

THE ARGOSY

COPYRIGHTED, 1893, BY FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1893

Under a Cloud;

OR,

OGLE WENT WORTH'S FATHER

BY J. W. DAVIDSON,

Author of "Comrades Three," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

COMMENCEMENT DAY.

It was opening day of the spring term of school in District No. 1, Mill City, and all the boys and girls of the district came trooping up to the brick schoolhouse as the new bell in the little tower, pealed forth its summons.

Josiah Quigley stood in the door and watched the pupils as they filed in and took their seats, a half frightened look on the faces of some, while others wore that reckless air of defiance seen only upon the countenances of scholars who are determined not to obey.

And Josiah himself did not seem wholly at ease as he turned to follow the scholars into the large, low ceiled room, where for years he had held sway, or at least was supposed to hold sway over the rising generation in that portion of the little hamlet.

But his rule had been more nominal than otherwise, the youngsters having it about all their own way, as a general thing, up to the present year, when a radical change had taken place in many respects.

First, the name of the town had been changed from Creekville to Mill City, in consequence of a large factory having been erected, which gave employment to a great number of hands and promised to materially increase the wealth and prosperity of the village.

Second, the superintending school committee of three had been superseded by a supervisor of schools, and this latter individual had declared his intention of seeing that a different order of things should prevail in regard to school affairs. In future, lessons would have to be learned, wads of paper and other missiles could no longer be thrown about the room promiscuously, and worse than all else, a certain degree of decorum must be maintained coming to and going from school.

Due notice had been given of these intended improvements, and Mr. Quigley was made to understand that his continuance as instructor would depend entirely upon his zeal in carrying out the proposed changes.

"A pretty how-do-ye-do," said Guilford Stanton, son of the senior member of the firm of Stanton & Green, owners of the big mill, as he stood surrounded by a group of admirers, just as the brazen tongue of the bell began to sound the call. "They are going to make regular State Prison convicts of us. We've always been allowed to choose our own seats heretofore, but now, according to this autocratic supervisor, we are to be placed as he sees fit."

Gilford glanced around at his companions as much as to say, "Well, boys, how do you like it?" After a short silence he continued:

"And then this matter of being more orderly going to and from school. It's absolutely outrageous. I guess old Josiah'll have his hands full."

He thrust his hands deep in the pockets of his reefer, and strode toward the door of the school house, followed by his half dozen faithful adherents.

"You'll make 'em sick, Guilford, see if you don't," said one of the boys, as they neared the door, but young Stanton turned on him sharply.

"Be careful how you betray my plans," he said, with a withering look, and the boy shrank back abashed.

"Ah, good morning, Master Stanton,"

day," said the teacher, to which Guilford replied with a wave of the hand:

"Yes, I've heard all about them," and he entered the school room and gazed about with an air of conscious superiority.

The scholars were all in their places, and still the bell continued to ring. Suddenly Mr. Quigley seemed to remember some forgotten thing, for he opened a small door and called sharply:

"There, that will do! Don't ring the tongue out of the bell."

A titter ran round the room, but it was quickly silenced by the voice of Mr. Quigley.

"The school will please come to order. Ogle take that front seat."

The boy who had excited Guilford's irreverent remark, walked to the seat designated, a flush on his freckled face and a gleam in his brown eyes as he turned them in the direction of young Stanton.

His appearance was sufficient certainly to attract attention. Although not more than fourteen years of age, his clothing was that of a man, the shirts and sleeves of his coat being somewhat abbreviated, and the legs of his pantaloons rolled up till they were of the requisite length.

Josiah Quigley stood upon the platform and glanced around over the assemblage of boys and girls for perhaps half a minute before he spoke again. Then he said in a somewhat uncertain tone of voice:

"My dear pupils, for some reason unknown to me, the people of Mill City (a decided emphasis on the last word) have seen fit to inaugurate a new era in school affairs, and the scholars in this building will be to a great extent, the care of the supervisor of schools—Mr. Green. I shall preside over you and endeavor to carry out his wishes, which in great measure, are: Steady attendance, close application to studies, prompt recitals, and above all, good deportment. This latter includes orderly behavior while on your way to and from school."

"Good for Quigley," said Guilford in a low tone. "I expect we'll get trained down pretty fine."

A sharp rap sounded upon the door, and the teacher went at once to answer it.

As he did so, Guilford Stanton, who sat only a few seats away from the strange looking boy with the mis-fit clothing, took a keen penknife from his pocket, opened it and leaning forward touched the sharp point to the neck of the boy.

The lad, whom Mr. Quigley had called Ogle, uttered no sound, though he shrank away from the steel. Like a flash he whirled around, seized Guilford by the wrist and with a twist caused that young gentleman to fairly shriek with pain, while the ivory handed knife dropped from his nerveless fingers to the floor.

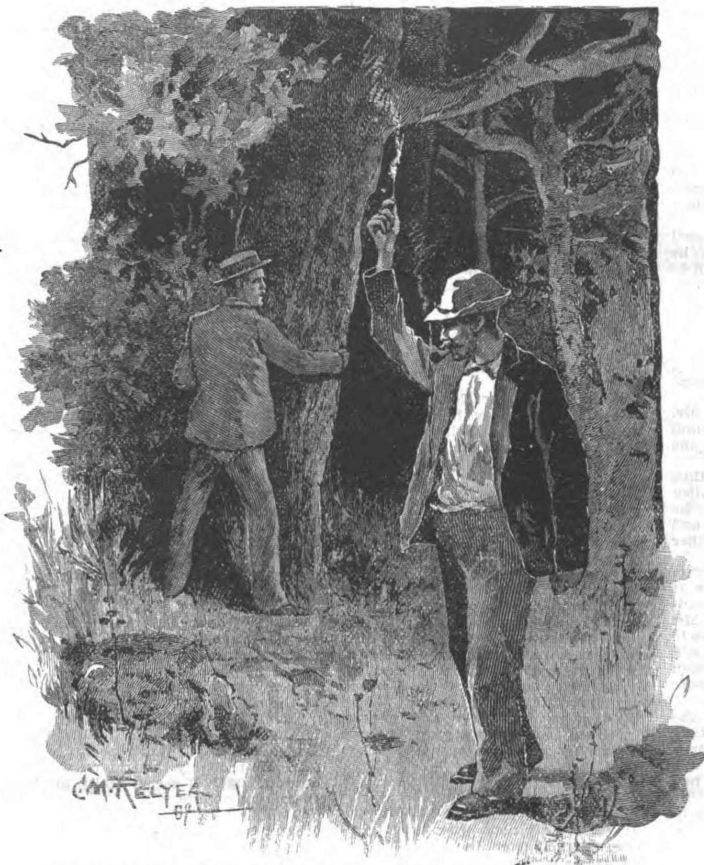
"Oh, murder! Let go my hand. You've broken my wrist," he sobbed writhing about in his efforts to break away.

"Boys, I'm astonished," came the stern voice of Mr. Quigley, and not till then did the boy release his hold, on Guilford, who shrank back into his seat again

whimperingly.

At this Ogle stooped and picked up the knife from the floor.

"Now, Mr. Green," said the teacher to a gentleman who accompanied him, "you will perceive that I have some difficult spirits to deal with, though I hope in time to bring them into proper condition. This boy, who has just behaved so badly, is the child of a poor widow, and I hope you will look leniently upon his transgression. His mother is obliged to work even beyond her strength in her efforts to keep her family of three children together."



HE HUGGED THE TREE TRUNK MORE CLOSELY, BUT WAS AFRAID TO MOVE.

said Mr. Quigley, as Guilford approached. "Glad to have you with us once more, though I fear that you will find the school here vastly different from the one you attended last year in the city."

He rubbed his hands and bowed, a deferential smile upon his face as he spoke, and the rich man's son replied carelessly: "Oh, some different, I expect, but there is some freedom here. A city school is to much like a military camp for me. I have been homssick for the old free and easy times I have had here."

"Of course, you are aware of the new order of things which go into effect to-

Immediately the sound of the bell ceased, and a boy's form appeared in the narrow doorway.

"You told me to ring till you said stop," said the boy sturdily, a dissatisfied look in his dark eyes. "How did I know without you tellin' me?"

"Oh, well, you know now," snapped Mr. Quigley. "Go in and take your seat."

As the boy entered the school room he met the gaze of Guilford Stanton bent upon him.

"Shades of Momus!" exclaimed Guilford in an audible whisper. "From whence comest thou?"

Mr. Quigley, as was his habit, threaded his long, slim fingers together, and rolled his light eyes toward his companion in a beseeching manner.

The two men were in striking contrast. Josiah Quigley was tall, angular and stoop shouldered, with a nose decidedly aquiline (Roman, he called it) and a breadth of cheek bone that made his thin cheeks painfully deficient, while Mr. Green was short and rotund, with a florid face, ornamented with tufts of gray side whiskers.

"He doesn't look a mite like a widow's son," returned Mr. Green, adjusting his gold bowed glasses, and looking intently at Guilford Stanton. "He has every indication of belonging to well to do people."

Mr. Quigley laughed nervously. "I hardly understand you, Mr. Green," he said. "Ogle, come here."

The boy, still holding the knife in his hand, rose to his feet and started forward, when Mr. Green spoke quickly.

"That is not the culprit. That well dressed lad, who seems to be in some sort of physical agony, is the guilty one. Call him out, too."

With apparent reluctance Mr. Quigley did so, and with a crestfallen air Guilford arose and came slowly forward.

"Boys," said Mr. Green gravely. "This is very unseemly conduct indeed, and I hope there will be no repetition of it."

"He twisted my hand 'most off," said Guilford falteringly. "I couldn't keep from crying out."

"Yes, that's a fact," interrupted Mr. Quigley hastily. "Ogle, I shall be forced to punish you severely."

A silence like that of death rested upon the schoolroom. Every eye was turned upon Mr. Green as he raised his hand quickly.

"No," he said, in a tone that caused the teacher to wince as though he had been struck a blow, "you will do no such thing. The door was a trifle ajar, and I witnessed the whole proceeding. The other deserves the punishment."

"W-h-y! That is Mr. Stanton's—your partner's—son," replied Mr. Quigley, losing his discretion entirely in his excitement.

"That doesn't matter," returned Mr. Green. "I was a poor boy once, and struggled to make my way in the world."

Ogle straightened himself up at this, while Guilford looked more crestfallen than before. As for Mr. Quigley, he was utterly at a loss for words, and rubbed his clammy hands together with more assiduity than ever.

"Now," continued Mr. Green, "we have wasted fully fifteen minutes. It is time we were making some headway in classifying this school. Mr. Quigley, please send those two boys to their seats, and endeavor to instill into their minds the fact that men make clothes and clothes do not make men."

With a sweep of his hand the teacher bade Guilford and Ogle take their seats, and then a cursory examination of the school was made, Mr. Green stating that for years he had earned his livelihood by teaching.

He questioned the boys and girls in a quick, alert manner that fairly astonished them, and then had each one write his or her name and age in a book which he had brought for that purpose.

By this time Guilford Stanton had recovered his usual self possession, and answered the questions with so much confidence and general accuracy that even Mr. Green was delighted, and seemed to have forgotten entirely the unpleasant little episode of the early morning, while Mr. Quigley was continually rubbing his hands together and smiling.

When Guilford wrote his name and age—Guilford Herbert Stanton, 15—it was such a combination of flourishes and shadings that for a moment Mr. Green seemed puzzled, and the boy actually thought he was lost in admiration at the masterpiece.

"I expected better work than that," said Mr. Green gravely, and passed on to the next, leaving Guilford in a half dazed condition.

When he came to Ogle he asked him if he could write.

"Dunno as you can call it real writin'," replied the lad. "I never went to school much."

He took the pen and braced himself for a supreme effort.

"Whole name?" he asked, after he had dipped the pen carefully in the ink and tried the point on his thumb nail.

"Yes, write it in full," replied Mr. Green, and the boy bent to his work.

"Ogle V. Wentworth, 14," he managed to make in quite legible characters after considerable effort.

"What is the V. for?" asked Mr. Green. "I would like all names written out fully."

Ogle shook his head. "Dunno," he answered and Mr. Green must needs be content.

"Your writing is actually better than young Stanton's," he said, much to Guilford's discomfiture at which Mr. Quigley expostulated earnestly.

"Better business hand today," retorted Mr. Green.

"I can draw a good deal better'n I can write," said Ogle, gaining confidence from the praise his penmanship had received.

Mr. Green smiled and drew a card from his pocket.

"What can you draw?" he asked.

"Anything," replied the boy. "Mostly men an' horses."

"Draw me," said Mr. Green, handing him an elegant gold pencil.

Without a word of objection, Ogle took the proffered pencil and card, and laying the latter upon the desk began at once, merely casting his eye now and then upon his model.

In a few moments he passed the card back to the waiting supervisor, who could scarcely suppress an outbreak of laughter as he gazed upon it.

There he was, certainly, though every point was greatly exaggerated. His portly form would have done credit to Falstaff, his double chin was a marvel and the seal on his fob chain was of about the dimensions of an ordinary fatiron.

With a great effort Mr. Green said with all the gravity he could command: "Yes, you can draw, that's a fact," and putting the card in his pocket he proceeded with his examinations.

When he had concluded these he made a little speech, in which he said:

"And now, my dear scholars, I want you all to strive diligently. Depart yourselves as becomes young ladies and gentlemen, and remember that you are the future hope of our country. I am going to offer two prizes, one to the girls, the other to the boys, to the ones that make the greatest advancement during the term, taking everything into consideration. I shall visit you frequently and watch over you with great anxiety."

Folding up his books and papers, Mr. Green took his departure without announcing what the proposed prizes would be.

CHAPTER II.

GUILFORD STANTON'S REVENGE.

It was nearly noon when the supervisor emerged from the school house, and as he walked away he drew the card bearing the caricature of himself from his pocket.

As he looked upon it he broke into a hearty laugh.

"That boy is a genius," he said, replacing the card, "but I am afraid his grotesque appearance is going to make trouble for him among those mischievous boys. Josiah Quigley is no more fitted to teach that school than a Cannibal Islander is to run an orphan asylum."

Then he felt carefully in his pocket. "I wonder where I left my pencil," he said after a fruitless search. "Did that Wentworth boy give it back to me?"

He stopped and stood irresolute for

a moment, undecided whether to go back or not, for the pencil had been a gift to him.

"I will question them at my next visit," he said, turning about again. "I may possibly find it in some of my pockets."

As Guilford Stanton walked out of the school room at the close of the session, a number of the boys surrounded him.

"That Mr. Green is a terror, isn't he?" said one. "You were caught very neatly, weren't you?"

It was evident to Guilford that he had lost caste somewhat, and he determined to make an effort to regain his former position.

"Now I tell you what it is, boys, you hold on and give a fellow a chance," he said. "That young Ogle, whatever his name is, was the cause of it all. I'll even up matters with him, see if I don't."

One of the boys, about Guilford's age, laughed a little incredulously at this.

"He seemed to rather get the better of you, Gil, this forenoon," said the latter, who was the son of the foreman at the mill. "By the way he twisted your hand I should advise you not to trifle with him."

Guilford flushed angrily. "Don't be hasty in your judgment, Caleb Dodge," he cried hotly. "See, there comes this Mr. Big Breaches now. I think I'll interview him."

As he said this, Guilford slackened his pace as did the rest of the little group, and the queer looking boy, whose clothing seemed to have outgrown him, overtook them presently.

As he was hurrying by, young Stanton laid a detaining hand upon his arm.

"Say, young man," he said, as the boy stopped, "who is your tailor? We fellows would like to follow your fashion in clothing. It is odd and unique."

The other boys laughed at this and Ogle struggled to free himself from Guilford's clutch.

"Oh, don't be in a hurry," continued the latter. "See, you've torn your coat now. It's a pity to injure such expensive clothing."

There was a dangerous look in Ogle's eyes as he wrenched himself clear from Guilford's grasp, though he did so at the expense of one sleeve of his coat, which was torn from shoulder to cuff.

For a moment he fixed his blazing eyes full upon his tormentor, and his brown fists were clinched threateningly. Then a sudden pallor overspread his face; he gasped, as though he were choking, turned and fled along the sloping street at a pace that made the rag of his torn sleeve flutter like a black flag.

The boys burst into a derisive shout, as the stumpy figure of Ogle sped rapidly away, wholly unmindful of where he placed his feet, incased in a pair of woman's garters, badly broken at the sides.

"H-h-h-estly, Guilford, you frightened him 'most to death," said Caleb Dodge, "but it didn't seem hardly fair. He probably thought we were all on your side. It seems really too bad to torture anyone so."

"Bah!" retorted Guilford. "Such creatures have no feeling except the sense of physical pain. Don't waste any sympathy on him. Now we've got to contrive some way to circumvent this Green, with his new fangled notions. He must have been a daisy teacher. Josiah's all right if they'll let him alone."

"I don't see how we are going to accomplish a great deal, without too much risk," replied Caleb dubiously.

"If I grasp the situation properly, Quigley realized that, unless he carries out these amendments to the constitution, he will have to yield up the scepter."

"I'll arrange that," said Guilford. "Come to school as early as possible this afternoon and we'll have a chance to perfect our plans against the tyrants."

They separated, Guilford feeling that he had recovered the lost ground.

As for Ogle, when he dashed away with such haste, his heart was nearly bursting with rage, while the tears were streaming from his eyes and trickling down over his face. In his headlong haste he nearly ran into a man as he turned a corner.

"Good gracious! What has happened?" cried the gentleman, as Ogle bounded past him, but the boy paid no heed to his ejaculation.

"Why, it's that queer boy at Quigley's," said the man, who was no other than Mr. Green. "I wonder what is the matter with him. Surely that is not a proper way to return from school."

At this moment, however, Ogle cared very little for the opinion of others. Straight on he went toward the great new mill, with its painted walls, and wooden towers, till he reached a narrow alleyway, down which he darted with a flutter of rags. Another moment, and he had reached a low door in a rickety little building.

"Mother," he cried, pushing open the door and rushing into the room like a miniature whirlwind. "I can't do what you want me to. It'll kill me."

A weary looking woman ceased her work at the washtub, and turned toward the sobbing boy.

"What is it, Ogle?" she asked, in a hopeless sort of tone. "What has happened to you now?"

"The boys have been plaguin' me and I'd promised you I wouldn't fight," replied the boy, stifling the sobs that rose in spite of him.

"And is it a pleasure for you to fight, my son?"

There was such a reproachful tone in her voice as she asked this question that it touched the heart of Ogle at once, and he answered in quite a different spirit:

"No, mother, I don't want to fight, but a boy they call Guilford Stanton, and whom the teacher seems to think a pile of, has been pickin' on me. He grabbed me by the arm, see, and tore my coat and made fun of me, and—and I couldn't hit him, 'cause I said I wouldn't. I almost did, though."

"Guilford Stanton!" repeated the woman. "That must be the son of the mill owner. He owns this place we live in. Don't have any trouble with him, above all things. You must have schooling this spring, poor boy, and by and by perhaps I can get you some better clothing. The suit you have on was your father's."

The patient face of the woman was full of sorrow as she spoke, and she did not see the sudden gleam that came into Ogle's eyes.

"Where is my father?" he asked eagerly. "Why do the boys call me jail bird and convict? I haven't killed anybody."

Such a look of horror came into the face of the woman at these words that the boy was appalled.

"Don't talk so," she gasped, "don't say such things as that. I cannot tell you where your father is; I do not know. Perhaps he is dead."

She wrung her hands and sank sobbing into a broken chair. Ogle looked at her wonderingly, and then went slowly to where she sat.

"Don't cry, mother," he said. "I'll promise you anything. I won't fight, unless I have to, and I won't ask where father is, but some day I am going to find out."

"Don't try to find out," she said vehemently. "Think that he is dead."

