he left the next morning to resume his tramp after a hearty breakfast, she told him that he ought to have luck on his mission, whatever it was, having done such a valiant deed that night.

But there is good luck and bad luck. We shall see whether Lester's was always of the same sort.

### CHAPTER II.

#### PUNISHING A BULLY.

"CAN you tell me where Peleg Dunton lives?"

The speaker was a stout, well made boy of fifteen. His face was browned from exposure, and a pair of frank, honest eyes challenged the confidence and good will of those whom he met. It was, in fact, our friend of the first chapter, Lester Gray.

"I reckon you mean Squire Dunton?" said the man whom he addressed.

"Very likely. I don't know what his title is."

"Be you any way related to the squire?" asked Tom Craig, the village

blacksmith, who had his share of curiosity.

"He is my father's cousin."

"Where do you live when you are at home?"

"I have no home now. My father is dead."

"What was your father's business?"

"He was an insurance agent."

"I calculate that pays pretty well?"

said the blacksmith in an inquisitive tone.

"My poor father left nothing," said Lester soberly.

"Shot that's bad. Do you calculate the squire'll do anything for you?"

"I don't know," returned Lester shortly.

He began to resent the officious curiosity of the blacksmith, who had no idea that his questions were impertinent.

"The squire ain't an open handed man. He looks out for Number One pretty steady."

"I don't want to cost him anything," said Lester proudly. "I'm strong and can work for a living. All I want is a chance to do it. You haven't told me where Squire Dunton lives?"



"HALT THERE!" CRIED LESTER, STEPPING OUT IN FRONT OF THEM.

"I always go early myself," returned Mrs. Marvin, and after Harry had helped her lock up the house, they went up stairs together.

Lester's head had scarcely touched the pillow before he was asleep, and it seemed to him he had not slept two minutes before he was awakened by a knock on his door.

"It can't be morning yet," he murmured, rubbing his eyes.

It wasn't morning, although the moon, which was just rising, made it rather light outside.

"What is it?" Lester called out. Mrs. Marvin's tones came in quavering accents through the keyhole.

"I—I think somebody's in the barn. Our horse died last week, but there's all the harness and the carriages."

"I'll be out there in a second," replied Lester, wide awake at once.

He slipped on his shirt and trousers, and felt his way quickly down the dark stairs.

"Be careful," Mrs. Marvin called softly after him. "Perhaps I oughtn't to have sent you."

But Lester Gray was not thinking of

He slipped out quietly, but had not quite approached the barn when the door opened and three figures came out with stealthy tread—a man and two boys. Each of the latter carried a whip and some portions of harness in his hands.

"Halt there!" cried Lester, stepping out in front of them from behind a rose bush which had concealed him for an instant from their view.

More astonished mortals it would be difficult to find. One of the boys dropped to the ground at once in sheer fright.

The others stared at Lester for an instant in dazed stupefaction. Then they all three turned and fled inconspicuously, dropping the harness and vaulting the wall in a trice.

"Well, that was an easy job," said Lester to himself. "Guess they must have taken me for a ghost in my white shirt."

He picked up the harness and restored it to its place in the stable, and after working for some little time with the broken lock of the door succeeded in patching it up.

"I'd better sit up and watch for fear they may come back, hadn't I?" he

"You go up the road about three quarters of a mile, then turn down a lane, and you'll see the squire's house. There's a barn a little back, painted red."

"Thank you. I think I can find it from your description."

Tom Craig followed Lester with a reflective glance.

"Seems a likely sort of a boy," he mused. "Purty strong, too. I wouldn't mind bringin' him up to my business. He'd soon pay for his keep. One thing's certain, the squire won't bring him up in idleness. I wonder whether he's got any money at all. I wish I'd asked him."

Lester kept on his way slowly. What he had heard of his unknown relative made him thoughtful. He carried in his hand a worn leather valise which had evidently seen considerable service.

It contained a small stock of under-clothing, all he had in fact, and this with less than a dollar in money, constituted all of his worldly possessions. Lester did not trouble himself about the rate of taxation in the new place he was entering. It was not likely to affect him.

Lester walked slowly, taking very little notice of scenes that were new to him. The village was small, and very few persons were out. All at once, however, his attention was attracted by an angry remonstrance from a small boy.

"Give me back that ball. It's mine," was the words he heard.

They were addressed to a boy with a head of flaming red hair, and a freckled face, almost as tall as Lester. This boy wore an ugly sneer upon his unattractive face.

"I don't care if it is yours, Bill Miller," he retorted. "I'm going to keep it and use it."

"You're awful mean!" said the smaller boy, looking as if he were on the point of crying. "My uncle gave me that ball for my birthday present. It's a regular League ball."

"So it is. I shall like it all the better." "I'd like to lick you!" said William.

"You're always teasing small boys. You're as bad as a thief."

"Say that again, and I'll smash you!" said the larger boy, his face darkening.

"Give me that ball!"

"I won't and that's all there is about it."

"I wish I was bigger," said William, clenching his fists.

"I've no doubt you do. Don't you wish you had wings? Then you could fly," was the taunting reply.

As he said this the elder boy started to walk away.

William Miller, or Willie as he was called at home, excited by the fear of losing his valued ball, ran after him and clucked him by the arm.

"You just let me alone!" said the big boy, "or I'll lick you!"

Lester had stopped in the road and listened to this conversation. He hated bullies, and all his sympathies went out to the young boy who was being imposed upon. He thought it about time to interfere.

"Give that ball to its owner!" he called out in a commanding voice.

The bully turned quickly, in great surprise, not unmixed with anger.

"Who says I am to do it?" he asked defiantly.

"I say so," answered Lester in a resolute tone.

"Then all I have to say is, that you'd better mind your own business."

"I generally do. Just now my business is to prevent an impudent bully from imposing upon a smaller boy."

The bully fairly gasped in angry astonishment.

"Do you know who I am?" he demanded.

"No, I don't, but I know *what* you are."

"Suppose you let me know what I am."

"With the greatest pleasure. You are a bully and a thief!"

"I'll have you put in jail!" howled the insulted bully. "I am the son of Squire Dunton, the biggest man in town."

Lester was considerably surprised at this intelligence. If the father was like the son he foresaw that he was not likely to have a very satisfactory interview with him. It would be policy for him to conciliate young Dunton, but he despised him too much to make any overtures.

"Yes, I am Peter Dunton," said the bully complacently. "You didn't know that when you insulted me, eh?"

"No, I didn't, but it would have made no difference in my action. Peter Dunton, give up that ball!"

"I won't!"

"I think you had better," said Lester calmly.

"Who are you, you impudent cad?" "You will know in course of time. At present I must insist on your giving up that ball."

"I have already told you I won't."

Lester felt that the time had come for energetic measures. He dropped his valise and sprang upon Peter with such impetuosity that the latter, utterly unprepared for such an attack, staggered and came near falling. The ball dropped from his hand, and rolled on the ground.

"Pick it up!" said Lester quickly, addressing the owner.

William Miller lost no time in following the advice of the young champion.

Peter Dunton turned red in the face. He felt insulted and outraged. He felt that he had been personally humiliated, and he thirsted for revenge.

"If you don't give back that ball, Bill Miller," he said, stamping his foot. "I'll give you the worst thrashing you ever had."

William looked troubled, and instinctively he glanced in Lester's face for advice and encouragement.

"Don't mind him!" said Lester. "He won't dare to do it when I am around."

Peter was a bully, and he was not very brave, but he was incensed, and his anger got the better of him. He stood between Lester and William and the temptation was too strong for him to resist.

He seized William by the arm, and gave it a wrench that forced a cry of pain from the younger boy.

His triumph was brief. In less time than it takes to describe it, Lester had seized and thrown him down violently.

As he lay on his back, half dazed, looking up into the face of his assailant, his visage bore the impress of malignant passion.

"You'll catch it!" he howled.

"From whom?"

"From my father."

"If you were my son I would flog you as you deserve."

Peter picked himself up, but he did not attempt to attack Lester. He brushed some dust from his clothes and shook his fist in Lester's face.

"I'm ever so much obliged to you," said William gratefully. "But you'd better look out for Peter. He's bad."

"I'm not afraid of him," said Lester contemptuously.

"You're awful strong!" remarked William admiringly.

"I ought to be," returned Lester, smiling. "I've got to work hard for my living."

"Won't you come home and take dinner with us?" went on the younger boy. "I want to tell mother what a good friend of mine you are."

Lester hesitated. It was twelve o'clock and he felt hungry. Then he looked at the little boy whom he had already begun to like.

"Yes," he said, "I'll come and thank you."

### CHAPTER III.

#### LESTER MEETS THE SQUIRE.

WILLIAM MILLER lived in a neat cottage, painted white.

His father was salesman in the village store and earned a comfortable income. He owned the house in which he lived, but there was a mortgage of five hundred dollars upon it held by Squire Peleg Dunton.

As William entered the house, followed by Lester, his mother greeted him with a pleasant smile. At the same time she looked inquiringly at his companion.

"This boy is Lester Gray," said William. "I have invited him to dine with us."

"He is welcome," said Mrs. Miller hospitably.

"You don't live in town?" she added.

"No," answered Lester.

"I thought I knew all the town boys."

"Mother," said William, "Peter Dunton tried to take away my ball, the one uncle gave me for my birthday, and Lester prevented him."

"You are all the more welcome since you have shown yourself my boy's friend," said Mrs. Miller. "Peter Dunton is a bad boy, but as he is the son of the squire he thinks he can do what he pleases."

"Lester gave him a licking," continued William in exultation.

"How did it all happen, Willie?" William explained, and Mrs. Miller showed her sympathy with the victor.

"It is well that he should have a lesson now and then," she observed. "How did he take it?"

"He almost foamed at the mouth. I never saw a boy so mad."

"You must be a brave boy, Lester!" said Mrs. Miller admiringly.

"I hope I am brave enough to punish a bully, Mrs. Miller."

"Peter is strong, but he seems to have found his master. Didn't he try to get even with you?"

"No, he walked off, threatening that his father would punish me. Is Squire Dunton like his son?"

"Very much so. Neither one is at all popular in this neighborhood, but Peleg Dunton is rich and so he has his way in most things."

"There comes father," cried Willie, looking out of the window.

Mr. Miller came in. Willie at once told him the circumstances under which he had made Lester's acquaintance.

"I am glad you gave Peter Dunton a lesson," said the father. "He deserves it. He is a chip of the old block. His father is a mean, selfish, grasping man. I could be more independent, but unfortunately he holds a mortgage on my little house, and he might make things uncomfortable for me. You, though a boy, are independent of him."

"I don't know about that, Mr. Miller. Squire Dunton is the man that I have come to this village to see."

Willie uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Do you know the squire?" he asked.

"No; I never saw him."

"Are you any relation of his?" asked the father.

"Yes, he is my father's cousin."

"Peter didn't know it," said Willie.

"No, and he won't be very glad to hear it."

"Did—excuse my asking—your father leave you to the care of Squire Dunton?" asked Mr. Miller.

"My poor father left no money, and he gave me a letter to Peleg Dunton, his cousin, hoping that he would befriend me. I don't want him to support me," continued Lester proudly. "I am old enough and strong enough to earn my own living if through his influence I can get a place."

"Have you inherited nothing from your father?"

Lester shook his head.

"I am very poor," he said. "A few clothes and less than a dollar in money is all I possess in the world."

Mr. Miller looked troubled.

"I am afraid in defending my boy you have got yourself into trouble," he said.

"I would do it again," said Lester promptly. "No bully is going to impose upon a small boy when I am around."

"I admire your pluck, but I am afraid Peter will set his father against you. When are you going to call on the squire?"

"This afternoon."

"Peter will be at school, so you will have a chance to introduce yourself before a complaint is lodged against you."

"I must take my chance."

"If Squire Dunton won't take you in, you can come here to supper, and may stay a few days till you have a chance to look around."

"Thank you, sir," said Lester gratefully. "I am glad to have found a friend. I need one badly enough."

Just then Mrs. Miller summoned them to dinner. It was a plain dinner, just a roast and a pudding, but Lester who was very hungry found it delicious. He ate till he was almost ashamed of his appetite, but Mrs. Miller seemed pleased to find he so thoroughly enjoyed the dinner.

"I expected to take dinner at Squire Dunton's," said Lester, "that is, if he received me in a friendly way."

"Probably you would have got a better dinner there," said Mrs. Miller.

"I don't think any dinner can be bet-

ter than this," said Lester, and he spoke sincerely.

Every housekeeper likes to have her dinner complimented, and Mrs. Miller was no exception to the rule.

"I am sure we are very glad to have you here," she said. "Is your mother dead, too?"

"My mother died four years since."

"And have you no brothers or sisters?"

Lester shook his head.

"I am alone in the world," he said.

"How sad! William is all we have, but at least he has his father and mother living."

So the dinner hour passed, and William rose from the table.

"I shall have to get ready to go to afternoon school," he said. "Shall I find you here when I come back?"

"I don't know. Perhaps I shall be at Squire Dunton's."

"Enjoying yourself with Peter. Well, if you have trouble there, you will come back, won't you?"

"Yes, I will accept your father's kind invitation."

After dinner Lester left the house where he had been so hospitably entertained, and walked about the streets for half an hour or more, in order to give the squire an opportunity to finish his dinner. Then after seeing from a distance Peter well on his way to school, he summoned up courage and went up to the pretentious house occupied by his unknown relative.

The servant who answered the bell supposed him to be a friend of Peter.

"Master Peter's gone back to school," she said.

"I should like to see Squire Dunton. Is he at home?"

"Yes, the squire's smoking a cigar in the library. Who shall I say it is?"

Lester Gray.

A minute later Lester followed the servant into the presence of the magnate of Shelby.

The squire sat in a large easy chair by the window. There was a striking resemblance between him and his son. There was the same bright red hair, the same mottled complexion, and the same small ferret-like eyes.

"What is your name, boy?" he asked.

"Lester Gray."

"Are you the son of Robert Gray of Harper's Mills?"

"Yes, sir."

"What brings you here? Did your father send you?"

"My father is dead," answered Lester, with a little tremor in his voice.

"Humph! Did he instruct you to come here to me?"

"Yes, sir. You are the only relative I have, so far as he or I know."

"Yes," said the squire reflectively. "Well, did your father leave you well provided for?"

"He left me nothing," replied Lester, with painful emotion.

"Then he was very inconsiderate, and—wicked," said the squire angrily. "Wasn't his life insured? It ought to have been, for he was in the life insurance business."

"It was insured at one time, but father was sick for several months. All his money was used up, and he had to let it lapse."

"This is a pretty state of things," said the squire, rising and pacing the floor in a state of excitement and irritation. "A man has no excuse—positively no excuse for such a lamentable failure to do his duty by his family. How does he expect you to live?"

"I am strong and well. I can earn my living," said Lester.

"That at least is commendable. How old are you?"

"Fifteen, near sixteen."

"I hope you don't expect me to support you."

"No, sir. I only hoped that you might give me a chance to earn my living in some position. But I have a letter which my father wrote a short time before he died. It is addressed to you."

"Give it to me."

### CHAPTER IV.

#### RISEN FROM THE DEAD.

S LIGHTLY frowning, Peleg Dunton settled himself back in his chair and read the following letter:

COUSIN PELEG:

When you receive this the writer will have passed to another world. It is ten

sars since we met, but I hope you have not forgotten me. I hear that you have prospered, and I am glad of it. I wish I could say the same of myself, but I have been unfortunate. Through the rascality of a man whom I considered to be my friend I lost a considerable sum of money—considerable for me—and a wasting sickness during which work has been suspended, has consumed the remainder of my small earnings. When I die my poor boy will be wholly unprovided for. It is surely natural under the circumstances that I could think of you, probably the only relative I have living. You are rich, and I am sure you will put Lester in the way of earning a living. He is a good boy, though do say it myself, and is willing to work for his own living. All I ask of you is give him the chance. A man of your influence surely can find a place for a good, desirous boy.

You cannot have forgotten that I rendered you a very important service when I last met. I saved you from losing five thousand dollars by giving you information regarding the knavish officers of a financial company in which you had that sum invested. So I think I have a right to appeal to your good offices on behalf of my boy.

Your cousin,  
CORNELIUS GRAY.

Lester watched the squire's face as he read the letter. He frowned at times, particularly when he read the paragraph in which his cousin spoke of the service he had rendered him. On the whole, it did not seem to impress him favorably.

After reading the letter he folded it up again and replaced it in the envelope. "This letter is very unbusiness-like," he said.

Lester's face flushed. "My poor father was very sick when I wrote it," he replied. "I don't think he felt in a mood for business."

"Have you read the letter?"

"He read it to me before he placed it in the envelope."

"Then you know what it contains?"

"He asks you to befriend me, Squire Dunton."

"Yes, but there should have been no need of it. His life ought to have been spared, say for a couple of thousand dollars. In that case I would have assumed the guardianship, and looked after your interests."

"Do you think, Squire Dunton, you will get me a chance to work and earn my living?"

"Places are very hard to get. Have you any money at all?"

"I have eighty seven cents," answered Lester uncomfortably.

"Is it possible that your father sent you out into the world with that paltry sum?"

"It was all that was left after paying funeral expenses."

"Then those are paid. That is one good thing. Where are you going to stay tonight?"

Lester colored. Certainly this unknown relative was making it very uncomfortable for him.

"I don't know," he answered shortly. He could not help thinking of the large house in which he was sitting, probably there were fifteen rooms, and he had heard from the Millers that the pure had only one child, the son whom he had already met.

An idea occurred to him.

"Can you tell me, Squire Dunton," he asked, "about another cousin of my mother—I think his name was Thornton—and whether he is likely to be alive now?"

"William Thornton," answered the squire deliberately, "disappeared when he was about twenty five. I think he had been crossed in love, and this was a reason for leaving home. Where he went I don't know, but it seems improbable that he should now be alive. Why do you ask?"

"I thought if he were alive I would apply to him, and not probably you."

"He is probably in his grave. You may as well give up all thoughts of finding him. Did your father think he might be alive?"

"No, sir. He thought with you that he was dead."

"And he was right no doubt. Now attend to your affairs. You can come here to supper at six o'clock."

"Thank you, sir."

"And you can stay all night. In the morning it is possible that I may arrange something for you. There is a blacksmith in the village, a decent sort

of man, who, I believe, wants a boy. You might suit him."

Lester was confident that he should not like to learn the business of a blacksmith, but he thought it would be impolitic to object to it before the issue confronted him.

"Between now and six o'clock," continued the squire, "I shall be occupied. You can go out in the yard and play with the dog if you wish."

"Thank you, sir, but I think I would prefer to walk about the village."

"Perhaps it will be better," said the squire, appearing relieved. "My son Peter will be home from school a little after four. You can come then, if you like."

"Thank you, sir."

Lester put on his hat and left the house. He did not feel greatly encouraged by his reception, and he felt very confident that he should not like the squire. When the latter had learned of his conflict with Peter he would be even less agreeable. He did not care to come back to meet Peter, but resolved to stay out till about six o'clock. It was rather a long wait to look forward to, but the weather was pleasant, and he thought he could pass the time.

He walked about the village, sitting down for a time on a fence to watch a farmer and his men gathering in hay. Finally he jumped down and went up to the farmer.

"Give me a rake," he said, "and I'll help you."

"You'll be wanting pay," replied the farmer cautiously.

"Oh, no, I'll do it for the fun of it."

"All right!"

An extra rake was found and Lester proceeded to use it.

By the time he had finished, it was nearly four o'clock.

He started out to walk again and struck off in the direction of the station. He reached it just as a train came in.

Among the passengers who got off at Shelby was a man of about fifty with a bronzed face. His dress indicated poverty, for his clothing though not ragged was well worn and shabby. He had in his hand a stout cane or staff.

As he stepped upon the platform, he looked about him inquisitively. Then he turned to see who there was likely to answer a question. His glance lighted on Lester.

"Can you tell me," he asked, "if there is a man named Peleg Dunton who lives in this town?"

This question surprised Lester. It seemed to him a singular coincidence that this man should be interested in the same person as himself.

"Yes," he said, "there is such a man living here. People call him Squire Dunton."

"The stranger smiled.

"I dare say," he returned. "Peleg was always a man to get on. Do you know if he is well off?"

"I hear that he is rich, sir."

"So, sir! Well, I am not surprised. But why do you say you *hear*? Don't you live in Shelby?"

"No, sir. I never was here before."

"And yet you have already heard something of Peleg Dunton?"

"Yes, sir. I came here to see him."

"Why! Are you related to him?"

"Yes; he is my father's cousin."

The stranger looked at Lester keenly.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Lester Gray."

"What," exclaimed the stranger in excitement, "are you the son of Cornelius Gray?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you are my relation also. My name is William Thornton."

Lester was overwhelmed with astonishment. So the cousin supposed to be dead, had turned up after all.

"I thought you were dead," he said.

"Didn't you leave home long ago?"

"Yes, but I am alive as you see."

"And poor," added Lester to himself.

"I suppose you have come to see Peleg Dunton. How is your father?"

"Dead!" answered Lester. "He died last week."