"Why, mother," said the boy pityingly. "What is the matter? I can remember father, and he was always pleasant. And then he went away. That was when Grace was a baby and I was four and Mabel two. You know then you 'most died and there was a lot of people came to the house and they all said 'poor woman' when they spoke of you. They took me away, you know, and I didn't see you again for a long time. Then we went to live in Portland for a while, don't you remember?"

The rambling talk of the boy seemed to have no effect on Mrs. Wentworth. She sat staring hard at the floor, till a low call from an adjoining room roused her.

"It's Mabel," said Ogle. "How is she today?"

"No better," replied the woman hastily, rising from the chair and going with swift steps toward a door.

This she opened and entered the room, which was nearly bare of furniture, save a bed of the poorest possible description and a chair. On the former lay the shrunken form of a girl of twelve, and in the chair by the bedside sat a child of ten.

"She's asleep," said the little watcher, holding up a warning finger. "She's talking in her sleep."

The woman drew a breath of relief, and gazed down into the pinched face of the invalid. Then she stepped softly from the room again on tiptoe. "Is she worse?" asked the boy.

The mother shook her head.

"No, I think not," she replied. "She's asleep now. If you'll take off your coat Gracie will try to mend that sleeve while I get your dinner."

"Yes, mother, I s'pose I must be back by quarter to one to ring the first bell. I'll get half a dollar a week for doing that."

He slipped off his coat as he spoke, and carried it into the room where his two sisters were, the sick one still sleeping fitfully.

Without a word the child took the garment and, procuring needle and thread, went to work with all the skill of a woman grown, while Ogle returned to the outer room where his mother was busy preparing dinner.

While the hungry boy was satisfying the demands of his appetite, little Gracie worked away on the torn sleeve, and by the time Ogle had finished his meal she had completed her task, and the long rent was closed.

As she turned the coat over in her lap something glittering slipped from an outer pocket and glided down into the work basket at her feet, where it lay hidden by the scraps of cloth and spools with which the basket was half filled.

"That's just as good as ever," said Ogle, as he donned the repaired garment. "Gracie's a treasure, isn't she nother? Now I'll carry home that washing for you, and then I'll be off for school."

He lifted a heavy basket of clothes as he spoke and bore it off with some effort.

"Good by," he said, as the door closed behind the queer little figure in her overgrown garments.

With a sigh, Mrs. Wentworth stepped softly into the room where her sick child lay, still sleeping, a hectic flush on her wasted cheeks.

"Gracie," said the woman gently, "I will sit by Mabel while you eat your dinner. She seems to sleep the best today that she has for weeks, perhaps the worst is over."

Silently the little watcher left the room, and the tired mother sank wearily into the chair.

"Poor Ogle," she said to herself, "I don't wonder he is dissatisfied. If Mabel improves I'll fix him up some better clothing. The weather will be warmer soon."

CHAPTER III.

THE TABLES TURNED ON GUILFORD. As for Ogle, his happy spirits soon returned, and he commenced whistling a lively tune as he trudged along. The clear birdlike notes issued from his lips in a fantastic melody, a gentleman stopped and listened, a leasid smile on his rosy face.

It was Mr. Green, and as he watched the boy, he muttered:

"There's youth and happiness for you, in spite of his uncouth habits." Then as Ogle turned a corner and passed from sight he continued reflectively:

"Why didn't I ask him about the pencil? But there, I was so taken up with that unique music that I forgot everything else."

As soon as Ogle had delivered his basket of clothes, he hastened to the schoolhouse. He was just in time, and a moment later the bell sounded its first call for the afternoon session.

Soon the pupils began to assemble again, among them Guilford Stanton and Caleb Dodge.

"I tell you what it is, Caleb," said the former, "poor old Quigley has bitten off more than he can chew. See him standing in the doorway now, Doesn't he look sick?"

At this the boys burst into a loud laugh, and Mr. Quigley glanced at them uneasily.

"I am glad to see you happy," he said, rubbing his palms together as though to stimulate the circulation. "I have a presentiment that we are going to have a very pleasant term of school when we once get accustomed to the new regulations."

"Oh, yes," replied Guilford, "I haven't a doubt but what we will have a pleasant time of it. At least, we shall endeavor to have."

Shortly after, school was called and the scholars took their places with more or less alacrity, Ogle marching to his seat with a defiant glance at Guilford and his companions.

The afternoon exercises had only fairly commenced, when in walked Mr. Green.

"You will see me here quite often," he said pleasantly, "for the first few days, as I am anxious that this shall be the banner school of the town. I wish to impress it upon your minds that the time spent in study is as good and better than money invested for your future use."

Guilford Stanton was at a loss how to proceed. It galled him to think that the eyes of all the more unruly boys were upon him, and he thought so much on this matter that he made a very poor showing in scholarship, gaining a reprimand from Mr. Green on his lack of attention, while Ogle was praised for the promptitude with which he answered Mr. Quigley's questions.

"Persevere, my little man," said the supervisor, patting him upon the head, "and some day you will occupy an honored position."

"He calls him a little man because of the men's clothing he wears, I suppose," whispered Guilford to the next boy, but Mr. Green's quick ear caught the sound.

"Mr. Quigley" he said severely, "put a black mark down against Master Stanton." Then he turned toward Guilford, who reddened with confusion.

"You must be more careful, or your chances for winning the prize will be very slight. Department is one of the essential things in scholarship."

At this Caleb Dodge could scarcely help laughing outright. But he did manage to keep a straight face, while Mr. Green turned to Ogle.

"Do you remember," he asked, "what became of a gold pencil with which you drew a picture upon a card for me this forenoon? I cannot find it, and, as I prize it very highly, I feel quite anxious about it."

Ogle tried to think. He recollected the pencil perfectly, but beyond that he was wholly at a loss.

"I dunno," he said at length, shaking his head slowly. "Didn't I give it back to you?"

"I am quite positive that you did not," replied Mr. Green. Then, addressing the school, he said:

"Does any scholar know where the pencil is? It was a gift from a niece of mine, and I value it much more than its intrinsic worth."

For a moment no one responded. Then Guilford Stanton raised his hand.

"If you please," he said respectfully, "I saw Ogle Wentworth put it in his pocket."

The accused boy sprang to his feet like a young panther, his dark eyes blazing, his hands clenched.

"You lie!" he cried passionately. "You know that's not so!"

All the fierce traits of his young

nature were roused, and he glared upon the rich man's son as though he would annihilate him.

A silence fell upon the school, so deep, that even the hands of Mr. Quigley could be heard rubbing together. Every scholar seemed to hold his or her breath, and all eyes were turned upon Guilford Stanton. The latter did not seem in the least disturbed, but met the inquiring gaze of Mr. Green without a tremor.

"What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Quigley, finding his voice at length. "Master Stanton, are you positive of what you say?"

"Yes, sir," replied Guilford coolly. "When Mr. Green turned away, after this boy gave him back the card, I saw Ogle, as they call him, pick the pencil up from the desk and slip it into the breast pocket of his coat. If you don't believe it, look and see."

The expression of Ogle's eyes was absolutely frightful.

"You can look and see," he said in a voice strained and high.

Mr. Green was greatly disturbed. He glanced first at Ogle, who was trembling as though smitten by intense cold, and then turned his eyes upon Guilford, upon whose face rested a smile of confidence.

"I mean just what I say," said the latter. "Perhaps he doesn't wish to be searched."

Mr. Quigley glided forward and inserted one of his hands in the pocket designated. An anxious look came into the face of Guilford as the teacher's hand came forth empty.

"There is nothing in that pocket," said Mr. Quigley. "I am afraid Master Stanton was mistaken."

"Rather a serious mistake to make," said Mr. Green gravely, after all Ogle's pockets had been examined. "A person cannot be too careful how he accuses another of wrong doing. Now I will give any one a reward of five dollars for the recovery of the pencil."

With these words he left the school-room.

Guilford seemed somewhat ill at ease during the remainder of the afternoon, and when school was dismissed Caleb Dodge came close to his side as he walked along the street.

"Did you really see him pocket the pencil?" asked Caleb.

"Hush," said Guilford in a low tone. "Keep it strictly to yourself. I picked the pencil up from his desk, and when I caught him by the arm I slipped it into his pocket. So you see I knew what I was talking about, and—murder! Oh-h!"

He threw his hands up to his face and fell heavily against the fence, while Caleb, who had been shoved back by someone, with difficulty kept his feet.

There, with his hands clinched and eyes blazing, stood Ogle.

"You called me a thief! You said I stole that pencil," he cried, his face flushed with anger. "I'll—" then his cheeks grew white, the look in his eyes changed from anger to one of fear, so it seemed to Caleb, and without another word he dashed away, his clothing flapping about his form like a loose sail.

"Whew!" ejaculated Caleb, while Guilford still pressed his hands to his face. "What a young tiger. Did he hurt you much, Gil?"

"One of my eyes feels as though it was put out," groaned Guilford. "Why didn't you stop him?"

"I didn't know he was going to attack you," replied Caleb. "He came like a meteor, and then ran as though he were frightened."

Still holding his hand to his face, Guilford proceeded homeward. Somehow, everything seemed to work wrong. When he reached home his father had an errand for him to do in the next town. This gave him a walk of three miles and while he was gone a thunder storm occurred which delayed his return till after dark.

He took a short cut through the woods and when in the very midst of them he was terribly startled by

coming into violent collision with a man walking in the opposite direction.

The fellow recoiled and swore savagely, threatening to "do up" the individual who had jostled him.

Guilford dodged to one side, greatly terrified. He hugged a tree trunk, hoping to escape in the darkness.

The next instant his heart jumped into his throat. There was a sharp scratching sound and a tiny flame illuminated the darkness.

The man had struck a match and seemed to be looking for him. He was a most repulsive appearing fellow and Guilford's heart sank within him. He hugged the tree trunk more closely, but was afraid to move around to the other side lest his foot should strike a crackling twig.

He expected to be discovered every instant, but suddenly a gust of wind blew out the match. Guilford took to his heels and did not stop till he was within his own gate. He little recked the connection the tramp was to have with Ogle Wentworth.

As for Ogle, as soon as he realized what he had done, his anger all departed.

"I told mother I'd never, never fight," he said remorsefully. "I wish I hadn't tried to go to school. If I don't tell her I suppose she'll find it out in some way."

He walked very slowly as he came near home. With all his roughness of exterior, the boy had a loving heart, and to please his mother he had agreed to attend school all he possibly could. He never could quite understand why she should insist so strenuously that he should never, no matter what the provocation, engage in combat with the other boys.

Being of a naturally pugnacious temperament, Ogle oftentimes found it a hard matter to obey his mother in this, for flight was the only alternative, and by this means he had gained the name of being a coward, which cut his pride sorely.

So, scarcely knowing what to say, he entered the dingy room where his mother was still at work. She looked up, saying quickly in a startled manner:

"Why, Ogle, what is the matter? You look frightfully."

"The boys at school," he answered stammeringly, and then stopped.

"What did they do? Strike you?"

He shook his head.

She gave a sigh of relief.

"Don't mind what they say to you," she said coaxingly. "Try to bear it. It will be such a great thing for you if you can get some learning. A young man has no chance whatever in the world without it."

The boy's face flushed hotly.

"But they called me a thief, mother," he returned. "Mr. Green gave me a gold pencil to draw on a card with, and I don't know what became of it. This afternoon he asked me about it, and Gil Stanton said he saw me put it in my jacket, and they searched me just as though I was a thief."

The boy's breath came in gasps as he finished, and his eyes shone with anger.

"Did you have any trouble with this Stanton boy after school?" asked Mrs. Wentworth in a low tone.

"I—I struck him," faltered Ogle. "I got near him and couldn't help it. I'm awful sorry."

The woman's face grew white as marble, and her breath seemed to forsake her.

At this moment Gracie came running from the inner room, holding something tightly in her hand.

"Oh, mama," she cried eagerly. "See what I found in the work basket. Isn't it pretty?"

A cry of horror burst from the lips of Ogle, as the child held up a glittering object for her mother's inspection.

"It's Mr. Green's pencil," gasped the boy, starting forward. "Where did it come from?"

"It must have slipped from your coat pocket while Gracie was mend-

ing it," said the woman in a strange, harsh tone. "Ogle, did you tell me the truth? Did you steal this pencil? Are you sure it is his?"

Mechanically she took the gold pencil from the hand of the child. Yes, there on the side was engraved:

"To Albion Green, from his niece."
Ogle said not a word, but his young face was fairly convulsed by his conflicting emotions.

What was he to do now? How could he sweep aside the evidences of guilt that stared him in the face?

(To be continued.)

[This Story began last week.]

Belmont;

OR,
MARK WARE'S COLLEGE LIFE.

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT,
Author of "Dirkman's Luck," "Brad Mattoon," "The Crimson Banner," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

A TRYING INTERVIEW.

Mark was so taken aback that he could not speak. A brief silence followed the president's question. Then, disconcerted as he was, Mark could not but feel how fatal to him his confusion must be.

Every second of silence was counting against him. With a strong effort he succeeded in mastering his feelings.

"Dr. Drayton," he said as calmly as he could, "if you mean can I deny that I have cheated in the examination or attempted to cheat, I say most emphatically yes—I can and do deny it."

Dr. Drayton raised his eyebrows.

"Then this note—"

"I did not write it, sir. Why you can see if you examine it and compare it with my examination paper that it is not my handwriting."

"Quite unnecessary," answered the president sharply. "You know the note is written in simple, print letters so as to disguise the handwriting."

Mark had forgotten that. He paused a moment helplessly.

"Then I can only deny it, sir," he said. "I did not write the note."

"Mr. Ware, I am astonished at your words," said the president sternly. "Did I not tell you that you were seen to throw this note to your neighbor? Will you deny that too?"

"No, sir," answered Mark, "I did throw that note on the floor—not to my neighbor, for I was not asking for help. It was not a note of mine."

Dr. Drayton looked at Mark curiously.

"Not a note of yours—what did you mean?" he asked.

Mark paused a moment. He was growing calmer now.

"I mean that I did not write the note. I acknowledge that I threw it on the floor—"

"Quite unnecessary again—you were seen to do that," interrupted the president abruptly. "What would you be doing with a note of that kind if it was not your own?"

"Dr. Drayton, I will tell you this much to clear myself. That note was written to me during the examination and thrown into my lap. I read it and threw it on the floor at once. That is the whole story. I did not write the note and I did not give any help to the writer of it."

Mark spoke in a straightforward, honest manner and looked the president squarely in the face as he did so. Dr. Drayton responded by merely raising his eyebrows incredulously.

There was a moment's awkward silence. Evidently the president did not consider Mark's explanation worthy a reply. At this point Professor Fuller spoke.

"Mr. Ware," he said in his gentle tones, "did it not occur to you that you were almost sure to be seen throwing that note on the floor, and that it would certainly incriminate you if you were seen?"

"No, sir—not at the time. When I

read the note I was indignant at being asked to cheat. Before I thought I crumpled up the note and tossed it on the floor. I can see now what a mistake it all was—and I can see, too, how lame an explanation it makes."

"It is certainly not plausible—to say the least," remarked the president.

"I am afraid so, but I can give you no other. If I wanted to lie I could make up a great deal better story, but this is the truth, so it's all I can say, improbable as it seems."

This blunt answer of Mark's almost provoked a smile from Professor Fuller.

"Mr. Ware," said the president, "some one has cheated or attempted to cheat, and the circumstances point distinctly to you. I am very sorry to think it possible of you, for I had begun to take great interest in you. Your record in the examination was very good."

"And isn't that fact in my favor, Dr. Drayton?" urged Mark earnestly. "Why should I write that note? I didn't want any help in the examination. Why, do you not remember, Professor Fuller, that I finished and handed in my paper just a few minutes after I dropped that note? I had only a few words left to write. That ought certainly to show that I needed no help."

There was a moment's silence.

"I think that is an excellent point, doctor," said Professor Fuller. "I remember that tutor Turner brought me the note just after Mr. Ware had left the room, telling me that he had seen it thrown but a few minutes before."

"I had but a half page more to write," continued Mark eagerly. "I did not need anybody's help. Doctor, if any further proof is needed, let me ask that you put me to the test right here. I am ready to stand as thorough an examination as you may care to give me, for I know that I can prove to you that I didn't want help. That note shows that the writer was poorly prepared in Cicero. Now I am prepared and would be glad at this very moment to translate any portion of Cicero you might assign. Would not that show that there was not the faintest reason for my wanting help?"

"Mr. Ware," said Professor Fuller, "I will not put you to such a test unless Dr. Drayton requires it, for I accept your word. Your examination paper is an excellent one throughout, and not at all like that of a man who was in need of help—you remember, doctor, I said that a half hour ago."

Dr. Drayton sat thoughtfully, with knit brows for several seconds. Then he turned toward Mark with a somewhat softer expression.

"We will accept your explanation, without the test, Mr. Ware," he said. "I am very unwilling to believe ill of you, and though the circumstances point directly at you, and your explanation does not altogether clear up the matter, we will give you the benefit of all the doubt. You have done very well in your examinations and there does seem to be little reason for your asking help—but the note in your possession and thrown by you; some one wrote it—some one of your neighbors—"

"I cannot speak of that," said Mark hastily. "I can only say that I did not write it."

"We will believe you," continued the doctor. "As for the test—the future will attend to that. Your conduct and class record will be all the test we will need."

Mark's heart beat happily. It had been a trying quarter of an hour for him, and it was with indescribable relief that he thanked the president and left the room.

It was not until he was outside that he realized the strain he had sustained during that brief interview.

"Phew!" he exclaimed as he drew a long breath and paused on the stone steps at the entrance. "That was a hard slap to begin with—right in the face—and I half deserved it, too. What under the sun did I want to throw that note away for? I

might have known it would make trouble. I don't wonder they thought the worst of me. I'd been in a nice mess if it hadn't been for that good old Professor Fuller—bless him—"

A hand was laid on his shoulder at this moment. Mark looked around and found Professor Fuller just behind him.

"Come and see me, Mr. Ware," he said in his kindly manner, "I am at home almost any evening and will be glad to have you call. Dr. Drayton has told me all about you and Mr. Morgan. Bring him with you. I like to be near my boys."

Then with a pleasant smile, the professor passed on down the walk. As Mark responded gratefully, and turned away he ran plumb into Percy Randall.

"Hullo!" said Percy, "here you are again. I'm just bound for the post-office. Going my way?"

"No, I am going back to the room. Shall we look for you there tonight?"

"Why not come over to my room?" said Percy. "Then I can show you those foot ball pictures I was telling you about this afternoon."

"All right, we will, with pleasure," answered Mark.

"Come about eight o'clock. My room is over in Warburton Hall—just across the campus from Colver Hall, you know. You'll find me at No. 15, north entrance. Bring Morgan and Hollis with you."

When Mark reached his room, he found Herbert alone, Tracy Hollis and the others having gone out a few minutes before. Mark at once related to Herbert in brief the main points of his interview with Dr. Drayton, to which Herbert listened open eyed.

"Jerusalem, what a tight place for you!" he exclaimed, when Mark had finished.

"And all because I wouldn't cheat—where's the moral to a thing like that anyhow?" said Mark.

"There isn't any—it's simply blamed hard luck, that's all," answered Herbert. "You're mighty fortunate to get out of it as well as you have."

"Oh, I'm satisfied now," returned Mark, "and it won't happen again if I know myself. Any notes that come my way hereafter during examinations will lie unopened just where they—hullo, what's that?"

Mark was standing by the window, and his foot suddenly struck something on the floor. He stooped and picked it up.

"Why it's one of the canes those sophomores brought in the other night," exclaimed Herbert. "The fellow you tackled must have dropped it in the scuffle."

"That will do for a trophy," said Mark.

"Don't know about that," answered Herbert. "It will be more trouble to us than it's worth, I think. The sophomores won't rest till they get it back, and if we keep it in here we're liable at any time to have the room raided and everything smashed to atoms. We couldn't feel sure of a moment's peace."

"Well, you certainly don't propose to give it tamely up to the sophomores, do you?" asked Mark.

"No, not that—I don't know what to do."

"Suppose we ask Randall," said Mark. "He wants us to come over to his room tonight. We'll take the cane over with us and see what he says about it."

CHAPTER V.

A CALL ON PERCY RANDALL.

"Well, this beats Colver Hall," exclaimed Herbert admiringly, as Mark, Tracy Hollis and he climbed up the broad flight of stairs in Warburton Hall about eight o'clock.

"Oh, this is the crack dormitory of the college," said Tracy. "Walter Baker told me that last year. He said that there was a big crowd always on the waiting list to get apartments here. A fellow has to have money to support this style, and, even then, he may not be able to get in,

so many fellows are after the rooms. Walter didn't get in here till his junior year."

"Randall must be pretty well off," observed Herbert. "His rooms are in a good situation—see there, No. 12 right in the front, on the third floor, and facing the campus."

A rap on the door and a cheery "Come in," introduced the boys to the interior of Randall's apartments, which were all they could have anticipated—rich, handsome and comfortable, and tastefully decorated with the many knickknacks, athletic trophies, and other ornaments that give a college room its peculiar interest.

Percy Randall rose from his chair as the boys came in and threw down the paper he was reading.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he exclaimed. "If you freshmen haven't got a nerve! What in the thunder are you carrying a cane for? Don't you know that freshmen are not allowed to carry canes?"

"Oh, yes, we had heard of that," laughed Herbert, "but what were we to do? We found it in our room."

He then explained the circumstances.

"And have you three innocent freshmen carried that cane across the college campus?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's mighty lucky for you it was after dark, that's all. Didn't you know you were carrying your life in your hands? Just suppose some of the sophs had seen you?"

"What would they have done?"

"Done! Why, you poor lambs, they'd have raised the war cry 'freshman with a cane!' and in five minutes the whole college would have been on the campus—in ten minutes there wouldn't have been enough left of you to serve for a sample—here you'd better let me have that cane right away."

"Certainly—take it," said Herbert. "We brought it over to ask you what to do with it. We didn't want it in our room, but we didn't want to give it back to a soph."

"I'll keep it," said Randall, placing it in a corner, "and I'll tell the sophs where it is. That will satisfy them, and they can come and get it if they want to—or no, I know something better than that. I'll get the fellows to use it for the trial of strength."

"The trial of strength—what's that?" asked Mark.

"The big cane fight—don't you know about that? Sit down and I'll tell you. Every year about three weeks after college opens—the night of the October full moon—we have what we call the 'trial of strength' between the freshmen and sophomores. The seniors and juniors arrange it. They pick out a representative strong man from each of the two lower classes and match them in a cane fight. The juniors train the freshmen in the various tricks for a few days before the fight and the seniors do the same for the sophs. Then comes the great event, and there's lots of sport. No freshman has ever won his cane thus far, though once or twice there has been a tie and the cane is cut in half."

"Now here's a chance for big excitement. This cane belonged to the sophomores and they lost it to you. Of course they won't rest till they get it again. Make them fight for it then. Don't give it back, but put it up for the trial of strength. Your position will be: Here's your cane! If you want it back choose your man and let him take it if he can."

"Crickey, that will be sport!" exclaimed Mark. "Will you fix it to us?"

"Well, I suppose it's none of my business now," answered Randall. "I'm only a postgraduate, you know and out of most college affairs, but I'll put the seniors and juniors on the idea, and they will take hold of it fast enough. Why, it's simply immense sport is no name for it. The story of the scuffle in your room will be all over college tomorrow and everybody will look forward to

he trial of strength with additional interest when they know that the contest will be for the very cane that he sophs lost to you last night. Excitement will run 'way up.

"It's only a pity now that Ware couldn't be picked out as the man to represent your class, but that's out of the question. I never let football men go into cane fights or rushes. We need all their energies for the team. Besides, you are not heavy enough, anyhow, for the sophs are sure to put up Hammond for their man, and he weighs over 180 pounds. I'll speak to Richards, one of the seniors, and he'll pick out some big, strong fellow from your class, and get him in good shape for the fight. Richards is a crack man for a coach. He fought for his class in sophomore year and took his cane in five minutes. So much for that. Now if there are any points I can give you about college, for goodness sake let me now right away, so you won't walk into the jaws of death again without suspecting it."

"I don't believe there is much to sk," laughed Tracy Hollis. "Walteraker told us a great deal about the college before we left home. We knew we ran a risk in carrying the cane over, but it was dark and we thought we would take our chances."

Conversation then drifted on to other topics, and a pleasant hour was spent in looking over Percy Randall's pictures and talking about college matters. The three boys were eager to gather impressions of their new life, and they learned a great deal in a very short time from the breezy, rattling talk of Percy Randall. It was evident that no one knew the ins and outs of college life better than he. His comments and reminiscences as the boys examined certain pictures and trophies of his early college life, so revealed an experience in college mischief quite as thorough and extensive as in athletics.

"Do you know," said Herbert, laughing, "as I look over these things I can't help thinking of what Walteraker once said to me about you."

"What was it?" asked Percy.
"He said, 'Percy Randall was one of those fellows who is always at the bottom of scrapes and yet manages to get off easy every time. He is the leader in all the mischief of the freshman and sophomore years, but if the time he escaped scot free, when he did get caught, he managed to get out without trouble.'"

"alter said he thought you must have had a pull with the faculty," Randall laughed heartily.
"No, there was no pull—here it is," said. "I guess Walter hit me about right, on the whole. After I got on a baseball and football teams I was kept busy enough with sports, but before that—well, I had to have something to do you know. As for luck, by I wonder at it myself. Now here's an example. Do you see these two photographs?"

They were pictures of the front campus.

"Why one of them hasn't the old cannons in it!" exclaimed Mark.

"Yes, that's what I wanted you to notice. Those two cannons are historic landmarks on our front campus, you know. They have stood here for years. Some time ago Park allege got the notion that they had claim to them, and determined to get them. During the spring vacation of my sophomore year, a crowd of ark students came over here and stole the cannons. When our boys got back from vacation we were azy about it, and we organized a party at once, hired a boat, and went to the river to Park college one night and took the cannons right off their campus while they were all asleep. We brought them back in triumph, and put them in their places again."

"I remember reading about that trouble in the papers," said Tracy Hollis, "were you in it?"
"In it! Why certainly—with both feet. It was the best sport I ever had, and here's where my luck came in. I wanted to celebrate the return of the cannons in what I thought a proper manner, so I got some of the boys to load them on the way back. Then, just as we set them in their places, we touched them off. The result was we blew out a whole lot of windows in Burke Hall; and the uproar, together with the racket we raised on tin horns, brought Proctor Murray on the scene."

"Then we scattered. I got off scot free while the proctor nabbed poor Harry Elder and Ray Windell—two upper classmen and the most innocent and well intending fellows in the crowd. I was mighty sorry for that, for both Elder and Windell got suspended from college, and, as they were both working for high rank in class and were both on the 'varsity ball nine, they had a hard time of it living around town and trying to keep up with their classes till the faculty let them back. Meantime I, the chief offender, walked the college sod, a free man, and even Wendell didn't bear me a grudge, for it was only a short time after that he put me on the 'varsity nine—such is luck! Everything came my way, while Wendell and Elder—well, it would have gone even harder with them if the old governor hadn't interested himself in them and got their sentence remitted."

"Who is the 'old governor'?" asked Mark.
"Professor Fuller. Don't you know his name yet? By the way I saw him talking to you on the steps this afternoon. I'll bet he was asking you to come see him."
"Yes, he was. He told me he wanted Herbert and me both to come," said Mark.
"I knew it," continued Randall. "That's the old governor's way—always welcoming the new boys. You be sure to go, both of you. The old governor is the best friend you can have here at Belmont. You can always look to him for sympathy and help."

"I can easily believe that," said Mark fervently.
As it was now getting late the boys thought best to go back to their rooms.

"Come in whenever you feel like it," said Randall, as he saw them out, "and remember, Ware, I will look for you and Hollis on the ball field next Monday at noon. We begin football practice then."

A few minutes later Mark and Herbert were at the door of their own rooms, Tracy Hollis having left them at the landing.

"Hullo, something is wrong here!" exclaimed Herbert as he gave the door a push and found that it opened readily without the use of the key.

"Somebody has broken this lock!" cried Mark, fumbling at the knob, while Herbert lit the gas. The light revealed a scene of utter confusion. Furniture, rugs, and books had been tumbled about. Clothes, papers, and the various articles of bric-a-brac had been tossed around in every direction. Nothing was broken or injured, but everything was upset and displaced.

The disordered and chaotic state of the room seemed the result of a rough, hurried search for something rather than pure maliciousness, for no great damage had been done.

"Sophs again!" exclaimed Mark without a moment's hesitation.

"What for?" asked Herbert, gazing blankly at the scene of disorder.
"For us, I suppose—probably a bigger crowd of them this time—look here!" and Mark took a sheet of paper off the table. "Here is a message from them."

On the paper was scrawled in large letters: "A cane was left in this room. It belongs to a member of the sophomore class. Place it in the hands of Carroll, the janitor, within twenty-four hours or prepare for trouble."

Mark laughed.

"That's well put, isn't it?" he said. "They write; 'a cane was left in this room.' They don't say what made the owner leave it here, I notice. Well, what do you think of it?"

"I think it is just as well we were out this evening," answered Herbert.
"Much better," said Mark, "for now we don't have to say anything or do anything in reply. Randall has fixed it all for us, and tomorrow the sophomores will get their answer—and a better answer we couldn't have made; 'if they want their cane let them pick their man and fight for it.'"

CHAPTER VI.

GETTING ACQUAINTED.

Percy Randall was right. By noon the whole college knew the story of the invasion and repulse of the three sophomores by Mark and Herbert and were laughing over it.

The two boys found themselves the object of considerable attention for several days, most of which was of a flattering nature. The seniors who, as a rule scarcely deign to notice freshmen, looked at them with unusual interest, and several of them were overheard to commend the boys for their grit. The juniors, the traditional guardians of the freshmen, made great sport of the affair, and rubbed it into the sophomores unmercifully. The sophomores continued their hostility towards Mark and Herbert for only a few days more, and in that time they made no more serious a manifestation of it than calling at them and guying them as they went about the campus to their class exercises. The two boys bore this unconcernedly, for they knew that they had the laugh on the sophomores, and they knew that their own position was a strong one.

For several evenings they were a little uneasy in their rooms, however, for they rather expected another visitation, but the sophomores had apparently abandoned the idea of molesting them. Perhaps Percy Randall may have spoken of Mark's ability as a football player and expressed his intention to make a trial of him on the team, so inspiring a feeling of wholesome respect for him. Whatever may have been the cause, the boys were left in peace in their room, and even the guying to which they were subjected wherever they went, ceased when the sophomores found it had no apparent effect upon them.

Not that the feeling between the classes had in the least subsided—far from it. It was merely a lull, that was all. The sophomores had been stirred up to the wildest excitement by the answer they had received to their message concerning the cane. The juniors, who now held the cane in custody, conveyed the challenge to the sophomores, and in a tone calculated to tease and chagrin them as much as possible. They picked out their man at once, their heavy weight champion Hammond, as Randall had predicted, and vauntingly called for the best man of the freshman class to meet him.

The juniors set about their work at once, studying the freshmen closely to find a suitable antagonist among their ranks to match against Hammond. A few days' search and Richards announced that he had found the right sort of man.

"His name is Rogers, and he rooms somewhere out in town. I can't quite make out where," said Richards.
"But I'll run him into his hole in a day or so. He's just the stuff exactly. He's fully six feet, two inches high, broad shouldered, and big boned. I'll bet he weighs 180 pounds, and he hasn't a bit of fat on him. He's as brown as an Indian and looks as if he had worked on a farm. I hope he has, for that means good lungs and lots of staying power."

Richards had guessed right. Rogers was the son of a farmer who lived about two miles outside of Belmont. Richards caught him the next afternoon just as he was setting out for his walk home, and got him up in his room to test him with measurements

and weights. Of the results of that examination Richards said very little except to his closest friends. To Randall he spoke quite freely that evening as he met him and Mark together on the campus.

"I'm not saying much about my freshman, Percy, for he doesn't need booming. If you want to see fun don't you miss the trial of strength this year, that's all. Have you noticed that fellow Rogers?"

"No," said Randall. "Is he a good match for Hammond?"

"He's a good match for anybody of his size—why, Percy, he's an ox. He has grown up on a farm, and is in splendid physical condition. His muscles are like iron, and his fingers like steel. I don't believe a machine could shake his grip on a cane. I tried him up in my room, and after about five minutes' knocking around there, I was glad to stop for the sake of the furniture."

"He's clumsy and a bit slow—that's all there is against him, and I can take that out of him, I think. I only wish it was easier to make him mad. He would fight a great deal better if he was a bit riled. He's so confidently good natured I'm afraid he won't put in his best licks. I think I'll put a burr down his back when I match him against Hammond. That will stir him up."

"Oh, you leave that to Hammond," said Percy. "You know how full of mean tricks he is. I'll warrant that he'll do something in the first five minutes that will rile your man worse than a burr."

"Well, then the fur will fly, that's all," returned Richards. "After I've got my country boy into good shape and taught him a few tricks, I'm going to bring him out for the trial of strength and give the college a surprise—don't miss it."

As Mark and Randall went on up the college walk they passed a large man of about forty years of age who nodded to Mark and said:

"Good evening, Mr. Ware."
"Who is that?" asked Mark.
"Proctor Murray," answered Randall.

"How did he come to know me already?"

"Oh, that's his business—and his secret, too. I'll bet he knows every man in your class by name before this first week is out. He has a mighty sharp eye and a memory like an elephant. He's a very inconvenient acquaintance sometimes. He has a way of popping up just when you least expect him and least want him, and knocking your plans for mischief into a cocked hat."

"Still the boys all like him, for in everything he does he is always fair, square and above board, and he has often served the fellows a good turn. He's one of the most entertaining old chaps you ever met. When you get to know him well, run down into his office under Burke Hall some time and get him to tell you some of his sailor yarns. He was a tar once and what he don't know about the ocean he makes up."

Mark was fast growing acquainted. The distinction he and Herbert had won by their encounter with the sophomores was the best introduction possible to their own classmates. Within three days the majority of their class had spoken to them and congratulated them. In this way acquaintances were readily formed.

Among his classmates Mark had looked with interest for the face of the fellow who had sat beside him in examination and asked him for help. The class which numbered about one hundred, was divided alphabetically into two sections for lecture and recitation exercises, and Mark did not see the fellow in his section. He met him, however, unexpectedly on the campus one morning and the fellow passed Mark with his cool, bold stare. On inquiring of classmates who were in the first section of the class he learned that the fellow's name was Chapin.

"Well, he got through somehow."

even if I didn't help him," thought Mark. "I don't care to know him any better, for I think he's a sneak. What did he want help for anyhow? He dresses and carries himself like a fellow of wealth, and could have prepared himself well enough to pass his examination in good style. I'll fight shy of him."

A mutual feeling of dislike prevented Mark and Chapin from knowing more of each other for some time to come.

On the whole Mark and Herbert made only pleasant acquaintances. Of course it was still too early for them to know their best friends, but in college, boys are very quick to judge of their acquaintance, and the first feelings of attraction and aversion are in most cases confirmed by later experience.

Within a week the little circle of Medford boys had drawn around them a larger circle of good fellows who formed a pleasant group and began to frequent Mark and Herbert's rooms in leisure hours. This group numbered about fifteen, and, as they seemed to be congenial, the proposition by one of them during the second week, that they should form an eating club together, met with universal favor.

Mark and Herbert had continued to take their meals at the hotel, and they were fast growing tired of the loneliness of the big dining room and the hotel fare, so they joined the party eagerly. It was customary for the eating clubs of the college to adopt some name, accordingly the boys organized as the "Epicures" and started in together the next Monday.

"Perhaps we may want to change the name when we find out what the board is like," laughed Tracy Hollis.

Teddy Binks, who had rooms in town, joined their club for his meals shortly after. Teddy had got through his examinations with only two conditions, which for Teddy was doing pretty well. These conditions stayed by him for a good while, but that didn't prevent his enjoying himself with all his heart.

The two elderly maiden aunts at whose house Teddy roomed, were a little too slow for him. His parents at Medford thought it very wise to have him room with his aunts, thus surrounding him with pleasant and safe home associations. Well, Teddy didn't "surround" at all. A month's experience with the sedate maiden relatives was as much as they could stand. They parted amiably and by mutual consent, Teddy taking a single room in Ferris Hall, one of the two small dormitories in the rear of the back campus.

There his ostensible quarters were, as Alfred Chase said: "That's where Teddy does his studying—which means that he is never there." In fact the rooms of Alfred Chase and Tracy Hollis and Mark and Herbert were his real quarters. He simply haunted their apartments, sometimes even passing the night on a sofa there.

The boys did not find their studies so very hard at first. Their preparation for college had been so thorough that it carried them along very easily for a while and it was not until the first term was half over that they began to take hold of new work.

They were now fairly launched on their college career. On the following Monday, Mark and Tracy Hollis went down to the football field as Randall had requested, and took part in the practice of the day. It didn't amount to much—just a little kicking around, and passing the ball but even that was enough to show Mark's proficiency. His long, high punts and drop kicks for the goal excited considerable comment, and quite satisfied the expectations which Randall's reports of Mark had aroused in the minds of the football enthusiasts.

Four members of last year's team had graduated the previous spring, among them a crack full back, and

the football men were very anxious to secure a suitable man for that important position. Mark seemed to be just the man needed and they welcomed him accordingly. It was after the first day or two of football practice, when Mark began to be talked about as the coming full back on the "varsity eleven," that he noticed a complete cessation of the guying and teasing on the part of the sophomores.

It was just as Percy Randall had predicted. Once a prospective member of the "varsity eleven" and he gained an importance that every man in college respected.

The team had not been chosen yet, and would not be for two weeks at least, but Mark's chances were beyond doubt, for there was no other capable competitor for the place. He was virtually adopted as a member of the team from the start, and when a practice game was played with one of the class teams during the last week of September, Mark played full back for the "varsity."

Early in October the team was chosen, and the names posted on the bulletin board in Burke Hall. Tracy Hollis was selected for one of the vacancies in the rush line, and so, with Mark for full back, the freshman class was represented by two men on the "varsity"—an unusually good showing, rarely more than one freshman ever being on the eleven.

On the same night that the team was posted the following bulletin appeared in Burke Hall as well as on several trees throughout the campus:

THE TRIAL OF STRENGTH.

Will take place next Wednesday night on the ball field at 8:30. Should it rain, the contest will be postponed till Thursday night.

Richards and several other juniors had been busy for two weeks with their man Rogers, getting him ready for the contest. Rogers had followed their instructions good naturedly, taking the whole thing as if it were a joke, like a big boy at play.

Richards, who was one of the rushers on the football team, and believed in riling a man to get good work out of him, often jokingly alluded to his first plan of using a burr on Rogers, but he finally decided to leave the stirring up to Hammond.

The big sophomore had been as carefully trained and practiced by several seniors, and everything pointed to a great struggle. Both on account of the unusual strength of the contestants, and the special interest that centered in the particular case to be fought for, the excitement was at blood heat; and from the time the bulletins appeared every college man looked forward eagerly for the great event.

In those last three days that remained the sophomores were loud, boastful, and confident. They knew little or nothing of the man that Richards was training, but they knew well the strength and agility of Hammond, and they had no fear for the results of the contest. This confidence was shared by the seniors who deemed it very unlikely that Hammond's match could be found.

The freshmen knew actually little more of Rogers than the sophomores, for Richards had about monopolized his leisure time, but they based strong hopes on Richards' assurances, and stood by their man boldly.

And so all waited anxiously—impatiently for the night of the full moon.

(To be continued.)