"You don't say so. I am sincerely sorry to hear it. He was a fine fellow, Cornelius; worth a dozen of Peleg Dunton. Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"No, sir. I am alone in the world."

"I hope your father was able to provide for you."

"He left nothing. By his request it

have presented myself to Squire Dunton."

"And how has he received you?" asked Thornton keenly.

"He has invited me to take supper and spend the night at his house."

"Did he seem glad to see you?"

"No, sir; rather sorry. He thought father ought to have left me better off."

"I wish he had and I am sure he would if he had been able. Then you can guide me to the home of Peleg Dunton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do so. Peleg is my cousin, and it is proper that I should call on him."

The two walked off together, William Thornton asking questions and Lester answering them. This new cousin seemed to feel an interest in him.

They turned into the lane and approached the squire's house. Out on the lawn was Peter Dunton. When he caught sight of his young antagonist of the morning his face assumed an ugly expression.

"Clear out, you young ruffian," he said, "or I will set the dog on you."

During the walk Lester had told his companion of his encounter of the morning. The old man surveyed Peter calmly.

"Go slow, young man!" he said. "This boy is your cousin."

"I don't believe it," burst from Peter in incredulous scorn. "Perhaps you are my cousin, too."

"I am your father's cousin."

"That's a lie. You look more like a tramp. If you don't clear out, both of you, I'll set the dog on you."

(To be continued.)

[This Story began last week.]

## The Lone Island;

OR,  
Adventures Among the Savages.  
BY E. E. YOUNGANS,  
Author of "The Treasure of Wild Rock Island," "The Oakville Mystery," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED

GOLDEN GALE is a handsome, large size yacht with a crew of ten. The captain, John Bower, has presented to his two sons, George and William. Not content with cruising along the coast, the young men became imbued with the desire to cross the ocean and pay a visit to the coast, Charles Wakefield, in England, and after much persuasion, the father reluctantly gives his consent. They invite their friends, Tom Radcliffe, Edgar Morton and Edwin Winslow, to accompany them, and set sail. All goes well for a time, but when some days out, a storm arises, succeeded by a fog, on the lifting of which latter they find themselves near a lone island in mid ocean, which they decide to explore. But while they are off, the yacht is stolen and they are left helpless. But deciding to make the best of things, they camp out for the night, with Tom to stand the first watch. While keeping his lonely vigil, he is startled by the appearance of a white apparition. He sets out to discover what it is, and suddenly finds himself falling into space through the darkness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEARCH.

CAPTAIN GEORGE and his friends slept on the former at night, and when the morning at last opened his eyes the bright rays of the morning sun were just appearing above the eastern horizon.

He sprang to his feet and aroused his companions, and soon all the boys were astir. Then for the first time Tom's absence was discovered.

As none of them had been awakened by him during the night they knew that he must have been gone for hours. A dread that something serious had befallen him began to assail them.

They called his name loudly and fired their guns several times, thinking he might hear them if he were anywhere in the vicinity, but all they could do failed to bring a response.

The words he had spoken the preceding day concerning the trouble he believed to lie before them the worst of which would fall on himself, occurred to the boys with startling vividness, and they found themselves wondering if he had voiced a prophecy.

"I wonder what could have become of him?" said George anxiously. "Perhaps he has wandered away during the night, and has lost himself on the island. We must begin a search for him at once."

"Which way shall we go?" asked Will.

"This was a difficult question to answer.

They were unable to tell on what part of the island the lost one might be, consequently no idea could be formed as to what course would lead them to him.

Any course they might follow, however, was preferable to the suspense of inactivity, and it was decided to commence the search in the hills back of them. They had an idea that in this locality some trace of the missing one might be discovered.

Accordingly they started in that direction and in a few minutes were ascending the hillside, taking very nearly the same route that Radcliffe had followed while in pursuit of the apparition.

When they at last reached the summit of the hill it was decided to separate, two going one way and two in the opposite direction, as by so doing the search could be more thoroughly prosecuted.

"I think that will be the best plan," said the captain, "for we can get over so much more ground, and our chances of finding some clew of Tom will be much better. We have only two guns between us, so Edwin and I will keep together, and Will and Edgar can do the same. By arranging it this way each party will have a weapon, and it may be of some use before we get through with the search."

"Those fellows who stole the yacht might have let us keep our guns," said Edwin, with flashing eyes. "That, I should think, would have been as little as they could have done."

"I hope the Golden Gale will sink with 'em," said Edgar angrily. "Had it not been for them Tom would have been with us, and all would have been well."

"Well, it can't be helped," rejoined George, "so we'll have to make the best of it."

They had all agreed on one theory: that Tom had gone away from the camp for some purpose during the night, and had met with an accident. Were he alive and well he could have found it again sooner or later.

But if he had been injured in any way he would lie there and suffer until assistance arrived, or until death ended his troubles.

"Where shall we meet again?" asked Will, after the decision to separate had been reached.

"Somewhere on the other side of the woods," answered his brother, "and should either party find any trace of Tom, let the gun be fired at intervals so that the other may know it," and as the suggestion was a good one, this signal was agreed upon.

It being thus arranged they started on again, fully determined not to abandon the search so long as there was a possibility of discovering some trace of their missing friend.

They had not breakfasted yet, it will be remembered, but they gave no thought of this, as the excitement occasioned by Tom's disappearance had caused them to forget all about it.

Will and his companion thoroughly searched the vicinity through which they were passing, but could find nothing to indicate the whereabouts of the lost one.

"It's singular that he has disappeared so completely," said Edgar at last. "I begin to feel as if we'll never see him again."

"I don't like to allow myself to believe that," remarked Will. "When I think that we invited him to go with us, it makes me feel as if George and I are to blame for his misfortune, as well as for the troubles which you and Edwin may have to pass through."

"That's all nonsense," rejoined the other quickly. "No one could tell that this thing was going to happen, and how you can hold yourself responsible in the least for it, is more than I can see."

"Well, I feel that way anyhow." Will continued, "and if we should live to get home, and I am compelled to tell Tom's folks of his unfortunate end, I'm sure they'll never forgive me."

"Don't let us think of it," said Edgar sadly.

When they had gone a mile or so farther they came upon a small tree to which was clinging a large grape vine, abundantly loaded with that luscious fruit. The sight of it so temptingly displayed brought to their recollection the fact that they had eaten nothing that morning.

"Let's stop long enough to get a few," said Edgar. "I'm hungry, and they'll taste good."

"So am I," answered his friend, as they halted under the vine.

Reaching up, each secured a large cluster. The grapes were delicious, and the rapidity with which the hungry boys disposed of the fruit was simply astonishing.

"They're fine," said Edgar, as he secured another bunch.

"Yes," answered Will, "and if Tom was only here to enjoy them with us, I should feel that our situation is not so bad after all."

Having eaten all they cared to, they started on again. They continued the search till the sun crossed the meridian, and began declining toward the west, then, tired out, they sat down by a small stream to rest.

They were again very hungry, for the grapes they had eaten were hardly substantial enough to sustain them on such a journey; and they found it necessary to secure a heartier meal. Therefore, while Edgar busied himself in starting a fire, Will went in search of some game, returning in a few minutes with a large bird he had shot near by.

This furnished them with a good repast, after which they took a long draught from the stream, and agreed that they felt better.

It was now after three o'clock. The journey was resumed, but the afternoon passed and night came on without bringing them any nearer a clew than before.

Tired and discouraged, they came to a halt convinced that they would never see Tom again. What could possibly have become of him was a mystery they were utterly unable to explain.

They had heard nothing of George and Edwin as yet, so they gave up all thought of seeing them that night; and concluded to camp where they were till morning. They prepared themselves a couch of boughs, and one watched while the other slept. In this way the night passed, and another day dawned upon the island. With little hope, they again took up the search.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE APPARITION AGAIN.

LET us now see what had become of the captain and his companion.

When the separation was made, these two took a direction that would lead them somewhat to the western side of the island. Their eagerness to discover some clew of their missing friend caused them to maintain a diligent search for several hours. Then as success was still beyond them, they began to regard it as hopeless.

A feeling akin to despair gradually took possession of them, and though they bravely tried to keep up hope, they were unable to do so.

"It's no use trying to fool ourselves any longer," said George in a voice he vainly tried to steady. "Poor Tom is certainly dead, or we would surely have seen or heard something of him. If we could only know the worst, it would give us some satisfaction, but the uncertainty of it is awful."

"This is a sad ending to what we all looked forward to with such pleasant anticipations," rejoined Edwin, unable to longer conceal his feelings.

"Yes, and all on account of those men who stole the yacht," said George vehemently.

Like his brother, the captain was disposed to hold himself amenable for the calamity that had overtaken Tom, and his grief was touching as he continued in deep distress.

"Tom, Tom, I'd give anything under heaven if I could only know you are not dead."

Edwin looked at him sorrowfully, but could offer no consolation, for he felt as much discouraged as George and sympathy was useless.

But nothing could be gained by giving up to their feelings in this manner, and after a while they shook off their despair and started on their search again.

The day passed; night finally threw its darkened shades over the island, but they had discovered nothing, and they went into camp weary and despondent. They felt that Tom would never be seen again, and with that feeling came a deeper sense of loneliness than they

had yet experienced. The uncertainty of their companion's fate rendered it easy for them to imagine all sorts of awful possibilities, and the mental agony these reflections occasioned was torturing in the extreme.

When they were ready to retire, George lay down and slept while the other watched.

During the silent vigil Edwin could not refrain from thinking how lonely Tom must have felt while acting as sentinel the preceding night.

"Poor Tom!" he mused; "where can you be now?"

In the midst of these gloomy meditations he was suddenly startled by a slight noise in the bushes near by. He paused abruptly and listened intently.

He could hear nothing more and was about moving on, when for the second time the sound came to his ears.

"What can it be?" he wondered, and was conscious of a cold feeling coursing down his back.

He was not cowardly, however, and determined to investigate.

With his rifle held ready for use, he advanced in the direction of the sound. Suddenly he was startled by a tall shape that came out of the bushes, and paused in an open space before him.

Raising his rifle, he was about to fire when it occurred to him to call George, and silently and quickly he made his way back to the sleeping captain and pretended to rouse him.

This proved a somewhat difficult task, for the youth was tired and slept soundly. At last, however, he opened his eyes and sat up.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "There's something out in the bushes, and I can't make out what it is," said Edwin. "I was going to fire at it when I concluded to call you. It is only a little way from here, so don't make any noise or it'll hear us coming."

Silently George arose and followed his companion. Edwin carried the gun and was ready to shoot at a moment's notice.

They soon reached the place where the shadow had stood, only to find it gone. They listened intently, but could hear nothing of it.

"What's become of it, do you think?" asked George, in a whisper.

"I don't know. When I saw it last it was standing in the open spot yonder," and as he spoke, Edwin pointed to the clearing just ahead.

At the same moment they heard a slight noise a little farther on. Hurrying forward they came upon the apparition again in another open.

"Let's fire at it," said Edwin.

"No; let's rush upon it and see what it is," suggested George.

"Isn't that dangerous?" whispered his friend in alarm.

"I think not; I don't believe it'll hurt us. Come."

They sprang forward together, and their surprise may be imagined when the shadow suddenly rose in the air. Then they saw it was a large white crane.

The bird uttered a series of peculiar cries as it ascended and disappeared in the darkness above.

"Well, there, if I had known it was only a bird I wouldn't have called you," said Edwin in a tone of deep disgust.

"It doesn't matter," George replied. "Your time of watching is nearly up anyhow, so we'll change places."

The change was made, and in this way the night passed. In the morning they renewed the search, but they had now abandoned all idea of discovering any trace of the lost one.

They took a route opposite to that which they had pursued the preceding day, and pressed on. They expected to meet Will and Edgar now at any moment, but the hours went by, noon came, and still they had not appeared.

"We ought to meet them soon," said George. "If they have covered as much ground as we have, the island has been pretty well searched."

"I hope they have been more successful than we," returned Edwin.

"So do I, but I don't think they have," answered the captain.

Presently they came upon a clearing of considerable size, in the center of which, to their prodigious astonishment, stood a small log cabin, rudely constructed, and giving evidence of having recently been occupied!

"Well, who would expect to find

anything of that sort here?" cried Edwin. "Who do you suppose could have built it?"

"Likely those fellows who stole the yacht," answered his companion, as they passed before the hut. "Let's go in and see what we can discover."

They entered to find the interior comfortably arranged. A number of roughly made benches were scattered around, and a few canvas hammocks were suspended from the rafters to serve as beds, no doubt, for those who had occupied the place.

In one corner stood several barrels. An examination proved them to be filled with sea biscuit, upon which the hungry boys at once began a vigorous attack.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A CLEW.

AS the day advanced Edgar and Will continued the search for their missing friend, but nothing that would throw any light on his mysterious disappearance came within the scope of their vision, and they came to a halt at last, satisfied that further efforts were useless.

Whatever calamity had befallen him was of such a nature as to baffle discovery, and his disappearance would not have been more complete had he been swallowed up by the sea.

They had heard nothing of the captain and his companion, but they felt sure that George and Edwin had encountered no better success. Had they done so the fact would have been announced by the signal agreed upon, unless the distance between them was too great to be traveled by the report of a gun. After a short rest they again moved on.

They now found themselves searching through a section not very far from where they had camped on the night that Tom disappeared, and if even the smallest trace of what had become of him was to be found at all, they thought that in this vicinity it should be discovered.

"Every foot of ground we have traveled so far has been thoroughly searched," said Will, "and, if we don't make a discovery somewhere here, there is no use of trying to do anything more. I don't think there is any use as it is, for I now firmly believe that Tom is dead; but we'll keep on till we meet George and Edwin; then we can decide on our next move."

They separated a little to search more carefully around some bushes near by, and a few minutes later Edgar suddenly halted, with an exclamation of surprise. Will paused and turned toward him. He had knelt down and was carefully examining something in the soft earth.

The other advanced to see what it was, and as he came up, Edgar rose to his feet, and, pointing down, exclaimed:

"A clew at last!"

There, clear and distinct in the soil, was the imprint of a shoe. There could be no doubt about it, and as Will saw it he became much excited. The imprint was, indeed, an important discovery, and perhaps the mystery surrounding Tom's disappearance would soon be explained. The impression was just about the size of Tom's shoe, and they knew he had made it.

They began searching for a continuation of the trail, but at first were not successful. The grass had prevented the imprint from taking, save in this one place where the earth was bare. Further on, however, the grass was thinner, and toward this place they made their way.

A careful inspection soon revealed another footprint, and still another, until at last, by looking closely, the whole trail could be distinguished. Then a new feature presented itself.

The steps were more than an ordinary distance apart, showing that they had been made by running rapidly. They followed on until they came to a large stone, on the opposite side of which the earth was scattered in all directions, and the bushes broken, proving that here the runner had fallen.

"He must have been running away from something," said Edgar, "and stumbled over the stone."

"It looks so," answered Will, as they began searching for the trail again.

They soon found it, and with every sense on the alert, pressed forward.

In this way a hundred yards had probably been traversed, when suddenly the trail terminated on the brink of a yawning chasm, on the very edge of which the boys found themselves before seeing their peril.

With a cry of horror they started back just in time to escape falling into it. Then they gazed at each other in utter dismay, as they saw that here the trail ended!

It did not require a second glance to tell them what Tom's fate had been. In his reckless fight he had run off into this chasm, and his crushed and lifeless body was now no doubt lying far below them in the very heart of the earth.

The thought was sickening, and the boys turned away, faint and dizzy. That such an awful doom as this should overtake Tom was horrible, and for a long time they found themselves unable to act, so great was the effect produced upon them by the discovery.

"It's horrible," gasped Will at last with a shudder.

"How could it have happened, groaned Edgar. "What could he have been doing so far away from the camp?"

This was a question which, in all probability, would never be answered. Nobody could explain it, but Tom himself, and Tom was dead!

Something must be done, however; they would learn anything further concerning his fate, and, controlling their feelings as best they could, they prepared to act.

"We must let George and Edwin know at once what we've found," said Will. "We'll fire the gun until the hear us, for they can't be very far away."

This was done. Half a dozen shot were fired, but no answer was received. "They're further off than I thought they were. They must be more than two miles away," said Will. "We'll mark the spot, and go in search of them. But first let me look down that hole."

He threw himself upon his stomach and crawled toward the abyss. Reaching it, he looked over, but it was so dark below he could discern nothing. A cool draught fanned his face, emanating from the depths of the earth.

"Why don't you call down when you're there?" suggested Edgar. "It'd do no harm, if it doesn't do any good."

Will did so.

"Tom, Tom!" he called, and listened intently for a reply.

Several times he called, then turned from the abyss and rose to his feet.

"We'll fire a few more shots," he said "then, if we receive no answer, we start out to find them."

Three times the report of the rifle echoed over the island, and immediately succeeding the last discharge came an answering shot from some where back in the woods.

"That's the boys at last; let's fit again," cried Will.

This was done, and a response was at once received. It was nearer than before, and the boys knew that the other were hurrying toward them.

The firing over the brink, at intervals for half an hour or more, at the end of which time George and Edwin came through the bushes, both eager and excited.

"Have you found anything?" asked the captain, as soon as he could get his breath.

"There."

As Will spoke he pointed toward the chasm. A glance sufficed to explain all.

George turned pale as the truth dawned upon him, but controlling his feelings, advanced toward the abyss. He looked over the brink, but the darkness was so great that it was impossible for him to form any idea of its depth.

There was only one way in which any knowledge of it could be obtained. That was to go down into the interior, and this George determined to do. He turned to Edwin, saying:

"Go back to the cabin, and get that coil of rope we found behind the barrels. Be as quick as you can, for we must do all we can to get Tom's body out of that hole."

"The cabin?" cried Will in surprise.

"What cabin?"

George hastily explained while Edwin went for the rope.

It was a considerable distance to the hut, but Edwin made good time, and in little more than half an hour returned with the rope thrown over his shoulder.

George then began preparing to descend into the cave. It was a hazardous undertaking, and, had it not been for his anxiety to secure Tom's body, he would have shrunk from it in fear. But as well as the others believed that Tom's mangled remains were lying at the bottom of the abyss, and it was as little as they could do to get them out and give them a decent burial.

He secured a dry piece of wood for a torch, then carefully fastened the rope under his arms. The next moment he was making his way over the brink of the chasm. A few seconds later he was dangling in space from the end of the rope.

He could not suppress a shudder as he felt himself slip into the abyss, but he knew the rope would hold, and tried to make himself believe there was no danger.

Lighting the torch, he directed the boy to let him down. They allowed the rope to run out carefully, and George slowly descended into the depths of the cave.

Once or twice he could not help thinking what the result would be if the rope should break, and for a moment his courage threatened to leave him. But he crushed back his rising fear, and, holding out the torch, continued to descend.

The light only served to make the darkness more intense, however, for, beyond the immediate circle illuminated it was black as Erebus, and weird and fantastic shadows incessantly danced before him.

The bats and other winged inhabitants of this subterranean horror, startled by the light, flew around him in wild confusion, frequently striking him in the face with their wings as they descended. The various sensations he experienced in this ordeal were such as to impress themselves indelibly on his mind, and for years afterward he could not think of it without a shudder.

Down he went, lower and lower, until the sound of flowing waters broke upon his ears, and he jerked the rope for them to stop. Flashing the light downward he found himself suspended about three feet above an underground river, the dark waters of which flowed away into the interior of the cave.

He shuddered again as he made the discovery. All hope of recovering the mains of his unfortunate friend left his breast, and, as a fuller realization of Tom's awful fate burst upon his mind, he groaned in unutterable sorrow.

If Tom were not already dead when he struck the water he must have been soon drowned, and his remains swept away by the current into the unknown depths of the cavern.

The explorer looked around, but it was impossible to see beyond the solid wall of darkness that loomed up around the circle of light. He had discovered all it was possible to know, however, and it was useless to remain longer in this grewsome place. He gave the signal to be drawn up, and a few minutes later was safe with his friends again.

He gave a full account of what he had found out, concluding with:

"We can do nothing more. Tom is dead, and his body forever lost. We may as well go back to the cabin now and make arrangements for our own safety while we're on the island, which I hope won't be long. We have done all that is possible for poor Tom."

Weary and discouraged they turned in the direction of the cabin. When they reached it, it was well along in the afternoon, and the sun was hanging low in the west like a great ball of fire.

(To be continued).

#### THE CAUSE OF IT.

SOFTLY blew the June breeze through the grand old woods. Feathered songsters flew joyously from branch to branch, the rippling brook murmured an accompaniment to their vocal melody and danced coyly in and out of the shadows, while the moss covered monarchs of the forest themselves waved their leafy plumes, as if in applause, and the sun beamed his approval from an unclouded sky.

"Laura," said George, as the two strolled along over the grassy carpet spread by nature's own hand, "in yon deep glen on the further side of this romantic stream, where mossy ferns and—bark! bark! Are the others calling us? What noise is that?"

"I think, George," answered Laura softly, "it is the echo of those trousers of yours."—*Chicago Tribune.*

#### THE UNITED STATES.

LORD of the universe! Shield us and guide us.

Trusting Thee always, through shadow and Sun!

Thou hast united us, who shall divide us!

Keep us, O keep us, the Many in One.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

[This Story began in No. 554.]

## The Markham Mystery.

BY ROWLEY BROOKS.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

BOB BRUCE, in the course of his wanderings in search of work, after the death of his orphaned parents, comes to a cavern in the woods on the edge of the town of Centerville. He rests here for a while, and, after hearing a regular procession of vehicles along the road, comes to the mouth to see what it means. While standing here he hears an exclamation of astonishment and an old couple passing in a wagon, tell him they thought he was Hen Billings, a vagabond, who has made this cave his habitation and who is to be tried at the court house this very hour for stealing from Ike Sanger.

The couple drive on and in a few minutes Ike Sanger and his sister Selma pass that way and appear greatly startled at sight of Bob, who has an indelible impression of having seen Ike somewhere before. They draw Bob into conversation and Selma Sanger endeavors to persuade him to go to another town for work.

After they have gone on, Bob strolls down to the court house and hears much talk about the district attorney. Mr. Pigott is expected to be present, and the crowd as it to strike him, but Bob steps between, Mr. Pigott asks the boy to come to his house, where Miss Pigott draws from him the story of his life. Bob thinks that the district attorney knows more about him (Bob) than he will tell. However, Mr. Pigott appears to take a strong interest in him, and procures him a position with Joshua Markham, a queer, crabbed old man, with a good deal of money, who keeps store in the town of Centerville. Bob has more influence over him than any one else, and he uses this power to induce him to make a will in favor of his daughter Eliza, who later on gets run away and married an actor. This he finally does, to the intense disgust of the Sangers, who, being of kin to him, would otherwise inherit his property.

One Sunday afternoon Bob, of whom the old man has grown quite fond, gets permission to take an hour or two of freedom in the open air. He goes to the cave again, lies down and falls asleep, to be aroused by angry voices on the bridge close at hand. He peers out and discovers the speaker to be Hen Billings, who has escaped from jail, and Ike Sanger, who in some way seems to be in the power of Hen, through the document the latter stole from him. They proceed to blow up the boat, springing out, tells Hen Billings to the earth.

#### CHAPTER XX.

BOB CONDUCTS AN IMPORTANT NEGOTIATION.

MR. SANGER straightened up from his bent position, and took to his heels. He tripped over Hen's prostrate form, but he did not stop to investigate.

If he was frightened I was more so. I thought I had killed Hen.

I knelt down beside him. He was breathing.

I struck a match. His eyes were still closed. I thought I saw the lids flicker as the match went out. I struck another. The eyes were still closed.

The match was burning out when I saw several torn scraps of paper lying around. I seized one, and lighted it as the match was burning down to my fingers. Hen's eyes suddenly opened and closed again. Then the paper had burned out.

The darkness rattled me. If I only had light. An ideal! The fire in the cave! It must be out by this time. I would see. There was kindling there any way. I swept up several of the bits of paper I could discern round about me, and clambered quickly down into the cave.

It was bruising work in the dark, but I got there. I kicked around with my feet. Suddenly I scattered a shower of sparks, uncovering the last smoldering embers.

On these I threw a handful of paper. As a tiny flame sprang up, I broke up a few dry chips from the brush piled close at hand. They kindled quickly; I threw on more.

Suddenly I heard a groan. I hurried out again with a "I'll be with you!"

I found Hen sitting up with his hand to his head. There was such a glare now shining up from the cave that I could see his face. Mine was in darkness.

"Are you all right?" I inquired.

"What's happened?" he asked in a dazed tone.

"Never mind now. How do you feel?"

"My head!" he exclaimed. "Was I hit? Where's Ike? What're you doing here? Oh, my head!"

"See if you can get up. I'll help you. If you can only manage to get down by the fire I can see what is the matter with you. Try to get up."

I helped him. He swayed a little and I put an arm around him. By merest accident my finger tips slipped into the off-side pocket of his coat. They touched something cold. I knew on the instant it was a pistol barrel.

For reasons which I deemed good, I put my hand in deeper and drew the pistol out. As luck would have it, a chain got tangled in my fingers, and it came out, too, with its dangling watch.

I transferred these to my own pocket in an instant, and Hen seemed to notice nothing. We were on the brink of the slight descent to the brook, and he seemed stronger.

We got down somehow and entered the cave. The first thing Hen did was to look hard at me.

"Sit down, now," said I, "and let me look at your head."

He obeyed and sat on a convenient rock. I heaped more brush on the fire. Then I turned his face to the light, looked and felt his head, but found no blood or bump.

"Where do you feel it?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm all right now, except for a headache. Feels a little sore here," and he touched his temple.

"You got it in a bad place," I said.

"Got what?"

"The blow."

"It wasn't him hit me, was it?"

"Sanger? No. I hit you."

"You're the fellow what was sleeping here all the afternoon?"

"Yes. You came back, did you?"

"And you were laying low while we were talking?"

"I heard some of your talk."

"Perhaps you think I don't know that we've met before."

I did not like the glitter of Hen Billings' eye as he said this.

"Have we?" I replied non-committally.

"Yes, we have, and you know it! I can see it in your face. You're the fellow tried to do me out of getting away."

"Well, what of it?" I asked.

"Perhaps you don't think that's anything. Perhaps you don't think this here head you gave me is anything—saying nothing of doing me out of my business with Ike Sanger; for I remember, now, how you rushed up as I was engaged with him."

"All of these things you mention are what any decent person would do, though I can hardly expect you to feel very kindly about them. But what of it?"

"What of it? This of it! We've got an account to square. I'm in trouble; I'm being looked for and you've seen me around. That alone is good reason for putting you away."

"Do you mean killing me?"

"Yes, if you want to call it that. Dead men tell no tales."

"Come, Mr. Billings," said I, laughing at his exaggerated seriousness, which I could see through plainly. "Do you take me for a child that you can scare that way?"

"Scare, is it? You think I'm fooling. I'll show you."

He slipped his hand into his side pocket, then his hip pocket, then the pocket on the other side of his coat. His face began to look blank.

"What's what you are looking for, Mr. Billings?"

That individual looked up and found the muzzle of a five shooter pointing on a line with the second button of his vest.

"That's mine!" he exclaimed, reaching towards me quickly.

"Look out!" I cried, cocking the pistol.

Mr. Billings jumped back.

"What were you saying about killing, Mr. Billings?" I asked with a slight smile.

"Say, I'll trouble you to hand over that pistol. You're too young to play with such things. It might go off."

"I'm glad to know you understand that fact, Mr. Billings. Because if you don't sit down and give me time to think, it most likely will pop."

To tell the truth I was afraid the thing would go off. I had handled an unloaded revolver many times, but never a loaded one. I had a sort of horror of such weapons, and I was actually nervous to think that I might jar

the thing in some way and send a bullet into the man opposite me.

"Say," said he, "you're pretty cool for a kid."

"To speak frankly, Mr. Billings, I'm very much excited and I'm no kid."

"Well, see here! I was only stringing you about putting you away. I wanted to make you give up your small change, 'cause I've got need of money."

"To get away with?"

"Sure."

"And I'm just thinking about getting you back to town."

"Me? To Centerville?"

"Yes."

"You don't mean to jail me?"

"That's what I'm thinking of."

"Hal hal hal Ah, say! you're fooling."

"No, I'm serious," and I moved the pistol around a little bit.

"What call have you got to jail me?"

"You're an escaped criminal. Besides, I've seen you rob a man."

"He gave me the money."

"And the watch?"

"Well, I took that. He owed it to me, and more, too. What of it?"

"It's a question with me, whether it isn't my duty to jail you, as you call it."

"Say, young fellow, don't be funny!"

Hen rose to his feet. So did I. He eyed the pistol, which I held before me, pointing straight at him.

"I'm not funning," I replied. "I mean business. What are those papers of Ike's you have?"

This was what I had been leading up to. I was thinking of my mystery and groping blindly for light.

"What do you want to know for?"

"Tell me first if you have looked at them."

"You can bet I have! They're just old truck."

"That is their nature?"

"Just old letters of Mr. Markham's. Most of 'em's from a darter of his what what run away."

"Letters of Mr. Markham's! From his daughter!"

He had told me all of the story. I knew Mr. Pigott had the only two letters the old man had received from his daughter!

"That's what they are!" rejoined Hen. "They're years old, and if they have any vally it's only Ike knows what it is."

"Mr. Markham might. According to you, they belong to him, not to Sanger. And Ike's willing to give you five hundred dollars to get them back."

"No he ain't! That's only guff. I know him—he wanted to get rid of 'em. He wants the letters—but five hundred? Not him!"

"See here, Billings," said I after a moment's reflection. "I want those letters!"

"What for?"

"To give to Mr. Markham. They're his by your account."

"What'll you give for 'em?"

"Nothing," said I. "I just want them," and I shifted the revolver slightly.

"You don't s'pose I'm fool enough to give up papers what's worth five hundred for nothing do you—and to you?"

"You say Sanger will not keep his promise—so the papers are worth nothing to you—unless Mr. Markham—or rather Mr. Pigott—might find them of some trifling importance, as I suspect. In that case, I might persuade them to give or send you something for them."

"How much?"

"I don't know. That would depend on their value, which they only can tell on seeing them."

Hen Billings cast down his eyes as if reflecting.

"Say, young fellow, you've given me an idea," he said.

"What is it?"

"I can't make anything out of 'Ike, and I'm bound to get square with him, if I hang for it. Now considering what you say and also the way he cut up about them letters—"

He paused.

"Well?" I urged.

"Strikes me perhaps the best way to get back at Ike is to turn 'em over to Mr. Markham—for they're his'n for sure."

"If you do, and they are of any value at all, I can safely say you'll be treated fairly."

"I'll do it!" cried Hen, slapping his leg.

"Good!" I returned. "When and how?"

"Now—this minute! I'll give 'em to you."

"You have them with you, then?"

"Not on me; but they're right here."

"In this cave?"

"You've struck it. See that cranny right back of you?"

I turned my head.

As I did so my arm was knocked up, the pistol flew out of my hand and exploded with a terrific sound as it struck against the rocky wall. Simultaneously, I received a blow in the neck that sent me spinning right through the fire and landed me on my back upon Mr. Billings's pallet of boughs.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE CROWD IN THE MAIN STREET.

"SAY," said Hen, as he picked up his pistol and examined it for damages, "you're a smart kid, you are, but I've got one fault to find with you."

"What is that?" said I, while my face tingled with shame at being caught so easily.

"You're altogether too smart."

"Mr. Billings, I agree with you perfectly"—and I meant it.

"I suppose you took me for a natchal born idiot, didn't you?"

"If I did, I know better now."

"Well, I can't waste any more time on you. What have you got about you?"

He had put the pistol in his pocket, but he came towards me as if he was perfectly sure of the mastery—and I was just as sure as he was.

He already had his hand on my shoulder.

"Listen!" I exclaimed.

He paused. A sound like that of a stone turning was heard. Some one was moving close outside the cave.

Hen turned quickly towards the entrance. Almost at the same moment a face appeared at the mouth of the cavern. The firelight showed it to be constable Halsey's.

With an oath, Hen sprang with all his force at the constable. His onslaught was irresistible—I heard him crashing through the brush of the ravine, as Halsey cried out:

"Hey! Stop him! This way! The woods!"

I saw another shadowy figure rush past the entrance in pursuit of Hen, I suppose. Then Halsey came in to me.

"You came in good time," said I.

"I reckon I did," said he.

"Aw, say, Jim," from a voice at the entrance. "It ain't no use to try to follow him in the dark. He—holy smokes! he's here!"

A tall young man had come in—one of Mr. Halsey's deputies. On seeing me he exhibited the utmost astonishment.

"Yes; he's here, but the other was Hen Billings."

"Hen Bill—? Aw, go way! he ain't in the State."

"You heard what I said. And that explains what I couldn't quite make out before—how this 'un could do the job alone."

"Meaning me?" I asked. "What have I been doing now?"

Mr. Halsey ignored me.

"You better run right over to Ike's and tell him, Bill. I can manage this feller alone. Go 'long now, quick!"

The other disappeared.

Then Mr. Halsey turned to me as he put his hand into his hip pocket.

"Hold out your hands," said he.

"What for?"

He produced a pair of handcuffs. I started back and he jumped after me, pinning me up against the wall of the cave.

"You can't play your pal's game on me, you little viper," said he, as he grabbed one wrist and clicked a handcuff on it.

"What are you doing?" I cried. "This is a poor—way to—get square with—me, Mr. Halsey!"

I was struggling with all my might, but he had me foul, and soon snapped the second handcuff on my other wrist.

"You better save your wind, young fellow; you'll have enough talking to do when I get you back to town."

"What is the reason of this outrage?"

"Come on. They're waiting for us."

"Who are?"

"Step lively, I say."

"I demand to know by what authority—"

"Look where you're going or you'll hurt yourself."

"Will you answer me or not?"

"Step out now! And shake a foot!"

We had been climbing up to the road and had started towards Centerville at a brisk pace. There was something about constable Halsey's brusque and confident deportment that made me think he felt he had me in a tight fix this time.

I divined something serious was the matter. But what could I be suspected of doing? He was evidently determined not to tell me.

Come to think—that remark about my having a hand in "the job" with Hen Billings, the calling us "pals"—it was plain he connected me with some recent burglary of Hen's. But why connect me with him?

"Halsey's malice!" thought I. "Sheer malice—the determination to fix me. Very good; the matter will be quickly settled. Perhaps somebody else will go the fixing. This following me up has gone far enough."

Then it occurred to me I had been found in Hen's company. Yes, that was the pretext Halsey would use for hauling me up!

"I wonder what Hen has been doing," thought I. "He must be a thorough going criminal. In one night he's robbed one man and—by George! that reminds me! It must be Sanger who has sent these people after Hen. That's the story! They came for Hen, missed him again, and now Halsey takes me for consolation."

The animus of Halsey's proceedings now seemed so plain and my conscience was so free, that I lost all fear and all perturbation—except my anger at the treatment I was being subjected to—handcuffed! like a desperado! A murderer would not have been treated worse to tell me.

Thus we reached the town and turned into the main street. What was this? The street filled with people? Something had happened!

We halted. A group on the curb stopped their talk to peer at us in the darkness.

"It's Halsey!" cried one.

"Who's that with you, Jim?"

"Thunder! he's got him!"

"Who is it?"

"The boy!"

"Snakes! so quick?"

"Good for you, Jim! That's slick work of yours."

"Who'd he thought it of a boy like him?"

"What could all this mean?"

"Any of you seen the judge?" Halsey managed to ask.

"He's down at the house with Eb Pigott and the doctor."

"Then that's the place for us," said Halsey and he pulled me along.

Great heavens! the crowd was thickest around Mr. Markham's door! I actually staggered at the thought. If anything had happened to him—oh! why had I gone away? Why had I allowed myself to sleep away the hours? How had I kept the trust which Mr. Pigott had reposed in me?

We were at the door. The store—every window showed light through the edges of the drawn shades. The buzz of talk subsided as we pushed through the crowd. Then, when people saw my handcuffs—saw me—a murmur arose.

"They've got him!"

"That's him!"

And one man shouted:

"Lynch him!"

A man keeping guard at the shop door moved aside to let us pass in. No one in the shop. The silence was deathlike—even the lights seemed spectral.

We went up stairs. My room was open. Several people sat on the bed and the chairs whispering. A man at the door seemed to be keeping guard over them. Almost with one accord they arose to their feet on seeing me.

"Where's the judge?" asked Halsey again.

"Next room," answered the guard.

Mr. Halsey knocked at the communicating door.

I heard voices within and moving feet.

The door opened. It was Mr. Pigott.

"Tell me!" I cried. "What has happened—is it Mr. Markham—is he dead?"

I had involuntarily placed my linked hands on Mr. Pigott's breast.

"What is this?" he demanded, with a lowering glance at Halsey. "Why these handcuffs?"

"That's a pretty question, Mr. Pigott, when a—"

"Did he resist?" interrupted Mr. Pigott.

"Yes, yes!" I cried. "It's all right. Never mind the handcuffs, but tell me—"

—please—what has happened, Mr. Pigott."

"Bruce," said Mr. Pigott slowly, "Mr. Markham is—dead!"

I leaned against the wall for support. My head fell on my breast. Why had I not been at my post when the time came.

"Take off those handcuffs, Halsey," from Mr. Pigott.

"You'll be responsible?"

"Do as I bid you, sir!"

I suddenly started up.

"Why am I handcuffed like this? I want to know what has happened!"

Mr. Halsey had freed my hands.

"Mr. Markham has died—under peculiar circumstances," said Mr. Pigott, "and I—"

"Why don't you call a spade a spade, and say it out that he's murdered the old man?"

"Murdered! IP!" I grew deathly pale.

"Mr. Pigott! this is—you—you do not say this?"

"Halsey, leave the room!" said Mr. Pigott with a look and a quietude that made the constable change countenance.

"Mr. Pigott—speak—tell me—you do not say this!"

"No, I do not. I caution you, Bruce—be careful what you say."

"Be careful? Why? Why should I not speak? Is it true that I am—am suspected, even?"

"You are—suspected!"

I looked at Mr. Pigott. I felt a chill through my body that singularly braced me and cleared my mind.

"Mr. Pigott," said I slowly, "do you suspect me?"

I hung on his words.

"I cannot permit myself to have any opinion—at present. Come into the front room."

I was perfectly cool now. I followed Mr. Pigott. As I passed through the door I heard a murmur break out among the people I had left behind.

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 557.]

## The Coast Guard;

## LIFE SAVERS OF ROCKY HAND.

BY GEORGE WALDO BROWNE,

Author of "Elmer the Outcast," "Written in Water," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

GREYDON is a hamlet along the coast, where a life saving station has just been established, with Luke Southard, called "Stormy Petrel" for his bravery as its keeper. Royal is his son, who over-hears a suspicious conversation between one Sparwood, who has been rescued from the wreck of the Columbia, and a stranger. This Sparwood manifests a strong interest in little Mona, a child, who, with a half demented woman, has been taken from the same wreck and lodged in the family of Black Oak, one of the life savers. This woman one day runs off from the house with Mona in her arms and out upon Tipping Rock, part of which gives way to her and precipitates her into the sea. Royal saves the child, but the woman is not seen again.

Some time after this tragedy a schooner is seen in the rigging and preparations are made to save them by means of the life cast. But three times the line sent out by the Lyle gun falls short, and when it finally reaches its destination, the sailors, in their excitement, fail to follow directions and start to come ashore on the life line, hand over hand.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ROYAL DEFIES BLACK OAK.

THE life savers tried to make the sailors understand what to do, but regardless of their signals they secured the line, and one of them, clinging to it, began to pull himself along through the water on a passage he could not have hoped to accomplish even under favorable circumstances.

He had made nearly half of the distance when a tremendous breaker dashed him over the whipline. Then as he held on for dear life the two parts of the line crossing as it turned caught him by the neck!

Captain Southard instantly rushed

into the water to effect the man's release, holding fast himself upon the line.

He had succeeded in freeing the poor fellow when a mass of driftwood struck them, to throw them from their feet into the boiling surf.

Royal, seeing his father's peril, was the first to rush to his rescue.

Plunging into the frothing tide, with his hands upon the line, he was closely followed by Jack Lonecraft and Burl Howland.

The keeper and the man he had tried to save had both been flung some distance from the line, and neither was making any effort to reach the shore.

With the floating debris all about them, Roy and his companions sought to reach the helpless ones, but Jack was thrown from his feet upon a mass of driftwood, where he had all he could do to look out for himself.

Roy and Burl were fortunate enough to gain the side of the castaways and succeeded in keeping them above the tide, until others from the shore, by clasping hands, formed a file, the foremost man of which, Tristram Speeder, reached the place in the nick of time.

By these heroic efforts the two were carried to the land, apparently more dead than alive.

Captain Southard had received an ugly looking gash upon the head and a broken arm, while the sailor had escaped more easily.

Quite a crowd of spectators had gathered on the shore by this time, and some of them willingly took charge of the insensible men, leaving the gallant surfmen to continue their heroic work.

Without realizing the extent of his father's injuries, Royal remained to take part in the rescue.

Two more of the sailors were already swinging upon the line, frantically endeavoring to reach the beach. Though tossed hither and thither by the surf the poor fellows managed to maintain their grasp on the rope, until about midway on their passage, when one of them was struck by some of the driftwood, to be lifted into the air and thrown flat upon a mass of the floating debris where he was held fast by the straightening of the whipline.

His companion about this time was caught by the surf to be flung a dozen yards away.

The life savers, with Royal among them, had gone to their rescue, and, by dint of almost superhuman efforts, they were dragged ashore.

The remaining seaman upon the mair rigging of the wreck now attempted his passage, endeavoring to reach the shore with such aid as the surfmen could give him.

A moment later the line slipped clear of the ill fated vessel, though this was rather a fortunate occurrence, as the other sailors could not have reached it very well, if at all, after their position.

As the wreck had continued to drift down the coast, Oak, who was now in command, ordered the apparatus to be moved again, volunteers lending their assistance, the cart at times having to be pulled through sand and water waist deep.