THE INFERENCE IS THAT THEY COULDN'T.

"DEAR ME!" exclaimed the good old lady, wiping her glasses and picking up the paper again. "What a dreadfully slow current that Chicago river must have! It says here in these headlines that a large force of men were at work all night dragging the river without success. Couldn't they make it move at all?"—*Chicago Tribune.*

NONE LEFT.

COBBLE—"How do you find trade?" SNOX—"That's the great trouble. I can't find it."—*Collier and Furnisher.*

THE SCHOOLBOY.

HAPPY the schoolboy! Did he prize his bliss,
"Twere ill exchanged for all the dazzling gems
That gayly sparkle in ambition's eye;
His are the joys of Nature, his the smile,
The cherub smile of innocence and health;
Sorrow unknown, or, if a tear be shed,
He wipes it soon, for, hark! the cheerful voice

Of comrades call him to the top or ball;
Away he hies, and clamors as he goes,
With glee, which causes him to tread on air.
—Knox.

[This Story began in No. 556.]

A Publisher at Fifteen

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

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

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ODD DELIVERANCE.

FOR one memorable instant Harry Atwin, as he gazed into the eyes of the lion, felt that he stood on the verge of eternity. Fettered as he was, he knew that he would be utterly unable to resist an attack by the brute.

"But I can bear it better to fight in some way for my own life," he thought, "than to be compelled to stand here helpless and see those boys mangled."

So he hoped that he might be the victim chosen and there did not seem to him to be any tinge of heroism in the wish either. He only realized that it would be excruciating suffering for him to see harm befall those little fellows who had come out here to the woods to play and who were now menaced by such deadly peril.

All this time—which really was not more than a few seconds, although it seemed ages to Harry, keeping his eyes fastened on those of the lion—not one of the boys had made a whimper. Their faculties appeared to be paralyzed by fright.

The beast took a step forward, straight for Harry.

"Why should he necessarily be feared?" the latter asked himself now. "Maybe he was born in captivity, or perhaps he has been trained to do tricks in the museum. What if—"

But the idea that now flashed into Harry's head seemed so preposterous that he almost laughed hysterically. And yet, as the beast advanced another step, and yet another, and so on until his cold nose touched his hand, it came over him that to a desperate man nothing that promises the faintest shadow of deliverance is hopeless.

So he nerved himself and tried not to shudder when he felt the animal's tongue on his hand. Indeed, the creature was doing nothing more than lick the flesh.

Up to this point the lion seemed docile enough. Doubtless all the spirit had been taken out of him by his years of captivity.

Suddenly he started to turn away. Was he going to one of the boys?

Harry clucked with his tongue as he would do to call a dog and endeavored to entice the brute back.

The lion panted, swung its tail strongly from side to side and looked around.

"Come here, old fellow," Harry called, coaxingly.

Even as he spoke he pictured himself relating the episode to the boys afterward—supposing he should ever have a chance to do this—and seemed almost to hear their expressions of incredulity as he told how he had tried to call the lion to him. But he still had his plan in view.

The creature hesitated for a second, and curiosity appeared to master him; he turned slowly and walked back to Harry.

The small boys, now recovered from their first stupefaction of terror, looked on at the proceedings with round eyes.

Once more the lion's nose was at

Harry's hand, close by the bands that tied them behind his back.

"If there is only some property left in my coat that will attract him," thought the young publisher, "my plan may succeed yet."

This plan was simply made up of the hope that in nosing about the strips of cloth that had been used as thongs, the lion might sever them and set the captive free. It was the wildest possible sort of hope, but what will not a man clutch at when he is in desperate straits?

"Oh, he is going to eat you," cried Larry suddenly. "If we could only get free!"

"Hush, he won't hurt me," returned Harry in a low tone. "And maybe he'll be the means of our deliverance. There! he has been!"

As he spoke, Harry brought both hands in front of him with a great sigh of relief, and then began wailing at the bands that swathed his legs. He soon had himself free of these, and leaving them for the lion to sniff at, hurried over to liberate his fellow captives.

"I think you're the bravest fellow I ever knew of, Harry Atwin!" exclaimed Larry, when it came his turn.

"Nonsense. What did I do? Nothing at all."

"You stood there and let that big monkey with his teeth around your hands," put in Bert.

"What else was there for me to do?" laughed Harry. "I couldn't get away."

"But you even called him back when he went off," persisted Larry. "I'm going to tell papa all about it and he'll put it in the paper—but he won't have any paper now to put it in," he added ruefully, the recollection of the fire recurring to him.

Percy was pretty well overcome by the fright through which he had passed, so Harry decided it would be wisest for him to accompany the boys home.

But the lion! What was to be done with him? It did not seem to be doing the correct thing by the museum people to let him go, and yet how could he conveniently be captured?

The problem, however, was solved of itself. Turning to look after the creature when he had freed the last of the boys, Harry discovered that he had wandered off into the depths of the woods and disappeared.

It was by this time fully dusk. There was no glow in the sky in the direction of Podmont, so Harry concluded the fire must have been put out.

"We can't see to pick up our soldiers now," said Larry. "We'll come back tomorrow morning and do it."

"I will if I hear that they've caught that lion," added Bert.

"You shouldn't be afraid of him," interposed Harry. "If it hadn't been for him we might all be standing there in a circle with our backs to the trunks yet."

"I know that, but somehow I'd rather see him the next time in some menagerie."

"You'll come to my house with me and see my father and mother, won't you?" said Larry to Harry. "Maybe we can send you home in a carriage."

"Yes, I will go home with you. But don't bother about the carriage. I can't get back in any other way. I can take a train down to the city and then the late one out to Canterbury."

"Why can't you stay all night with us?" asked Larry.

"I see you still want to keep me in prison," laughed Harry. "But if I stayed here what would become of the Reeveport Record? The next number ought to be issued in the morning."

"And what's going to become of the Podmont Press?" went on Larry.

"Isn't there any other paper in Podmont?" asked Harry. "Wouldn't that help your father out?"

"Yes, the Patriot, but they won't help papa, I'm sure. They're as jealous of the Press as can be and will be glad the fire happened."

"Does your father know Mr. Mims, the editor of the Canterbury Chronicle?"

"Yes, all he wants to know of him."
"If the Record's press can be of any service, he is welcome to it," added Harry, after an instant's thought. "It wouldn't be so bad for a weekly to be a day late as for a daily."

"Maybe he would like to use it," exclaimed Larry. "You're awfully good to offer it. Here's Percy's house now. Bert lives across the road, and our place is a little farther on."

The respective families to which Percy and Bert belonged were beginning to be greatly troubled about the boys when the latter made their appearance. So fearful of the same state of things at his own home, Larry did not linger to help in the explanations, but hastened on with Harry.

They met the depot carriage just turning out of the gate.

"Is that you, Larry?" cried a voice from inside.

"Papa!" shouted the boy, and the carriage stopped.

"I was just driving back into town to give notice of your absence to the police," said Mr. King. "Where have you been?"

"Is the paper all burnt out, papa?"

"Yes, but tell me what has kept you?"

"Robbers and a lion. And this is Harry Atwin of the Reeveport Record and he's been another hero this afternoon—I mean a hero again. And he says that you can print the Press with his type if you want to. And if it hadn't been for him we might have been in the woods yet."

"Go in the house and see your mother, both of you, and as soon as I put this back up, I'll come in and find out what you mean by all this, Larry. And it may be that I can accept young Mr. Atwin's kind offer."

CHAPTER XXXII.

BACK TO BEEVEPORT.

Larry had just introduced Harry to his mother when Mr. King appeared.

"What is all this about lions and robbers?" he began.

Then Larry told his story, which was listened to with breathless attention. Mr. King had read of Harry's doings; had even had a note about them in the Press.

"So you saw our big fire?" he added, after he had expressed his sense of gratitude for what Harry had done for his boy, which the young publisher had sought to avoid receiving by asking questions about the amount of damage the Press building had sustained.

"I saw it start," replied Harry. "There is a story about how that came about, too, which I haven't time to tell now, because I know you must be terribly busy. Of course you don't want to miss an issue."

"No, indeed; the Press has never done that yet, and it was started away back in the forties by my grandfather. I was going to see what arrangements I could make about getting out some sort of a sheet tomorrow morning, after I had left word with the police about this boy of mine."

"You've seen the Reeveport Record, haven't you?" asked Harry, flushing slightly. "I sent a sample copy to all the editors in the neighborhood."

"Yes, and a very neat little sheet I thought it, too. We said so in the Press at the time."

"Oh, did you! I'd like to see that notice. But you don't want to talk about my paper now, but your own. I was telling Larry that if the Record's press would be of any service to you, you would be quite welcome to it, if you could reach it in time. I'm not sure though whether I have paper enough for your edition. There may have been an extra supply sent up from the city this afternoon. But then I suppose you could get what you want done right here in Podmont much better."

"Perhaps I could," responded Mr. King, stroking his short brown beard thoughtfully, "but I am not sure that I should like to put myself under obli-

gations to any of my craft here. There would be a certain sense of triumph in issuing tomorrow morning without being beholden to any of them. We can arrange a temporary office of our own for the following day's paper. As it is, Atwin—Harry, I think I shall accept your offer with many thanks."

Although the tender of the facilities of the Record office had been made in good faith, now that the publisher of a Podmont daily had decided to avail himself of them, Harry was inclined to be somewhat nervous. It seemed quite audacious to imagine that a paper like the Press could put up with the primitive means of getting itself into existence employed by the Record. But he was in for it now, and he determined to act the host to the best of his ability.

He had no idea what the circulation of the Press might be. Probably several thousand copies daily. How it was possible for these to be run off on a treadle press in one night, he could not comprehend. But doubtless Mr. King knew what he was about.

"We ought to start at once," the latter said now. "I want to drive into Podmont first and get some paper that was stored in another place, and bring out two of my men to take turns kicking the press and set the type. Are you ready, Harry?"

Goodbye was said to Larry, and then the two publishers mounted the depot wagon and drove off through the darkness to the stricken city. It did not take Mr. King long to get what he wanted, and then, with the two men on top of the back seat and a huge bundle of paper under it, the carriage was headed for Reeveport.

Mr. King sat in front and drove, with Harry beside him, and on the way asked many questions about his young companion's method of conducting his paper.

"You have done wonderfully well," was his comment, after he had heard the history of the Record up to date. "But you must remember that novelty—"

He checked himself suddenly. "Look out there, Major," he cried to the horse, although Harry could not see that anything was going wrong with the animal.

Then Mr. King turned the conversation to the Press and discussed with Harry some particulars of the fire that would work up into an interesting "story."

It was after nine o'clock when they drove under the shadow of the elms on Broad street, Reeveport. Harry hoped Miss Griggs would not have gone to bed.

He suggested that they had better stop at Dick's house, which they would pass.

"I suppose you want all the help you can get," he said to Mr. King.

"Certainly, if it is efficient, but you know the proverb about the many cooks, Harry. And one thing more. I want you to feel that I am going to reimburse you for all the trouble I am putting you to tonight. It will not be in money and may be in a way that will not at first strike you favorably. But later now which is your friend's house?"

Harry pointed out the Stenhouses; but scarcely thought of Dick. His mind was busy pondering as to Mr. King's meaning. This was the second mystery he had given him to meditate on during the drive.

What had he been going to say when he broke off so suddenly that time to speak to the horse? And what did he mean by hinting that Harry might not like the manner in which what he was doing for the Press tonight would be rewarded? But Harry was not left long with an opportunity to puzzle over the problem. As the carriage halted in front of the gate, there was a whoop from the piazza and quick footsteps came down the gravelled path.

"Any news of Harry Atwin?" was Dick's cry as he ran.

"Harry himself," was the reply. The next instant Dick had climbed

impetuously over the dashboard and was fairly embracing his friend.

"I thought I'd seen the last of you," he exclaimed. "I went from end to end of that train and could find no sign. Then I concluded you'd forgotten something and came back here. But when I got home, rushed over to your place, next to George's, and then to Hebe's, and couldn't hear anything of you, I just sat down and got ready to mourn your untimely demise. Where have you been?"

"Can't stop to tell you now," replied Harry. "Just tumble in here if you can spend a couple of hours with me, and you shall hear all, as they say in the play. But just tell me whether you got that paper?"

"I did, and it's all ready to print from now."

"Then let me introduce you to Mr. King, publisher of the Podmont Press, who is going to get his paper out in our office tonight."

"W—h—a—t!" exclaimed Dick, so astonished that he had no strength with which to shake the hand Mr. King extended to him.

"Perhaps you haven't heard of the fire," said that gentleman.

"What fire?" gasped Dick, still too dazed to be anything but blunt.

"Two blocks of Podmont burned to the ground a few minutes after you left," replied Harry. "You missed a great sight, I tell you."

"But how in the name of the seven wonders did you miss that train?" Dick wanted to know.

"That's another story," as Kipling says, and thereby hangs quite a long and exciting tale. Here we are though. Perhaps I'll have a chance to tell it to you before you sleep tonight."

There was not a light in Miss Griggs's dwelling. Harry had no latch key. Indeed the door was never locked in day times and none of the inmates were supposed to stay out at night.

Harry sprang over the wheel and rapped smartly on the door. No answer. He rapped again, harder this time. Still no response.

He began to feel very uncomfortable. Mr. King and his men were already waiting impatiently behind him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LOCKED OUT.

"What's the matter?" asked Mr. King. "Isn't there anybody in the house?"

"There must be," replied Harry. "Miss Griggs would never go out and leave the place alone. Even before I came, when she had to go down street, she would always ask one of the neighbors to come in and watch things while she was gone."

Harry punctuated his explanations with another rapping, louder than any that had preceded it. His first assertion was verified by the sound of a scream coming from one of the rear rooms.

"She thinks it's burglars, Harry," Dick crept up to whisper. "She doesn't keep any firearms in the house, I hope."

"No, indeed. She'd be more frightened of them than at the burglars. I wish I could make her understand what it is. You stay here with Mr. King while I go around and try."

"Do be careful, my boy. There's no knowing what a nervous woman, awakened out of a sound sleep, may do when she thinks she has house-breakers to deal with."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of her," replied Harry, confidently, as he started off.

Indeed, he was more afraid of Mr. King. What must be the latter's feelings at this delay when every moment was precious.

Miss Griggs's sleeping room was in the second story, left hand side in the rear. Below this window Harry now stationed himself and began calling up, in tones designed to inspire confidence, "Miss Griggs, oh, Miss Griggs, it's I, Harry Atwin. I want to get in. Won't you please open the door?"

No response whatever; not even a scream.

Harry grew impatient. "Miss Griggs," he called out more stridently, "Please open the door. It's very important that I get in."

Still silence in the upper room. Thinking that possibly the old lady might have gone to the front hall to let him in, he hurried back to the other side of the house, only to find the door barred as inexorably as ever.

Mr. King took out his watch and tried to see what time it was by the light of the stars. It was becoming more and more difficult for him to conceal his impatience.

"Isn't this the most exasperating thing possible to imagine?" Harry whispered to Dick. "Here I've invited Mr. King to come all the way from Podmont to set up his paper in my office, and now I can't get in."

"Come, let's play a regular tattoo on the door," suggested Dick.

"That won't be of any use. You see she isn't asleep. The scream we heard proves that."

"Why doesn't she let you in then?"

"She's afraid. Thinks it's burglars, and the more noise we make, the more terrified she will become."

"Can't we steal in ourselves, then? Isn't there some window you know of with an insecure fastening?"

"Not one. She's too timid of thieves for that. And the queer part of it is that the only really valuable thing she owns is the house itself, and you can't expect burglars to walk off with that."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"I hardly know what to do."

"I can think of something, but I suppose it would hardly be the thing to try it."

"What is it?"

"Yell fire and scare her out with a new fright."

"That would be a last resort, and I'm not sure whether it would work either. She'd probably think it was only a trick of the enemy to gain an entrance."

"And she'd think right, wouldn't she?" laughed Dick.

But Harry did not feel like laughing. Mr. King had been hovering about with his men, and now he came up to the young publisher of the Record. "If we lose any more time here," he said, "I'm afraid we shall have to miss a publication day. If you don't succeed in getting in at once, I shall have to turn about and see what I can do among my newspaper neighbors in Podmont."

"I'm very sorry, Mr. King," returned Harry. "I don't—, but wait a minute or two longer. I think I've got a plan that will fetch matters now. Come Dick."

He beckoned to his friend and led the way into the yard of the house next door. This was occupied by Mr. Barmore, the painter, and out by the barn lay a ladder.

"We'll take this and put it up at Miss Griggs's window," Harry explained. "Then I'll climb up and perhaps at such close quarters, I can make her understand who I am."

"I'm glad you didn't ask me to be the ladder climber," returned Dick.

"And I'll be mighty glad if Barmore doesn't wake up and see us walking off with his property. I'll explain about it in the morning."

The ladder was conveyed around to the adjoining house and set up against Miss Griggs's window. Mr. King and his men followed the two boys to watch the working of the new plan.

The top round of the ladder came just high enough to bring the crown of Harry's head on a level with Miss Griggs's window sill. This wasn't all that could have been desired, but, as Dick called up consolingly, it put him out of range of a possible bullet from the bed.

The shutters were closed, and on these Harry proceeded to rap smartly. Then he paused and hearing nothing, called out in his most wheedling tones:

"Don't be afraid, Miss Griggs. It's only Harry Atwin whom you've locked out. Won't you please open the front door for me?"

(To be continued.)



PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

THE SUBSCRIPTION PRICE OF THE ARGOSY IS TWO DOLLARS PER YEAR, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE. FOR THREE DOLLARS WE WILL SEND THE ARGOSY TWO YEARS.

CLUB RATE—FOR THREE DOLLARS WE WILL SEND TWO COPIES OF THE ARGOSY ONE YEAR TO SEPARATE ADDRESSES.

DISCONTINUANCES—THE PUBLISHER MUST BE NOTIFIED BY LETTER WHEN A SUBSCRIBER WISHES HIS PAPER STOPPED. THE NUMBER WITH WHICH THE SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES APPEARS ON THE PRINTED SLIP WITH THE NAME. THE COURTS HAVE DECIDED THAT ALL SUBSCRIBERS TO NEWSPAPERS ARE HELD RESPONSIBLE UNTIL ARREARAGES ARE PAID AND THEIR PAPERS ARE ORDERED TO BE DISCONTINUED.

REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS—NO REJECTED MANUSCRIPT WILL BE RETURNED UNLESS STAMPS accompany IT FOR THAT PURPOSE.

FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY
Publishers,
155 East 23d Street, New York.

A Curious Companion.

BY GEORGE KING WHITMORE,

Author of "Freed Acton's Mystery," etc., etc.

This is the new serial, to begin next week in THE ARGOSY. Starting out in a town in one of the Middle States, the scene will shift later to Chicago and the World's Fair, detailing the experience there of Al and Max, in company with the strange companion with whom they are thrown in the opening chapters. While the interest of the story does not depend upon the Exposition feature, this being an episode in the plot merely, part of the action being placed there infuses an element of freshness into the narrative and brings it most happily "up to date." The author writes from a personal visit to the Fair at the time he introduces his characters to the gay scene.

MUNSEY'S for October is sparkling with bright articles, beautiful pictures and fascinating stories. It contains over one hundred pages and sells for 10 cents.

A Great Announcement.

The Price of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE Cut From Twenty Five to Ten Cents a copy. Subscriptions Now a Dollar a Year.

On the fifteenth page of this issue of THE ARGOSY, our readers will find an announcement of extraordinary character. It tells of a cut in price of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE to less than half the former figure, without any falling off whatever in the quality or quantity of the magazine itself.

The publishers have been looking towards this reduction for more than a year, and have been making preparations for it. The step has not been taken hastily. This sweeping departure will result in no falling of in quality or quantity. On the contrary the matter will be of higher grade and there will be more of it. MUNSEY'S has established a reputation for two things, namely—the superior excellence of its illustrations and the realness of its contents. Beyond this the publishers' ambition has not gone; beyond this there is little that appeals to the great body of intelligent readers.