In one of these gullies the gun was unmounted, when Burl Howland took it upon his shoulder to carry it the rest of the distance.

Once more a suitable position was found and the apparatus planted.

It was now daylight, but the storm showed no signs of abating.

The schooner had struck an opposite current and after swinging head off began to work back to her anchors.

There certainly was no time to be lost if they were to save the three men still seen clinging to her fore-rigging.

Black Oak thundered out his orders, as he looked to the planting of the gun, showing by his manner that he felt the importance of his position.

"Get me a dry shot line!" he cried. "Lively, too, if you'd have yonder wretches saved."

Robin Speeder started at once for the station, now less than a quarter of a mile off, but before he had returned Oak had poised the gun and was fuming over his protracted absence.

"You move like a snail!" he growled, as the other appeared. "We can't be all day about this."

In a few minutes the order was given to fire the gun, when the elongated cylinder projectile with the line attached

to an eye bolt went hurtling over the sea.

To the disappointment of the onlookers and the chagrin of the acting keeper, the shot line fell more than twenty fathoms astern of the vessel.

"It's the wind!" exclaimed Oak. "Haul it in lively. I'll get it in the right place next time."

Unfortunately he aimed too far in the other direction and the line was carried wide of its mark again. Then, before it could be hauled, it was caught by the driftwood and became so entangled that it was extricated only after long and patient work.

By this time Oak was getting nervous, but it would not do for him to give up. The crowd of spectators had continued to increase and the eyes of all seemed upon him.

Southard held worse than I," he muttered, as he prepared with greater carefulness to poise the gun for a third trial.

He made a good line shot then, but in his excitement he had used too small a charge of powder and the missile fell short of the mark.

Shouts of derision came from the onlookers.

Oak began to lose his temper, and he stamped spitefully upon the sand as he ordered the line to be hauled.

Partly in extenuation of Oak's failure, it should be remembered that the Greydon crew had not long been organized, and that this was their first real action. He was not as proficient in any part of the drill as his companions, however.

His nervousness and excitement dulled his judgment, while it required an expert marksman to send the line just where it should fall.

The fourth time Oak failed, when the spectators began to murmur.

The vessel was rolling worst than ever. She had slewed around broadside to the sea, and it was certain the three men could not keep their position much longer.

"This delay is outrageous!" shouted a tall, gaunt shoresman, pushing himself to the front. "Haven't you a man here who can handle that gun better than that?"

"Stand back!" roared Oak. "I am master here; haul and fake."

The line had again become tangled, so it required half an hour to draw it in, and Burl Howland came near losing his life in going out to free it.

As Oak made ready for his fifth shot, Tristram Speeder ventured to offer a suggestion in regard to poisoning the piece, when the keeper ordered him away in no unmistakable terms.

This shot added to his list of failures. A furious uproar came from the crowd as the line was again hauled.

"Git th' fool out o' th' way!" some one cried, and the surging, jostling throng pushed the excited keeper from his post.

In times like that men lose their reason. The sight of the poor castaways had fired the natures of the onlookers to fever heat. Oak's repeated failures feeding the flames. Unable to do anything for themselves, they were wild, clamorous for others to do something.

Of a fiery temperament Oak was thoroughly aroused and turning upon the nearest person to him he dealt him a furious blow with his sledge hammer fist.

The young man whom he struck had been a silent spectator, his only transgression having been in getting within the other's way. Even in that he was to blame only so far as getting in the path of the crowd, which had pushed forward step by step.

Oak's attack was the signal for the infuriated mob to rush forward, and in a moment the keeper found himself encircled by the excited men.

Fortunately the space about the gun was left clear, except for the handful of surfmen.

"This is shameful!" groaned old Robert Speeder. "If some one don't aim that gun I will. Here, Roy Southard, take your father's place; you can do it."

Royal was one of the group and boylike he sprang thoughtlessly to the gun.

Of course he had no business to do it, for he was not even a surfman. But he had seen his father practice at the drill too many times not to know how to get the right focus and the amount of powder needed.

With the eye of a practiced gunner he ranged the weapon, commanded its poise and looked to its loading, the surfmen obeying him with willingness and alacrity.

So quickly was this done that the sharp report of the piece ended the disgraceful scene between the keeper and the outsiders.

"Who fired that gun?" demanded the enraged Oak, as he rushed back to the spot.

"I did, sir," replied Royal, boldly facing him.

"You? What bizness had ye to meddle with that gun, ye overgrown strippin'?" But I'll 'arn ye yer place."

Oak was about to throw himself with clinched fists upon the other, when Royal uplifted the swabbing rod which he held in his hand, crying in his clear, ringing tone:

"Lay a hand on me, Black Oak, and I shall defend myself to the best of my ability."

#### CHAPTER X.

##### ROYAL TAKES OAK'S PLACE.

ROYAL OAK paused before the defiant youth. His manner as well as his words showed that he was in earnest.

A cheer came from the onlookers. "He is every inch a Southard!" cried one.

"And you can't back him down!" added another.

"Hooray! they got the line!" shouted Jack, who had been watching the effect of the shot. They are making it fast to the fore and main rigging."

In a moment all eyes were turned upon the vessel.

Royal's shot had been a success. The line had been carried between the foremast and the jibstay, the cut sweeping the bight into the side of the schooner.

The men had already seized it, and, as if profiting by the mistake of their companions, were making it fast.

No time was lost in securing the whipline with its appurtenances to the shot line, when the sailors hauled aboard and made fast to the tail of the block.

The hawser following the whipline and the breeches buoy was rigged on.

But the vessel tumbled so it was impossible to set the hawser up on shore as usual; and it had to be roved through the bullseye in the sand anchor, while Grote, Tristram Speeder, and one of the Sandsink surfmen held upon the rope to give and take with each roll of the vessel.

The work of hauling in the sailors now began, and so rapidly did the life savers pull, that within half an hour the last man—the captain—was safely landed.

"God be praised!" he exclaimed, as he was lifted out of the car, "we owe our life to you."

Cries of relief came from the spectators, many of whom had done good work throughout the fearful ordeal.

As nothing could be done for the vessel until the storm had cleared away, the overworked surfmen sought the station.

Those of the Sandsink beat started back for home an hour later.

Owing to the fury of the gale, keeper Oak decided to maintain a day patrol, the Speeder brothers taking the first turn.

Oak had said nothing of the morning's disgraceful scene and the others seemed as anxious as he to avoid its mention.

Royal had gone home at once to find his father in a far worse condition than he had expected.

The best care possible had been bestowed on the keeper, but those watching over him feared his work was done. He was in a delirium of fever and it required two men to care for him.

At the end of a week he was no better. The schooner Osprey had been got off the sandbar in a battered condition, but not beyond repair, and a portion of her cargo saved.

Captain Hawley felt extremely grateful as well he might, and he was greatly concerned over the condition of the keeper.

"It's too bad! too bad!" he repeated. "The department shall hear of this and you shall all have the credit you deserve. You battled nobly for us and we owe our lives to you. I wish Captain Southard a speedy recovery."

The protracted, and to nearly all hopeless, illness of keeper Southard made it necessary that a new keeper be appointed in his place.

By right of promotion in regular sequence the honor belonged to Black Oak.

The others knew this and moreover felt that he deserved it.

The unfortunate affair on the morning of the rescue was not recalled to injure him.

No one had any differences to settle with him and he said to their credit not one of the crew desired the position of keeper.

There was a person, however, whom they, with the exception of Grote, preferred above Black Oak to be keeper.

"It rightfully belongs to Royal Southard," declared Jack. "He should take Luke's place. He is capable of it. Mind how he fired the shot that morning. Oak couldn't do it; he can't do it any better now."

In a few days the district inspector called, when the case was laid before him in all its details.

"The boy is too young," said the officer. "The keeper must be twenty one or over. When he shall have had experience I doubt not the boy will be capable of the place."

"Experience?" repeated honest Jack. "Why, he's more experienced than any of us. He can handle a boat or breeches buoy with the best. I'm Number Two an' I ain't ashamed to be under him."

Others have spoken very highly of him beside you; but of course it would not do for me to select him. If he deserves the place he will get it some time."

"So he will," declared Jack.

"I see no other course for me except to appoint Number One. If he thinks best the boy can be allowed to fill the vacancy in the crew."

"So he shall."

Black Oak, though he was careful to show it as little as possible, was very much elated over his nomination.

He had not been obliged to wait long before gaining the desired post, while he never gave a thought to poor Luke Southard.

As soon as his nomination had been confirmed the crew, headed by Jack Lonecraft, asked for a consultation with him.

"It's in regard to filling the vacancy," said the latter. "Axin' your pardon for interferin', we thought mebbe you would not be 'bove favorin' us, seein' as how by doing so you would please everybody."

"Yes, I know," said Oak impatiently. "I s'pose you want that young Southard pointed."

He had anticipated the request, and it gave him no little uneasiness. Royal Southard was the last person he wanted, but he knew that nine out of ten in Greydon expected him to have the place, and that nine of ten of these would be offended if he was not chosen.

"That we do," said Jack. "An' so does every man in Greydon. 'Tis to lift an' o' it. He's a born life saver."

"Good," exclaimed all the crew, excepting Grote.

"I suppose I shall have to make a little change in th' order o' numberin'."

"Mebbe," assented Jack more surprised than he cared to show. I don't keer where you put me, but that boy is going to the head."

Oak showed his surprise. "That boy Number One! The idee! I shan't do it."

"It is no more than justice," said Robin Speeder. "His father's name as lost his life in the cause and we all know the boy is capable of filling his place. All who has done better work than he in all times since he was big enough to lift an' o' it. He's a born life saver."

"Ay, ay," chorused the others, all except Grote.

"And we want him there, don't we, boys?"

"Ay, ay." "Things hev come to a purty pass when a keeper can't chose his own crew!" muttered Oak.

"Don't take offense, Captain Oak. We only wanted you to know our feelings. If the boy can't fill that place put him, after he has been tried, where he belongs."

Keeper Oak was in an unpleasant sit-

uation. He didn't want to yield to the other's wishes and he dared not refuse them. He was crafty enough to realize that he must accept him or lose those he had. And not to have Jack Lonecraft and the Speeder brothers in his crew would have been the most unfortunate thing that could have happened.

So Royal Southard became in name as well as deed one of the lifesavers of Greydon, occupying, too, the first position in the crew.

(To be continued.)



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Richard Copy, N. Y. City. In No 5606 THE ARGOSY, the beginning of Vol. XVII, we shall print a synopsis of the serials running. Accept our thanks for your kind offer, we may avail ourselves of it some time.

C. E. Mac C., Kansas City Mo. Many thanks for your words of praise for THE ARGOSY. There are very many who agree with you in the opinion that it is "the best." Yes, Judson Newman Smith writes exclusively for THE ARGOSY.

INTERROGAT JACOBUS. 1. Second edition means that the first thousand copies have been exhausted and the book had to be put on the press again. 2. "Home, Sweet Home" was written by John Howard Payne, as a part of one of his plays, "Clari, the Maid of Milan." The melody to which the words are set was composed by Sir Henry Bishop. In the September number, 1892, of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE you will find an article on Payne. In the Crimean War was fought in 1854-5 between Russia and the allied powers, England, France, Sardinia and Turkey. The Russians were defeated.

E. P. S., Newark, N. J., sends us the following ingenious *pot-pourri* of ARGOSY stories, which he calls

##### A DREAM ABOUT THE ARGOSY.

I dreamed the other night after reading THE ARGOSY that "A Publisher at Fifteen" wrote about "The Markham Mystery," and said that if "The Aldermont Factions" were "Cast Upon the Breakers" "The Fate of Horace Hildreth" in "The Cruise of the Dandy" would be equal to "Fred Acton's Mystery." He further stated that "Victor Vane" met the "Comrades Three" in "Alaskan Waters." They told him that "The Treasure of Wild Rock Island" and "The Hetherington Fortune" were "In the Grasp of Another."



PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

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FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY,  
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Any reader leaving home for the summer months can have THE ARGOSY forwarded to him every week by the news-dealer from whom he is now buying the paper, or he can get it direct from the publication office by remitting the proper amount for the time he wishes to subscribe. Three months, fifty cents; six months, one dollar; one year, two dollars

#### OUR NEW VOLUME.

WITH this issue THE ARGOSY passes another milestone in its career. We print no elaborate prospectus; not promise, but performance is the service we aim to render our readers. And we think the record of the past few weeks is a good one by which to anticipate the history of the coming ones.

A wide variety of tastes is catered to in the cargo of stories our gallant ship is now carrying, and we have some serials in—but there, we said we were going to perform, not promise, so watch this space from week to week for the rest of that unfinished sentence in the shape of announcement for the next number.

By the way, note that there are synopses to four of the serials in this issue and suggest to your friends that the present is an excellent opportunity to subscribe.

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

#### THE MIDSUMMER OFFER.

THE weeks are passing and the first of September will soon be here, after which our great offer of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY for the price of the magazine will be no longer available. Responses are rolling in from every quarter. See that yours does not come too late.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE makes friends at once wherever it is seen. Its pictures are beautiful specimens of the latest developments in the photo-engraving art, while its stories make a veritable feast for all lovers of fiction. Read the special offer on the last page.

#### WONDERFUL STRUCTURES.

WE have been making of late a collection of reports of terrible accidents, not with a morbid fancy for the horrible, but in order to have at hand available statistics in the matter of the extraordinary resisting power of the human body. When one considers its delicacy, the sensitiveness of its organs, it seems wonderful that it endures as long as it does the ordinary buffetings of life, yet here it is, standing out against awful catastrophes.

For example, a train of six cars goes over a high precipice in Spain. What is the death record? Six only, with thirty

seriously injured. Does it not seem as if every one aboard the luckless train must inevitably have been dashed to pieces at once? Again, in New York State, two passenger cars on a crowded excursion train were completely wrecked by running into a locomotive that was standing on a turn table. No one was killed, although the cars were demolished.

Still another case. In Chicago a street car containing forty six passengers was struck by a locomotive and hurled thirty feet through the air. Were half the number killed? No, nor a third. Just three.

Does not all this seem remarkable? We call the attention of our readers to the showing, not to make them careless in courting danger, but to impress them with the marvelous nature of their own bodies, which are surely deserving of the most scrupulous care to keep them up to the high degree of perfection with which the Creator has endowed them.

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 Argos and Magazine for one year.

#### SEEING OUR WORDS.

WOULD you like to see what your spoken words look like? It may be possible for you to do this at no distant day, as an experimenter has succeeded in photographing vowel sounds. With such a device perfected speech could be preserved for the eye as the phonograph preserves it for the ear.

But there are already spoken words which linger all too long in the memory of those who hear them. They are the words of anger, of bitterness, of rage, uttered in a fit of passion and regretted perhaps deeply afterward, but inflicting wounds which can never wholly heal.

The gift of speech is the attribute that gives man a place above the brute. At what pains should one be then to use it with discretion.

#### LISTENING.

THERE is said to be as much art in knowing how to listen well as in being able to talk learnedly. Indeed, it is really much harder for the majority of us to listen than to talk. For everybody likes to talk, and only the few care about listening.

But of course it is not going to do us any good to talk if we are to have no one to listen to us. If you have ever tried to tell a story to a companion and noticed that his attention was wandering, you have an idea of how unpleasant a position a talker without an attentive listener occupies.

Cultivate the art of listening then, and thus live up to the Golden Rule of doing as you would be done by.

#### BOYS, AROUSE!

"THE photograph of a boy," says an exchange, "never looks like him because no one ever saw a boy as clean as he is in a photograph."

We call upon all our boy readers to refute this base aspersion on their genus. We admire boys immensely, and we feel like taking up the cudgel in their defense when we read such reflections on their habits. Of course there may be some boys who are a little careless about their finger nails or the lapse of time they allow to intervene between face washing and hair brushing during the day, but then, to pillory the whole race because of some of its members! No indeed, our boys, we are sure, will see to it that there is no point left to this alleged joke, by reforming the few specimens that gave it an excuse for being.

## The Boy Near a River.



COMING down to us from early times is an adage that declares a shoemaker never has any shoes, nor a hunter a hat, and the inference seems to be founded on the principle that we are always hunting for something we do not have, and despising the material that is near our hands.

The boy who lives near a river can usually swim, but the chances are ten to one that he does not get half the sport and enjoyment from the stream than a boy who had lived inland all his life would find. The boy on the river thinks that if he only lived on the seashore or in the mountains there would be endless delights. He thrills in fancy with the great incoming breakers at the seashore, or dreams of brook trout and game in the mountains. But if the river boy only used his inventive faculties he could find as much pleasure at his own door.

Last summer three boys from the East were visiting a cousin near a small Western river and, accustomed to keeping their eyes open, and to making capital of everything that came their way, they found three weeks of capital sport.

Two of the visitors were brothers and one was a cousin. They left their home in an Eastern city to visit in the small town where there was "nothing to do." But their cousin who lived there wrote them, that they had never gone anywhere in their lives that they had not found something to do, and they did not mean this occasion to be an exception.

They were accustomed before they went away on summer journeyings to getting a map and a gazetteer, and studying up all the resources of the place they were about to visit. They were not like Mr. Frederic Remington the artist, and his party in Canada, who lived for three weeks on salt pork within a hundred yards of a lake stocked with fine fish. When they decided to take their holidays at their uncle's home, they sat themselves down together, these three city boys and talked the situation over.

"There is a river," Tom said. "I don't know what Jim means by saying there is nothing to do, when there is a river right here. That is enough."

It was late in the evening when they arrived at the little town and they were almost the only passengers that were set down by the train. They found a bright, clever looking boy about their own age waiting for them who came up at once and told them that he was their cousin. He hadn't even a horse, which the city boys felt always ought to belong to the country. They walked the half mile up to their uncle's home.

It was a pleasant house with elms about it, but with none of the appliances for comfort which belong to a rich man. Tom was glad they had brought some hammocks with them. Away off down under the hill they could see the river, shimmering in the sun under its willow fringed banks.

"Any boats?" Walter asked.  
"Oh some," John said. "We haven't any."

"Let's go down and see 'em," Jim suggested and they went. They found an old fellow living in a house boat who had a few boats to let, and it took the city boys about fifteen minutes to pick out the one they wanted, and to make a bargain with the man. They selected a large flat bottomed skiff. It was not as easy to row as some of the lighter ones, but when there were four pairs of arms, that did not make so much difference, and they wanted plenty of room. The skiff was worth about forty dollars, and they rented it for three weeks for eight, two dollars a piece. Then they spent about stocking it and arranging it for a tent. The boatman had no awnings, but

they went up town to a barrel factory and had some hoop poles bent, and the boatman allowed them to have slots put into the sides of the boat. Then they bought enough heavy canvas muslin to make a cover over that, which was to be drawn up at the ends when it rained, like the old fashioned emigrant wagon of the plains which everybody has seen in pictures if he has not seen in reality.

The boys took the muslin home, and with some directions and assistance from their aunt, made the cover themselves. They hoped they would have to use it very little. Then they stocked their boat. They took two rough ticks neatly folded away, to fill with straw from some farmer's rick when the weather obliged them to sleep in the boat. Four blankets, rough and gray, for light hammocks to sleep in on fine nights; a little spirit stove and a jug of spirits.

The other boys had tried a kerosene stove one year incamping out, but the oil was over everything. It sounds more romantic to talk of a fire of sticks gathered along the bank, but there is nothing more unmanageable. It is seldom that the sticks are dry, and when you have built up a blazing fire on the ground there are very few people who know how to cook on it. A little spirit stove is ready on an instant's notice, can be used inside the tent covering on rainy nights, and will set the kettle singing in no time.

With the stove went the coffee pot, and a collection of pans, which fitted into each other, and a frying pan. They took coffee and bread, "hard tack," a bolted ham, and about two dozen cans. They did not bother with butter and many of the unmanageable eatables, as they knew that they were going to camp every night upon a farm, where they could buy chickens and butter. They anticipated building a fire many nights by which to broil tender young chickens.

It was early in August when they finally started. They took, each of them, a flannel shirt. It sounds well to talk of washing a flannel shirt in the river. Some campers and all old soldiers declare that is the only proper way, but any one who has really tried it once is chary of making a second experiment. They put four big soft towels in their rather bulky bundle. A river bath at night leaves you sleeping much more peacefully when you have been rubbed into a glow by a big Turkish towel.

Then there are fishing tackle, and a shotgun, and an old coat apiece, and an extra pair of shoes and stockings for each of them. The stocking of the boat with everything cost below twenty five dollars. They were going to row up the river leisurely, taking their time, camping when it suited them.

"If we don't get more than ten miles away it makes no difference," Tom said. "We are not out for a record, but for fun."

They were going to row up the river for ten days and spend the rest of the time leisurely floating down. There would be many a hot afternoon when they would be up and swing their hammocks, and take out the half dozen books they had brought along, purchase some watermelons from some convenient patch and put them in the soft running, lapping water to cool, and be as lazy as they knew how.