The new club rate for MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE and THE ARGOSY will be \$2.50 for both periodicals.

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

EASY WORK.

WITH so much talk as there has been of late about the hard times and the great army of the unemployed, it seems strange that there should be complaints from men who had work to be done and who were unable to obtain hands to do it. But such was the cry that came up from the countryside during the harvest time just passed.

Farmers were obliged to gather in their crops as best they could, as there was no help to hire. Why was this? Simply because farming is not one of the "preferred occupations." To be sure, harvesting would offer only temporary employment, but some work is better than no work at all. And yet the idle ones through the city's street and seek for work that may have some excitement attached to it.

It is unfortunately the same with boys in many cases. Only the other day we heard a young man, who had long been out of work, declare that he would not take a position he stood some chance of obtaining because it was "too confining." He wanted something that would require him to be about among men more.

It cases where one has a natural aptitude for a certain line, of course an effort should be made to secure work in this field, but where there are no such limitations to be considered, in this age of fierce competition the boy who spurns any honest work that is offered him in hope of getting "something easier," is very apt to be a laggard in the race and not be placed at all at the finish.

MUNSEY'S at ten cents is bigger, brighter, better in every way than was the same magazine at a quarter.

SOMETHING ABOUT SLEEP.

WHAT a mysterious thing is sleep! We cast ourselves each night not only fearlessly, but longingly into the arms of a goddess who woos us to helplessness and temporary annihilation.

At other times we are always on our guard. The instinct of self preservation prompts us to be constantly alert to avoid any danger that threatens to snap the chord of life. Only when slumber summons us do we become reckless as to our surroundings, and trustfully close our watch towers.

Did you ever reflect though on what a weary world this would be were it not for sleep? Even were we so constituted that we should not require the refreshment it imparts, the mind grows dizzy in contemplating the horrors of a mundane existence that possessed no periods by which its continuance might be notched off.

ON KEEPING QUIET.

DID you ever notice how often it happens when there is occasion for advice to be offered that those who know least are the most forward with their suggestions? It is the old story of the hollow vessel giving forth the loudest sound.

Why this should be so in the case of the vessel is perfectly apparent, but the reason for those who are really ignorant making all haste to expose how little they know is much further to seek.

"Keep thy tongue at rest, my son," said a Quaker to his witless offspring, "and folks will not know what a big fool thou art."

And this rule is a good one to observe in all instances.

"Of being quiet one never repents," writes a thoughtful man; "of talking he always does."

MUNSEY'S at ten cents marks the beginning of a new epoch in magazine publishing.

REASONABLE SUGGESTIONS.

FOR a good many people the season at which we have now arrived partakes more of the nature of a New Year than does the first of January. Vacation is over, not only for the schoolboy, but for the clerk, the lawyer, the minister, the business man.

The invigorating air of autumn inspires one with the desire to be active. New enterprises are now inaugurated and old ones are reorganized. As the leaves of nature fall, the hopes of man appear to rise, and everybody is full of plans for the winter.

What more suitable time than the present in which to tinker up the resolutions you formed last January and which have been candidates for the repair shop for the past eight months? You might then finish the year with flags not quite so drooping.

As for those who have never turned over a new leaf, October 1st is a good date to try their hand at it.

Cryptography.

BY HERBERT BELLMAN.

Do you remember the happy day, reader, when you felt that you had at last gained the power to express your thoughts in writing? What an uplifted state of mind was yours! The many weeks of toil in acquiring the accomplishment were all forgotten. It was as if you had conquered a kingdom and were entering into possession of it with flags flying.

To be sure, it was not wholly your own. You could not set yourself up as monarch of all you surveyed. But there was one thing you could do: feel infinitely superior to your younger brothers and sisters, or companions, who had not yet mastered the art. But this triumph was a short lived one. They soon caught up with you and you no longer felt like a pioneer who has blazed his way to some fertile strip of virgin land.

Perhaps it is the missing of this brief sense of "private possession" that causes boys to evince such an interest in signal codes, ciphers, and cryptograms. To be able to read these endows them for the moment with a knowledge apart, and recalls the most pleasurable side of their days of useful study.

Well, the passion to find is inherent in the human race. Search for a thing involves the eager expectancy of finding it each moment, which seems to answer to a special demand of man's nature. And the word cryptography is derived from the Greek *kruptein* to hide. "Hidden writing" is therefore the literal meaning and to see such before him at once challenges the average boy to master its meaning.

Of course there are many ways of making a cryptogram. Here is one method, as old as the time of Julius Caesar, who made use of it himself. Suppose you want to write a letter to a friend which you desire none but himself to be able to read. All you have to do is to tell him in advance to take the fourth letter ahead as the key, and then sit down and write your note, using *d* for *a*, *e* for *b*, and so on through the alphabet.

Of course you may select the sixth or the ninth letter, or any other, just as you please. This is considered the simplest of all the methods of writing in cipher.

An instance of it occurs in the Bible (in Jeremiah XXV; 26) where the name *Sheshach* is substituted for Babel in a prediction about Babylon, the prophet, in place of using the second and twelfth letters from the beginning of the Hebrew alphabet, employing the second and twelfth from the end.

But for popular use there are still simpler methods than the foregoing, involving a so called hidden language for both speaking and writing. I recall still how, when my parents wanted to speak of something that they did not care for us children to know about, they employed the words they wanted to use, adding to each a gibberish "ugery," as near as I can spell it, which was very mystifying to our young minds, but which we finally came to associate with some pleasure, such as theater going, in which we were to have no share.

The Rev. Edward Everett Hall, the famous Boston author, whose "Man Without a Country" and "Ten Times One Is Ten" are books that thousands have read and profited by, has a wonderfully young heart for an old man of seventy, and is all the while thinking up things that will interest boys and girls. He has lately been writing for *The Golden Rule* some reminiscences of his boyhood, in the course of which he suggested a secret language which the young people of today may like to try their hands, or rather their brains, at getting up, in the manner that Dr. Hale and his companions did so many years ago.

I shall take the liberty of quoting his recipe for this, which begins by stating that for your private language you will need not over seven hundred words. Of these, he adds, about one hundred and eighty are idiomatic, which means that they could not be translated literally into another language and still have the same meaning.

For instance, we say, "How do you do?" while the German puts it, "Wie geht's?" Again the French say, "How do you carry yourself?" This makes "do" an idiomatic word.

"If you want to know the one hundred and eighty idiomatic words," Dr. Hale continues, "buy one of Prendergast's primers for a quarter of a dollar, and you will find them all. Then for the rest take a chapter of Dickens, or Robinson Crusoe, and write out in a copy book the six hundred words besides the 'idiomatic words' that you think you will be most apt to use. Most writing books have twenty four pages; so there is, on an average, a page for a letter, in your first dictionary. Make three columns on a page, and that will give you sixty words on a page, if the ruling be as coarse as on this paper that I am writing on. Some of the letters, like Q and V and X and Y and Z, will not need a whole page each, while you will be wise to give two pages to C.

"Take a newspaper or a good book or narrative, and pick out, say, fifty *a*'s. I have done so, but you had better choose your own. My fifty are: a, able, about, above, abundant, account, add, address, admire, adopt, affair, afraid, after, again, against, agent, aid, all, air, alive, all, almost, allow, alone, already, always, am, amen, amuse, an, angel, another, animal, answer, navy, anxious, any, appear, arise, arm, army, arrest, as, aside, ask, astonish, at, attend, awkward. I made this list by writing down seventy words, and striking out twenty, such as 'assist,' where 'help' is as good.

"First, provide the one hundred and eighty 'idiomatic' words. They are such words as, unless, if, whether, although yet, but, besides, except, during, whilst, because, for, as, whereas, since, after, instead, of, for, that, lest, till, until, and, or, upon, wherever, therefore, in, from, without, before. These make the first column. Then come columns of pronouns of different classes; connecting verbs like am, art, are; the most frequent other verbs, like make, give, etc.; and last, the most necessary adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions.

"I should be pleased if some bright boys and girls would make a language from the first five letters of the alphabet with the addition of the letter *i*. You will find it a great convenience, in making a language, to have as many as three vowels. You will see that you can have three words of one letter, *a*, *e*, and *i*. You had better use *a* and *i* for the purpose for which you use them in English; *e* you might use as a cockney use it, for 'he.' Then for words in two letters you can have *ab*, *ac*, *ad*, *ae*, *eb*, *ec*, *ed*, *ib*, *ic*, *id*, and the reverse, *ba*, *ca*, *da*, *be*, *ce*, *de*, *bi*, *ci*, *di*. Here also it will be well for you to use for the corresponding English words the words 'be,' 'bi,' and even 'di.' Do not be troubled about the odd spelling, but use them by the sound.

"Of words in three letters you will readily see that you can make a great many more; of words in four letters you can make still more; and of words in five letters you can make quite enough to complete the list of seven hundred words. Then, you see, nobody that learns your language will have to learn but five letters. In every case I would use the word for its English meaning.

"Now you will go over the dictionary book that you have already provided, and first put in those fortunate words that exist already, such as *abcd*, *abide*, *cab*, *bac*, and so on.

"You see how much easier this language would be to write than English. Take the beginning of the Declaration of Independence: "It becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another." How much easier to write. Instead of this: *id*, *bee*, *dee*, *ba*, *ed*, *beb*, *da*, *di*, *de*, *bic*, *bid*, *ci*, *ab*, *ci*, *ded*, *id*, *ade*. When you looked out these words in your dictionary, you would find: *id*, *it*; *bee*, *become*; *dee*, *necessary*; *ba*, *for*; and so on."

GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

THE man who is ruled by his feelings will always travel in a zigzag course.

KINDNESS is the sun of life, the charm to captivate, and the sword with which to conquer.—CARLILE.

A HELPING word to one in trouble is often like a switch on a railroad track—but one inch between wreck and smooth rolling prosperity.—H. W. BECHER.

How are riches the means of happiness? In acquiring they create trouble, in their loss they occasion sorrow, and they are the cause of endless division amongst kindred.

GIRLHOOD-

An exquisite incompleteness;
The theme of a song unset;
The weft in the shuttle of life!
The bud with the dew still wet;
The dawn of a day uncertain;
The delicate bloom of fruit;
A plant with some leaves unfolded;
The rest asleep at the root.

—AMELIA E. BARR.

The Phantom Horseman

BY E. E. YOUNG.

Seth Jones bounded into camp, his face as white as a sheet, his manner wildly excited.

"Come quick, fellows!" he cried, seizing his rifle. "It's out there; I just saw it."

"What?" demanded Abe Atkins, leaping to his feet and making for his gun which was leaning against a tree.

"The phantom," replied Seth. "There's no mistake about it this time. I saw it as plainly as I see you this minute. But come on, or it'll be gone before we get there."

"I reckon you've been drinking a little too much, Seth," said Hank Hickory, slowly getting up on his feet. "You want to stop it, old man. That's the third time now you've claimed to have seen the white rider. Next thing you know you'll be seeing snakes."

"Oh, go to thunder, will you?" growled Seth, examining his rifle to see that it was in order. "I tell you it's there, and, if you just come along to the top of the gulch, you'll see for yourself."

"Well, lead on," said Hank. "We'll go."

But Seth had already started, striding rapidly up the gorge. His companions followed, but the excited Jones led the way so fast that they were soon left far behind.

"Hold on there, Seth, will you?" called Hank. "Don't go so fast; we can't keep you in sight."

Seth waited till they came up. "What's the matter with you fellows?" he demanded angrily. "Are you trying to make a fool of me? Why don't you hurry? If it's gone when we get there and you gny me about it, I'll punch your head—see?"

He pressed on again as rapidly as before, and the others broke into a dog trot to keep up with him. In a few minutes they reached the end of the gulch, and Seth began climbing the rocky banks leading to the level land above.

He was more excited than ever now, and mounted the incline so swiftly that he had almost gained the summit by the time Hank and Abe were half way up. They called to him to wait, but he paid no attention.

Jones was more agitated than they had ever seen him before, and they began to believe that he had not disturbed them for nothing.

"Come on, Abe," cried Hank, springing ahead. "Blame me if I don't think he has seen something. Look out for that stump," he suddenly added, swinging himself around the obstruction as he spoke.

Seth had disappeared over the top of the gulch by this time, and the two men hurried on. In a few minutes they reached the summit and began looking around for Jones. They could not see him at first, and pressed forward to the edge of the trees bordering the prairie beyond.

Here they paused, and an instant later the moon broke through the clouds above, lightening up the scene so that it was almost as plain as day.

"Look there!" gasped Hank, clutching his companion's arm.

Truly it was a startling sight; Atkins felt a strange thrill run through him as he beheld it.

There, not more than a hundred yards distant, on the top of a small knoll, was a large white horse with the form of a man, robed in white from head to foot, seated on his back, while a little to the right stood Seth Jones, leveling his rifle at the motionless phantom.

The next second the sharp crack of the rifle broke the stillness of the night, but the white rider did not move. Again the Winchester cracked, with the same result.

A wild, weird laugh fell from the lips of the phantom horseman, and the horse that had been crouching back on his haunches, now sprang forward with a mighty bound. Seth had barely time to leap aside when the white rider passed him swift as the wind, his demoniac mirth ringing out on the silence.

Spellbound, Abe Atkins and Hank Hickory stood in the edge of the bushes, and not until the phantom had almost disappeared in the gloom beyond did they come to their senses sufficiently to fire. Then they leveled their weapons, but the same horrible laugh was all that followed the report.

Slowly Seth Jones walked toward them. His face was ashen white as he came up, and his voice was scarcely above a



A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT STOOD SETH JONES, LEVELING HIS RIFLE AT THE MOTIONLESS PHANTOM.

whisper as he asked:

"What in heaven's name do you think of it?"

"It was awful," gasped Hank. "That laugh will ring in my ears forever."

"What can it be?" asked Atkins, looking uneasily in the direction the horseman had gone.

"It's not human, you can depend on that," answered Seth. "I had a dead bead on him

both times, and, if it had been anything a rifle ball could harm, I'd have brought him down. When he rushed past me I couldn't hear his horse step, and a draft of air, cold as ice, fanned my face."

The miner shuddered as he recalled it. They lingered for some time and were about turning toward the gulch, when that awful mirth rang out again; the horrified men turned quickly, and the next moment the white rider swept over the knoll, circled round it several times and vanished in the darkness on the other side.

The men made no attempt to fire upon him; they were too appalled to think of their rifles, and for fully two minutes after he had gone they stood staring through the pale moonlight, powerless and horrified.

At last they turned toward the gulch. Silently they made their way back to the camp, and not till they were safe in their tent did any of them speak. Then Hank looked up, saying:

"Boys, I'm not easily scared, but what I've seen tonight has knocked me out entirely. I move that we settle up here and light out as soon as we can."

"And leave all that gold behind?" asked Atkins, incredulously.

"Sure. We've got all we need; we won't be able to lug much more anyhow. We can wash out the loose dirt tomorrow and next day, and on the following one start back home."

"How did you come to see the white rider tonight Seth?" suddenly asked Jones.

"After we had supper I walked up the gulch, having nothing better to do, and when I reached the end I climbed up the bank to the prairie above. I'd no sooner come to the edge of the woods when I saw the phantom standing on the knoll, and I hurried back as quick as I could to tell you. I had seen him twice before, but then he was some distance off, and I thought he was only an ordinary rider. I named him the Phantom Horseman because he was all in white, and I wanted you fellows to see him just to find out what you'd think of a fellow riding around at night dressed like that."

"He was on the knoll both times before when I saw him, but by the time I got back and told you of it he was gone. Tonight I had two good shots at him, and

this Abe and Hank scouted the idea, declaring that it was one of Seth's hallucinations, but now they were compelled to do him justice.

At the same time Atkins was not willing to abandon the mine; it was panning out, too well. He vigorously opposed the idea of leaving, and for more than an hour argued with his friends, but they were firm in their decision and he was compelled to concur.

When the next day dawned they started to work washing out the gold they had dug in the river that flowed through the gulch, and when night came the work was nearly finished. No search was made for the white rider, for none of them were anxious to see him again, and early the next morning labor was resumed.

Toward the middle of the afternoon they finished up, and the gold was put in stout buckskin bags and carefully laid away in the tent. Some minor affairs were then attended to, and by this time night had settled over the gorge.

"We'll leave early in the morning," said Hank, "and blame me if I'm sorry."

"We're a pack of fools for going at all," cried Atkins angrily. "We're leaving a fortune behind us in that vein, and I've got a good mind to stay alone. I thought you fellows had more—"

A blood curdling laugh, ringing down the gulch, drowned the sentence. For a moment the men were helpless with horror, but as the frightful sound broke upon their ears again, now close upon them, they uttered a wild yell of terror, and plunged headlong out of the tent.

One look down the gorge was enough. There was the phantom horseman coming toward them so rapidly that he seemed to scarcely touch the ground, while the awful mirth went sounding through the gulch like a knell of doom.

Away bounded the three men. Abe Atkins himself in advance, nor did they pause until they dropped from exhaustion nearly two miles from the camp. They had taken nothing with them; their guns, gold and even their hats were back in the tent, and they huddled together in a small clump of cottonwoods in the most object terror till morning.

Never were the bright rays of the sun welcomed with keener delight than on this occasion. As his first golden streaks pierced the eastern welkin the men felt their courage begin to return, increasing as the light grew stronger, until at last, when the full rays of the glorious orb burst upon them, they felt that "Richard was himself again."

Then Abe Atkins turned toward them, saying:

"We're three of the biggest fools you could find in a day's travel. So help me jingo, if I had my revolver here I'd blow my cowardly brains out."

"Draw it mild, Abe," remonstrated Seth; "it was an awful sight, you know. The only wonder is that we survived it at all."

"I wonder if the fiend has harmed the camp?" asked Hank anxiously. "Wouldn't it be hard on us if we should lose that gold after all the work we've had in getting it?"

"Don't speak of it," groaned Seth. "Let's get back as soon as we can, get our traps together and leave."

"There may be nothing left to get together," said Atkins. "Why didn't we stay and fight?"

They turned toward the gulch and began retracing their steps. When they had gone a little more than a mile a horseman was suddenly discovered, approaching from the direction of the camp.

The men stopped and stared in stupefied amazement. The horse was white as also the dress of the rider, but there was a certain familiar appearance about the latter that held them in speechless astonishment.

When within a hundred yards of them he suddenly drew rein, and the horrible laugh they knew so well broke over the plains. But it did not affect them this time; it is doubtful if they even heard it.

couldn't bring him down. You know I'm not in the habit of missing, and the fact that I couldn't harm him shows that he's proof against lead. That's all I want to know about him. I'm in favor of doing as Hank says, and getting out as soon as we can. It's blamed little sleep I'll get tonight," he concluded.

It was just two months previous to this eventful night that these three men in company with a fourth, Nick Rider, came out here to make their fortunes in the gold diggings. They happened by extremely good luck to strike a rich vein in the gulch, and for a few weeks all went well. Then they began to discover that Rider was not the man they took him to be, and that he could not be trusted.

The crisis came one night soon after when he was caught in the act of robbing his companions, and he was compelled to leave the camp under penalty of death if he should appear again in that vicinity. He departed, vowing to be retenged, but nothing more was heard of him, and affairs at the gulch progressed without friction.

A few days subsequently Seth discovered the white rider and hastened to summon his friends, but when they reached the spot he was gone. Jones was ridiculed good naturedly about it, but he did not complain, and when a night or two later the phantom appeared again he led them on another chase up the gorge with the same result.

Tonight they had been successful. There had been no mistake about it; all had seen the phantom horseman. Before

For fully a minute they continued to stare at the motionless horseman, then Abe Atkins managed to stammer: "N—Nick Rider!"