There would be other nights when a chill little wind would come sweeping down and they would eat their hot suppers of broiled chicken and boiled green corn with fresh butter from the farmhouse near, and filing their ticks, creep in under the tent and sleep soundly.

There would be other gray, cloudy days when they would dig bait, and sit on the willow roots and fish all day, eating their trophies, fried for supper. This is the great meal, cooked just before dark, when the sun is down and the cool stars are just coming out of the sky. Then a little later the plunge into the cool shimmering water, the rub down and the healthy sleep. The boy on the river has a gold mine of pleasure at his hand. LIEUT. JOHN LLOYD.

WE comprehend nothing in the world we are in, but by the light of the world in which we are not; we are much nearer to what we call the other world than we are to this.—MARTIN.



## THE MAN WHO LEADS.

We want no kings but kings of toil—  
No crowns but crowns of deeds.  
Not royal birth, but sterling worth,  
Must mark the man who leads.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

## The Mate's Blunder.

BY MARCUS D. RICHTER.

**S**PEAKING of occurrences, seemingly of a trivial nature, but that afterwards lead to many of more importance, until at times the chain seems endless, reminds me of an experience, or rather a series of experiences of my own, which occurred quite thirty years ago.

The blunder of one man, and that a bull headed Frenchman, affected me for two years afterwards, or at least, that is the way I look at it. I'll spin the yarn and you tell me if I am not about right in my belief.

It was when I was on my second whaling voyage in the ship Emma Duncan. I was not more than twenty five, but I came of a seafaring race, knew how to steer and make sail an' splice before I was out of dresses a'most, and was rated as an able seaman on the Emma's books. Old Cap'n Joshway Joy was our skipper—a better man never lived—and the mate was this same thick headed little Frenchman, Louie by name—a good seaman, and not hard on the men, but with as dull a wit in a time of emergency as any man I ever saw.

A man ought to be pretty sharp witted, not dull as an old caseknife, to be mate of a whaler, for he has to take the lead in a chase and there is always the danger of running against an old bull with fight in him from the word go. Then, look out for a gale, says I.

I steered Louie in the first boat, and I don't know how many times I saved him from smashing the craft by running in too close to a "struck" whale. He'd get excited and lose every bit of judgment he ever possessed.

The time he made the biggest fool of himself was when we'd been out a little over two years and were working down the coast of South America on our way 'round the Cape and home. We'd done well, remarkably well, in fact, and when we ran into a little school of sperms off the Chilean coast Cap'n Joy said one of 'em would fill all the remaining casks we had aboard. I tell you, with that declaration ringing in our ears we put off from the old Emma's side with a will.

Our boat was ahead and we overhauled the first whale, as vicious a little bull as I'd ever seen. I stood up in the bow with the iron, and when we were almost a-top of him I sank it deep into his back. I never made a prettier cast in my life, and by the way the bull sounded I knew that we had no weakling to deal with.

While the line was still whistling over the bows, I changed to the stern and Louie took my place with the lance. We didn't have bomb lances in those days, nor bomb guns, such as they use now in whaling. We were content to pull up on the whale and prod him with the lance until he spouted blood, and then back water and wait till the death flurry.

Well, this bull went down as deep as ever I saw a whale go, I verily believe,

and as soon as he came up he started off, towing the boat with the speed of a railroad train. But we'd gathered in some slack, and knowing that he'd soon tire of playing horse, and the sea being calm, we just laid back and let him run.

By and by he stopped and we crept up to him. He let us get right on to him, and soon Louie was churning him with a lance.

"Blood!" I yelled, after a minute; "back water!"

A great spout of blood rose from his blow holes and dyed the sea all around, while we backed out of harm's way. The mate was nervous and excited, I could see, afeared that the whale would get away from us.

He *did* die hard, that's a fact, but I'd

of the year, and the water was pretty cold.

They hadn't been gone ten minutes before I saw that we were going to have trouble. One of the sudden fogs peculiar to that latitude was coming up and had already hidden the ship from us. It might last only a few moments, going as quickly as it came, or it might remain for hours.

If the other boat kept on after the whale they'd be sure to lose us; but I don't think they noticed the fogbank. Any way they kept right on.

"We're in for it," said old Bill Rogers, and I tell you we were.

The fog came down so thick that you could almost cut it with a knife, and although there was no danger of our sinking, still the prospect of sitting

waste of sea; all of us lost heart, for what with the hunger and thirst, and the bruises we had received from the pounding of the waves, our situation was enough to dishearten any one.

The sun beat down on us all day, and as the only protection from its heat we had was obtained by wetting our heads with the sea water, it is a wonder we didn't all get flayed. Bill Rogers did go completely crazy before night, and declared that the sharks (who had gathered about us again) were painted red, white and blue, and were winking at him, and beckoning him with their fins to jump overboard.

The other man, a Kanaka and myself, dared not try to hold him, for the least roll of the boat might pitch us all out. So we had to sit there and see poor Bill

leap to his death and see those terrible tigers of the sea fight each other for his dismembered body.

After Bill went, the Kanaka began to droop a good deal. I noticed, and I couldn't get a word out of him. Finally I fell into a doze myself which lasted pretty much all night, and when morning came I wasn't greatly surprised to find the poor black boy gone.

We must have drifted a great way from where we had struck the sperm whale, or the Emma Duncan would have found us before; but I certainly hoped to see her that day.

About noon I did sight a ship, but 'twas the dismantled hull of a smaller vessel than the Emma. I tore out a seat and paddled with all my strength for the wreck. Anything was better than that smothered whale boat.

In my weakened condition I was until nearly dark getting near enough to the ship to swim for it. Fortunately there was a rope hanging over the side and I pulled myself aboard.

I could tell by the roll of the vessel that she was pretty well waterlogged, and the best thing I could do would be to put off again as soon as possible. Lashed to the deck I saw a hatch that had been made into a raft with a mast stepped and a sail already bent to a spar. It was pretty evident that the crew had started to escape in this way, and had either all been washed overboard, or rescued by some passing ship.

I went into the cabin, which was under two feet of water, and after lighting the lamp I found the log book open on the table. The last entry was dated that very morning, and stated, would you believe it, that after being wrecked by a great wave the night before, which wave had smashed and carried away all the boats, she had been sighted and her crew rescued by the Emma Duncan.

But before this you can easily believe that I had been to the water tub, and even as I read the entry in the log book I was munching some food. Knowing pretty well that the old hulk would not hold together much longer, I provisioned the raft as best I could, and by the aid of a block and tackle and a lot of rollers, I got the unwieldy thing over the side.

I lost a good deal of my provisions in the plunge overboard, but there was no time to return for more, so I set sail at once as near as I could guess for the Easter Islands, which I figured were the nearest to me. I had fortunately obtained a boat compass from the wreck, so I was not entirely helpless.

It was gray morning when I left the wreck, and with a fresh and favorable



RIGHT ACROSS THE GLOWING DISK APPEARED A SHIP UNDER FULL SAIL.

seen 'em die harder an' knew that when the "flurry" *did* come it would come sudden.

Louie chewed his mustache and stamped his feet on the bottom boards of the boat till I thought sure he'd pound a hole in her. And still that bull lay as quiet as a lamb without a sign of "flurry."

"Pull men! pull!" he finally shouted. "Let me geeff him another von!"

Before I could open my mouth the fools had done it—pulled right onto the dying whale. Louie began to prod him again, and just then the whale "up flukes" and slammed the whole after part of his body down upon the stern of the boat.

Just by reason of good luck, rather than by good management, I sprang forward over the stroke oar and so saved myself, but the whole stern was carried away. The whale started off with a rush, and somebody knew enough to cut the line, but I'll be bound it wasn't that Frenchman.

Of course it wasn't exactly a new experience for us to be smashed, and the third mate's boat was near by, but it was such an utterly useless accident that it made me mad. Any one with a grain of common sense would have known that the whale couldn't last long after spouting so much blood, and have been content to wait.

We hailed the third mate's boat, and he came over to us. Of course our smashed craft couldn't sink, although she was full of water, and we were all sitting in it up to our waists, so Louie decided to go in the third officer's boat after the wounded whale.

"You stay here with the men, Potter," he says to me, "an' I geeff that whale yet."

So they put after the old fellow and left us in the smashed boat, feeling anything but pleasant. It was the spring

there in the boat with the water lapping around our waists was not an enviable one.

Then, along with the fog we began to see the sharks cuttin' through the water all about us—great ugly fellows, twelve or fourteen feet long. There's nothing that swims in the sea that's worse to look at, or worse to fall in with, than those "sea lawyers." They'd swim right up to the side of the smashed boat and roll over on their sides and look at us out of their wicked eyes—Bill Rogers declared they winked at *him*—and tell us as plainly as dumb looks could that they were only waiting for us to thrust an arm or a leg over the side so that they could snap it up. They couldn't turn the boat over or they'd have had us all at once.

Well, we lay there in that fog five hours, once being so near the Emma Duncan that we could see her upper rigging, and finally the fog began to lift. But with the lifting of the fog a nasty wind sprang up that quickly rose to a gale. I tell you, we wished then the fog had stayed by us a bit longer.

Night was upon us now and there was little hope of our being taken off until morning, but the sharks had left the surface. Fish, mostly, are not fond of storms, and go below when the gales begin to whistle.

That was a dreadful night. Nothing but the buoyant quality of the material of which the boat was made kept her afloat, and with every wave beating directly upon us I doubted very much if any of us could retain our hold until morning.

And my fears came very near being realized. At daylight, when the blow eased up, only three of us were left. All the others had been washed away during the night.

There wasn't a sail in sight when the sun came up—just a bare, heaving

breeze I bore away to the westward. Not a sail did I spy all day long until just as the sun, a great, round, red orb, was sinking below the sea line. Then, right across the glowing disk, there appeared a ship under full sail.

It was a long way off, but I knew those spars and the rigging. It was the Emma Duncan!

But she was too far away for them to see me and she only appeared to my vision while passing the sun. Then she disappeared, and hers was the last sail I saw for six months.

Not that I remained on the raft all that time. I reached an island less than two weeks later, more than half dead from lack of food and drink, and on that island I stayed for over seven months.

When six months of the time had passed a native craft came to the island, but I hid myself, for they had every appearance of being pirates of the worst kind. Some of those Malay proas get even as far east as that longitude at certain seasons.

Shipwreck stories are too common for me to tell you how I lived on that island. It sounds well to read about, but I never like to think of it. Sometimes, even now, I awake in the night trembling and crying because of my dreams of that lonely isle. I never liked solitude and I certainly did not care for it then.

The San Francisco whaler Aden took me off the island at length, and I was landed in that city without a cent, about a month later. Of course I had to ship as best I could, so instead of going toward home, I went to China and from there to India and back again. Then, however, I made for home on the bark Josephus, landing in New York just about two years after leaving the Emma Duncan.

I was in Jerry Smith's, who used to keep a respectable sailor's boarding house in North Street in those days, talking with some men I knew (they had given me up for dead long before) when who should walk in but Louie, the old mate of the Emma Duncan. He'd been on a short trip on a Mediterranean frigate since leaving the old whaler at New Bedford, and had just got back.

I walked right up to him, and says I, "Louie, do you know me?"

Quarter deck etiquette is kind of dropped ashore, you know. He stopped and gasped as though he'd seen a ghost.

"Potter," says he, "I ought you was dead."

"Not yet, Louie, as you'll soon find out," says I. "Through your bullhead blunder, I've lost my lay' in as good a whaling voyage as ever was seen; I've been knocked about in a Chinese packer for nigh a year, been alone on an island for six months an' more, besides that—have lost six mates, all good an' true men, an' you ain't," says I, "being as you're nothing but a Frenchman."

"Well, you'll excuse me for talking kind of rough like that when I get excited, won't you? The men made a ring for us and then and there I gave Louie a little the biggest licking one man ever gave another; at least so the men called it and they talked about it at Jerry's long after I'd become captain and part owner of a good ship myself.

Louie never laid it up against me, however, for he sailed under me as second mate more than one voyage years afterward, and a better officer I wouldn't want, barring his natural dullness. But I could never really forgive him for that blunder.

#### THE FROG'S FATAL CURIOSITY.

Do you like frogs? Probably not—to look at. If you are a Frenchman you doubtless consider their legs a great delicacy for the table. The meat certainly resembles chicken. And why shouldn't we eat frogs as readily as chickens? The latter are not particularly dainty about what they eat. But to return to the frogs, a Georgian paper tells how they are captured in the South. The frog catchers take a lantern, go to a pond and wade around near the edge. The frogs will perch on the bank and look at the light, and an assistant can catch them. They sell for one dollar a dozen.

#### A LEADING QUESTION.

MISS PINKERLY.—"Isn't it a pity that all the good looking people can't be bright, and all the bright people good looking?"

YOUNG TUTTER.—"Yes, indeed it is, Miss Pinkerly. But tell me, if you had your choice, which would it be?"—*Life*.

#### SUMMERTIDE.

SUMMER, in all her beauty, reigns  
O'er the mountains, seas and plains,  
In temperate and in torrid heat,  
In country green and dusty street.  
Or mild or moderate or intense  
She rules, I'll sing in her defense!  
Doth she not rear the tender brood  
Of animals for human food?  
Make flowers, for honey from the bee,  
And quicken fruit upon the tree,  
Whose laden branches bear the strain  
And pay the laborer his pain?  
Doth she not rear the mighty swell  
Of ocean's throb reward him well!  
Upon their bosoms, in their deeps,  
Pleasure and profit both he reaps,  
While on the margin, at his feet,  
The kissing waves advance, retreat—  
Go health and wealth, go hand in hand,  
In summertide, by sea or land.  
—Philadelphia Ledger.

[This Story began in No. 536.]

## A Publisher at Fifteen

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.,

Author of "In The Grasp of Another,"  
"The Young Editor," etc.

#### SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

WHILE out sailing Harry Edwin hears a cry for help on the water and rescues a man who has been trying to swim across the river with all his clothes on. The man is a convict, for whose recapture a reward of \$250 has been offered by the prison authorities. Harry resolves not only to earn this but to make a feature of the capture in the first issue of the "Reeveport Record," an amateur journal he is on the point of issuing. With the aid of his friends, George and Martin, Dick Reehouse and Hebe Tillie he secures the prisoner in the outbuilding on the Atwin grounds where he keeps his printing press and they prepare to get the first number of the paper ready to publish early the next morning.

But Harry's father thinks that the criminal would be safe in the jail at Canterbury, four miles distant, and sends for the constable there to come and get him. In the transfer the convict, Dan Miggs, gets away. Harry rises early the next morning and starts for Canterbury on his bicycle to get the latest news of the fugitive for the "Record." He runs into him by accident, on the road and after some exciting experience, in which Bunting, the Canterbury baker, and Reckford, the Reeveport butcher, take part, Miggs is captured and lodged in the Canterbury jail, awaiting the coming of the warden from the State prison at Mensing.

Getting Alvin Hargreave, the son of a farmer to help him, Harry goes home and, with his friends, bends all his energies towards getting out his paper, which has already been delayed far beyond the time number of its publication.

#### CHAPTER XII—(Continued.)

A PIECE OF NEWS AT THE POST OFFICE.

BY this time there was matter enough set to fill one form of the paper—that of the two inside pages. Leaving Hebe and Dick to throw the type together for the copy making the fourth page, Harry, George and Alvin proceeded to make ready for the press.

And now the young publisher loosed his tongue and told of his morning's adventure on the road.

"You don't think there's any danger of Miggs's getting away again before he's handed over to the Mensing people do you, Harry?" asked Dick.

"No, but to be certain, just before we get ready to print the last form, we'll send Alvin over to the telegraph office with a message to Mr. Reckford."

But several hours elapsed before that last form was ready. The boys were so excited that they made more errors even than the night before.

"We must have it out by noon," said Harry, "or everybody will know as much as the paper can tell them."

Already several people had called at the Atwins' to know if they could get a copy of the *Record*.

Finally Harry saw that it would be impossible for them to have the thing ready before afternoon, so he set up in his biggest type the following announcement:

READY AT 3 P. M.

NO. 1 OF

THE REEVEPORT RECORD,

With full account of the capture of convict Miggs—Price five cents.

He ran half a dozen of these off the press and handed them to Alvin.

"Tack one of these to the elm tree—the big one, you know—to the right of our gate. Then take the others to Graham's, Schuyler's, MacIntoshes' and the post office. Ask them to post them up and tell them we'll send 'em the papers as soon as they are ready, and allow them two cents on every copy they sell. And send this message to Mr. Reckford and wait for a reply."

Alvin, highly elated at being made use of in such an important enterprise, sallied forth on his mission. When he reached the post office, where tele-

graphing was also done, he found quite an excited group gathered there.

He thought at first that they were discussing the affair of the convict, but when he found out what the excitement was about, "Poor Harry," he muttered, "how can I tell him?"

"Is Atwin & Co. the only firm that has gone under?"

This was the first remark that caused Alvin Hargreave to forget for the instant the errand on which he had come to the post office.

"Don't know," answered Mr. Treakwell, the postmaster and telegraph operator. The chap at the other end of the line only told me about him, knowing I would be interested here in Reeveport. But there's a big panic in the Street, I guess."

"What's this about the Atwins?" said Alvin, pressing forward.

"Failed; gone up the spout," replied Andy Gunn, an idler of the village who lived on his mother and appeared to take special delight in seeing workers come to grief.

"Has he lost all his money?" went on Alvin. "He's got lots of it, I guess. And that reminds me: Harry sent me down here to send a telegram for him. Mr. Treakwell, and to ask you to put up this poster. And I'm to wait for an answer."

The postmaster put out his hand eagerly for the message. He evidently hoped it would have a bearing on the matter of the failure, and give him additional material for gossip.

"Only to Canterbury, eh?" he muttered, as he read it. "Seems to me young Atwin's pretty extravagant usin' the wires over only a four mile stretch."

"This is a very important business dispatch, Mr. Treakwell," exclaimed Alvin, bristling to defend his friend.

"Please send it at once. Here's the money to pay for both it and the answer."

The postmaster ticked off the message, and while waiting for the reply Alvin explained to him the terms on which the *Record* was to be sold.

"Startin' a paper of his own, is he?" commented Mr. Treakwell, holding the poster off at arm's length so as to read it through his long sighted glasses. "I reckon his pop'll stop that in short order when he comes home tonight."

"That's no the question," said Alvin. "Will you hang that up here in the post office and see if you can sell any copies after I bring 'em down to you this afternoon?"

"Well," drawled Mr. Treakwell, "you see I'm an agent of the government, an' I don't know as the President would like—"

But here the machine began to click, and the postmaster was compelled to drop that rôle for a while and assume that of telegraph operator.

This was the message he handed to Alvin a minute later, without taking the formality of putting it into an envelope:

HARRY ATWIN—Miggs safe with warden on way to Mensing. Reward to you.

RECKFORD.

"Hurrah!" cried Alvin, and rushed off, waving the slip of paper in the air.

He had forgotten for the moment the bad news he had heard, but he remembered it before he got back to the Atwins'.

At first he decided he would say nothing about it to Harry.

"It isn't really any of my business," he argued, "and he's sure to hear it soon enough."

Then the thought came to him that perhaps it would make a difference in regard to the paper. Perhaps Harry wouldn't want to go to the expense of issuing it if he knew his father had failed.

"I think I ought to tell him was his final decision as he entered the gateway.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

HOW ALVIN BROKE THE NEWS.

THE *Record* office was a scene of bustling activity when hestepped into it. Harry was working the press with his foot and placing the sheets to receive the impression of the two inside pages, while George removed them as fast as printed.

Hebe and Dick were setting type with flying fingers.

"All right; the convict's in safe hands and you get the reward. Harry!" exclaimed Alvin, as he entered.

A lusty shout of triumph went up from all hands.

"Harry," said Alvin, plucking young Atwin by the sleeve when this had died away, "can I speak to you for a minute?"

Harry looked around with a surprised air, and his astonishment deepened when he noted the sober expression on Alvin's face.

"All right," he replied. "Is it private?"

"I—I guess it is," answered Alvin, wishing he hadn't started in now. "It won't take long, will it?" went on Harry, linking arms with the deacon's son, and starting for the door.

"No, only a minute or two, if I can get up my courage to tell it to you straight out."

"Why, what is it, that it should take so much courage for you to tell? Something you heard while you were gone?"

They were walking back and forth over the grass now, under the cherry trees. Peyton was washing one of the carriages in the stable close by. Harry smiled as his eye fell on him, remembering how frightened he had been of Miggs the night before.

"Yes, it was," replied Alvin, stepping over to pick up a couple of cherries which had fallen to the ground.

But he did not put them in his mouth. He kept them in his hands, nervously fingering them.

"Well," said Harry, finding that the other did not continue. "What was it? Anything to do with the paper? Some mischief Nate Peavey has set on foot?"

"No, no. It's awful hard to tell you Harry. Maybe it ain't so, but I thought you ought to know. It's—it's something that happened in the city today."

"In the city?" repeated Harry, mystified. Then, after a second, "You don't mean anything in connection with my father?"

Alvin nodded, and said, almost under his breath, "Yes, that's it."

Harry stopped in his walk and seized his companion by both arms, thus bringing them squarely facing each other.

"Father hasn't been killed, has he?" He spoke in a peculiar tone, different from any Alvin had ever heard him use.

But now that Harry had thought of something worse, it was easier for him to tell his news.

"No, nothing of that kind," he said quickly. "I wouldn't have acted this way if it was. What I heard was that there had been a panic in the city and—that your father's firm had gone under."

It was pretty hard after all to say this, with Harry's clear gray eyes looking unflinchingly straight into his.

For a second Harry said nothing. Alvin saw a motion in his neck, above his pretty blue and white tie, that showed he was swallowing hard.

"This is an awful surprise, Alvin," he said then, dropping one hand from his companion's shoulder, but keeping the other in place. "Tell me how you heard it."

Alvin briefly related what had taken place at the post office.

"I didn't tell you, Harry," he added, "because I thought it would make you feel bad, or because I wanted to let you know that I knew it, but because I thought you'd like to know it before you brought out the *Record*. I thought maybe you wouldn't want to bring it out now."

"Just give me time to think a second, Alvin," answered Harry.

He stepped aside to lean against one of the cherry trees, his eyes fixed now not with a smile, on Peyton washing the carriage, but in grave thought on the rolling river that washed the foot of the lawn.

Alvin started to return to the printing room, but before he had gone half way Harry called him back.

"Wait a second and I'll go with you, Alvin," he said. "What you've told me isn't going to make me give up the *Record*, but push it all the more. I'm going to try my best to make it a flier, instead of a drain to the family finances. Perhaps I can't do it, but I can try, and try in such a way that father won't suffer if I fail."

He led the way back to the *Record* office and worked like a Trojan till the lunch bell rang.

Mrs. Atwin had sent word that Harry was to invite all the staff to take lunch

with him and at the sound of the summons Harry announced that the procession would start to the bath room to "wash up."

"Don't tell the fellows yet," he whispered to Alvin.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE FIRST COPY.

HARRY'S friends considered it a great treat to be invited to take a meal with him. Alvin wondered now, as he looked at the cut glass and handsome silverware on the bountifully spread lunch table, if the Atwins must give up all this.

He glanced at Harry. The latter was making a great effort to be his usual self, but he took two spoons for his chocolate and made the boys laugh by absent mindedly spreading his bread on both sides while he talked about the *Record*.

Just before they rose from the table, he asked:

"What would you fellows say to making the paper a weekly?"

Dick dropped his head over on his shoulder and assumed an attitude of utter limpsness in his chair.

"How could we fill it each week?" George wanted to know. "It would be too much like work in playtime, I'm afraid. This is our vacation, you must remember."

"But I should like to make the *Record* something more than a plaything," Harry went on. "And what I want to know now is whether you feel like helping me—of course for salaries."

"Salaries!" exclaimed Dick, rousing himself. "What nonsense are you talking, Harry?"

"No nonsense at all, Dick, but dollars and cents. The idea has occurred to me to set the *Record* on a paying basis, and of course, if we do that, we don't any of us want to work for nothing and we certainly can't hope to compete with our only rival, the *Canterbury Chronicle* unless we make a weekly."

"But think of it!" Hebe put in. "Every seven days to fill up a four page paper!"

"But haven't we not only filled it up, but set it up in a night, you may say?"

"Yes, and didn't we have a splendid stock of material to fill it with," returned Dick. "You can't expect to capture an escaped convict every week, Harry?"

"But if I undertake to supply the matter, what then?"

"Oh, we'll stand by you, Harry," said George, patting him on the shoulder.

"Then you mean to have us get out another paper next Friday?" asked Hebe, in his drawing tones.

"No, next Wednesday," answered Harry promptly. "Thursday's the *Chronicle's* publication day, you know. We don't want to be behind, but ahead of them."

"Next Wednesday?" repeated George, in dismay. "Why, that is—"

But Dick interrupted him by bringing his hand down on the table with a force that caused the spoons to rattle in their cups.

"Great Scott, fellows!" he exclaimed. "Has anybody realized that we are starting this thing on Friday?"

"What of it?" said Harry.

"Everything of it," returned Dick. "What luck can you expect the paper to have, started on such a day."

"Being an American institution, it ought to have unbounded luck for that very reason," returned Harry. "Wasn't America discovered on Friday?"

"Yes, and Columbus set sail on Friday, too," added George.

"And died in misery," added Dick triumphantly. "Don't forget that point of it, George."

"I can't help that," Harry affirmed. "Till this republic falls into ruin I shall stick to it that Friday is America's lucky day. And that reminds me. I'll buy an American flag from the type foundry and put it in the center of our head for next week. We'll make the *Record* a patriotic paper out and out. Now to work again."

Harry's words had inspired his mates with enthusiasm, there was no denying that. They worked like beavers after they returned to the shop, and in less than an hour the first complete copy of the *Reeveport Record* was in its publisher's hands.

They all crowded around Harry, as he held it, still damp from the press.

"There's a turned's you didn't see," remarked Dick.

"And there's a widow at the top of that column," added Harry.

"A widow?" repeated all three boys in a breath. "What's that?"

"A line that ends a paragraph at the top of the page. It isn't considered good form."

"But what are you going to do when it happens that way?" asked George.

"Add a word to it somewhere, and turn it over, so as to leave two words at the top. Then you take out a word or two somewhere else so as to equalize things in your column. But it doesn't really matter so much in a newspaper as it does in a magazine. What do you think of our little sheet?"

"She's a dandy, widow or no widow!" exclaimed Dick.

"Now for some more then," and Harry once again started up the press.

For a time he forgot the cloud that had settled over the family fortunes. *Records* flew out from the press thick and fast.

An edition of one thousand had been decided on for the first number. After they had come out from lunch Harry had written for the first page the following notice:

POSTSCRIPT—Arrangements have been made to issue the *RECORD* every Wednesday. Subscriptions received at the office, \$1 per year. Advertisements on favorable terms.

There were no advertisements at all in this first number. There was no room for them, for one thing, and no time to get them if there had been. It must be remembered that Harry's original intention had been to bring out the *Record* as a monthly amateur sheet the first of July and to issue it every thirty days until the school term opened again in September.

By half past two there were enough copies dry to warrant Hebe and Alvin each starting out with a bundle. Harry had prepared slips for them to give each person with whom they left a supply. The number of copies delivered was placed on one line, and the receiver signed in a line below it.

There were two other spaces, one for the number of copies returned when the agent went around again, and the other for the latter to sign. The difference was to be handed over in cash, at the rate of three cents for each paper disposed of.

"But look here, Harry," said Dick, when the two boys had started out, and the others were talking over the prospects of large sales, "what's to prevent some of these storekeepers from cheating you if they want to?"

"Why, this way. He may get twenty copies and sell ten. Five of these may be to intimate friends. He can tell them to be careful of them and when they have read them, to hand them back to him, for which he will allow them a rebate of a cent or two. Then he'll shove these papers back on you as unsold and pocket all the profit."

"That would be mighty mean," exclaimed George. "Do you think there's anybody in Reeveport low enough to do that, Harry?"

Harry made no reply for an instant. He was looking very thoughtful, thinking of the act in which he had discovered the editor of the *Canterbury Chronicle*. He might put the Reeveport storekeeper up to some such trick.

"There's this about it," he said at last. "The return privilege is used by magazines and weeklies in the cities, and—"

"But they won't take back uncut copies," exclaimed George. "I remember about it now. My uncle Edgar has a book store in Cleveland and when I was out there last summer I remember hearing him say that he couldn't return cut copies to the publishers."

"But you can't make a four page paper uncut," said Harry. "I'll tell you what I can do, though," he added, brightening. "It will help the circulation in other ways, too. Beginning with the next number I can put in a coupon for a prize of some sort. Have every buyer entitled to cut one out and refuse to take back any copies with this coupon missing."

"But what would you have for the prize?" asked Dick.

"I'll think that up between now and

Wednesday. Who's that just come in the gate? Alvin or Hebe back already?"

George went to the door to look.

"No," he reported. "It's Phil Treakwell, and he's got a telegram in his hand."

## CHAPTER XV.

## HARRY PUTS ON HIS THINKING CAP.

"PERHAPS the convict has escaped again," suggested Dick, with an alarmed look.

"No; I think I know what the message is about," said Harry quietly. "It's probably for my mother. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Harry reached the back door of the house in time to take the telegram from the servant who had received it and carry it to his mother himself.

He was pretty sure of what it contained, and he wanted to be by his mother when she read it. She was always nervous about telegrams.

"Open it, Harry," she said now, when he had found her.

She sank down on a chair; her face was pale.

"There's nothing happened to father," Harry said reassuringly. "He was able to send the message himself."

"Read it to me, Harry."

"Firm gone under. Will stay in town late tonight."

"Don't worry, mother," Harry added, when he had read the above. "Things might be much worse, you know. I heard about this failure of the firm this morning. I'm going to try and do my share toward supporting the family now."

He hurried back to the printing office and soon had the last *Record* off the press. Then he and the other boys started out with the entire remaining edition and by four o'clock he and George were in Canterbury, distributing copies to stores there with which the Atwins dealt.

They drove over in Harry's pony cart, which had been a present to him on his eleventh birthday, and as he listened to the musical patter of Gypsy's hoofs on the hard roadway as they bowled swiftly homeward, he wondered if this was going to be the last time he would drive behind a horse of his own.

He left George at the Martins', and as he was passing the post office Mr. Treakwell hailed him.

"Got any more of them papers up at your place?" he called out.

"Only one or two more for my own use," answered Harry, pulling Gypsy down to a standstill. "Why, could you use some more?"

"Guess I could. They're going like hot cakes. You see, folks know pretty generally that this'll be the last number, and so they want to be sure and have one as a kind of—of memento."

"Who said it was going to be the last number?" exclaimed Harry, bristling. "Didn't you read the notice on the fourth page about it's being made a weekly?"

"Certain, but then we all knew that was writ before you heard this bad news about your pa. Maybe you don't know that yet?"

The old man's face had such an eager look that Harry was confident he had stopped him merely with the hope of being able to tell it to him.

"Yes, I do know it," he answered promptly, "and it was after I heard it that I decided to make the *Record* a weekly."

"Shucks, boy, you must be crazy. Don't you know that your pa won't have any money now to fool away on playthings for you?"

"I don't intend the *Record* to be a plaything, Mr. Treakwell," answered Harry, with all the dignity he could muster.

"It doesn't look as though it was, does it," he added, "when you have sold in about two hours all the copies I sent you?"

"But it ain't fair to judge by this number, I tell you," the postmaster rejoined. "You caught that convict, and folks want to read what you got to say about it. You can't keep on tellin' that fifty two times a year. I warned ye," and Mr. Treakwell took his foot down from the hub and ambled back to his quarters.

Although Harry resented his interference, he knew that there was a great deal of truth in what he had said. Ex-

traordinary circumstances had undoubtedly paved the way for a large sale of No. 1 of the *Record*. Unless he could think of some practicable scheme for pushing the paper between now and next Wednesday there were nine chances in ten that No. 2 would linger long on his hands.

"Maybe I was too impetuous," he told himself. "But then, with that splendid press of my own and such a fine opportunity to introduce the paper it seemed a shame not to test it to the full."

He began to think with all his might on plans for the next number.

As soon as he reached home he went to the printing office and put things in order there.

"Maybe I'll have to put the form back on the press and issue another edition of No. 1," he reflected, "so I won't start distributing the type yet."

"Now, what can I make a coupon good for? Chromos don't go any more, neither do free subscriptions. It must be something new and novel."

He started toward the house, so that he might be with his mother. Besides, he wanted to tell her of the large sale the *Record* had had at the post office.

As he went through the hall, his eye fell on something standing in one corner of it. It was his camera.

His father had given it to him last Christmas and for a while he had taken everything he could get to pose for him and even some that wouldn't. But the advent of the printing press on his birthday, had put the camera's nose out of joint for the time being.

"I wonder," he mused now, as he stood and looked at it, "I wonder if I couldn't make a combination of the two. An illustrated country weekly would be a novelty. By George, I believe I've struck it."

He took the camera and carried it up to his own room, where he made sure that it was in good order.

"Yes, sir," he said to himself, "that's what I'll do. The two hundred and fifty I'm to get for capturing Miggs ought to pay expenses till I begin to get some returns. It surely won't cost more than five dollars to have each picture engraved."

For a moment he forgot his father's failure, forgot everything but the excitement which possessed him at being the pioneer in the field of illustrated country journalism.

"The *Canterbury Chronicle* will be left away behind," he said to himself. "Let me see; I can have four pictures—one on each page. But that coupon?"

Here was the puzzler. How was he to make the coupon available?

"I might offer to take the picture of every one who handed in a certain number of them," he reflected; "but then they would all come in at once and I'd be swamped with work."

He sat down and held his head between his hands for a moment.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet.

"Great Caesar!" he exclaimed. "I believe I've found out what to do with the coupons by discovering that there won't be any use for them now. The pictures will be such an attraction that none will want to give their papers back after they have read them."

He dressed for dinner and went down stairs to join his mother.

"I'm going to make our fortunes over again, mother," he said cheerily, as he entered the library.

Then he told her of the encouraging report from Mr. Treakwell—omitting the disheartening prognostication that gentleman had added thereto—and then announced his great idea in connection with the camera.

Mrs. Atwin tried to smile and appear interested. But the effort was an apparent one.

"I wonder on what train your father will return?" she said every little while. "He will certainly send us another dispatch so that we may meet him."

But none came. Dinner passed, then eight, nine, ten and eleven o'clock struck, and still no word.

Mrs. Atwin's nervousness was becoming unbearable. Harry tried to persuade her to go to bed, saying that his father had undoubtedly found it necessary to remain in town all night and that a telegram, announcing the fact, had miscarried.

But she declared that she could not

sleep if she did go to bed and just then the door opened and Mr. Atwin appeared.

Harry almost cried out at sight of his father's face, it was so pale and care worn. He had walked over from Canterbury to which place he had taken the late train from the city.

In a few words he told the story of the day to his wife and son, including them both in the one confidence. The failure was worse than Harry had supposed it.

In order to settle fairly with his creditors Mr. Atwin had given up everything, even to the house in Reeveport. Tomorrow the *Record* would be homeless! (To be continued.)

[This story began in No. 548.]

## The Fate of Horace Hildreth.

BY JUDSON NEWMAN SMITH,  
Author of "Jasper Fearing," "The Hermit-  
age Tangle," etc.

### CHAPTER XXXV.—(Continued.)

#### THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST PETER.

PETER the Lark now began a straightforward story, showing that he was possessed of no little intelligence and tact when a really serious moment was at hand.

Shorn of its ungrammatical verbiage it was as follows:

On the Sunday afternoon under notice, Peter had met Tommy Cronk on the high road near the mill. Tommy was agitated by the idea that the mill was haunted by a negro's ghost, whose face he had seen at the window.

Peter was on his way to the mill, where he had usually slept. He kept on, saying if there were any ghosts around, he was quite ready to meet them. Tommy followed him out of curiosity.

On arriving at the mill Peter went in, and, for the purpose of allaying Tommy's absurd fears, made a cursory inspection of the place, finding no negro, ghost or mortal, either up stairs or down.

However, he had not looked very carefully. For, while he and Tommy stood just within the doorway, they heard a noise, and, on turning, they saw a big negro coming down the stairs from the upper floor.

As he turned his face to the light, Peter recognized him, principally by a long scar across his face, as a negro whom he had caught robbing a friend of his one night several months back near this very place.

Indeed the negro immediately spoke of that very incident and declared that now he had a chance to get square for being knocked over on that occasion.

He immediately followed up this declaration by springing on Pete, and they both went to the floor together, the negro's great weight being more than Peter could withstand.

From that instant, Peter lost sight of Tommy. The two men fought close to the door, Peter getting much the worst of it.

In the course of the terrible struggle, Peter managed to break away for an instant. Both men sprang to their feet—the negro with a billet of wood in his hand.

As he raised this to strike, Peter as a last resort dodged downward and butted the negro full in the middle with all the strength that remained to him.

This did not prevent Peter from receiving a tremendous blow on the back and shoulder; but it did make the negro stagger backwards—out of the door by which he stood—on to the platform, and then Peter heard a crash and saw the negro fall out of sight.

A glance out of the doorway showed Peter the platform had caved in, and the negro lying on the ground below as if dead.

Peter jumped down to the ground, felt of the body, and, discovering no sign of life, he was overcome by fear and hastened to get out of the way, as was his usual procedure when trouble came in view.

The cross examination of the prosecutor, not too astute a man, entirely failed to shake Peter on any single point.

Inquiries into his mode of life failed to embarrass Peter. He acknowledged smilingly that he had been arrested

dozens of times—never for assault or any kind of violence, however.

It was not until this cross examination began that Peter began to let himself out, and kept the crowd in a continuous smile by his frank admissions or his quaint replies. But his statement remained unimpeached when he was finally allowed to step down.

Then Mr. Wiley declared that he might in perfect safety rest his case where it was, but, as it was his duty to leave nothing undone for his client, he begged leave to introduce the affidavit of an eye witness of the tragedy.

Said witness was then on a bed of sickness, unable to be moved, and his testimony had been taken only with great difficulty, because of his weak condition.

Then Mr. Wiley handed up an affidavit from Tommy Cronk. Larry was one of the very few who knew of this testimony beforehand, and its introduction was one of the greatest sensations of the day.

The affidavit corroborated Peter's testimony to the letter. It stated further that, at the opening of hostilities by the doorway Tommy had fled up the stairs by which the negro had descended.

From the upper floor he had witnessed the terrible struggle, he being so paralyzed with fear that he had been unable to raise any outcry.

After it was all over and Peter had fled, Tommy had for a long while been unable to find resolution to leave the mill, because he would have to let himself down from the broken platform where the negro's horrible black face lay upturned to the sky. But at last, remembering another exit by way of the second floor, he made his escape and remembered very little after that moment.

The affidavit concluded by a strong statement that the negro had opened hostilities and that Peter had not only acted in self defense, but had appeared to be getting a terrible beating up to the moment when he knocked his assailant backwards out of the doorway.

Cheers greeted the conclusion of this affidavit. It was evident that Peter had the crowd with him.

Then Mr. Wiley called several people to testify to the peaceable and good natured disposition of Peter as exhibited during the two periods of his lingering in that neighborhood.

And he concluded by calling Larry to the stand and making him relate how he had been attacked by the vicious negro and rescued by the valiant Peter.

This ended the testimony. The summing up by the prosecutor was about as lame and illogical a piece of work as was ever seen in a law court; while Mr. Wiley tersely showed how it was that his client, a harmless, good natured vagabond, had by a rare chance, barely escaped occupying the pauper's grave, now filled by the true criminal.

The jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty" without leaving their seats.

He was thereupon discharged, but not without a prosy sermon from the judge, admonishing him to amend his evil ways and abandon his life of vagabondage and vice.

Then, when he was at length free from the meshes of the law, Peter the Lark suddenly found himself hemmed in on every side by scores of people who might easily have driven him from their doors without so much as a cup of cold water. But, after his sensational adventures, he was almost as great a hero as some of the convicted criminals who are so constantly attracting the admiration of the impressionable public.

### CHAPTER XXXVI.

#### CONCLUSION.

IT was that afternoon about five o'clock, Mr. Gregory had been in New York all day.

On coming into the office, looking hot and tired, he threw down a paper before Mr. Bostwick and said:

"There! that clears the way for the Bostwick Labeling Machine at last."

Mr. Bostwick glanced over the paper. "Ha!" he exclaimed. "They've abandoned the suit!"

"Yes; and it was that lucky horse car ride of yours that did it, Bostwick. When we showed that scoundrel lawyer that we were aware of Bunker's fraud and threatened to send them both to

State's prison, he gave in naturally. If you had not seen Bunker with that lawyer, our ex-bookkeeper would have kept in the background and doubtless have got a fat share of the compromise money they probably expected to wring from us."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Gregory," said Larry. "And here is a large sized letter for you, with the imprint of the Eureka Mining Company."

"It is time!" exclaimed Mr. Gregory. "Come into my office."

When the door was fast shut, Mr. Gregory opened the envelope and took out of it a certificate for five thousand shares of Eureka mining stock. He handed it to Larry. It was made out in the name of

DONALD GREGORY,  
Executor Hildreth Estate.

"There, my boy! That is the fortune that Horace Hildreth saw so many visions of, yet never grasped in reality. It is yours!"

"No, Mr. Gregory, it is not *all* mine. What your brother Bob said was true—a part of it was his, a large part, for he developed the mine, and paid for it with his life."

"It was your father's life he paid for," said Mr. Gregory gloomily.

"But to save his own," and Larry, too, knit his brows as he thought of that unfortunate madman, his father, seeking the life of another in his insane fury.

"Come, come, my boy! Let us stop this quibbling. We talked this all over the other night, and you know how strong my views are. I do not wish to be haunted with money that has blood upon it. I—"

"That doesn't sound like you at all, Mr. Gregory," said Larry.

Evidently he was on the most familiar terms with his guardian.