"Yes, Nick Rider," cried that individual; "the man who had a fine revenge on you all. I swore to get even, and I have succeeded. All the gold your tent contained is right here in this bag, and you can go back now and dig more."

"The next time you shoot at a white horseman, or any other for that matter, be sure your cartridges contain bullets. I planned this all out beforehand. I sneaked around your tent many a time watching for a chance to doctor your guns, and finally I made it out."

"I lay near the tent more than once listening to Seth tell about the phantom horseman, but you never guessed who or what it was. You're a fine lot of cowards, even if you are all blame good runners, and a man can scare you all without trying."

"But I've no more time to waste with you. Go back and go to work. I'll keep this gold to remember you by, and hope you'll be glad to see me if we ever meet again."

"Good—by now, and take my word for it you'll never again be frightened out of your wits by the Phantom Horseman."

He wheeled and galloped away, the frightful laugh he could utter so well ringing out behind him, and the men stood and watched him, too angry and disgusted to speak.

Then without a word they continued on toward the camp. When they reached it everything was found just as they had left it except the gold; that precious metal was gone.

It is impossible to describe the rage and chagrin of the men as they realized how thoroughly they had been duped and robbed by the treacherous Rider.

The men examined their weapons the first thing after recovering somewhat from the bitter disappointment occasioned by the loss of the gold, and found the bullets extracted from every one of the cartridges the magazines of the Winchester contained.

"No wonder I couldn't hit him," cried Seth savagely, hurling the worthless shells to the floor; "but let me ever lay eyes on him again."

Of course they did not leave. They went to work the next day, and for many weeks worked on unmolested. When the vein finally gave out and the mine was abandoned, they divided many dollars' worth of the yellow treasure among them.

At the same time they thought with regret of the amount taken from them by the Phantom Horseman.

[This Story began in No. 554.]

The Markham Mystery.

BY ROWLEY BROOKS.

CHAPTER XXXV.
IMAGES OF THE PAST.

The news printed by the *Centerville Clarion* in such tantalizingly incomplete way was true—as far as it went. If it went no farther, it was because it had not as yet received information upon the unexplained points.

In order to enlighten the reader as to the cause of the second arrest of Ike Sanger, it will be well to go back a little and depict a scene in Mr. Pigott's back office shortly after Mr. Badger's arrival with the "buxom" and mysterious female, and while Mr. Sanger was enjoying the delicious sensation of liberty regained—on bail.

In that back office were: Mr. Pigott and his stenographer, Mr. Badger and the lady.

This woman appeared to belong to the middle class, and was, as the *Clarion* had described her, comely in person. She had upon her lap a photograph album—the same as I had examined a few nights previous at the Pigotts'. She was turning the leaves of this and was carefully examining each portrait.

Mr. Pigott had before him at his right hand a packet of letters which the mysterious woman had handed him on her arrival; on his left hand

he had an open box of inlaid wood—the same that had been cast at his feet by Mr. Badger on the day of the famous chase.

He was smiling to himself for a wonder as he read one by one the letters on his right hand. Anon he seemed to be comparing these with the letters that lay in the inlaid box.

His examination was interrupted by an exclamation from the woman.

"Here it is," she cried, stopping the turning of the album leaves.

"You recognize that face, Miss Wilbur, as—"

"Howard Hollingsworth's own face and no other," replied the woman, slipping the card out of the album. "It's a face there's no mistaking, either."

"Very true. I saw him but once myself," replied Mr. Pigott, "yet when Mr. Badger produced this faded photograph, I was ready to pronounce upon its identity as positively as yourself."

"By the way, Mortimer," to his stenographer, "you sent for Bruce?"

"Yes, sir. Lem Stott consented to run up to the house for him."

"These letters of yours, Miss Wilbur, make a perfect case. Yours and Mr. Sanger's here show, on the one hand, how important it is to preserve all correspondence, and on the other, how dangerous it may be not to destroy such incriminating doctrines."

"Mortimer," to his stenographer, "are you ready?"

"Yes, sir," replied the other, who had been waiting for some time with open notebook.

"Take down as follows," and Mr. Pigott knit his brows in thought, then began to dictate: "Mary Wilbur, spinster, being duly sworn, deposes and says that she is a native of Buffalo, N. Y., where she has resided continuously for the past thirty-one years, at No.—"

It was at this point that I entered the outer office, having been summoned by the obliging Mr. Stott. I heard Mr. Pigott's voice break off, and then resume with:

"Who is that? Bruce?"

"Yes, sir," I replied. "You wanted me?"

"Yes; come in."

I opened the connecting door. My eye swept around the room, taking in the assemblage at a glance. I saw amongst the rest the woman; she was looking at the photograph, but glanced up as I entered. At that moment I saw the photograph card fall from her hand to the floor. I sprang to pick it up. As I stooped for it as it lay face up, I saw to my surprise it was the portrait of Howard Hollingsworth, the late Mr. Markham's son-in-law.

"Allow me," said I, rising to hand the card to the lady.

But she had risen from her chair; she was looking straight at me—staring at me and with such an expression of blank wonder on her face as made me think for an instant there was something wrong with her mind.

And surely I knew that face! and yet—

"The woman was almost gasping:

"This is—"

"Master Robert Bruce," said Mr. Pigott suavely.

"Bruce? Robert Bruce?" repeated the woman. "But—but—if mother were only here, I could leave it to her."

"Leave what to her?" asked Mr. Pigott, his eyes twinkling slightly, as if he were quizzing the woman.

"Why, I'd leave it to her if he wasn't—but don't you see it yourself?" she suddenly asked; and she snatched the photograph out of my hand and almost threw it down before Mr. Pigott. "Don't you see? Bruce or no Bruce, I say this is the boy that this man got from mother. His face is older, but he hasn't changed, except to grow more like his father."

"I?—my father?" I gasped.

I stood like a statue. I felt numb in every member.

"Don't you remember me?" cried the woman. "Don't you remember Maggie and—and—the red and yellow horse reins I knit and—"

"Wait!" I cried. "I know you now!"

I held out my hand to stop her, and shut my eyes tight. I was looking into the black void of memory and figures were taking shape and beginning to glow in the Stygian abyss.

"I—I have known you—played with you—loved you. Wait! It will all come back to me in a minute." It was titanic—this effort of memory which I was making. I see you, an old lady with white hair, tall, large—and another, younger—she is serving—"

"Your mother!" explained the woman.

"What is this?" I cried, coming out of the trance I had been in. "What is this about my mother—my father? Have I a mother—a father? Do you know who they are?"

"I think," and Mr. Pigott arose from his chair and stepped towards me—"I think I can now afford to announce to you, Bruce, what I have been convinced of since the first visit you paid to my house, namely, that you are the son of Howard and Elizabeth Hollingsworth—and heir-at-law of the late Joshua Markham!"

In the month of March, 1872 (sixteen years before this history was written). Howard Hollingsworth, the actor, accompanied by his wife Elizabeth, was en tour with the dramatic company of which he played the leading parts.

When near the city of Buffalo, a trivial collision, of which he was the only sufferer, dimmed forever the hopes and aspirations of Howard Hollingsworth. His leg was crushed—so badly that at the charity hospital at which the company had left him it was found necessary to amputate the member.

It was months before he was discharged from the hospital. Meanwhile, his wife was entirely without means. She had twice written to her father, Joshua Markham, soon after she had been married. He had not deigned to notice either of these letters. She had not humbled herself to beg further for the forgiveness of her elopement. She had not written him in nearly two years.

But now, when this fearful trouble came upon them, when death threatened her husband and destitution stared her in the face—then Elizabeth Hollingsworth swallowed her pride and appealed to her father by letter for help.

That letter never reached his hands. Elizabeth was thus thrown on her own resources. By sewing and dress-making she endeavored to support herself. When her husband came out of hospital, a cripple, incapacitated for his profession, there were two, instead of one to support.

There was but one thing else but act which he could possibly do—paint. In his earlier days he had developed some skill at miniature painting. With this he dallied, and endeavored to furnish his share of the family support, but it was his wife who bore most of the burden.

In August, 1872, I was born. Then there were three instead of two, and then there came a time when all three might have starved and died but for the charity of a humble widow in whose house they lodged—a Mrs. Wilbur, with a young daughter, Mary.

I never think of her but I remember the story of the widow's mite. Query: Is there such a story? If so what is it? Bless if I remember it. Where am I at? It was Mrs. Wilbur who kept despair and death from our door when we could earn nothing for several months.

But it was only postponement. Within two years of my birth my father, his constitution shattered by

the operation that had been performed upon him, died. Within another year my mother followed him. I was an orphan at three.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Proud for herself, my mother was humble for me. It was her last request, when she learned that death was imminent, that my grandfather—just think! Joshua Markham, the dotard I had tended with a sort of condescending pity, he, my grandfather! Even yet, I have not ceased to look back with wonder on that strange relationship into which we were thrown by fate (and Mr. Pigott), and the stranger relationship by blood which has since been established.

To him Mrs. Wilbur wrote. She gave an account of his daughter's life—and death. Of her circumstances in life, and her legacy in death—that is, myself.

To this Mrs. Wilbur received an answer signed with Joshua Markham's name—an answer so utterly, so basely heartless, that all the indignation of a rugged and uncultured nature was aroused. She addressed a second letter to Joshua Markham, in which she said that if he persisted in his intention of casting off his grandchild amongst strangers and without provision for his support, she would find a way of holding him up to the scorn and contempt of his own townspeople—probably by consigning me to the authorities of Centerville with a full description of my pedigree and his heartlessness.

And now there came to Mrs. Wilbur a letter couched in a very different tone. Her threat had had its effect. It said, in substance, that Joshua Markham would take me and care for me, but that he could not find the time to come all the way for me. Nor could he afford to pay Mrs. Wilbur's fare for such a long journey as that from Buffalo to Centerville.

But he suggested that I be ticketed and placed on the cars alone and he enclosed the amount of my fare to Albany, saying he would go as far as that city and meet me there.

Little as such a plan was relished by Mrs. Wilbur, she was not in circumstances to act counter to it, and I, at the tender age of four, was placed upon the cars, with a ticket in my little fist and a tag around my chubby neck, entrusted to the humors of conductors and the pity of passengers to reach my destination and to find my grandfather—or rather to be found by him.

I was met at Albany—not by my grandfather, but by Ike Sanger.

The letters received by Mrs. Wilbur were, without exception, written and signed with my grandfather's name—by Ike Sanger.

By him I was taken in charge and conveyed—to Centerville? No! past Centerville—to New York City, and there, amid the hurly burly of a million hurrying feet, I was ruthlessly abandoned!

You may ask how all this was possible. It was effected with the utmost ease. It happened that the letters sent to my grandfather by Mrs. Wilbur came during a severe illness of the old gentleman, during which Selina Sanger, the head and front and brains of the whole conspiracy, was an inmate of his house nursing him.

It was she and her fraternal Ike who had never ceased to embitter the old man against his daughter for marrying in opposition to his wishes. It was she who conceived this dastardly plot, and had her ignoble brother to work it out.

How do I know all this? By the letters—every one—which passed between Mrs. Wilbur and Ike Sanger. She kept his, and he, by a fatality which not seldom possesses the most astute criminals—he kept hers, and these it was which Hen Billings stole in the inlaid wood box, for which theft, by the way, he is still serving his term on the complaint of Ike Sanger.

These letters, with the signatures of my grandfather, Joshua Markham, are indisputably in the handwriting of Ike Sanger. But lest this were not enough, have we not his own confession, dated within the walls of Sing Sing, where he will doubtless finish the term of his natural life?

Yes, we sent him up. Mr. Pigott had no pity, nor, I confess, had I. I think he would have prosecuted Selma as well. Indeed, I do not see how he could have failed to do so, if he prosecuted her tool, Ike.

But Selma, with a coolness characteristic of all her acts and attitudes, deliberately made away with herself one week after the second arrest of Ike.

As for that cowardly individual, he preferred to take his punishment and take refuge behind a pretended conversion to religion. His confession teems with religious hypocrisy to such an extent that it seemed to me a silly thing. Fough!

But there! In my eagerness to tell about myself, I had almost forgotten to satisfy my friends—are you not?—about another, Mr. Markham—his death and his will.

It all came out in Ike's confession. On that fatal Sunday evening, Ike was moved to make another attempt to see his aged relative. He knocked at the shop door, and, thinking it was I returned, Mr. Markham opened it and let Ike in.

Little by little, there began to be enacted a scene very much like that which I had recently terminated by my assault on Ike—Mr. Markham finally boasting that he had made a will in which Ike and his sister were practically unmentioned.

Mr. Markham in his childish rage went so far as to offer Ike ocular proof of his assertion. He hurried upstairs, followed by Ike. He unlocked the drawer of his bureau, snatched up the will, waved it triumphantly in the face of Ike and—fell dead!

It took Ike some minutes to realize that his uncle was dead, and he was filled with terror at the thought that, if he were discovered to be with the old man under the circumstances, he might be suspected of having caused his death.

He was about to steal out of the house, when cupidity mastered him. The will was at his feet. He picked it up, glanced through it and saw that it had been given—only the mortgage on his farm! He tore up the will without an instant's hesitation. You know the rest.

These essential facts being established before the courts, it was by me, the son of Elizabeth Markham, that her father's estate was inherited.

It took long; it cost money; it required much labor and keen procedure on the part of Mr. Pigott. But at last it is done. Mr. Pigott is (or rather was) my guardian, appointed by the courts, and I, who am just come of age, am independent of necessity for life.

I am known as Bob Bruce. It is the name I was brought up under, and, indeed, I would not wish to lightly throw off the name of those who were, in deed at least, my real parents.

It seems I am born to good luck. I have always fallen into good hands. It occurred to me the other day when I was sitting at the threshold of that old cavern in the ravine.

My mother was, I learn, a devoted, almost heroic character in some respects. She having died, I fell to Mrs. Wilbur, who was a true, good woman. And then to Mrs. Bruce—who could have better fulfilled the teaching of that beatitude, "Who giveth even a cup of cold water unto one of these, giveth unto me."

And then, Mrs. Pigott! the most perfect woman I have ever known—to me mother and friend alike.

True, I did fall into the hands of Ike Sanger, but then, was it not all for the best?

THE END.

SEPTEMBER.

The golden rod is yellow,
The corn is turning brown,
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusky pods the milk-weed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest
In every meadow nook;
And asters by the brookside
Make asters in the brook.

By all the lovely tokens,
September's days are here,
With summer's best of wealth,
And autumn's best of cheer.
—Our Dumb Animals.

[This Story began in No. 550.]

The Lone Island;

OR,

Adventures Among the Savages.

BY E. E. YOUNG,

Author of "The Treasure of Wild Rock Island," "The Oakville Mystery," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE COILS OF A SERPENT.

The strange noise continued, and Tom aroused the captain. He was thoroughly alarmed by this time, and his agitation was apparent in his voice as he said to the sailor:

"There's something coming down the path!"

As he spoke, a slight trembling of the earth was perceptible as if some ponderous body was approaching. They leaned forward as far as possible, and looked down the trail.

The moon had risen an hour or so before, and, although its light did not penetrate the jungle sufficiently to admit of their seeing distinctly for any great distance, they were nevertheless able to discern the dark outlines of a number of large objects approaching.

Tom's alarm momentarily increased, and he had all he could do to control his fear sufficiently to keep from leaping from the tree, and plunging away headlong through the jungle.

"What can it be?" he cried, and, as the trembling of the earth continued, and the tree began to sway to and fro, he added in a voice scarcely audible: "It must be something awful!"

Bolt had been straining his eyes to see through the darkness. The next moment he threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"Don't be alarmed, Tom," he said; "it's only a few elephants coming, and these are the animals that have probably made the trail. Just be still, and we'll see 'em pass."

The captain was correct, as the next few seconds proved.

They sat back in the tree, and silently waited. In a moment the first elephant passed beneath them, and was followed by another and still another, and for nearly five minutes they continued to pass, their heavy tread causing the earth to jar considerably.

When the last one faded from view in the darkness beyond, the sailor turned to Tom, saying:

"They gave you a bad scare, eh, my boy?"

"I should say they did," declared the youth. "I was never so frightened before in my life. I ought to be ashamed to show the white feather. I suppose, but the excitement we've passed through lately has made me as nervous as a woman."

"Well, it was enough to scare any one," continued the captain. "I was uneasy myself till I found out what it was."

Nothing more occurred to disturb them, and as soon as daylight came they resumed the march.

When the sun arose Bolt took their bearings, and was pleased to discover that the trail led them in a north-westerly direction. This was the way in which they wanted to go, and if nothing happened, the sailor declared,

they ought to reach the ocean in a day or two at most.

Meanwhile the pangs of hunger were beginning to give them considerable annoyance, and they kept a sharp lookout for fruit, but hour after hour passed, and it did not materialize.

A small stream of water was found trickling through the thicket, and from a little pool they managed to slake their thirst. This afforded them temporary relief, and, in the hope of coming across fruit later on, they pressed steadily forward.

At last they noticed that the jungle was becoming less dense, and a little later they came out into the open forest. Here the path ended, but they had little difficulty in making their way through the woods, and the journey was continued as before.

Presently some grapes were descried in the distance, and Tom hurried forward to secure a few. The captain followed, but was still quite a distance behind when the youth reached the vine.

Then something occurred that caused the sailor to utter a shout of alarm and horror, and spring forward with upraised spear.

Tom was in the act of plucking a cluster of grapes, when there was a quick whirring sound and an instant later the long coils of an immense serpent shot out from an adjacent tree, and wound themselves with lightning rapidity around the boy's body.

At the same instant another reptile darted from the very tree to which the vine was clinging, and Tom was enveloped in the horrible coils of both monsters before he could realize his peril.

He struggled desperately to extricate himself, but the serpents wound themselves so tightly around him that he was unable to move. His chest felt as if it were being crushed in, and he could hardly breathe.

The hideous heads of the reptiles were poised close to his face, their tongues darted in and out, and a low hissing noise emanated from their horrible throats. The captive expected to feel their awful fangs pierce his flesh each moment, and the agony he suffered in those few seconds he remembered through all his after life.

The serpents seemed to be in no hurry to strike, preferring to play with their victim a while before dealing the fatal blow. To this delay Tom Radcliffe owed his salvation.

Bolt had now reached the spot. He was pale to the lips, but he did not falter, and there was a strange expression in his eyes.

"Courage, Tom," he cried, "I'll save you."

"Quick!" gasped the youth.

Before the sailor was near enough to use the spear he saw it could not be done without injury to the captive. The reptiles were too close to their victim to admit of a successful lunge, and a mishap would prove fatal, for the instant the serpents were attacked the poisonous blow would be dealt.

There was only one course he could adopt, one which, if it failed, would be fatal to himself. He had seen it done before; could he do it now?

Not a moment was to be lost. He saw from the motion of the monsters' heads that they were getting ready to strike.

That peculiar glitter in his eyes deepened; he advanced to within a few feet of the serpents, and emitted a low purring sound.

Instantly the snakes began swaying gently from side to side, their coils around the imperiled youth slightly relaxed, and a moment later they turned their hideous heads toward the captain.

Not a muscle of his face moved. He caught the eyes of the reptiles the moment they turned, and his glance was steady and concentrated. For an instant the serpents seemed to waver, and Bolt fairly held his breath while he continued to look them steadily in the eyes.

A sigh of relief fell from his lips

the next second as he realized that he had succeeded.

He uttered the peculiar purring sound again, and, with his eyes still fastened on those of the snakes, began slowly moving back. The serpents uncoiled themselves from Tom's body, and, rearing their heads a foot or more from the ground, crawled after the retreating sailor.

The moment Tom found himself free, everything turned dark before him, and he sank down unconscious.

Meanwhile Bolt slowly backed away. Not for an instant did he shift his gaze, and the bead-like eyes of the serpents were fastened upon his own orbs with a fascination they could not break.

Step by step the sailor retreated until a distance of several yards was covered; then he paused. Stooping lower he extended his hands, and uttered the strange noise which exercised such a charm upon the reptiles.