"Well then, talking pure business does," replied Mr. Gregory. "Sit down here, and we will negotiate with our young capitalist—who by the way, has not got a word to say about his money till he is twenty one and I am released from my guardianship."

"I'm glad Mr. Bunker isn't around to remind me of that," said Larry mischievously.

"He will probably keep out of the way," replied Mr. Gregory. "But attend to business now!"

"As you are aware, I hold claims on the Hildreth Estate to the extent of thirty five thousand dollars, moneys loaned on bond and mortgage—"

"Besides the five thousand you paid to my mother for my father's worthless model—"

"It gave Bostwick his idea. The suggestion ought to be paid for."

"I don't see that," objected Larry. "If it hadn't been for Mr. Bostwick's brains, the suggestion wouldn't have been worth a cent."

"I'm afraid you are not cut for a business man, Larry, if that is the way you look after your end of a bargain."

"Then," persisted Larry, "there are the expenses of my education and maintenance, for which the Estate owes you."

"Very well; I shall make up the accounts, and pay myself. Is that satisfactory? I don't like mining stock and I shall sell this stock out, as your guardian has a right to do."

"Then, with the money, we can develop the Hildreth acres—"

"And can't you buy me an interest in the Gregory Canneries," suggested Larry laughingly.

"That wouldn't be such a bad investment, after I've borrowed about fifty thousand from my ward, to tide over my present difficulties."

"But I must have good security," said Larry jokingly.

"I'll mortgage the whole plant to you," returned Mr. Gregory in the same spirit; "then our positions will be reversed. While I was once the mortgagee of all you owned, you will have liens on all my property, and—"

"And then Mr. Cronk will probably get it into his head that I'm just waiting till you get old and childish to grab all your belongings," laughed Larry.

"When that time comes," said Mr. Gregory very seriously, "I hope I shall have in you a guardian to whom I can turn over my own affairs. Meanwhile—who can that be?"

The question was called forth by the

sound of a loud but husky voice shouting out with an attempt at melody:

"Come, landlark, fill the flowing bowl,  
Until it doth run over."

Here the voice was overridden by a babel of cheers in boyish shrillness.

Then the listeners heard the song again:

"For tonight we'll merry, merry be,  
Tomorrow we'll get sober."

"Hil hil!" "Hurray!" "Go it, Pete!" came the applauding tones.

"It's Peter the Lark!" exclaimed Larry.

"By Jove! It's his trial day," exclaimed Mr. Gregory. "I'd forgotten. He was acquitted, then."

"Yes; there's his voice in the office now."

"See what he wants."

Larry opened the door. There stood Peter—but how changed in a few hours! He still wore the suit of Mr. Gregory's which had made him look so spick and span in court, but now it was marked with whitewash and dust and was pulled all awry; his derby hat was crushed in and his hair and whiskers were all rumpled up. Peter was the tramp again, and, in his present disorderly condition, the red nose seemed perfectly appropriate.

He stood waving his hat grandiloquently to Mr. Gregory and Larry, and swayed unsteadily on his feet, while a crowd of small boys peeped in at the office door and giggled ecstatically.

"This is a glorious day!" cried Pete. "Glorious—glorious! My heart is filled wizzer soft 'motion o' gratitood. Nothin' like the finer feelin's—nothin', nothin'! Gratitood's one of 'em—an' I've got it! I'm full of it!"

Here Peter gave an oratorical sweep of the arm that nearly lost him his balance.

"Mist' Greg'ry, you're a gen'lman! Lem'me sh-shake you by the hand! There ain't many of us left, but you're one. You are a man wizzer finer feelin's. You done noble by me—noble, noble! Y'have my gratitood. I can't put a figger on it, Mist' Gregory, but I can go away. Oh, I ain't so loaded but I know! Gettin' out's the b-best favor I can do you an' I'm goin'—goin'! I'm allers goin'."

"You're 'nuther gent!" to Larry. "You're a feller what sticks by his friends—/w your friend an' you stuck by me! That's right—stick by your friends and you'll allers get along."

"That's all I've gotted s-say, gen'lmen. I'm goin' now. I'm goin' to Florida, an' I'll leave a trail o' gratitood all the way 'there an' back. S'loug, gents, s'loug!"

And Peter carefully picked his way out among the crowd of admiring gamins.

"I guess there's no hope for your friend the tramp," said Mr. Gregory. "Once a tramp, always a tramp."

"But he's done a lot of good around this neighborhood," said Larry. "He brought you your brother's letter and—"

here Larry paused, painfully conscious that, after all, that was not without its drawback for Mr. Gregory.

"Which letter restored to you your father's fortune," supplemented Mr. Gregory.

"Another thing he did—or rather that trouble with the negro did—is to secure Tommy Cronk from running away from home and beating about like a tramp."

"What a voice that man has!" exclaimed Mr. Gregory, as Peter was heard breaking out into song again.

Larry and his guardian looked out of the doorway. Peter was a little way off, facing the factory. He was waving his hat in time as he sang out loud enough to be heard over the hill:

"For he's a jolly good feller, for he's a jolly good feller,  
For he's a jolly good fe-hel-ler,  
Which nobody can't deny!"

"An' so'm'll!" cried Pete.

Then he turned and shambled towards the railroad track.

"He's a queer one," commented Mr. Gregory, as he turned back to his private office with his hand on Larry Hildreth's shoulder.

THE END.

HOPE is a pleasant acquaintance, but an unsafe friend; not the man for your banker, though he may do for a traveling companion.—HALIBURTON.

## TO NIAGARA.

I HEAR, Niagara, in thy grand strain,  
His voice, who speaks in flood and fame  
and thunder:  
Forever may'st thou roll, forever reign  
Earth's grand, sublime, supreme, eternal  
wonder.

—ANON.

[This Story began in No. 551.]

## The Cruise of the Dandy.

BY OLIVER OPTIC,

Author of "Always in Luck," "Every Inch a Boy," etc.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## ON THE TRIP TO PLATTSBURG.

GAYNOR had evidently come on business, the nature of which could hardly be mistaken. He looked for Spotty and soon found him. As he passed Luke the latter spoke to him, and they seemed to be acquainted, at least enough to pass the time of day when they met.

"Captain Hawke, is Tom Gates to be the engineer of this boat?" demanded the ex-engineer of the Dandy, as though the appointment was a personal grievance to him.

"I expect he will be," replied Spotty. "Do you expect me to stand that?" asked Gaynor angrily.

"I don't see that it is any of your business," replied the captain quietly.

"You don't? Well, I think it is my business, after being the engineer of this boat for three years. Do you think I will see a boy put in my place without saying a word?" demanded Gaynor.

"Well, you have said your word, and I advise you to return to the other side," replied Spotty.

"It was you that was the cause of his being put in my place when I have a wife and three children to support."

"You threw up your situation, though you had been paid for some time longer than you worked. I prefer to have Tom Gates for the engineer, and I recommended him to the present owner of the boat," replied Spotty, who thought it best to speak the whole truth in this instance, for the man was insolent.

"I knew it!" exclaimed Gaynor. "You might have given the place to me if you had been a mind to."

"Perhaps I might."

"I know you might, and it will be a sore day to you that you didn't do it," said Gaynor, shaking his head to emphasize his malignity.

Spotty was on the point of ordering him to leave the boat when the party came on board, followed by the cook of the house, and a waiter with a large market basket in his hand.

Gaynor "went for" Mr. Duckworth; but the business man did not scare "worth a cent." The little fat man ordered him to leave the boat as soon as he had opened his mouth.

"We don't want any man of your style on this boat. Clear out, or I'll pitch you into the water. We are going down the lake and we won't bother with you," blustered Mr. Duckridge.

"You have nothing but a boy for an engineer," protested Gaynor.

"He knows twice as much about an engine as this man does," said Spotty, speaking the truth again.

"Do you hear that, Mr. Ducklegs?" demanded Gaynor next.

"Are you going ashore or overboard?" asked the business man, his rage increased by the distortion of his name, which was an accident on the part of the ex-engineer, for he had misunderstood the name when he heard it.

"If this boat leaves the wharf with those two boys in charge of her, I will complain of them both for serving without a license," said Gaynor, in a loud voice, which attracted the attention of the whole company.

Spotty was rather startled by this threat; but one of the gentlemen with Mr. Spottwood seemed to be much amused by it. The ex-engineer appeared to be satisfied with the effect he had produced, and dropped over the side into his boat. He pulled off a little way, and then on his oars.

"Spotty, I advise you as a friend not to go to Plattsburg in this boat," said Luke, in a low, confidential tone, as the party went into the after cabin.

"I shall leave all that with Mr. Paul

Spottwood. If he is satisfied, I shall be," replied the captain.

"You don't quite understand me," added Luke, in the same insinuating tone. "You forget the circumstances of your last visit to that town."

"No, I don't; and I shall go if Mr. Spottwood says the word," answered Spotty, trying to shake off his officious adviser.

"You outgeneraled the officers on board of the Saranac, and they will be malicious enough to prosecute you for assisting a fugitive to escape."

"I am not concerned about it," answered Spotty.

"If it should be known there that you are not the son of Mr. Hawke, they would certainly arrest you," added Luke.

"And you are going there to show that I am not the son of the fugitive!" exclaimed Spotty, impulsively, as he fancied that he had fathomed the purpose of the enemy.

"If I go to show anything, it will be that you are the son of Mr. Hawke, as I fully believe you are," replied Luke, confidently.

"You believe it!" exclaimed Spotty, thrown off his guard by the novelty of the statement, for he had been entirely satisfied that the banker had told him the truth in regard to their relations. His story was consistent with the facts, so far as Spotty knew them. Besides, the present position of Luke was exactly opposite that which Mr. Hawke had reported him as taking on the day of the departure of the fugitive.

"Of course I believe it. What should lead me to believe anything different from it?" asked Luke.

"Didn't you tell Mr. Hawke at the opening in the deck, that I am not his son?" asked Spotty, deeply interested in spite of himself in the conversation.

"It was he who told me so; not I who told him," replied Luke, in the most plausible manner.

"We are all ready, Captain Hawke," said Mr. Duckridge, coming forward to the pilot house.

The engineer had been showing the cook and the waiter where to find the stores, dishes, and other articles needed for the supper, and Spotty had been waiting for him. He went down to the wharf and cast off the fasts, and then started the steamer. In a short time the passengers came forward with the owner and the business man. Neither of the latter seemed to be pleased to see Luke on board.

In the course of an hour the supper was ready in the forward cabin, and the guests, who had chosen the pilot house as a sitting room, went below.

The steamer sped rapidly on her way, for her machinery was never in better condition. The company had hardly left the captain alone before Luke presented himself again. Spotty's curiosity was excited, though he had fought against it, and tried to keep his former resolution not to talk about his family matters with the nephew of his employer. He had changed his mind to some extent on this point.

Luke had a family secret by which he evidently intended to profit. The villain knew something about Spotty's mother, something more than her husband, the banker, knew, or than he pretended to know. Spotty hoped that Luke might drop some idea that he could get hold of; and he knew that Luke still wanted the ring and the locket, for which he had periled his life and his liberty. They were evidently the key to the situation, whatever the situation might be.

"I think if you and I should sit down in some quiet place and talk over these matters, we should have no difficulty in coming to an understanding," said Luke as he seated himself on a high stool by the wheel.

"If you will excuse me for saying it, I have not the slightest confidence in anything you say, Mr. Spottwood."

"I don't know that I can blame you, Spotty," replied Luke, biting his lip. "I am before you in a false position."

"Then put yourself in a true position at once," added Spotty. "Your stories don't agree. You deceived Mr. Hawke and were guilty of an abominable piece of treachery. You proposed to assist him to make his escape, and then informed against him on shore."

"That was his fault not mine. If he had kept his promise no officer would

have pursued him," replied Luke in his silkiest tone.

"I know nothing about his promise; but you must have informed the officer of his presence on board of the steamer before you knew whether or not he intended to keep his promise. I repeat, it could have been nothing but a piece of treachery," retorted Spotty, with spirit. "The promise was that you should receive the ring and locket that had belonged to my mother."

"That is quite true; and those articles are of the greatest consequence to me, while they are of no consequence whatever to any other person."

"If you will explain clearly in what manner these things can be of service to you I will consider whether or not I will give them to you," added Spotty, perfectly satisfied that Luke would not do this. "I must be sure of the truth of what you say."

"In a few words, then, my mother was a sister of your mother. Those articles of jewelry will enable me to obtain the inheritance in England that would have come to her if she had lived," said Luke, in a low and impressive tone.

"In England!" exclaimed Spotty, recalling some of the statements of the banker.

Mr. Hawke had told him that his wife was an English woman, though she had spent some years in America before her first marriage.

"In England," repeated Luke. "Her father was a clergyman, and both his daughters incurred his displeasure by leaving home to study music in Italy with a maiden aunt of theirs on her mother's side. The property awaits an heir today."

"Then it seems that I am as much an heir to it as you are," said Spotty.

"Precisely so; but as you were the son of a rich banker, you did not need it as much as I do. Things have changed. I plead guilty of concealing from your father and you the facts in the case in my own interest. That is all the wrong I have done you, Spotty. But now I am willing to take you into my confidence, and divide the property with you."

"I will speak to Mr. Duckridge about the matter. He appears to be a good friend of mine," suggested Spotty.

"To Mr. Duckridge!" exclaimed Luke, aghast at the mention of the name. "Then you would ruin both your hopes and mine. Don't you know that my Uncle Paul hates me? Don't you know that Ducky, as his shadow, hates me fully as much? My father and I were disinherited. Paul is today reveling in the wealth that should be mine. He can buy estates on the other side of the lake and a steam yacht, while I, who have just as good a right to the property as he has, have to starve on the meagerest pittance that will keep me alive."

"What was your mother's name?" asked Spotty, suddenly changing the direction of the conversation, for he felt no interest in the family quarrels of the Spottwoods.

"Kitty Clyde was her professional name. Kitty and Minnie Clyde sang in concerts together until my mother was married. Then Minnie sang alone till she was married."

"To whom?" asked Spotty sharply.

"To Richard Hawke; but they separated after you were born, and then came together again."

"Here is your supper, captain," said the waiter, bringing a tray into the pilot house, for there was no one to steer while Spotty went into the cabin for the meal.

Luke took this opportunity to go down for his supper.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## SPOTTY DISPOSES OF THE RING AND LOCKET.

AS Spotty fed himself with one hand and steered with the other, he reviewed the story related to him by Luke. He had heard the reason why his cousin—for such Luke appeared to be—wanted the articles of jewelry.

But Luke did not explain how these things were to entitle him to the property in England. He had told the banker that he wanted them to use as evidence. The story looked plausible enough; at least, Spotty could not deny its truth.

When it was too dark to see the shores

of the lake, Spotty had the forward part of the boat all to himself. Luke soon joined him. He had told the substance of his story, and it is not necessary, for reasons that will appear later, to give the details of his narrative.

Either Luke spoke falsely or the banker had done so. Mr. Hawke said Minnie Clyde was a widow when he married her; Luke said that it was a reunion after a period of separation. This part of the narrative covered the question as to whether Mr. Hawke or was not his father.

"Why should Mr. Hawke tell me that he was not my father, if that was not true?" asked Spotty, as the Dandy was approaching the bay at the head of which Plattsburg is situated.

"I think the reason is plain enough. He was really fond of you, Spotty; and he did not wish you to carry through life the burden of believing that you were the son of a criminal, a forger, who had fled from the justice of his country," replied Luke, promptly.

And so they argued the question till the boat touched the wharf. The passengers landed, and the owner went on shore with them. The captain was simply told that they would leave for Tomnington some time the next day. The fires were drawn, and everything put in order for the night.

Spotty hoped that Luke would join the party on shore, or go to a hotel, for he was not yet satisfied that the remaining guest was not a dangerous person to him. He had the coveted jewelry in his pocket, and it was not impossible that Luke might make an effort to obtain it during the night.

The captain did not feel easy in regard to the safety of the ring and locket, for Luke could not help believing that the two articles were either in the pocket of their owner, or concealed somewhere on board of the Dandy, as Spotty had not been on shore since he came from the other side of the lake.

Spotty did not believe he was a match for Luke in a "fair stand up fight," and especially not when taken at a disadvantage. There was nothing to prevent the passenger from attacking him in the night, or from searching his person and the vessel. Luke was cunning, and it was necessary for Spotty to keep out of any and all traps.

The captain proposed that Luke should take a stateroom in the after cabin; but the passenger insisted that he was no better than Spotty and Tom, and he preferred to occupy the forward cabin with them. This answer made the captain more suspicious, and he dreaded violence in the night.

It was not quite eleven o'clock. The three were in the cabin, and Spotty thought he would go out and look at the fasts, for he did not want to find the boat adrift in the morning. The bow and stern lines were all tight; but the captain concluded not to return for a while. With a rapid step he walked up the wharf, and soon he was at the house of his friend the bank officer.

There was a light in the house, and the captain rang the bell. His friend came to the door with a lantern in his hand. He recognized Spotty as soon as he saw his face, and was delighted to see him. It was the cashier of the bank, who had been an invited guest on board of the Dandy in an excursion around the lake the year before.

According to his custom, the cashier was going to the bank the last thing before he went to bed, to assure himself that all was right there. He was very willing to serve Spotty in any manner he could, and they walked to the banking house together.

The captain saw his two cherished mementos of his mother committed to the vault of the bank. They were put into a box, which was done up in a paper and sealed, the name of Spottwood Hawke being written upon it. The cashier assured him that it would not be delivered to any one but himself in person, unless he wished it given up on his written order.

"Don't give it to any one but me, written order or not, if you please," said Spotty, as the cashier wrote the direction on the wrapper of the box. "There is a certain person who would break into the bank, take it from you by force, or in any other manner he could; and he would not scruple to forge an order, and then make oath that it was genuine."

"I don't think he will be likely to break into this bank," replied the cashier, as a clock in the banking room struck eleven. "There is a time lock on the door of the vault, and it cannot be opened again till nine o'clock tomorrow morning."

Spotty knew all about locks, and when the package had been deposited in a private drawer of his friend, he took his leave and hastened on board again. He had not been gone more than twenty minutes, and he hoped he should find Luke in his berth; but instead, he was on deck.

It looked as though he had missed the captain and had come out to see where he was. Luke followed him into the cabin, and Spotty locked the door. The passenger looked the captain over, and watched him as he prepared to turn in. It was plain enough that he had something to say, but he was somewhat embarrassed about saying it. Possibly he suspected the nature of Spotty's mission on shore.

"You have been to take a walk, haven't you?" he asked.

"Yes; I went up the street a short distance," replied Spotty carelessly; and since he had got rid of the precious treasures he felt careless; for now Luke could not rob him of them in the night, or coax them out of him in the day.

"Do you know anybody in Plattsburg, Spotty?" asked Luke.

"Yes; I know the cashier of one of the banks, who was with us in Mr. Hawke's party around the lake last year."

"A cashier?" queried Luke.

"A cashier," answered Spotty, with a heavy gaze; and he saw that the passenger intended, through an interminable series of questions, to discover where he had been and what he had done. "I took the ring and locket to him, and saw them safely deposited in the vault of the bank," he added, deciding not to submit to the questioning process.

"You put them in the vault of the bank!" exclaimed Luke, with the most intense disgust. "I think this is a little ungenerous in you under the circumstances."

"Ungenerous?" added Spotty, amazed at the cheek of his companion.

"I thought we had become friends, and such action on your part looks as though you still regarded me with suspicion."

"Of course you can take your own view of the matter; but I have intended to deposit the jewels in this bank ever since they came into my possession. This is the first time I have been here since the day Mr. Hawke went into Canada."

"Then you have no intention of passing them over to me, Spotty?" asked Luke.

"At present I have not; when I understand the case you present better than I do now I may do so. I don't think we ought to talk here where Tom is asleep," added Spotty, as he leaped into his berth.

Luke said no more, but he did not retire. He walked up and down the cabin a few times, and then, unlocking the door, went out on deck. The captain noticed his vexation, and believed he had been wise in putting the jewels in a safe place.

He lay for some time thinking about the story that Luke had told him. It might be true, and it might not; at any rate, it was not safe to trust a person like Luke. It could not be a very difficult thing to ascertain something about his passenger's mother, however difficult it might be to learn anything about his own.

While he was considering the subject he dropped asleep. Soon after Luke came in. Perhaps he had made up his mind that he could accomplish nothing that night, and, locking the door, he sought his berth. He did not go to sleep for a long time; and it was not unlikely that he was disappointed in the results of his day's work.

The cook and the waiter had been berthed in the cabin; and they were the first to turn out the following morning. Tom appeared at six, and went to work on the engine. The cook got breakfast, and when Spotty came on deck the meal was ready. Both thought this a nice way to manage things. Luke took his breakfast later. The passenger was not so sociable as

he had been on the previous day. He spoke civilly to Spotty and that was all. He was greatly dissatisfied with him and appeared to regard the depositing of the jewels in the bank as a serious affront. But the captain believed he could stand it, if the passenger could, and he thought very little of the conduct of the latter.

At nine o'clock a note was brought to Spotty from Mr. Basbrook, requesting him and Tom Gates to be at the custom house at ten. Both of the boys wondered what this could mean; but the signature of their late passenger assured them that no harm could come to them.

Luke had warned the captain that he had better not come to Plattsburg, for he might be arrested for the part he had taken in the flight of the banker. But whatever the call meant, it was better to "face the music" than to attempt to dodge the issue.

When they reached the custom house, at the appointed time, they were ushered into the presence of three gentlemen, seated at a table. They looked quite formidable to the boys, and they began to fear that they were to be "hauled over the coals" for what they had done on their last visit to the town.

But Spotty discovered that one of the gentlemen at the table was Mr. Winggold, Mr. Paul Spottwood's friend, who had been on board of the Dandy on the trip up from Tonnington. He was the one who had laughed when Gaynor threatened to complain of the boat. In a word, the three gentlemen were the steamboat inspectors.

One of them took Spotty aside, and began to question him in regard to the navigation of the lake, about handling steamers in general, and in all sorts of emergencies. The other two, including Mr. Winggold, took Tom Gates into another room. For a full hour they examined him in regard to steam engines, marine engines, and steamers. They supposed all sorts of difficult situations in which a steamer might be placed, so far as her boiler and machinery were concerned, and required the young engineer to get her out of the scrape.

Both of the boys were able to pass muster, for Tom had lived on steam engines for the last four years, and Spotty had had quite as much experience in piloting the Dandy over the waters of the lake.

Before noon their certificates were presented to them, and they hastened to have them framed. They wanted them hung up on board of the boat when they returned. Gaynor was malicious enough to give them trouble, and they were now prepared for the worst.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. BLITHE AND CAPTAIN GUSTOFF.

AFTER dinner, Spotty sat in the pilot house waiting for his owner to appear. Tom had his fires under way, and the Dandy was ready to sail on her return to Tonnington when Mr. Spottwood should give the order.

Luke had been absent from the boat since early in the forenoon, and the captain wondered what conspiracy he was fomenting, for he knew that he was studying all the while to accomplish his purpose. While he was waiting, a gentleman came on board who was a stranger to Spotty.

"My name is Blithe," said the stranger, as he presented himself at the door of the pilot house. "I am an officer."

"Walk in, Mr. Blithe," replied the captain, politely.

"I suppose you don't know me," continued the stranger. "You gave me a hard run about six weeks ago."

"Then you were in the Saranac," suggested Spotty.

"I was. I learned that Mr. Hawke, the forger, was on board of this boat at the wharf. I depended upon another person to prevent the steamer from leaving, while I was telegraphing to New York City for instructions; but the boat got off, and the first thing we knew she was off Cumberland Head."

"I suppose you won't object to telling me who was to prevent her from leaving the wharf?" asked Spotty.

"I shall object to telling you."

"O! it is of no consequence, sir," replied Spotty. "I supposed Mr. Luke Spottwood would object to your saying it was he."

"I didn't say it was Mr. Spottwood," added the officer, sharply.

"It was unnecessary that you should say so, Mr. Blithe."

"Is Mr. Hawke, the forger, a relative of yours?" asked the officer.

"I always supposed he was my father," replied Spotty, who saw at once that this man had been instructed how to proceed.

"Did you know whether he was or not?" demanded the officer.

"I took it for granted that he was my father."

"Do you say now that he was your father?"

"I don't say anything about it," replied Spotty, who had no notion of falling into any trap set by Luke.

"I ask you the question: Was Mr. Hawke, the forger, your father. I want a straightforward answer," continued the officer, rather offensively.

"I decline to give any answer, straightforward or otherwise," answered Spotty, who felt that he was playing the game with Luke rather than with Mr. Blithe.

"Well, that is rather extraordinary! You decline to tell whether Mr. Hawke was your father or not?" said the officer, with a sneer, intended to cover his chagrin at his defeat.

"That is what I decline to do, sir," replied Spotty, mildly, and with a pleasant smile.

"Then I shall be obliged to arrest you on suspicion of being concerned in getting the forger out of the country; or in other words, as an accessory after the fact," added the officer, impressively.

"Of course you can do so, if you have a warrant; but I don't even know that you are an officer," replied the captain, lightly.

Mr. Blithe bit his lip. While he was biting it as though it tasted good, another person appeared on the wharf, and came on board of the Dandy. He was a young man of twenty five, and had a bronzed face, as though he had spent most of the summer on the lake. Mr. Blithe addressed him as Captain Gustoff.

"Why don't you introduce me to the captain of the Dandy, Blithe?"

"I am about to arrest him for his day's work the last time you met," replied the officer, gruffly.

"We didn't meet, and there was where the trouble lay," replied Captain Gustoff, laughing heartily. "He seemed to have an objection to meeting me, and he kept out of my way. He handled his boat handsomely, and I want to take him by the hand and tell him he is a good fellow."

The captain suited the action to the word, and extended his hand to Spotty, who took it and returned the hearty pressure.

"I am glad to see you, Captain Gustoff," said Spotty. "My name is Hawke, commonly called Spotty Hawke. I suppose you were in charge of the Saranac the last time I was in this part of the lake."

"I'm glad to see you, Captain Hawke," continued Captain Gustoff, as he took Spotty's hand again. "You handled that boat of yours as though you had served in the navy all your life. If Withers in the Chaxy had known enough to take the West Channel when he saw me chasing you down the East Channel I should have had you sure."

"I'm not so clear of that, Captain Gustoff," replied Spotty good naturedly. "I had half a dozen other chances; and he went on to name them."

"But what do you mean by arresting this lad, Blithe? We did not get near enough to the Dandy to hail her and demand the prisoner, or the forger, for he wasn't a prisoner then, and never had been. Captain Hawke did not know what we were after, did you?"

"I knew you were after me; and I always try to keep out of the way of any steamer that looks as though she was after me."

"That's it, Captain Hawke! You took it for a friendly race, just as I should have done," said Captain Gustoff, slapping Spotty on the back. "Besides, even if he did try to run away from the officers, he is Mr. Hawke's son, and you wouldn't blame a son for helping his father out of any difficulty. I should have done just what he did if all the constables in the State had been after me."

"He will not say whether Mr. Hawke

is his father or not," interposed Mr. Blithe. "I put that question to him."

"Of course Mr. Hawke is his father! What a stupid question that was!" laughed Captain Gustoff.

"No doubt of that," said Luke, arriving at this moment.

Blithe looked at him, stepping back as if astonished at the remark. Spotty saw that the officer had been coached by Luke.

"Didn't you tell me he was not his father?" demanded Blithe.

"Certainly not. I told you the boy had some doubt about it," answered Luke in his only tone, which he could use when occasion required. "I have no doubt that Mr. Hawke is his father."

"Nor I, either," added Captain Gustoff.

"If he is, I have nothing more to say; for I shouldn't go out of my way to arrest a boy for helping his father out of any difficulty," said Blithe.

"Spoken like a man! No decent officer expect a son to turn against his father," exclaimed Captain Gustoff.

"I was told the young man would say that Hawke was not his father," said Blithe, who appeared to be the most dissatisfied man in the party. "But Captain Hawke won't say anything about it, any way. I didn't come down here of my own; you needn't punch me," he added, fixing an angry gaze upon Luke.

"I think you hear with your elbows," replied Luke. "By and by you will say that I sent you down here to arrest Captain Hawke."

"That is just about what you did!" exclaimed the officer. "I was to get the young man to admit that Hawke was not his father, and then get a warrant to arrest him for obstructing the officers in the discharge of their duty. Here is the five dollars you gave me for the dirty job; but I only came down to inquire into the matter."

Blithe was disgusted and threw the bank bill into Luke's face.

"I don't believe Hawke was in this boat on the day we chased her down the lake," added he. "If he had been, we should have caught him, for we had Canadian officers on the train, and at St. John's. This man lied when he said the boat was going to St. John's, for he did not go there. It was a put up job like this one today."

"We landed Mr. Hawke at Rouse's Point," added Spotty. "He went on the train with you to Montreal, I suppose; at any rate that was the arrangement."

"We did not think of looking out for the forger till we got to St. John's," added Blithe.

While Captain Hawke was explaining how the affair was managed, Luke, somewhat abashed, left the boat, and walked up the wharf. He evidently did not intend to return in the Dandy. His plans had all failed again; but Spotty had no doubt he would resort to other means to accomplish his purpose.

About the middle of the afternoon Mr. Spottwood and Mr. Duckridge came on board, and the Dandy started for her new home. The owner and the business man seemed to have affairs of their own to discuss, and they did not come into the pilot house during the trip. Spotty was alone; and he had time to consider the events of the day, and the information he had received the night before from Luke.

Luke's mother and his mother were sisters, according to Luke; but the information was not as reliable as the gospel of that name. Spotty knew that Luke lived at Windport; but he had no information in regard to the residence of his father. Mr. Paul Spottwood must know all about the family affairs; but Spotty had not the courage to ask such questions of his employer. Perhaps Mr. Duckridge could inform him in regard to what he wanted so much to know.

The story which Luke had told seemed to account for the fact that the name of Spottwood had been given to the captain by his mother.

Luke's father had been disinherited for some reason; and this indicated there had been unpleasantness in the family. Possibly Paul knew something about the wife of his brother. It seemed very strange, if Mr. Hawke's wife was the sister of Luke's mother, that there was nothing about the cottage at Gildwell to indicate the fact.

(To be continued.)

SONG OF THE SCYTHES.

OWERS, weary and brown and blithe,  
What is the word methinks ye know,  
adless over word that the scythe  
Sings to the blades of grass below?  
ythes that swing in the grass and clover,  
Something, still, they say as they pass;  
hat is the word, that, over and over,  
Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?  
ush, ah, hush! the Scythes are saying,  
Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;  
ush, they say to the grasses swaying,  
Hush, they sing to the clover deep!  
ush—"tis the lullaby Time is singing—  
Hush, and heed not, for all things pass,  
ush, ah, hush! and the scythes are singing  
Over the clover, over the grass!

—ANDREW LANG.

The Football of Fate.

BY TOM P. MORGAN.

WHILE Sims and I were holding down  
it claim out on Spavinaw Creek, we  
it seldom entertained angels un-  
-rars. We had no hard cider to lend  
or one thing, and we were out of the  
ach of book agents.  
But one afternoon as Sims was about  
fight me for purchasing three quarts  
basswood shoe pegs at \$4.50 per quart,  
om a fisher of men who warranted  
em to be Bohemian oats, a racking  
up, with his mane burnt off, stopped  
front of our shack. At the other end  
of the lariat rope, which was dragging  
on the horn of the saddle, was a bun-  
le which upon examination proved to  
be the victim of some grievous mistake.  
His raiment had been scrubbed up-  
ard till it was little more than a  
uffler around his neck. His head was  
attered and begrimed to such a degree  
at investigation was necessary to de-  
ermine upon which side of it his coun-  
ance was located. His nose was  
ell high abrogated, and his ears  
emed to be considerably nearer the  
up of his head than is customary.  
We placed him on the bed, found his  
ice and cleansed it, extracted a pebble  
om his eye and a wad of grass from  
is mouth. Then while we were won-  
erifig if he would ever draw another  
eath without the aid of a corkscrew,  
e moved his arms and squawked. He  
it up, removed another wad of grass  
om his mouth and was able to talk  
t without squawking.  
"Howdy, gentlemun!" he remarked  
t without animation. "Looks sort o' like  
im."  
"Er—do you always—that is—do you  
el very bad?" questioned Sims, awk-  
ardly.  
"Bout the same as usual, thank ye!"  
plied our guest, cheerfully. "I'm  
alitative. Is my hawse yerabouts?"  
"Yes, we tied him to a post."  
"Wal, if you'll ease me out to him an'  
nto boost me into the saddle, I'll be  
a lovin' forward."  
We expostulated, and he finally con-  
ented to stay to dinner. Our curiosity  
rereame our politeness, and after he  
ad begun to eat we ventured some  
ading questions.  
"Wal," said our guest, "it's kinder  
o so that I don't feel right unless  
e's suthin' wrong, so to speak. This is  
s another ripple in my ocean uv un-  
ppiness. Probably you think I rid up  
e in a rather queer fashion. But the  
ly thing that surprises me is that  
en I arrived I was behind the hawse  
stead uv bein' ahead, an' nuth'n much  
a head. Still, it's encouragin' when  
feller looks at it right, an' only  
engthens my belief that I'm slowly  
din' thro the catalogue uv reverses  
'll at last emerge triumphant with  
more kinds uv misfortune to molest  
r make afraid.  
"I've been the football uv fate ever  
e I was as big as a milk can. While  
as yet in the cradle, I swallowed my  
nforter, a little scheme made by tyin'  
a wad uv sugar in a rag an' hitchin'  
e far end of the string to my superior  
e toe. Somehow the noose slipped offen  
e toe. They pulled the string an'  
scued the comforter after a while, but  
e been pestered with palpitation uv  
e heart ever since. After I began to  
idle I fell into a kettle uv hot soft  
ap. My brothers allus looked for fish  
oks in my feet. I was kicked by  
wses an' hooked by cows. I fell into,  
e from an' thro everything.  
"I've had smallpox an' occasional fits.  
e been blowed up by bilers and cyces  
e an' narrowly escaped bein' married

by a third degree grass widdier with  
nine children. I'm allus on the wrong  
side in politics. I never ketch no fish.  
I've been numerously jailed for the fel-  
ler that looks like me. I've dealt with  
real estate agents an' only escaped with  
my immortal soul.  
"I took up a claim in Butler County  
once, an' all the polecats in the section  
rendoized under my shack. When I'd  
stood it all for six months I found  
that owin' to a little failure on the part  
uv the surveyors I'd been livin' in the  
section road all the time.  
"Wal, so it's gone on ever since.  
I've wandered up an' down the yearth  
from Alpha to Omaha, an' from Padu-  
cah to nervous prostration, with luck  
allus agin me. I've had my left arm  
broken between the elbow an' the Miz-  
zury line, and a leg broken between the  
heads uv a hay press. I've been every-  
thing but plumb killed, an' yet, in spite  
uv it all, I hope to live down my ill luck  
an' emerge in triumph."

"But how did you happen to drive up  
here in that manner?" asked Sims.  
"Oh, that was jest another piece of  
my luck! I left Champion City day be-  
fore yesterday owin' to a popular but  
mistaken sentiment agin me. Wal,  
nuth'n happened to me till over that on  
the side uv the rise. I stopped under a  
tree to finish up the grub I'd brought  
along. Bein' kinder hungry fer a smoke  
I loaded up an' lit my pipe before gettin'  
off from my hawse. Pipe didn't draw  
well, an' I kept pullin' at it while I un-  
loosened the lariat. Nobody but me  
would a' dropped a lighted match into  
his hawse's mane, an' nobody but me  
would a' been throwed so that his lariat  
would a' formed the prettiest spirr-  
noose ever you seed with him inside uv  
it. That's how I happened to drive up  
yere. It's nuth'n when yer git ust to it,  
but it's kinder hard to git ust to. It's  
got so 'ow that I'm resigned to most  
anything. Wal, I must be gettin' along.  
Good day, gentlemun!"  
Ten minutes later he was gone, and  
all the rest of the day Sims never once  
thought to chide me about the Bohemian  
shoe pegs.

Queer Things in Siam.

THE trouble between Siam and France  
has recently concentrated the attention  
of the world on the little Asiatic king-  
dom, of which the White Elephant is  
the symbol. Some of the odd things  
about Siam and the Siamese are here-  
with set down.  
They have a curious bent for odd  
numbers. Every house must have an  
odd number of rooms, of doors, of win-  
dows; every stairway an odd number  
of steps. The decimal system is, how-  
ever, in universal use among them.  
They spend much time in investigating  
the powers and properties of numbers,  
and have a veritable passion for the  
construction of "magic squares," in  
which the rows of numbers, vertically,  
horizontally and diagonally, all add up  
to the same sum. Naturally, therefore,  
they are great chess players.  
When a Siamese dies his family wail  
and lament; the body is washed and  
wrapped in a white cloth and placed in  
a coffin surrounded with flowers and  
tapers. A day or two later the coffin is  
borne out, not through the door, but  
through a hole specially made in the  
wall, and carried at a run three times  
around the house, in order that the  
spirit of the dead may not be able to  
find its way back into the house. Then  
the corpse is either given to birds of  
prey or burned—usually the latter.  
At Bangkok, the capital, is the Royal  
Cremation Grounds, where, on the crea-  
tion of a member of the royal family,  
the entire city assembles to witness  
ceremonies of a week's duration, with  
distribution of gifts, exhibitions of curi-  
ous fireworks, and largess to the popu-  
lace at an enormous outlay from the  
privy purse, the splendors being in strict  
relation to the importance of the crea-  
mated personage.  
Adjoining Siam, is the little kingdom  
of Cambodia, a part of the Anamese  
Empire, and which belongs to the  
French possessions in Indo-China. Its  
king, Norodom, presents a strong con-  
trast to Chulalongkorn, the ruler of Siam,  
being a typical Asiatic with no trace of  
European culture or advancement. Al-  
though entirely subject to the rule of  
France, he keeps up a court in the old  
Cambodian style, and manages his per-  
sonal affairs with all the barbarism of



Mr. J. B. Emerton, Maine, had Dyspepsia complicated with Liver and Kidney troubles. He took HOOD'S SARSAPARILLA and it gave relief and great comfort. He says: "It is a God-send to any one suffering as I did."

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his fathers before him. According to M. Adolphe Belot, who was not long ago a guest at Norodom's court, under no pretence whatever is any one of his subjects permitted to touch him without a special order. This exaggerated deference is not infrequently attended with inconvenience to himself.  
On one occasion, his horses having taken fright and bolted and run foul of a post, His Majesty was thrown out of his carriage and lay wounded and bleeding on the ground. There were numerous mandarins and attendants on the spot, but none of them dared to offer him any assistance. Fortunately a European happened to pass at the time, and taking pity on this forlorn king whom a silly etiquette had condemned to die unattended, he took him up in his arms and carried him into the palace.  
His being nursed in illness is entirely a matter for the hands of the Bonzes, or body servants, whose fingers have to be bound in strips of cloth of gold. His hairdresser, previous to operating on the royal head, has to put on gloves, over which are worn heavy rings set with precious stones. Working under these conditions is no easy matter, and King Norodom's hair is probably the worst cut in the world. His Majesty has adopted a style of dress in vogue in Europe seventy years ago. He wears a blue tailcoat, with gold buttons, satin knee breeches, and pumps.

Stockings to the Rescue.

CAN our readers conceive how a pair of black stockings enabled a boating party in Florida to escape from an alligator? Here is the story of how it came about, told by a lady in a letter to the *New York Tribune*.  
There were half a dozen young people in the house at which I was staying, and, wearying of commonplace comfort, they decided to camp out for a few days. The camp was near the plantation, but was separated from it by a creek, one of the innumerable tributaries of the St. John River. At least twice a day some of the young people went over to the camp in an awkward but roomy old flat bottomed boat, carrying various articles which they supposed would be useful.  
On one occasion there were four of us going over and we were burdened with tools, hammer and nails, ropes, canned meats, etc. As we were nearing the opposite shore a young woman in the party espied some beautiful wild flowers. There was a submerged log directly in front of the bank where they grew, but as our boat was strong, and she said that she would be broken hearted unless she could have them, we rowed directly over the log and one of us leaned out to pick the blossoms.  
Suddenly our boat began to move in a most extraordinary manner, going neither forward nor back, but straight up. "Alligator!" shrieked some one, and we instantly realized that the supposed log we had seen was in reality a living saurian. Three of us were almost paralyzed with fear, but the fourth and brightest of our party was equal to the emergency. In far less time than it takes to tell it he had snatched up the hammer and nails and was using the first article to drive the second through the bottom of the boat. "You'll have to help; we must be quick. Take off your shoes and use the heels as hammers!" he cried; and, realizing the necessity of blind obedience, we began driving nails too. His intention dawned on us by the time it had become a finished action, and we complimented him

on his idea of pinning the alligator to the boat with nails.  
But our prisoner was not pleased and began thrashing the water violently. Again our clever friend came to the rescue. "Does either of you girls wear black stockings?" said he. One of us did. "Then sit up in the end of the boat and dangle your feet in the water. No, don't put your shoes on! Now swing your feet to the right!" The young woman followed his directions, and, wonderful to relate, the boat slowly moved to the right. Oars were useless; the alligator bore us home on his back and we showed our gratitude by putting him out of his misery as soon as we could.  
"But how did you know he'd carry the boat, and why did he go where I steered? And, above all, why were black stockings necessary?"  
"Have you ever heard of tying a carrot to the end of a whip and dangling it in front of a balky horse to make him go? My idea was based on that. You swung your feet in the water, and seeing the black hosiery, the 'gator fancied you were his favorite article of diet—a nice, plump little daisy. He followed where you led; the nails prevented his reaching you, though his hide was so tough they hurt him but little, and certainly didn't interfere with his powers of locomotion, as we've seen."

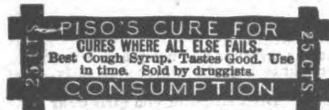


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