Nearer and nearer crawled the snakes until their heads were within a few inches of the captain's hands.

This was the critical moment! His own safety depended on the next few seconds!

Suddenly his heart stood still! The spell was broken, and in another moment he knew they would deliver the fatal blow.

But quick as the lightning's flash he sprang forward, and grasped their necks just as they drew back their heads to strike. With a tenacious grip he held them fast, and tightened his hold with all his strength.

The reptiles coiled around him, and for a moment he thought he could not hold them. But his life depended on that grip, and his fingers locked together like bands of steel.

"Tom!" he shouted. "Tom, Tom!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

DISAPPOINTMENT AGAIN.

Tom was just returning to consciousness as the sailor called his name, and it came to his ears like a distant echo.

Slowly he opened his eyes, and looked around.

"Tom!" again called the sailor; "help me, if you can."

This fully roused him, and he struggled to his feet. He felt weak and dizzy, but as his eyes fell upon the captain in the serpents' coils, he mastered himself by a mighty effort, and sprang to his companion's assistance.

The spear was lying where the sailor had dropped it, and Tom snatched it up as he ran. A moment later he reached the captain's side, and drew back the spear for a thrust.

"Kill one of the fiends," cried Bolt, "and I'll manage the other."

A swift and sure lunge severed the head of the nearest reptile, and, as it relaxed its coils and fell to the ground, a writhing mass, Bolt flung the head far from him, and grasped the neck of the other with both hands.

"Let me fix this one, Tom," he cried, but the youth did not like to see him trifle with his peril.

He knew that if by a mishap the sailor lost his hold, the snake would strike, and nothing could save his friend from death. He poised the spear again and ran it through the reptile's body just below the captain's hands.

Bolt released his grasp, and, as the snake fell away, Tom plunged the spear deep in the ground, pinning the reptile to the earth.

The captain soon extricated himself from the monsters' coils, and, staggering back a few paces, leaned against a tree.

Both man and boy were well nigh exhausted, and it was sometime before either recovered sufficiently to speak. The reaction proved a trifle more than they could endure, and Tom's voice was unsteady when at last he managed to say:

"That was awful. I believe it was the worst fix we've been into yet, savages and gorillas included."

"You're quite right; and it was lucky for us that I never forgot the

charm I learned in India years ago," answered Bolt with a shudder, as he watched the struggles of the dying serpent.

"This is where you saved my life," continued Tom. "I thought my time had come when I felt the snakes around me."

After a long rest they prepared to move. The spear was withdrawn and cleaned off, then with some trepidation they approached the tree to which the grapevine was attached. But no more serpents were encountered, and they were soon feasting on the luscious fruit.

They gathered as much as they could carry conveniently for future use, and wrapping it up in some leaves were ready to continue the journey.

"I hope now we'll be able to reach the coast without further trouble," said Tom. "I'm getting tired of this sort of thing."

"It is getting rather monotonous," was the captain's grim rejoinder; "but we'll be more careful in future, and try not to run into danger."

A few minutes later the journey was resumed, and with all possible caution they pressed on steadily through the forest.

Although Captain Bolt was confident that they would reach the coast in a day or two, they wandered through the woods for more than a week without coming upon the welcome sight of the ocean.

Tom had long since given up the idea of getting out of the forest alive, and had resigned himself to his fate with a sort of grim stoicism that amused the sailor considerably. Bolt had been in similar situations before during his wanderings over the globe, and the same courage that sustained him then did not desert him now.

He tried hard to revive hope in his companion by constantly declaring that the next day's journey must bring them to the sea, but as day after day passed, and the end of the forest seemed to be no nearer, even he began to be discouraged.

He could not understand it. Being sure they had journeyed in the one direction each day, it was safe to conclude that they had covered at least over a hundred miles, and the ocean ought to be near at hand.

"I must say I can't see through it at all," he said to Tom one day, as they halted hot and tired from their long tramp. "I know we have not turned from our course, for I have been careful to gauge it by the position of the sun, and why we haven't reached the coast I can't satisfactorily determine."

"Luck is against us," was Tom's gloomy reply, "and it'll be against us to the end."

"Luck be hanged," said the captain impatiently. "Come, Tom, I credited you with more sense than to believe in such stuff. After all we've been fortunate, for we haven't met any more gorillas or serpents and twice we avoided the savages. So you see that although our condition is bad enough, it could be a good deal worse."

"Look at our clothes," went on Tom, with a groan. "They'll soon be in rags."

"Even so, they'll last some time yet, and we must surely reach the coast in another day or so."

"I don't believe we'll ever reach it." "Well, don't give up yet. We've had a pretty hard tramp today, so we'll rest a while, eat some fruit and try it again," said the captain with forced hope.

After a rest of some thing over an hour they started on again. That day passed and also the next, and there was no change in the situation.

On the following day, however, at an early hour the forest gave indication of ending, and they hurried forward with a cry of joy. Sure enough another mile brought them to the termination of the woods, but the hope of seeing the ocean was shattered, as they found themselves confronted by a vast expanse of pampas that

stretched away before them as far as vision could extend.

Tom uttered a cry of keen disappointment, and sank down in the grass, while Bolt scanned the pampas long and attentively. He began now to understand why it was they had journeyed so far without reaching the coast, and he was provoked at himself for not having thought of it before.

"How I could have been so infernally stupid, I can't imagine," was his mental ejaculation, "and we've tramped miles out of our way in consequence of it."

The explanation was simple. When they left the river and struck off through the jungle, he had neglected to take into consideration the irregular character of the coast, and while the northeasterly direction in which they had been steadily traveling would have brought them in sight of the sea in a day or so had the coast continued regular, it would throw them many miles out of their way should it bend either to the north or west.

The more he thought of it the more convinced did he become that such was the case. Of course he was not supposed to know the coast line in this strange country, but his blunder lay in the fact that he had neglected to change his course from northeast to north or west when he found the ocean was not reached in a reasonable length of time.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

When Bolt reflected that the long journey, with all its hardships and privations, was due to his own oversight and neglect, he was unable to think of words sufficiently emphatic to express his disgust.

"Tom," he said, looking down upon the youth at his feet, "I've made an important discovery."

"What is it?" asked Tom wearily. "I'm one of the biggest, one of the worst infernal and thickwitted fools on record."

"Eh!" cried the boy, springing to his feet. "What'd you say?"

The captain laughed. "Don't get excited," he added. "I haven't gone crazy, though none but a lunatic would make such a mistake."

"What are you talking about?" The sailor explained. He did not spare himself, and was so severe in his self condemnation that Tom finally interposed.

"There's no use in blaming yourself too much," he said. "Anybody would be liable to make the same error."

"No they wouldn't," quickly returned the sailor. "If you'd have been the leader of this expedition we'd have reached the coast long ago."

Tom could not help thinking that this was so, for several times during the journey he was tempted to suggest changing their course, but supposing the captain knew best, had refrained from speaking. He said nothing, however, and Bolt continued: "Well, it won't do to bemoan matters, I suppose, so we may as well make a fresh start. I am sure of the way now, but it may be several days before we reach the coast."

"Which way do you intend going?" asked Tom. "We must bear away to the left. Now do you want to cross the pampas, or go through the forest?" "Which is the safest?" "That's hard to tell. If we haven't far to go I suppose it would be more convenient to travel over the prairie; but if the distance is long there will be less danger in the woods, for there we can find food and water, while on the pampas we can get neither."

"Then maybe we'd better go through the woods."

This being agreed upon, they entered the forest again, and pushed steadily on. But day after day passed without bringing them to the sea, and the ninth day found them still wandering through the woods, in a ragged

and forlorn condition. Their shoes were almost worn away, and their feet were bruised and bleeding from lack of proper protection.

Their coats were nearly torn in shreds, and were only held together by the twine with which Bolt had endeavored to repair them.

"This thing can't last much longer," said Tom; "for if it does, we won't be able to survive it."

"It's hard on you, my boy, I know, and all my fault, too," returned the captain remorsefully.

"I don't look at it that way," said Tom. "You thought you were right, and we all make mistakes. But to be wandering around like this with no prospect of final safety is enough to discourage any one."

"I know it; but keep up a while longer, and we may come out all right," responded Bolt, with an assurance he was far from feeling.

So weary, footsore and discouraged they still plodded on. Mile after mile was slowly covered, but the coast seemed as far away as ever, and just as the sun was sinking from view in the west, Tom threw himself upon the earth with a bitter cry.

"I can't go another step," he declared. "I'm dead tired, and ache in every joint."

"Well, we'll camp here for the night, and go on again in the morning," said Bolt. "We can't possibly be more than fifteen or twenty miles from the ocean at most."

They had been careful to keep themselves well supplied with fruit, and some of this now served them for their evening meal. Then they began looking for a suitable tree to spend the night in, for they had followed this custom since the journey began.

Suddenly they were startled by the report of a rifle near by, and a moment later another rang out. They turned quickly, but the underbrush prevented them from seeing who had fired the shots.

"Savages!" cried Tom in alarm, but the sailor shook his head.

"They don't carry guns," he said; "but we must see who it was. Come."

They began cautiously picking their way through the bushes, and in a few minutes came to a small open in which stood three men, two of whom were engaged in reloading the guns they had just discharged.

They were dressed in sailors' clothes, and the moment Bolt saw them, he uttered a shout of delight and bounded into the clearing.

The sailors were so startled at his sudden appearance that the two who were reloading their rifles dropped them with a crash, and the other with a cry of amazement, quickly raised his weapon, and pointed it at the intruder.

He lowered it again upon seeing his mistake, and, as Tom came dragging himself into the clearing behind his friend, the man dropped the butt of his rifle to the ground, and cried out in astonishment: "Well, I'll be blowed!"

The captain advanced, and, to Tom's amazement, extended his hand, saying: "Ralph Baxter, don't you know me?"

"Shiver my timbers," roared the seaman, dropping his rifle and grasping the sailor's hand with both his own; "if it ain't Captain Bolt!"

"What under the sun are you doing here, and in this condition?" he continued, eyeing the captain in wonder. "That's a long story, Ralph, and it'll take some time to tell it. But how is it you're here in the wilderness when the last time I saw you we were in London?"

"My roving habits and love of adventure account for that," answered Ralph. "Our ship lies at anchor off the coast a few miles back, and we came ashore to do a little hunting."

"How near are we to the ocean?" asked Bolt.

"About three miles, I should say," replied Ralph.

"Do you hear that, Tom," continued the captain. "We're within only three miles of the sea, and ready to give up almost in despair when a few hours more would have brought us to the coast."

Ralph Baxter was an old friend of the captain's, and had served under him on many a voyage. When all the parties had been introduced, Baxter suggested starting on their return to the ship.

It was wonderful how the sudden change of fortune infused new life into the two wanderers. Tom forgot all about how tired he was, and kept up with the other men almost without an effort.

It was nearly dark by this time, but Baxter declared he knew the way, and, taking the lead, pushed through the woods as fast as possible. Bolt followed close behind, Tom came next, and the other two seamen brought up the rear.

The captain had much to talk about with his old friend, and they maintained a steady conversation as they moved along. Bolt gave a brief account of his adventures since they parted in London several years before, and when he related how on his last voyage his crew had seized the vessel and abandoned him on a lonely island, Baxter's indignation was prodigious.

One of the mutineers, Joe Hodges, by name was well known to him, and several times they had sailed on the same ship. He had always regarded Joe as a good sort of fellow in a general way, but when he heard Bolt's story, his opinion speedily changed.

"The contemptible scoundrel," he cried; "I'd like to wring his neck."

"A rope'll do that some day, I imagine," said the captain dryly.

At last they came out of the forest, and about a mile distant the waters of the ocean could be seen. The lights on the ship to which Baxter belonged glistened through the gloom, and were a welcome sight to the two wanderers.

Tom wanted to vent his feelings in shouts of exultation, but controlled the impulse, and in due time the party reached the coast.

A small boat was drawn up on the beach, which the men shoved into the water, and all embarked for the vessel. The ship was soon reached where Tom and the captain were provided with comfortable clothing, and the first substantial meal they had enjoyed for many a long day.

The vessel proved to be the Silver Star, bound for an American port, and the next day she got under way.

"Our troubles are over, Tom, my boy," said Bolt, "and we're homeward bound at last."

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 557.]

The Coast Guard;

OR,

LIFE SAVERS OF ROCKY HAVEN

BY GEORGE WALDO BROWNE,

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

CHAPTER XXV.

SPARWOOD'S CONFESSION.

Well might there be rejoicing as the surf boat returned to the shore with every one saved from the wreck.

Prompt care was given to the unfortunate ones, while others crowded around the surfmen to express their admiration for so gallant a rescue.

The true lifesaver, however, has little thought for praise. If he has succeeded he has but performed his duty.

Royal was puzzled to know the meaning of Sparwood's presence on the wreck.

And in the midst of his speculations he was told that Sparwood wanted to see him at once.

Wondering what was to follow he obeyed the summons immediately, to find the man impatiently awaiting him.

He was lying upon a couch and looked very pale.

"I recognized you," he said, "and so I sent for you as the one person whom I wish to see."

"And now that I am here please state your business. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing," faltered the other faintly, "except to help undo a great wrong. I have received an injury to-night from which I cannot recover."

"Perhaps it is not as bad as that."

"I am sure I am right, else I should not have sent for you. It seems strange to meet you here, too."

"We were sent for to come here to save a shipwrecked crew."

"It is strange I should owe my life a second time to you. I ought to thank you I suppose. But that isn't what I wished to say. Is the woman alive?"

"Yes; though she is prostrated with fatigue and exposure to the storm."

"Poor thing! But, Royal, you will see that she has good care when I tell you that she is Mona's mother!"

"Mona's mother!" repeated Royal, unable to credit his own hearing.

"Yes and your mother's sister."

Royal was too much surprised to speak now.

"I speak the truth," declared Sparwood. "Get me a drink of water and I will explain all."

When the water had been brought and he had drunk lightly of it, he continued:

"It is a bitter confession I must make, but the shadow of death compels me to do it. I shall die easier, knowing I have righted somewhat the great wrong I have committed."

To go back to the beginning I would say that my true name is Adams and that I was your mother's adopted brother, though I had never seen her until I came to Greydon.

"She had a sister two years older than she, and her mother dying when she was an infant she was adopted by another family. Of course I was older than your mother or her sister."

"Well, the family who adopted your mother moved away and we never saw her again."

"We did hear, however, several years after that a vessel on which they had engaged passage to Boston was lost with every soul on board."

"You may judge of my surprise when I met your mother at Greydon and recognized her, for we had all supposed her dead."

Meanwhile her sister Amelia had married a retired sea captain and little Mona, named after her aunt, was their child.

"Soon after Mona's birth her father was called to India to attend to some business in which he was interested. The ship came back in the course of time with the news of his death at the hands of a party of coolies."

"The blow completely prostrated his wife and for a time her life was despaired of."

"Just before that I had learned that considerable property through the death of a distant relative had fallen to her."

"Knowing that I could lay no claim to even a part of it I resolved to possess it by foul means. Under pretense of her failing health I had your aunt removed to a place where I intended no one should find her."

"But in that I was partially defeated for a woman who was a harmless imbecile and had conceived a great liking for Mona followed and discovered their stopping place."

"I tried to get her away, but stealing Mona she eluded me and I saw no more of them until I met them at Greydon."

"The loss of Mona made Mrs. Walton more frantic than ever, so I had her carried to a private asylum."

"At last to my terror Captain Walton returned alive and well, to begin a search for his wife and child."

"I grew alarmed then and not daring to risk Mona longer at Greydon, I planned to move her to a safe place, in which attempt you thwarted me."

"I didn't dare to do any more in that direction, so I turned my whole attention toward keeping Mrs. Walton concealed from her husband."

"Then, not daring to remain in New York longer, I was on my way to Philadelphia with her when—well, you know the rest. I have been overtaken in my sins."

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 50.]

Lester's Luck.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

Author of "Victor Vane," "Chester Rand," "Ragged Dick Series," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LESTER MEETS WITH DISAPPOINTMENT.

Entering the saloon, Lester looked around him. Nothing was to be seen of the professor, but behind the bar stood a stout German weighing apparently about two hundred pounds, who was serving a customer with a glass of lager.

"Is Professor Robinson here?" asked Lester, addressing the bartender.

"I don't know no professor," answered the saloon keeper with a broad German accent. "You think I keep a college, eh?"

"I mean the short, elderly man who came in about twenty minutes ago."

"Was he a professor?" asked the bartender incredulously. "He looked more like a tramp."

"He said he was an old schoolmate of yours."

"Dat's more dan I know. He is more nor fifteen years older dan I."

Lester began to suspect that he was again the victim of a trick.

"He said he was going to borrow money of you to pay me what he owes me."

"I wouldn't lend him no money. He's no good."

"Didn't he ask you?"

"No, he asked for whiskey, and I gave him some."

"Isn't he here now? I didn't see him go out."

"He went out at the side door."

Then for the first time Lester noticed there was a door leading to the side street. While he was waiting patiently outside the professor had escaped in this way, and might be a mile away by this time.

Lester was mortified to think he had been taken in a second time by the wily professor.

"What you have to drink?" asked the stout German in a business-like tone. "You want whiskey, too?"

"You may give me a glass of sarsaparilla," answered Lester, not because he wanted it, but because he saw that he was expected to patronize the house."

"I hope you catch him," said the saloon keeper sociably. "Does he owe you much money?"

"Twenty-five dollars."

"He's no good. He never pay you."

"I don't think he will," returned Lester soberly.

"So he is a professor, eh?"

"He calls himself so, but I don't think he has any claim to the title."

"He is a professor of—what you call it—humbug," said the German, laughing.

"I guess you are right."

Lester left the saloon and went back to the ferry, feeling more dissatisfied than if he had not met the professor at all. He was sorry now that he did not accompany him into the saloon. Still, even then, it would have done him no good, for the chances were that all his money had been spent.

He took the next boat back to New York, deciding that he would not look up the situation in Brooklyn. He would make an effort to secure a place in New York.

In the evening when Frank came home Lester told him of the day's experiences.

"I should have liked to see the professor," said Frank. "He's smart.

Would you be willing for me to introduce him into my next story?"

"I don't mind as long as you don't introduce me. I am ashamed of having been outwitted so easily."

"You didn't hear of a place, did you, Lester?"

"No; at any rate I got no encouragement from anyone to whom I applied."

"There's a sign 'Boy Wanted' on a druggist's door on Broadway."

"I suppose it is taken by this time."

"No; it was there when I got out of the car twenty minutes ago."

"I'll go right up there and see about it."

Lester found the store and went in. He asked a man at the soda fountain if the situation was filled.

"No. If you want to ask about it go to the tall man at the back of the store."

Lester followed directions.

"I hear you want a boy," he said.

"Yes; do you want the place?"

"I should like it. What is the pay?"

"Three dollars and a half a week."

That seemed small, and would not even pay his board, but Lester had a little money ahead, and thought it would enable him to tide over three or four weeks perhaps.

"Have you ever worked in a drug store before?" asked the tall man.

"No sir. Do I need to know anything of the business?"

"No. You will tend the soda fountain. Still it would be convenient if you knew something of the work. Can you draw soda?"

"Yes sir."

In his native village of Harper's Mills Lester had occasionally helped draw soda in a candy store kept by a friend, and he found that this knowledge helped him now.

"You can come to work next Monday," said the druggist.

"What are the hours?" asked Lester.

"From eight in the morning till ten o'clock at night."

"That's pretty long."

"You will have one evening to yourself. You will also have an hour for dinner and an hour for supper."

"Very well, sir. I will come."

Lester left the store with a certain degree of satisfaction, yet not without some anxiety. He had agreed to accept a salary that would not pay his board. The eight dollars he had succeeded in saving up would make up deficiencies for a short time, but it would not be long before he was stranded.

"I will take the place and wait till something better turns up," he reflected.

It is wonderful what a difference there was in Lester's feelings from the week previous when he was earning ten dollars. He seemed to be making progress backward.

"I don't think I can get much lower," he said ruefully to his friend Frank.

"Things may take a sudden turn," replied Frank encouragingly.

"It is about time. If I only had the twenty-five dollars Professor Robinson robbed me of, I should feel comfortable for a time."

It was now Thursday, and he was not to go into the drug store till Monday. He was earning nothing, and his expenses were going on all the same.

He would have gone to his cousin William Thornton and asked his help in getting a more satisfactory position, but he was reluctant to do so. He was satisfied that Thornton had all he could do to earn his own living, and he did not want to be a burden to him.

"Why don't you go down to the Fall river boat pier early in the morning?" suggested Frank Crocker.

"You may get an opportunity to carry a man's valise to Broadway, or to one of the stations of the Elevated Railroad, and so pick up a quarter. It would be better than nothing."

"Certainly it will," said Lester. "I will follow your advice."

The next morning before breakfast he went to Pier 23, and was on hand

when the passengers landed from the boat.

"Carry your valise?" said Lester, addressing the new arrivals.

Most of them took no notice of his appeal, but walked on, baggage in hand.

Finally one man, who looked like an elderly farmer, paused and gazed at him irresolutely.

"What's that, sonny?" he asked.

"I will carry your carpet bag for you. Where do you want to go?"

"To the New England Hotel. Do you know where it is?"

"Yes."

"How fur away, is it?"

"About a mile."

"What'll you charge to take my bag? It aint very hefty."

"You may give me what you like, sir."

Frank had suggested that he would lose nothing by leaving the matter of compensation to the generosity of the passenger.

"Well, that's fair," said the farmer, looking relieved.

"Shall I take it, sir?"

"Yes, sonny, walk right along with it, and I'll follow."

"He ought to give me more than a quarter for taking his carpet bag so far," thought Lester.

There was another reason why he thought he should receive a good fee. The bag was very heavy. What there was in it he didn't know, but learned from his rustic patron that it contained about a dozen books in addition to some articles of clothing.

"I'm goin' to visit my darter," said the farmer, "and I'm takin' some books she left at the house."

By the time they reached Broadway Lester felt as if his arm were ready to drop off. He kept shifting the burden from one hand to the other. He was half inclined to give up the job, but felt that he could not afford to do so.

Finally, much to his relief, they reached the hotel. He put down the carpet bag, and waited for his fee. The farmer took out his purse, and fumbling about with his thumb and finger finally produced a nickel.

"There, sonny," he said, "that is to pay for your trouble."

"What!" exclaimed Lester aghast.

"You give me five cents for bringing your carpet bag all this distance?"

"You told me I might pay what I pleased. Let me tell you, sonny, five cents is a good sum for a boy like you. When I was your age I seldom had so much money."

Lester was angry.

"I don't want your nickel," he said hotly. "You can keep it yourself."

"You're a queer boy!" said the farmer. "I don't want you to work for nothing. I shan't take back the money."

Lester took the nickel, and flung it across the street.

"I don't want any of your money," he said.

"You'll die in the poorhouse, young man!" said the farmer solemnly. He thought some of going across the street to pick up the despised coin, but a small boy had already possessed himself of it.

Lester went home disappointed and angry.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LESTER GETS INTO TROUBLE.

On Monday morning Lester entered upon his duties at the drug store. The work was not arduous, but the hours were long. From eight o'clock in the morning with an hour for dinner and half an hour for supper, made twelve hours and a half. Besides he would be required to work every other Sunday.

Lester had never been so confined before, and he became very weary. Had he received a living income he would not have cared so much, but three dollars and a half failed to pay his weekly expenses. At the end of the first week he found that he had been compelled to spend three dollars from his reserve fund, and this was not only discouraging but alarming.

for he had only about ten dollars left.

Lester tried to think how he could economize even more closely than he had done, but this did not seem to be possible. Moreover, though he was well supplied with clothing at present, he would soon be obliged to buy a pair of shoes and a hat, and where the money was to come from he didn't know. Perhaps his cousin William Thornton would help him, but he didn't like to apply to him. Mr. Thornton, he had reason to believe, was a poor man, and he did not care to impose upon his generosity.

There was another boy in the drug store, John Sanders, who stood next above Lester. He was an ill-natured and malicious boy, and had for some unknown reason taken a dislike to Lester. He was not dependent upon his salary, for he had parents living. His father was in the custom house, and earning a good income. He had placed John in the drug store, thinking that the business was a good one, and he might eventually start him in it if he appeared to be suited for it. John took an early opportunity to question Lester as to his circumstances.

Lester told him frankly that he had no parents, was alone in the world, and obliged to earn his own living.

"How much do you get?"
 "Three dollars and a half a week."
 "Do you have to live on that?"
 "I can't live on it, but I have a little money ahead."
 "How much?"
 "About ten dollars."
 "Humph, that ain't much. My father's in the custom house and he has got money."
 "I am glad for you."
 "Besides I get five dollars a week. I wouldn't work for three dollars and a half."

"I wouldn't if I could get more."
 "You could do better blacking boots."
 "Perhaps I could," answered Lester, nettled. "Is it hard work?"
 "How should I know? I am a gentlemen's son and I shan't have to work at any such business."
 "Nor will I."
 "You'd better not be too proud. You may have to do it."
 "If I do," said Lester, amused, "perhaps you will patronize me."
 "Oh, yes," said John in a lofty tone. "I will do what I can to help you along."

It so happened that on Monday of the second week the two boys were in the drug store alone. Lester's attention was drawn to a sudden crash, and looking up he saw that a large bottle of valuable perfume had dropped on the floor and been broken, the contents being spilled. John stooped over and began to pick up the pieces. He helped to finish before the proprietor, who ran out to dinner, came back. But there was one thing that could not be concealed, the stain upon the floor.

"What a pity!" said Lester. "How much was the value of that bottle?"
 "Two dollars and a half."
 "Will it be charged to you?"
 "It will be charged to the one who knocked the bottle off the counter."

This seemed a strange answer to Lester; for it was owing to John's carelessness that the bottle had fallen. He understood it better when the proprietor came in.
 "How came the floor wet?" the latter asked.
 "One of the bottles of perfumery fell and was broken," answered John.
 "It fell, did it? You mean it was knocked off. Who did it?"
 "Lester," answered John unblushingly.
 Lester was so surprised that he could not at first command words to deny this false charge.
 "Lester Gray," said Mr. Rogers sternly, "the value of this bottle—two dollars and a half—will be deducted from your week's salary."
 "But, sir," exclaimed Lester, "I did not knock off the bottle."

"Oh!" said the druggist in a tone of sarcasm, "I suppose it fell off of itself."

"No, sir."
 "Then how did it happen?"
 "I can only say, sir, that I was on this side of the store. When I heard the crash I looked over and saw John picking up the pieces."
 "Is this true, John?"
 "No, sir, it isn't. Lester was walking by, and hit the bottle with his elbow."

"Lester," said the druggist, "it seems that in addition to your carelessness you have deliberately lied in order to screen yourself and get your fellow clerk in trouble. At the end of the week I shall deduct two dollars—the wholesale price of the bottle from your salary."

"I repeat, sir," said Lester indignantly, "that I had nothing to do with breaking the bottle. I feel satisfied now that John broke it, or he would not have told such a falsehood about me."

"That is sufficient. You cannot deceive me."

Lester felt very angry, and was tempted to throw up his place, but he reflected that he would be held responsible for the loss, and must therefore work till the end of the week. Then, even if the druggist retained him in his employ, he would have but one dollar and a half towards his week's expenses.

It was clear that he could not go on so. He must get another place, or he would soon be helpless from lack of means.

John took care to keep out of his way. He was conscious that he had done a very contemptible thing, and was ashamed to face the boy he had wronged. That evening John left at half past five, it being his night off, so that Lester did not again see him to speak to him.

When Lester reached home he found a letter waiting for him. The handwriting was unknown to him. Wondering who could have written it, he opened it, and read as follows:

My Young Friend—I wish to see you tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock sharp at the office of Mr. Clinton where I first had the good fortune to meet you.
 Yours sincerely,
 Seth Compton.

Lester's heart beat joyfully. He felt sure that this meeting would result in something to his advantage, and he decided to keep the appointment, at the risk of offending the druggist. Should he go to the store in the morning he knew that he would be unable to get off, so he made up his mind not to report for duty. It was only fair to apprise the druggist, however, and he accordingly wrote to Mr. Rogers, saying that he had an important engagement, and would be unable to go to the store till two o'clock in the afternoon.

This letter we will follow.
 At nine o'clock the druggist, who lived in Seventy-Fourth street, entered the store, and with his usual scrutinizing glance looked about him.

"Where is Lester?" he asked.
 "I guess he don't dare to come after what he did yesterday," said John Sanders.

"Hasn't he been here at all?" asked the druggist quickly.
 "He hasn't showed up."
 "That is cool. He thinks he can avoid paying for the bottle of perfume."
 "That's just what I thought," said John.

"Here is a letter for you, sir," said Simon Gates, who felt more friendly to Lester than to John. "Perhaps it may be from Lester."

"Give it to me."
 Mr. Rogers tore open the letter, and read it with a frown.

"Well, I declare," he said. "That boy has cheek. Listen."
 He proceeded to read Lester's letter.

Dear Sir:
 I shall be unable to be at the store tomorrow forenoon, having an important business engagement. You may expect to see me at two o'clock in the

afternoon, or sooner, if I can manage it.

Yours Respectfully,

Lester Gray.
 "Did you ever hear the like, Mr. Gates?" demanded the druggist angrily. "And this is a letter from my junior boy. You would think he was a business man of my own rank."

"Lester is awful cheeky," remarked John, pleased to find that his fellow clerk had incurred the druggist's censure. "You wouldn't catch me writing such a letter."

"The boy will find that he can't trifle with me," said Mr. Rogers, with an angry frown. "I shall have a rod in pickle for him when he reports for duty in the afternoon. I shall take off a day's pay, and that, with the value of the bottle, won't leave him much when we settle at the end of the week."

John Sanders smiled gleefully. He was looking forward eagerly for Lester's appearance and enjoyed in anticipation the blowing up he was sure to get.

CHAPTER XXV.

LESTER'S LUCK.

Lester had some idea of the reception he would get from the druggist. It might lead to his discharge, but he felt that he could not afford to retain his place. He was strong and well grown, and it would be strange if he were not worth more than three dollars and a half a week somewhere.

He walked down to Wall Street, feeling that in his present circumstances it was worth while to save five cents. It was about five minutes of eleven, when he entered Mr. Clinton's office.

"Good morning, Lester," said Lawrence, the chief clerk, extending his hand with a pleasant smile. "How do things go with you?"

"Not very well," answered Lester, shaking his head.

"Haven't you found a place?"
 "Yes."
 "What sort of a place?"
 "In a drug store."

"You needn't tell me about it. I began business in a drug store. The hours are long and the pay is small. I was only fifteen when I entered the store, and I remained there for a year."

"I am not likely to remain that long. Another boy employed there broke a large bottle of perfumery, and has charged it upon me. I suppose I shall have to pay for it."
 "That is bad luck."

"Especially when I am earning only three dollars and a half a week."
 "Is that all? It is very small. But how do you happen to be off this morning?"

"I received a letter from Mr. Compton asking me to meet him here at eleven o'clock."

"That is a good sign. He found your advice good, and will make you a present."

"It will be very welcome. Even five dollars would give me a lift."

At that moment Mr. Compton entered.

"Ah, Mr. Gray," he said cordially, offering his hand, "you are prompt."
 "Yes, sir."

"I like promptness. I am three minutes late myself, but it doesn't often happen. I wished to see you on business. I may say important business. I suppose you remember that advice you gave me about stocks?"

"Yes, sir. I hope the advice proved good."

"It did. The stock has gone up six points, and as I bought a thousand shares my profits have been handsome—very handsome."

"I am glad of it, sir."
 "You have reason to be. When I consulted you I made up my mind to give you ten per cent. of whatever profit I made. Ten per cent. of six thousand dollars is—how much?"

"Six hundred," answered Lester in joyful excitement.

"Precisely. Here is a check made payable to your order for six hundred dollars."

"Are you really going to give me this large sum?" asked Lester in amazement.

"Certainly. But for you I should have invested in another stock which has gone down two points. And after all I shall have over five thousand dollars left."

But Lester's mind was not on Mr. Compton's profits, but on his own. He felt that this windfall would change his entire prospects.

"I can't tell you how grateful I am for your great liberality," he said, as he received the check, which was on the Park National Bank. "Will they give me the money at the bank?"

"Yes, if I endorse the check, but I advise you to deposit it with Mr. Clinton for the present and get him to give you on account whatever sum you stand in immediate need of. You might hold back a hundred dollars, and deposit, say half of it in some savings bank to be drawn upon as you have need. Are you employed at present?"

"Yes, sir, but I shall give up my place, and look for another that will suit me better."

"That may be well. I think Mr. Clinton would employ you at a nominal sum, and then I should have an opportunity to consult you from time to time. How is that, Mr. Lawrence?"

"If Lester will work for five dollars a week I will venture to engage him as extra clerk. Our youngest boy has left us."

"I accept with pleasure," said Lester, "but I should like to wait till next Monday before entering on my duties."

"That will do. Now, if you will endorse this check, I will credit you with whatever sum you want to leave with us."

"Say, five hundred dollars."
 The arrangement was quickly made and Lester received a certificate of the amount deposited, which he carefully put in his pocket. One hundred dollars was given him in bills.

"Good morning, Mr. Gray," said Mr. Compton. "I am due at a directors' meeting up town, and must leave you. I shall see you often now that you are to be with my friend Mr. Clinton."

Lester consulted Mr. Lawrence as to a savings bank, and was directed to a large institution on Wall Street, where he deposited fifty dollars. As his salary would not pay his expenses, he felt that it would be well to keep a considerable sum with him. Besides he wanted to buy a few small articles.

It was not quite two o'clock when Lester, feeling considerably happier than he did the day before, entered the drug store on Broadway.

"Oh, so you've come back, have you?" said John Sanders with a leer. "The boss is as mad as blazes. You'll catch it when he gets through with the customer he's waiting on."

Rather to John's surprise Lester smiled.

"Didn't he like my staying away?" he asked.

"You just bet he didn't. I never saw him so mad."

"I was called away by important business," said Lester composedly.

"Well, if you haven't got cheek," ejaculated John.

Lester might have felt insulted and angry, but the consciousness that he had fifty dollars in his pocket and eleven times that amount in the hands of Mr. Clinton made him feel good natured.

"I wouldn't like to be in your shoes," continued John, who found great pleasure in gloating over Lester's misfortunes.

"I am not sure about that," returned Lester.

"Well, you're the queerest lot I ever saw. Do you think I'd change places with a boy earning three dollars and a half a week? Oh, I heard Mr. Rogers say he should dock you for all day, seel'n' you went off without leave. That won't leave you much, after pay-in' for the bottle—"

"Which you broke."

(To be continued.)

A Plunge

To Bed Rock!

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

Has been reduced from 25 to 10 cents per copy, and from \$3 to \$1 a year.

These are the times when it is well to get down to bed rock. MUNSEY'S has reached that point, a point below which no good magazine will ever go, but to which all magazines of large circulation must eventually come. The present low price of paper and the perfection of printing machinery make it possible to produce and sell a magazine at these figures with a profit—as good a magazine as has ever been issued. This sweeping departure will result in no falling off in quality or quantity.

Clubbed with THE ARGOSY for \$2.50.

We will send both THE ARGOSY and MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE for one year, to one address, on receipt of two dollars and fifty cents. This is ten cents less than THE ARGOSY alone costs by the week.

A Harvest for Agents—\$3 to \$5 a day.

Any active boy or girl, man or woman, who will take hold of this business in earnest, can make from \$3 to \$5 a day. We will guarantee this. Others are doing it—you can do it. Commission to agents, 20 per cent.

The October MUNSEY'S—the issue with which the price is reduced—is the most beautiful in illustrations, and the most attractive in contents, of all the magazines of the month. Don't fail to get the October MUNSEY'S and see what a ten cent magazine of today is like. The October issue opens the tenth volume. The leading features of this number are: A sketch and frontispiece portrait of Senator John Sherman; Modern Artists, with reproductions of their work; The Men who Make the New York Sun; A Famous Illustrator of Dickens; Heroines of French History; Dr. Gottheil on Jewish Charities; The Stage, with portraits of prominent players; Three Serial Stories, with synopses of opening chapters, four clever short stories, Literary Chat of the month, and Impressions by the Way.

Ask your newsdealer for MUNSEY'S. If he has sold his supply he can get you a copy or you can get it direct from the publishers. It will be mailed immediately on receipt of price.

FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY, 155 East 23d Street, New York.

Down Goes the Price!

Bound Volumes of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

Reduced from \$2.00 to \$1.00.

These are very rare books, beautifully bound in green and gold. Vols. VI, VII, VIII and IX now ready.

FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY.

Postage 35 cents.

USE POND EXTRA

For Piles, Burns, Bruises, Wounds, Chafing, Catarrh, Soreness, Lameness, Sore Eyes, Inflammation, Hemorrhages,



DEMAND POND'S & ACCEPT NO SUBS

The Pot insulted the Kettle because the Cook did not use

SAPOLIO

Good Cooking demands Cleanliness. Sapolio should be used in every Kitchen.

The Argosy and Munsey's Magazine

to one address, \$2.50 a y

LADIES!! Why Drink Poor Teas?



When you can get the Best at Cargo prices in any Quantity, Dinner, Tea and Toilet Sets, Watches, Clocks, Music Boxes, Cook Books and all kinds of premiums given to Club Agents. Good Income made by getting orders for our celebrated goods. For full particulars address THE GREAT AMERICAN TEA CO., 31 and 33 Vesey St., N. Y.

P. O. Box 298.

WORK FOR US.

If you are seeking an honorable business in which all persons of either sex, and all ages, make great pay all the time they work, write to us for particulars. All succeed. Beginners easily earn \$25 per week. We will bear all expense of starting you.

TRUE & CO., Box 1300, Augusta, Me.



Send 10 cts. silver, for postage, etc. and we will mail you out of this solid rolled gold engraved rings and catalogue of tasteful goods for agents to sell. Howard Mfg. Co., Providence, R. I.



HAS DONE IT for others, will do it for you. Our **BEARD ELIXIR** will force a heavy mustache in 10 days! Full beard in 30. Never known to fail. Sample package, postpaid, 1 1/2c., two for 25c., one dozen, \$1.00. Agents wanted everywhere. **WEBSON MFG. CO., 6 E. St., Providence, R. I.**

PLAYS

Dialogues, Speakers, for School, Club and Parlor. Catalogue free. **T. S. DENISON, Pub. Chicago, Ill.**

World's Fair Souvenir Stamps from the East 1000, 40c; 200, 10c; M. Ali Bey, G. D., World's Fair, Chicago

Looking Better

feeling better—better in every way. There's more consolation in that than well people stop to ponder. To get back flesh and spirits is every thing.



Scott's Emulsion

of pure Co.'s Liver Oil with Hypophosphites is prescribed by leading physicians everywhere for ailments that are causing rapid loss of flesh and vital strength.

Scott's Emulsion will do more than to stop a lingering Cough—it fortifies the system **AGAINST** coughs and colds.

Prepared by Scott & Bowne, N. Y. All druggists.

BOUND VOLUMES OF

THE ARGOSY.

Volumes I, II and IV are entirely out of print.

Only three copies of Volume III for sale. Price \$5.

Volumes V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X are very nearly gone. Price \$5.

The stock of Volume XII is also almost exhausted. Price \$4.

Volumes XI, XIII, XIV, XV and XVI can be had for \$1.50 each. Expressage to be paid by receiver.

FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY.