VOL. XVII. No. 570. FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS, MADISON SQUARE, SOUTH. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

THE ARGOSY

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1893

A Desertion From the Ranks.

BY HOWARD C. CROSBY.

BEHIND the rows of tents, pitched upon the level plateau at the west end of Starve Goat Island, in the shade of the pine grove, were grouped eight or ten boys, some of the oldest and largest in the school, though, as the tutors of the Bonondale Academy would have told you, among them were some of the most mischievous, not to say malicious spirits in the whole rank and file.

In gathering two hundred boys together, it is utterly impossible to have the number entirely free from bullies and the maliciously inclined; but in an institution ruled as strictly as was Bonondale, the turbulent spirits found few opportunities to make trouble. This was the occasion of the annual camp, however, and with a smaller number of tutors, and the older boys mostly in command, things had not been going so smoothly during the week which had been spent upon the island. With Colonel Allen away, and most of the senior teachers remaining at the Academy, the boys were rather disorderly, and this year several of the "hard set" were among the list of senior officers and thing were worse than usual.

Hugh Durgin was lieutenant colonel for the term, having gained the position by sheer hard work at his tactics and other studies; the character he bore among the instructors never would have gained it for him, nor was he liked enough by the other boys to have secured their votes had it not been for his undoubted ability.

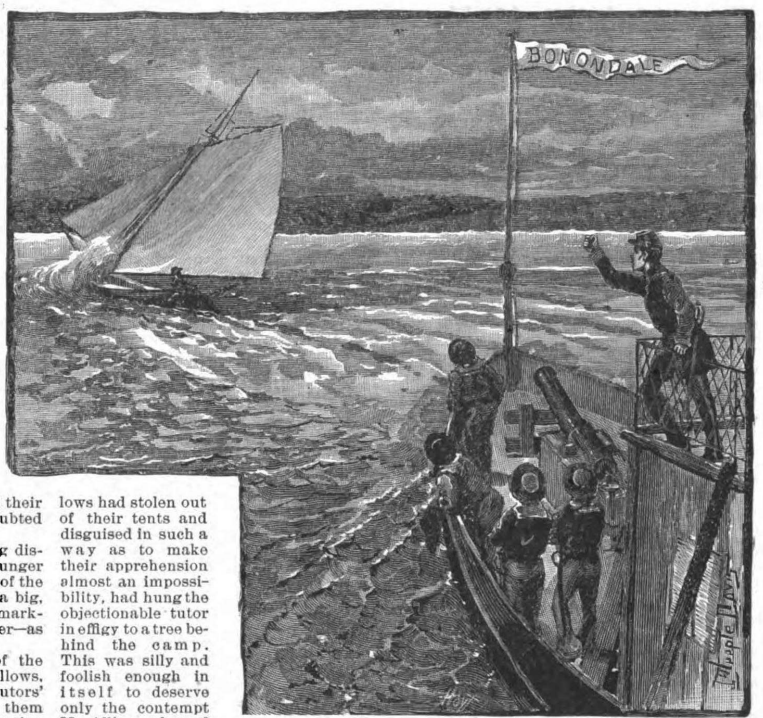
He was of a bullying, overbearing disposition, especially with the younger boys, and without doubt even some of the junior tutors feared him. He was a big, strapping fellow, with an ugly pock marked face, and a fist like a hammer—as many of the boys could testify.

He winked at a great many of the pranks played that week by the fellows, and there was little doubt in the tutors' minds that he often had a part in them himself; but how to prove the assertion was another matter. Mr. Allison, a young, mild mannered tutor, who taught mechanical drawing during the school year, seemed to have been singled out by the "hard set" as a butt for much of their horseplay. Mr. Allison was never harsh, and had always been exceptionally kind to the boys; but this did not save him.

He was a diffident young man, who, though he was an excellent draftsman, could never stand up before his scholars and explain a figure on the board, without blushing like a girl, and stammering and trembling, with symptoms of stage fright. Further, Mr. Allison had a thin, peculiar voice, was weak and sickly looking, and wore smoged glasses to shield a pair of very weak and near sighted eyes. More than enough peculiarities these, you see, to make him the butt of his pupils' practical jokes.

Once during the term Mr. Allison received a visit from his old mother, as peculiar and weird looking as himself, and the rougher boys had amused themselves by making as open fun as they dared of the poor old creature, and caricaturing her on the blackboard. That the drawing master loved and respected his aged parent there could be no doubt, and he was most tender of her while she remained. She lived alone in a little town not more than twenty miles away, yet his duties were so confining that it was seldom that he could get leave to go home.

The colonel and all of the senior teachers being away, Mr. Allison had had an exceptionally hard time of it during this camp. The night before some of the fellows had stolen out of their tents and disguised in such a way as to make their apprehension almost an impossibility, had hung the objectionable tutor in effigy to a tree behind the camp. This was silly and foolish enough in itself to deserve only the contempt Mr. Allison showed for it, for he did not even order his caricature cut down, and left it dangling from the tree branch in a rather ghastly way, did not one know that it was stuffed with hay.



DURGIN WAS FAIRLY WILD AT THIS MOVEMENT ON THE PART OF THE DESERTER.

The face of the dummy, however, had been painted by Ned Murray, the artist of the school, to bear a very strong resemblance to the young tutor, for the mask had been used by the boys in some theatrical attempt at the Academy during the previous winter, and the figure appeared very lifelike.

It was an "off hour" now, and the group of boys back of the tent, Hugh Durgin among them, were talking over the rather disappointing effect of the "lark" of the night before.

"I thought he would be wild," declared Harry Cousins, who, although he often had a part in the mischievous doings of the "hard set," was by no means viciously inclined, being more thoughtless than intentionally mean in his skylarking; "but he hasn't raised a yip. Kind of knocks the wind out of our sails."

"I'd like to take it down and parade it up and down before the tents," said Neal Murray. "It looks near enough like him to fool his mother, if I do say it myself."

"By George! let's play a joke on the old lady. That *will* get Old Goggles wild," cried Hugh, forgetting the dignity of his position and becoming animated.

"What sort of a joke?" asked Harry, doubtfully.

Durgin lowered his voice.

"You know that box the new rifles came in? It looks just like a coffin. We'll clap *it*," with a jerk of his thumb toward the effigy, "into the box, put in enough weight in it to seem like a real body, nail up the box and ship it to the old lady. Ha, ha ha! won't she be quite wild? We'll send a telegram, too, announcing Old Goggles' demise and telling her to meet the body at the railroad station. I'm going to send somebody over to town for some supplies in the Belle tomorrow morning, and I'll see that they're the right fellows," and he winked knowingly. "We'll cut it down tonight and get it aboard the boat. I'll write the telegram, and whoever goes to town can send it up to the office by a boy and send the box to the station by an expressman; get somebody who you know won't peach, of course. Now, how does that strike you?"

"It doesn't strike *me* at all," responded Harry, before the others could speak. "That's the meanest thing I ever heard proposed, and I, for one, won't have anything to do with it."

"Well, now, what's the matter with *you*?" Hugh asked in surprise, flushing up hotly at Harry's words.

"There's nothing the matter with me," returned young Cousins. "It's this trick of yours that's the matter. It's an outrageous thing to do, and besides, it might lead to serious results. The old lady, so Goggles says, has got heart trouble, and if we should send her such a telegram she might never recover from it. If the shock should kill her what would *we* be?"

"Why, we would be students of the Bonondale Academy, of course," exclaimed Durgin, with a coarse laugh. "What's the use of going into heroics over it? Heart disease nothing! I guess if she's had heart trouble all her life and it hasn't killed her yet, this won't harm her."

"Well, I won't have anything to do with it, and I advise you to let the whole thing alone," declared Harry, walking away.

There may have been others in the crowd who felt that Harry was right; but they dared not openly oppose Durgin as Harry had, and some of them even joined their older companion in jeering at Harry as he departed.

"Milksop!" Durgin exclaimed in disgust. "He deserves a good licking, and he'll get it, too."

"Perhaps he'll blab," suggested some one, timidly. "If he should, it would get us into no end of a row."

"He wouldn't dare," Durgin declared. "The whole school would blackball him."

"He wouldn't any way; he isn't that kind of a fellow," added Neal Murray quietly.

But Harry was terribly tempted to give Mr. Allison a hint of the plot which Durgin and his friends were arranging; yet that iron bound code of honor, which all boys sacredly obey, and which more often does ill than good in the keeping, kept him from warning the tutor. He did not try again to persuade the others from committing the dastardly trick, for they were all afraid of Durgin and would do his bidding.

He saw those who were in the plot meet for another conference in the afternoon; he knew when they left their tents at night, secured the effigy, and bore it to the little sloop; and he was sure, when he heard Neal Murray and Fred Angel ordered to go to Camden for supplies in the Belle, that Durgin had not given up his plan of sending the box to Mr. Allison's mother.

Neal and Fred were to go immediately after roll call. The Belle was all ready to push off, and unless he did something quick, Harry knew that it would be too late.

He slipped away while the drum which beat to ranks was still sounding, ran down to the shore and hastily boarded

the sloop. She lay out of sight of the parade ground, and he knew he would not be missed until his captain reported him absent from the ranks. That would mean an explanation and a reprimand; or several days in confinement should the explanation be refused.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind he was not idle, however, and at once commanded the hoisting of the sails, after assuring himself that the box, nailed up and weighted, was in the cabin. About the time that the officer of the day should approach Lieutenant-Colonel Durgin and saluting, say: "Sir, the parade is formed!" Harry had got up the sails and was endeavoring to cast off the fastenings.

While he was still struggling with the refractory cable, an orderly appeared at the summit of the ridge which hid the parade ground from his eyes. The fellow saw and gave the alarm at once. But the Belle was free now and began to scud rapidly out of the tiny cove.

At the end of the long wharf, before the officer's quarters, lay the steam tug Bonondale, which had brought the school over to the island, and which was chartered annually at camping time for the purpose and for some naval maneuvers which the boys usually arranged for the last day, the camp always breaking up in a mock battle. Several of the younger boys who were still in the primary department and too small for regular drill were allowed to play at sailoring and remained aboard the Bonondale with a tutor, while their older schoolmates were in camp.

On receiving the report of Harry's desertion, Durgin immediately ordered a file of boys upon the Bonondale, going with them himself to chase the fugitive. Fortunately the engineer of the tug had steam up, and before the Belle had got a mile out into the lake the Bonondale left the wharf in pursuit.

At one end of the lake was Bonondale and the Academy; at the other extremity Camden was situated. The spires of the first named town were faintly visible from the island, but Camden was entirely out of view, around a long arm which made out from the west shore of the lake. Between this peninsula (which was really an island now, only being joined to the mainland in the dry season) and the mainland was a narrow passage through which small boats could pass—the Belle had done so; but the only way for the tug to get to Camden was to go around the long peninsula, at least six miles further.

Harry turned the Belle's head to the south as though he proposed running back to the Academy, and thus tolled the Bonondale some distance further away from the end of the peninsula; but having reached a point just opposite the narrow strait before mentioned, he tacked and headed the Belle direct for the shallow water.

Durgin, who stood upon the upper deck of the Bonondale, was fairly wild as he saw this movement on the part of the deserter; he dared not run the tug into the passage and all he could do was to remain off the inlet, until he saw that Harry got safely through, and then steam around the peninsula and run the Belle down in Camden waters.

The little sloop went through the passage "as slick as a whistle," barely touching her keel on the sandy bottom. Out of sight of the tug Harry dropped over his kedge and with the boat hatchet split open the coffin-like box in the cabin and tore the effigy of Mr. Allison to pieces, throwing it and the box itself overboard.

Then he hoisted his anchor again, beat back through the passage, and finding the Bonondale out of sight, he sailed back to the island, and gave himself up to the officer of the day. The second "slip" he gave the tug and the wrathy lieutenant-colonel doubtless added several days to his confinement to the guard tent, and he remained there by Colonel Allen's express order when he heard of his desertion, all through the remainder of the camping week; and while his two hundred or more school fellows were taking part in the mock battle which ended their outing, poor Harry was sitting in his prison studying line after line of Greek verbs.

"That foolish escapade," as the colonel called it, cost Harry Cousins any chance of promotion from the ranks he may have had, for that term at least, and the colonel even considered it a serious enough matter to write to Mr. Cousins about. But Harry did not refuse to make an explanation of his conduct to his father, although boylike he bound him to secrecy, and made no objection to the punishment inflicted upon him by the principal.

And I am not sure that it was not a pretty good thing for him all around; for it put Harry at sword's points with Durgin and his friends, and therefore, having so much more more time to study, the "deserter" went up in his classes hand over hand and the next year, greatly to Colonel Allen's surprise, the boys unanimously voted Harry into the position formerly occupied by Durgin.

You see, the boys knew what Harry had done for Mr. Allison, although the colonel and his assistants did not.

[*This Story began in No 568.*]

A Bad Lot.

BY ARTHUR LEE PUTNAM.

Author of "Ben Bruce," "Cast Upon the Breakers," "Number 91," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED CHAMPION.

Bernard posted himself at a point where he could watch the hotel. When he saw the departure of Septimus and his father he made his way back and rejoined Mr. Penrose.

"The coast is clear," said his elder companion with a smile. "Thanks to you I have had an interview with my old teacher."

"Did he remember you?"

"No, and he seemed very touchy on the subject of his experiences in Illinois."

"Do you think he will come after me again?"

"I don't know, but he certainly appeared very desirous of getting you back. His son seemed to sympathize with him. Is he a friend of yours?"

"Septimus loves me like a brother," laughed Bernard. "He was very anxious to have his father give me a horsewhipping. I shall feel glad to get a little farther away from Doncaster and Snowdon Institute."

"We will go tomorrow morning. I should like to rest here one day."

The two were seated on the piazza when Bernard, chancing to look up exclaimed in alarm: "There's Mr. Snowdon coming back. He is nearly here. There is another carriage behind."

Mr. Penrose looked up quickly, and Bernard saw that he turned pale.

"The carriage behind," he said, "contains my cousin, the man who is trying to have me adjudged insane, and the two men with him are doubtless doctors, medical quacks, whom he has hired to certify to my insanity.

"Good heavens! Then you are in as great danger as I."

"Greater," answered Mr. Penrose in a low suppressed tone.

"Can they take you?"

"Not legally, but they will try."

"Let us escape while we can."

"No; it would seem to bear out their charges. Besides they are too near. I will stand my ground. You can get away if you like."

"No; I will stand by you, Mr. Penrose," said Bernard firmly.

The two remained seated till the carriage halted in front of the hotel.

"Aha!" said the cousin triumphantly, "we have run our fugitive to earth."

He jumped out of the carriage, and advanced to the piazza.

"So you are here?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Penrose calmly.

"You escaped my vigilance, and fled from Buffalo."

"Stop there, James Roque! You speak as if I were not a free agent."

"You are not. You are insane, and you know it."

"I know why you want to make me out insane. You want to get possession of my property."

"It is unsafe in your hands. A lunatic isn't fit to manage property."

"I am no lunatic, nor would you try to prove me so, if I were poor. Why did you pursue me?"

"Because you are not fit to be at large."

"I am as sane as you are. Your unprincipled attempt to deprive me of my liberty shows that you ought to be locked up."

"Of course I may be wrong, but I am willing to abide by the verdict of experts. I have brought with me two distinguished physicians, who will examine you, and decide whether you are or are not in your right mind. Dr. Brown and Dr. Jones, will you kindly approach and give your opinion as to the condition of my unfortunate cousin?"

The two doctors descended from the carriage and approached the piazza. They were dressed in shabby black, and eyed Penrose furtively. Brown was the first to speak.

"Your cousin," he said, "affords every indication of insanity. What say you, Dr. Jones?"

"I fully agree with you, my learned brother," replied Dr. Jones in a nasal tone.

"I see, gentlemen, you have got the whole thing cut and dried," said William Penrose in a tone of agitation. "These tools of yours have learned their part well. All they need is to look at me, to pronounce me insane. Even a renowned doctor would hardly venture to come to so quick a decision merely from a momentary inspection."

"They have both been connected with establishments for the insane. I have called them as experts who cannot be deceived."

"What do you pay them for aiding and abetting you in this villainy?"

By this time Mr. Wilson, the landlord, appeared upon the scene. He looked from one to the other in surprise.

"What does all this mean?" he asked.

"Merely that you have been harboring a lunatic," said James Roque.

"Who is a lunatic?"

"William Penrose."

"I cannot believe it."

"It is hard to believe. Like all of his class he is very cunning. Why, should you keep him here he might set fire to your house during the night."

"Is this true?" asked the landlord, who was a timid man.

"It is a base lie!" exclaimed Penrose indignantly. "Don't believe him. He wants to have me adjudged insane that he may get control of my property."

The landlord looked bewildered.

"It that true?" he repeated doubtfully.

"No, it is a lie. My poor cousin has no property. He is dependent upon me. I am willing to pay his expenses in an asylum, and this is his return."

"Heaven give me patience!" ejaculated Penrose. "This black villain is lying in an infamous manner. He is himself a man of no means, and wants to get possession of my fortune."

"Dr. Brown, is this true?" asked James Roque, turning to his subservient tool.

"No," answered Brown, shaking his head.

"The man doesn't know me," said Mr. Penrose in a tone of contempt. "I never saw him before."

"I used to go to school with him," retorted Brown, unabashed.

"I see you are determined to lie it out."

"I appeal to my distinguished brother, Dr. Jones."

"You are quite right, Dr. Brown. We both know Mr. Penrose."

"You will bear me out in my statement," interposed Roque, "that he escaped from the asylum in Buffalo where I recently placed him?"

"Certainly."

"I was never in an asylum!" said William Penrose.

"Really, gentlemen," put in the landlord.

"My dear sir, I will see that your bill is paid," said James Roque, "but I depend upon you not to interfere with me, now that I have succeeded in overtaking my unfortunate cousin."

"Of course, if what you say is true.——"

"Don't these eminent physicians substantiate my statement?"

"To be sure," said the landlord, who was greatly influenced by the assurance that his bill would be paid.

"I see you take a sensible view. William Penrose, you must go back with us."

"Never!" exclaimed Penrose vehemently.

"You see his excitement. Can there be any clearer indication of insanity? Dr. Brown and Dr. Jones, give me your assistance, and we will secure my unfortunate cousin. Bring the cord from the carriage."

Dr. Brown produced a stout cord which the party had brought with them, and the precious trio approached their unfortunate victim.

"Mr. Wilson!" exclaimed Penrose, "will you stand by and allow such an outrage to be enacted under your own roof?"

"I think you had better go with your cousin," said the landlord soothingly. "As you are crazy, it will be better for you."

"But I am not crazy."

"Undoubtedly the man is crazy," broke in Mr. Snowdon. "I have had an interview with him in which he claimed to be a former pupil of mine, and told an absurd story of my being ridden on a rail."

"I see you are a sensible man," said James Roque. "I might have known as much from your intelligent appearance."

"Moreover he has aided and abetted a pupil of mine to escape from my rightful authority."

"The case seems to be pretty clear," said Roque with a malicious smile. "Cousin Penrose, you may as well resign yourself to circumstances. You must go back with us. I trust you will not compel us to use force. Come, gentlemen, whatever is to be done must be done quickly."

"Stop a minute, gentlemen!" said the landlord. "You promised to pay my bill."

"I will do it as soon as my cousin is secured. You don't want me to leave him here to burn down the house about your ears."

"No, no!" said the landlord hastily. "Come along, gentlemen!"

The three closed in about William Penrose, and producing the cord were about to tie him when he called out in desperation: "Will no one save me from these villains?"

"I will help you!" said Bernard, kicking Dr. Brown in the shins with such force that he dropped the cord, and yelled with pain.

"And I, too!" added a new voice.

All eyes were turned upon a long, wiry, loose-jointed man, an unmistakable Yankee, dressed as a Western miner, who had been sitting on the piazza, and had been an interested witness of what had been going on.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONSPIRATORS ARE FOILED.

Roque and the doctors loosened their hold of William Penrose when they heard the new voice. Then Roque in a supercilious tone said, "You had better attend to your business if you have any."

He clutched his cousin once more.

"Let us lose no time!" he whispered to the doctors.

"Look here!" said the miner, striding up to the group, "you're trying to kidnap an inoffensive man, and are going clear against the law. This is a free country, and it can't be done."

"Sir," said Roque, "this is an escaped lunatic, and I propose to carry him back to the asylum. I don't owe you any explanation, but I don't mind telling you that. Now get out of the way!"

"He's no more a lunatic than I am."

"Thank you, sir," said Penrose with reviving hope. "It is a cruel attempt at abduction. Save me from a fate worse than death."

"I will!" responded the Yankee miner resolutely. "No man is going to be abducted when Josh Stackpole is around."

"Clear out!" said James Roque, incensed. "Clear out, or——"

"Or what?"

"I'll have you arrested."

"And I'd have you lynched if you were out in Colorado."

"You are officious and impertinent."

"Call me all the hard names you like, squire. It won't do me any harm."

"I will do you harm. Landlord, are you going to permit this impertinent person to interfere with me?"

"Really, gentlemen, I don't know what to say," answered the landlord, who was a weak and vacillating man. "If I knew the law——"

"I'll tell you what the law is," said the miner. "Before I went out West I spent a year in a law office at Burlington, Vermont. These men haven't shown any papers—they haven't proved this gentleman to be out of his mind. It's just a high-handed violation of the law they are trying."

"In that case, I guess you'd better stop," said the landlord. "This gentleman is probably right, and——"

"He's a fool!" interposed Roque angrily. "Haven't these eminent physicians declared my cousin to be a lunatic?"

"They look more like tramps than eminent physicians," remarked Joshua Stackpole.

"We have wasted time enough with this fool," said Roque. "Dr. Brown, take one arm, and you, Dr. Jones take the other, and we will soon put an end to this foolery."

"Do it at your peril!" exclaimed Joshua Stackpole sternly.

The doctors looked somewhat apprehensive, but at a nod from James Roque, and confident in the realization that they were three to one, they proceeded to obey orders, but something unexpected happened.

Joshua Stackpole sprang upon James Roque and pitched him headlong from the piazza. Then he started for Dr. Brown, and that luckless physician followed his principal.

The miner was about to turn his attention to Dr. Jones when the latter threw up his hands and begged for mercy.

"This is an outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Snowdon, much disconcerted. "Isn't there a constable at hand, landlord, to arrest this bold ruffan. Bernard Brooks, I want you."

"Aha!" said Stackpole, "what do you want him for? Is he another lunatic?"

"No, but he is my pupil, who has rebelled against my lawful authority, and run away from his happy home at Snowdon Institute."

"How is that, sonny?" asked Joshua Stackpole.

"He tried to horsewhip me," said Bernard.

"And I will do it yet," cried Mr. Snowdon with more anger than prudence.

"Ha! it seems there is more work for me to do. You are an old man, if you don't get into your wagon and and I don't want to hurt you, but hurry home I'll——"

Joshua Stackpole looked so determined that Mr. Snowdon was alarmed.

"Come, Septimus," he said, "we'd better be going. I'll go to a magistrate and get a warrant for this man's arrest."

By this time James Roque had risen from his recumbent position.

"Dr. Brown and Dr. Jones," he exclaimed in a passion. "Are we to be worsted by a single man? Seize William Penrose, and bundle him into the carriage."

"Excuse me!" said Dr. Brown, rubbing his shins.

"And me, too!" added Dr. Jones, with an apprehensive look at Joshua Stackpole.

"Sir," said James Roque, addressing Mr. Snowdon, "as I can get no help from these cowards, will you lend me your co-operation?"

"I wish you success, sir," replied Snowdon hurriedly, "but I ought to return to Snowdon Institute where my presence is imperatively required."

"I think, squire, you'd better give it up for a bad job," said Stackpole. "If you make another attempt to abduct this man I'll treat you worse than before."

With a look of baffled rage James Roque entered his carriage, followed by the two doctors.

"You have escaped this time," he said to William Penrose, "but I will have you yet."

Penrose shuddered as he saw the evil look on his cousin's face.

"I've got something to say to that, squire," remarked Joshua Stackpole coolly. "Do you see that," and he displayed a revolver.

"Don't shoot!" exclaimed James Roque, falling back, his face assuming a sickly pallor.

"I don't intend to—now," said Stackpole composedly, "but I can't answer for what I would do if I heard of your trying to abduct your cousin."

"I should like to lock you up in an insane asylum," said Roque with an ugly look.

"So you think me insane, do you?"

"You are stark, staring mad!"

"Thank you, squire. If I should happen to shoot you accidentally, that'll let me off."

James Roque did not think it wise to reply, but drove off hurriedly.

"My friend," said Penrose, offering his hand, "you have done me a great favor. But for you that man would have carried me to an asylum."

"What is his object?"

"Unfortunately I am rich and he is poor. As a near relative, he wants to get control of my property. Your brave interference has saved me."

"Don't mention it! There wasn't anything brave about it. The whole pack of them are cowards. Have those doctors ever seen you before?"

"Never."

"Yet after a mere glance they are ready to pronounce you insane. I don't believe they are doctors at all."

"Nor I. They are tools of my cousin. But nothing is easier than to throw a sane man into an asylum on the evidence of such creatures."

"They'd have a lively time making out me to be insane."

"James Roque says you are stark, staring mad," said Penrose with a smile.

"He'd have reason to think so, if I got hold of him," returned Stackpole grimly. "And now, my friend, I am going to give you a piece of advice."

"What is it."

"Get out of this as soon as you can. There's an ugly look about your cousin's face, and he may make you trouble yet. Of course he has no legal right to interfere with you, but that won't stop a man like him. He hasn't got hold of your property yet?"

"No."

"Then if you have money at command, go off where he won't be able to track you. Why not go to Europe, or to Colorado, my State? If he tried any of his tricks there, we'd soon stop him with a rope."

"Your advice is good and I will follow it. But I don't like to leave my young friend here. He, too, is in a tight place."

"Don't trouble about him. I'll look after him for a time. It will be better for you to part, as your cousin will probably describe you as traveling in his company."

"All right! I will make my way at once to New York and take passage for Europe. I have long intended to go there, and this is a favorable opportunity. But I must first show my good will to Bernard by offering him this."

He drew a ten dollar bill from his pocket book and handed to Bernard.

"Ought I to take so much, Mr. Penrose?" asked Bernard in a tone of hesitation.

"I am rich. I can spare it," said William Penrose. "You need not hesitate."

"Then I will take it with thanks, for I have got to make my own way, and I have no one to depend upon. My guardian will be angry when he learns that I have run away from Mr. Snowdon."

"You can adopt me for your guardian for a short time," said Mr. Stackpole. "And now I move we get away from Poplar Plains as soon as possible."

A carriage was secured, and within fifteen minutes the three were on their way to the nearest railroad station.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE HUDSON RIVER BOAT.

William Penrose kept on his way to New York but Bernard and Mr. Stackpole stopped at Albany.

"I have a little business to attend to here," said Mr. Stackpole, "so if you don't mind, we'll stay over here a day."

"All right, sir, I have no pressing business to hurry me on. I have never been in Albany, and shall be glad to go about and see the city."

The next morning they took the day boat down the Hudson. The great steamer was a floating palace, and had every accommodation that could be desired.

Just before going aboard Bernard bought from a newsboy a copy of the Albany Argus. He glanced rapidly over the contents of the paper, and his attention was arrested by the account of the mysterious disappearance of a package of government bonds—five thousand dollars—from the banking house of Murdock & Co.

"The loss was not discovered till about the close of business," said the account. "No one in the office could throw any light upon the matter. Whether it was an employe, or an outside party is uncertain. Mr. Murdock remembers seeing the package on a desk, but assuming that the clerk was preparing to find it in the safe, gave no more thought to it till it was found to be missing. Detectives have the matter in charge, and it is honed that the thief will be captured within twenty four hours."

Bernard read the account with languid interest. He knew none of the parties, and had no special reason to dwell on the paragraph.

"Will you let me look at your paper?" asked a young man of twenty five, dressed in showy style, and carrying a small satchel in his hand.

"Certainly, sir," answered Bernard politely.

"Anything interesting in it?" asked the young man languidly.

"There is an account of the theft of some government bonds from Murdock & Co.

"Ah! that is a prominent house."

"I don't know anything about Albany firms," said Bernard.

"Then you don't live in Albany?"

"I never saw the city till yesterday."

The young man read the paragraph.

"Rather a clever robbery," he said in a tone of indifference.

"I think any robbery is foolish," responded Bernard.

"Yes, of course, that is the proper view to take of it. I suppose you attend Sunday school?"

There was a lurking sneer in the young man's tone, as Bernard thought.

"I am not connected with a Sunday school at present," he said.

"I don't think Sunday school boys are better than any other."

"They ought to be."

"True, but we have to consider facts. Won't you go down stairs and drink a glass of beer?"

"No thank you."

"Oh, I forgot that you were a Sunday school boy. Well, ta, ta! I'll see you again."

There was something peculiar about the young man. Though it was a warm day he wore an ulster, which he never took off. Then he carried round his portmanteau with him all the time.

During the next two or three hours Bernard saw him several times.

There was something else also that drew his attention to the young man. He scanned his fellow passengers attentively, rather as if he was afraid of meeting some objectionable person. He seemed very restless also. He would seldom stay more than fifteen minutes in one spot.

Bernard had asked him his destination, but he evaded a straightforward reply.

"I am going wherever the boat does," he said with a smile. "How is it with you?"

"I suppose I shall land in New York."

"Do you know any one there?"

"Yes, I know Mr. Cornelius McCracken."

"Never heard of him. Is he an uncle of yours?"

"No, he is my guardian."

"Your guardian?" repeated the young man with interest. "Then you have property?"

"I don't think so. Mr. McCracken says I have none."

"Then what is the use of a guardian?"

"Not much. Probably he will throw me off."

"Why?"

"Because I have run away from a school where he placed me."

"Humph! why did you do that?"

"I was not well treated. The teacher wanted to whip me."

"And you objected?" said the young man, laughing.

"Yes."

"I can't blame you. I should have acted in the same way probably. Who is that man I have seen with you—he looks like a Yankee."

"He is an acquaintance I made yesterday."

"Are you traveling with him?"

"Yes."

"He has a Western look."

"I think he has been a miner in Colorado."

"So. Has he much money, do you think?"

Bernard began to think his companion too inquisitive, and he answered shortly, "I don't know."

"Hasn't told you, I suppose. Well, I shouldn't mind going out West myself and trying mining."

"What business are you in?" asked Bernard, thinking he had a right to ask questions also.

"I am a traveling man," answered the young man after a slight hesitation.

They passed Newburg early in the afternoon. Shortly before reaching this place as Bernard was sitting on a bench on the upper deck his friend in the ulster came up to him hurriedly.

"Please take charge of my portmanteau a few minutes," he said, "if it won't be too much trouble."

"No trouble at all!" replied Bernard politely.

The portmanteau was a small one, and it was hard to conjecture from its appearance what it might contain. Upon this point, however, Bernard was not curious.

"It can't contain anything very

valuable," he reflected, "or the owner would hardly trust a stranger with it."

They reached Newburg, and remained some time. Bernard thought of going down to the lower deck, but it occurred to him that the owner of the portmanteau might come back for it and be unable to find him. This was rather embarrassing and he felt sorry that he had been so obliging as to assume charge of property not his own.

As they left Newburg he went to the rear part of the boat, and took a look at the place. He knew from the history he studied in school that Washington had at one time had his headquarters here. If there had been time he would like to have gone on shore. But even then he could hardly have done so with the portmanteau in charge.

He fixed his eyes carelessly upon the historic town, not expecting to see anything of special interest.

He was destined to a great surprise. There on the pier stood the young man in the ulster. He could not mistake him. Not alone the ulster, but the scanty yellowish mustache, and pallid complexion betrayed him.

"He must have been left behind!" thought Bernard, "and I have his portmanteau!"

He took another look at the young man in the ulster. Certainly he betrayed, no signs of having been left against his will. He stood in a careless position with a quiet and composed face looking at the great steamer as it steadily widened the distance between him and his late companion.

Bernard was very much puzzled.

"He doesn't seem to care. Does he remember that I have his portmanteau?" he asked himself.

He tried to attract the young man's attention, but in vain.

"What shall I do?" he asked himself. "I don't know the name of the man who intrusted me with the valise. I wonder if there is any name on it."

He examined it, but found nothing to indicate the identity of the owner.

"I must ask Mr. Stackpole what to do," thought Bernard. "It is certainly a queer position to be in. I may find it necessary to open the portmanteau, and ascertain the contents."

He looked around the boat in search of Mr. Stackpole, but the steamer was large and quite crowded. Then there were so many divisions to it that somehow he missed seeing his mining friend. There was nothing now to interfere with his going where he liked, as there was no chance of the young man in the ulster looking for him.

At length he sat down again, and became interested in a German family where there were three or four young children. He got on quite sociable terms with a roguish looking young boy named Herman. Bernard was fond of children, and easily won their sympathy and attachment.

A small man dressed in a drab suit came up stairs and looked keenly about him. Finally his glance rested upon Bernard, and his portmanteau.

He stepped up to Bernard, and said in a tone of quiet authority, "Young man, I would like to examine that portmanteau."

Bernard looked up in surprise.

"The portmanteau is not mine," he said. "What do you want of it?"

"Nevertheless I must look at it."

Bernard still hesitated.

"Come," said the other firmly, "it won't be wise for you to object. I am a detective!"

(To be continued.)

THE HAPLESS FISH.

"If fishes knew enough to live in the ground instead of water," remarked Frank, "they could get all the worms they wanted without hooks in them."—Selected.

AUTUMN.

Most favored season of the four,
The rich reward of fruit is thine!
From lofty vineyards purple wine
Thou givest! and we ask for more.

The South-lands, where the olives grow,
Bear witness that thou art divine;
The fruitful palm and juicy pine,
And golden grain, in fields below!

Harmonious Autumn!—over all—
Bird, beast and insect, thou preside.
Offer the gifts the gods provide,
Then gently drop thy purple pall!

Fall on the landscape, yellow leaves,
Or golden-russet, streaked or pied—
Nips off by Winter's sullen pride—
And lie among thy harvest sheaves.
—"Philadelphia Ledger."

[This Story began in No. 560]

Lester's Luck.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

Author of "Victor Vane," "Chester Rand," "Ragged Dick Series," etc.

CAHPTER XXXVI.—*(Continued.)*

AN UNPROFESSIONAL DETECTIVE.

The next morning, at nine o'clock Mr. Hancock received a note requesting him to meet Mr. Compton at his boarding house. He complied with alacrity.

"He will report his failure," he thought, "and give me some advice preparatory to leaving town. Well, it will soon be over."

He entered the room, where Mr. Compton awaited him, with a jaunty step.

"Well," he said with a smile. "I suppose you have sent to tell me who robbed the bank?"

"I have," was the unexpected reply.

Lewis Hancock started in irrepressible astonishment, and turned pale.

"Who is it?" he managed to ejaculate.

"It is a man who ought to have guarded the interests of the bank, instead of conspiring to defraud it."

"Good Heavens! What do you mean?"

"I mean that the bank robber stands before me!"

At first Hancock was struck dumb, but he reflected that this was probably only a random charge, and resolved to put a bold face upon it.

"I shall hold you responsible for this false charge," he said angrily.

"You may—if you like. Would you like to know my grounds for it?"

Lewis Hancock nodded. There was a great fear in his heart.

"To begin with, the missing gold has been found!"

Another start, and the fear deepened.

"I—I am glad of it," he stammered. "but how does that incriminate me?"

"I have two witnesses—one your accomplice—who saw you deposit the box of gold in the hiding place where we found it."

The bank president saw that the game was up.

"What are you going to do about it?" he asked, "what do you wish me to do?"

"To write out your resignation," answered Compton sternly, "and request you to leave town at the end of a week. During that week I will familiarize myself with the state of the bank and assume the duties of president till I can find a suitable man to install in your place."

"Tell me one thing. How did you find out?" asked Hancock. "I thought I had covered my tracks."

"The boy bookkeeper of whom you have expressed so poor an opinion has rendered me valuable assistance," said Compton significantly. "I knew him better than you did."

"He was my accomplice!" said Hancock spitefully.

"That won't do! Your real accomplice has confessed. It was your nephew, Julius Niles. Don't make me regret showing you mercy!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SUMMONED TO NEW YORK.

Mr. Compton carried out his programme, and assumed charge of the bank. At the end of a month he promoted the cashier to the presidency, and sent for a man in whom he had confidence to take the place of the cashier.

"I would make you cashier, Lester," he said, "if you were adequate to the duties of the place, but you are too young as yet. You will remain as bookkeeper, and I expect you still to be watchful and keep me apprised of all that I ought to know, especially if anything is done which is calculated to injure the bank."

"I will do so, Mr. Compton. As to the post of cashier, I know that I am not competent to undertake it, and am content to remain as bookkeeper."

Lester would have been glad to have Mr. Compton remain in West Moultrie, but his patron had large interests in New York, and felt obliged to return.

"I wish you to write to me every week," he said, "even if you write but a few lines. Remember, I leave you as my representative here."

We will now advance our story by a year. Lester was still bookkeeper, but he began to feel a longing to return to New York. There was no further promotion likely. The president and cashier were competent and satisfactory, and likely to remain in their posts indefinitely. Indeed Lester would have been quite young to take the place of either.

Now as to his financial position. He had paid for the two Helena lots he had bought of Mr. Tudor, and purchased two others at double the price, all out of his savings during his first year's service.

It was about this time that Mr. Tudor was summoned by business to West Moultrie, and his first call was made on Lester.

"I suppose," he said, "you will like to hear something of your real estate investments in Helena," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"The town is growing rapidly, and real estate is going up every day. The two lots I sold you first are centrally located, and are wanted for a hotel."

"But a hotel would require more than two lots," said Lester.

"That is true. They will require two of my lots also. If you approve I will sell the four. I hold the two corner lots, and yours are adjoining."

"I shall be glad to have you do so, Mr. Tudor, and I appreciate your kindness."

"I don't know how high the parties will go, but I mean to ask a stiff price. I shall probably be able to report to you within a week."

"Thank you."

At the end of five days Lester received a letter from Mr. Tudor containing the following paragraph:

"I have just sold the hotel parties the land they required. For the four lots I obtained five thousand dollars. This makes your share two thousand, five hundred dollars, which I hold subject to your order. My advice is, to invest half of it in cheaper lots in a less central location. As the city grows they will enhance in value; and pay you more than any other form of investment I can think of."

In reply Lester authorized Mr. Tudor to invest the money as proposed. When he sat down to take account of his property the result was very satisfactory. Besides the amount he had in ready cash he possessed two thousand, five hundred dollars, and two lots not yet sold which must be worth considerable. Besides this his prospects for the future were excellent.

He could hardly realize that it was not yet two years since, a penniless orphan, he visited Shelby's, to crave help from Squire Dunton, his father's cousin. If Squire Dunton had extended a helping hand and given him employment, he would probably have been no better off now, nor would his prospects have been at all flattering. What had seemed a misfortune had turned out for the best.

He had heard very little from Shelby since his departure, but about this time he received a letter from William Miller, who had been his friend when friends were few. The letter ran as follows:

"Dear Lester—

"I hope you are doing well as you were when you last wrote me. It seems strange to think of you so far away. I wish I could see you, as I like you better than any of the boys here. I suppose you would like to hear something of your dear cousin Peter. I can't say that he has changed much. He is just as conceited and overbearing as ever. I hear that he wants his father to send him to a military boarding school, but the squire objects because it would be expensive. You will wonder whether he ever remembers you. I can answer that question, as he met me the other day at the post office when I was taking out a letter from you. I suppose he saw the postmark, for he asked nervously, 'Who writes you from Montana?'

"'Lester Gray,' I answered.

"'What is he doing out there?'

"I told him I didn't know, for you know you have never told me how you were employed.

"'I suppose he tramped out there,' said Peter contemptuously. 'He couldn't get out any other way.'

"'He tells me he is making a living,' I said.

"'But he doesn't tell you how?'

"'No.'

"'Because it is something he is ashamed of.'

"'I don't believe that.'

"'Oh, you will stick up for him of course.'

"'Don't you want him to do well?' I asked.

"'He doesn't deserve it. If he had remained here and behaved himself, my father would have seen that he didn't suffer, but he was too proud—paupers generally are—and he went off with that other beggar William Thornton. Will you let me read the letter?'

"'No; if you were his friend I would, but you don't talk as if you wished him well.'

"'Oh well! just as you please. I shan't be at all surprised to hear that he is in the poorhouse.'

"And with that your affectionate cousin turned and strutted off. He has about as big a head as any boy I know of. If you were anything like him, I shouldn't care to have you for a friend.

"I see the squire almost every day. He looks glum, and it may be true, as I have heard, that he has met with losses. Write soon to

"Your true friend,
"William Miller."

Lester smiled when he read this letter.

"I don't suppose it would please Peter to know that I am doing so well," he reflected. "I don't know why he should feel so bitter toward me. I have never injured him in any way, though I did defeat him in the athletic sports at the picnic. If I keep on and become prosperous he may feel inclined to take notice of me, but I like Willie Miller ten times as much as I ever could like Peter."

By the same mail that brought the letter from Shelby, Lester received one from his former fellow clerk, Frank Crocker, the literary office boy.

"Dear Lester," he wrote, "you may be surprised to hear that I have left Wall street. I like Mr. Clinton, and all who are in the office, but I don't think I should ever make a success in a financial position. You know my taste for writing? Well, I have met with very good success. 'The Banner' actually paid me seventy five dollars last month for serials which will run about ten weeks. I feel that I am winning a reputation, and that some day I may hold a recognized position in American literature.

"But I must tell you why I have left Wall Street. I was not discharged for my relations with Mr. Clinton are very friendly. I have been offered a place in the office of 'The Banner' at eight dollars a week. It isn't much, but I shall receive extra pay for my contributions, and that will probably amount to two hundred dollars a year, so that altogether my income will be six hundred dollars, and that won't be bad, will it? I wish I could have induced you to begin writing for 'The Banner.' Though I have never seen anything of yours, I am sure you can write. It is not too late now. If you will send me a couple of Western sketches, (you had better introduce a cowboy as one of the characters) I will lay it before the editor, and you will probably get a commission. I don't know how well you are doing—in fact, you haven't told me how you are employed, but I presume a few extra dollars would not be objectionable.

"I am proud to think that I shall now hold a literary position, and may consider myself an editor. You didn't think I would rise so high when we were office boys together in Wall Street. Well, I have followed my bent, and you yours. I hope you will succeed as satisfactorily as I have. I wish I could see you and talk it over—in fact have one of our old fashioned chats.

"Your friend,
"Frank Crocker."

"Frank is a good fellow," thought Lester, as he read this letter, "but I doubt whether he will ever rise beyond the position of a hack writer. Well, if he likes it, it is probably the best thing for him. In Wall Street he would never have done much."

A week later Lester received an important letter from Mr. Compton.

"Come to New York," he wrote. "I have work for you here. Ask the president of the bank to supply your place as soon as possible, so that you can leave."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
LESTER MEETS HIS COUSIN PETER.

Lester had no hesitation in giving up his position and starting for New York. He had perfect confidence not only in the friendship but in the good judgment of Mr. Compton. While he was not tired of the West he felt that he would enjoy finding himself once more in New York among the friends he had made there.

He had not for a long time heard of his cousin William Thornton, and feared he might be sick or unfortunate.

and can afford to contribute to his comfort."

On reaching New York he repaired at once to the house of his patron.

H found him in his chamber, not in bed, but sitting in an easy chair, looking pale and not in his usual health.

The smile of welcome was unmistakable.

"I am glad to see you, Lester," he said, "were you surprised to receive my summons?"

"Somewhat so, Mr. Compton."

"And you have not hesitated to throw up a situation which paid you a handsome salary?"

"No, sir. I knew you must have had good reason for asking me to do so."

"I have. The fact is, Lester, I am just recovering from a fit of sickness. At my age (I am over sixty) I cannot be sure of retaining my present strength for many years. I am a rich man, and have large business interests, that require attention. I feel that I ought to have assistance, and I propose, if you are willing, to familiarize you with my affairs so that I can feel confident that my business will not suffer whatever my health may be. Are you willing to enter my employ in the capacity of my secretary, or business agent, or whatever the position may be called."

"I am not only willing, but I feel very much complimented by your thinking of me in that connection."

"I know you thoroughly, Lester, and I not only trust you but I have a high idea of your capacity. We ought to settle about your salary.

"I have thought of fifty dollars a week."

"But, sir, shall I be worth that to you?"

"I shall feel at ease if you are in charge of my affairs. No doubt I could get an assistant cheaper, but I am willing to pay you more than any one else."

"You are too generous, Mr. Compton. Think how young I am. I am not quite eighteen years old."

"That's true, but I value qualifications more than age. Is it settled then?"

"Yes, sir, and thank you."

"Very well! Your duties and salary will commence tomorrow. I should like you to get settled as soon as possible. By the way I suppose you have saved up something while you were in Montana."

"Yes, sir. I am worth several thousand dollars."

"Is it possible? How could you possibly have saved so much? It is considerably more than the entire salary you have received."

Lester explained about his real estate investments in Helena.

"You have been shrewd, and I am glad you have been successful. I am only afraid that you will get rich so fast that you won't be willing to remain with me on a salary."

"I shall never get too rich for that, Mr. Compton. I don't forget that you have been the founder of my fortune."

"I am glad you feel so, Lester. Those whom I have benefited have not always showed gratitude. Well, I won't keep you any longer now. Go and get settled."

Lester found a pleasant room on Thirty Fourth Street, and removed his trunk thither at once. He felt that in his present circumstances he would hardly be satisfied with the plain room he had occupied at the home of Frank Crocker's aunt, though he by no means intended to give up his young literary friend.

A surprise was in store for him.

On the following day when he was returning from Mr. Compton's in the afternoon he met on Broadway, near the Gilsey House, a familiar figure,

Though he was somewhat grown, Lester had no difficulty in recognizing his cousin Peter Dunton, son of Peleg Dunton of Shelby. Though he had never liked Peter, it seemed pleasant after so long an absence from New York to meet any one whom he knew.

Peter was about to pass him without recognition, for Lester, too, had grown, but the latter stopped him.

"How are you, Peter?" he said, holding out his hand.

"Are you Lester?" said Peter doubtfully.

"Yes. Didn't you know me?"

"I thought you were out West somewhere. I thought you might be a cowboy. William Miller told me so."

"I have been out West, but I have never been a cowboy."

"So you couldn't make it go out there?" said Peter, noticing Lester's rather worn suit for he had not yet had an opportunity of procuring new clothes.

"Oh, yes," laughed Lester, "I did very well out in Montana."

"Then why didn't you stay there?"

"Because I had a position offered me in New York. How is your father?"

"He is getting old. I don't believe he will live many years."

"I am sorry to hear that."

"A man can't expect to live forever," said Peter in an unfeeling tone.

"I wouldn't speak so of my father if I were lucky enough to have one," thought Lester. "But what brings you to the city?" he asked.

"I've got a place," answered Peter proudly.

"Have you?"

"Yes. I got tired of Shelby. It's a slow town."

"I should think your father would miss you."

"Oh well, he can't expect me to stay at home all my life. He can come to New York to live himself if he wants to."

"What kind of a place have you?"

"I am at Cross & Creswall's."

"Ihave heard of them. It is a large commission house."

"Yes. We do a large business. I get seven dollars a week."

"That's very fair for a beginner."

"Yes. Of course I don't live on it. My father gives me five dollars a week. That makes twelve."

"Very good."

"How much do you get?"

"I—think I would rather not tell," answered Lester, who didn't wish to mortify Peter and excite his envy.

"I understand," said Peter, his lip curling. He fancied that it was the smallness of Lester's salary that made him unwilling to state it.

"He probably doesn't get over five or six dollars a week," he reflected, "though he has been at work nearly two years."

"At any rate I am glad to see you, Peter. I am so poorly provided with relations that it is pleasant to meet with a cousin."

Peter did not protest, though he did not like to have Lester refer to him so familiarly.

"Why won't you come to supper with me and to some theater afterwards?"

Peter was considerably surprised at this invitation from a cousin who he was convinced was well nigh penniless.

"It is getting towards the end of the week," he said cautiously, "and my money is nearly exhausted."

"Oh, I shall pay the bills," said Lester.

"In that case I don't mind."

"I will ask you to come round to my room," said Lester. "I have one better suit than this, and I don't want to go to the theater looking shabby."

"Where do you live?"

"In West Thirty Fourth Street."

"Isn't that rather a dear place?" asked Peter in surprise.

"It is a nice street. I hope you will like my room."

When Peter entered his cousin's apartment, which was large and handsomely furnished, he felt mystified. How in the world, he asked himself, could Lester afford such a room?

"I board in the house," said Lester. "Dinner will be ready at six."

The dinner to which Peter sat down was much better than he was accustomed to; and his wonder grew greater. After dinner Lester took his cousin to a prominent up town theater and purchased seats at a dollar and a half each. Peter noticed that Lester tendered a ten dollar bill in payment for the tickets.

"You seem to have a good deal of money," he said in surprise and envy.

"Did you think I was poor?" laughed Lester.

"I thought you were getting a small salary. Do you get as much as I do?"

"Considerably more."

"What do you do? Isn't there a chance for me in your store?"

"I am not in a store."

"What do you do?"

"I am secretary, or agent for a rich gentleman in the city. He employes me to attend to his business."

"How long have you had the place?"

"I started in today."

"Probably you won't keep it."

"Why not?"

"He will find you are not competent for it."

"That is hardly likely. I have known him almost two years. He got me the situation I held at the West."

"What was that?"

"I was employed in a bank, as bookkeeper."

"And are you doing better now?"

"Yes."

Peter began to think Lester was worth cultivating, and his manner became much more cordial. He even ventured to ask before they parted if Lester would oblige him with the loan of five dollars till the end of the week.

"Certainly, Peter," replied Lester.

"I am glad you are in the city," said Peter, quite won over. "You must come to Shelby and spend Sunday with me sometime."

"So I will if you think your father will receive me. You know we didn't part on very good terms."

"The old man is a little cranky, but when he hears you are doing well he will be glad to see you."

"Like son, like father," thought Lester. "Money makes friends."

(To be continued.)

[*This Story began in No. 665.*]

Belmont;

OR,

MARK WARE'S COLLEGE LIFE.

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT,

Author of "Dirkman's Luck," "Brad Mattoon," "The Crimson Banner," ect.

CHAPTER XV.
TEDDY BINKS' ENTERPRISE.

Mark listened a moment to his friend's retreating footsteps. Then he drew his chair up to the table with a bang, and caught up his Memorabilia.

"So much for speaking out!" he exclaimed to himself. "I wish now I had said nothing about those fellows."

He tried to concentrate his attention on his book, but his mind kept wandering back to his recent conversation. It was Mark's first difference with Herbert—the first jar, and it left an uncomfortable, a disagreeable impression.

It was not the mere difference, so slight in itself. That could easily be forgotten by both of them. But this glee club affair, and the friends it would bring Herbert—what would it mean to the two boys in the future?—

A light tap sounded on the door—so light that Mark did not at first hear it. Then he shouted as if out of a dream:

"Come in!" he called.

The door opened, and the curly head of Teddy Binks was thrust in.

"Alone?" he asked.

Mark nodded.

Teddy came in, and, following him, came one by one, a troup of six fellows—Tracy Hollis, Alfred Chase, Bobby Barlow, and two other congenial souls. They seated themselves in imposing array before Mark.

"Well, bless my heart!" exclaimed Mark. "What is this—a conspiracy?"

"Ask Teddy," said Tracy, laughing. "We are here at his request."

Teddy rose.

"Tonight is the opportunity of our lives," he began.

"Great Scott! And to think that Herbert is missing it!" said Mark smiling.

"Isn't he around?" asked Teddy.

"No—and won't be back till late."

"Never mind. We are seven, and that is a lucky number," said Teddy.

"Well, what's up?"

"Stop—listen a moment. Do you hear anything?" asked Teddy.

"Nothing but the nine o'clock bell ringing."

"'Tis well. It shall not ring tomorrow."

"Why—what are you going to do?"

"Just hear me," went on Teddy. "What is the bane of the freshman's life? What is it that rouses him at daylight when he fain would sleep? What is it that summons him to early morning chapel, cold and hungry? What is it that drives him to recitations, unwilling and unprepared? What is it that haunts and hounds him at all hours, robbing

him of his liberty, and forcing him to disagreeable duties?—what is it, I say?"

"The college bell," chorused Teddy's little band of followers.

"What then?" asked Teddy, looking from face to face.

"The college bell must go," they responded.

"There's the whole thing in a nutshell," said Teddy to Mark.

"What are you going to do?"

Teddy leaned forward eagerly.

"Capture the clapper."

"Oh that's an old trick, Teddy, and it has been tried too often. Every two or three years a freshman class tries to get the college clapper——"

"Tries, Mark—yes, tries, but not in the memory of the present generation has a class succeeded. There's where we shall make a record. We shall succeed."

"What makes you think so?"

"I know it. There never was an opportunity like the present. I have been watching for this nearly two weeks. Masons and carpenters are repairing the north tower of Burke Hall."

"Well?"

"They leave a scaffolding up there that makes climbing to the roof an easy matter—oh, I know; I climbed up this noon, and its like going up stairs. That disposes of one difficulty that other classes have had. We don't have to make our way into Burke Hall, nor pick any locks. It's all a matter of climbing—"

"But Proctor Murray—what about him?" asked Mark. "You know you can't fool him. He's as sly as a fox."

Teddy winked at Mark.

"Proctor Murray is out of town. He left this morning, and will not be back till tomorrow—so Carroll told me three hours ago. How is that for a combination? It wouldn't happen again in twenty years. It's what I call a great, big, fat snap."

Mark was silent but his eyes twinkled as he looked from one to another of the group.

"Teddy is right," said Tracy. "It's a grand chance for us."

"Everything is ready. We have just about the right number," continued Teddy. "It will leave four on the watch and three of us to climb the cupola up on the roof. To help us there I have twenty-five feet of good, strong rope and two big hooks. Besides, I know where the carpenters have stowed away a ladder about sixteen feet long."

"Got a file?" asked Mark.

"Oh, two beauties—each about a foot and a half long—regular blacksmith files. They and the rope are down in my room. Nothing is wanting. We have the materials, and the opoprtunity of a lifetime. I got Alfred Chase to come along especially because he has just been elected class historian, as you know, and——"

"You mean to be immortalized in college history," said Mark laughing heartily.

"Yes, sirree—as Iago says: 'This is the night that either makes me or foredoes me quite.'"

"Well, how are we to go about it?" asked Mark. "What is your plan?"

"To begin with, we must go down to my room and get the materials. It's too early to start now—half past eleven will be time enough. Then we go up in ones and twos to the north tower. Once in that we are safe from being seen, and we can easily get in there through one of the windows at the basement, for the carpenters have taken all the casements out. Then we climb up the stairs inside the tower. At the top we will find the scaffolding that will help us to the roof. After that the cupola must be climbed—and there we are."

The boys understood this easily, for they knew, as the reader may not, that the towers of Burke Hall were not steeple towers, running up above the roof, but were merely old stone stair towers, stationed one at the north end of the building and one at the south end, running up only to the height of the roof. The stone steps inside these towers ran up to the top story of the building, but this came far short of the roof, and a ladder would be necessary to go farther.

The boys could reach the roof only by means of a ladder from the scaffolding attached to the top of the north tower, as Teddy proposed, for all access to the interior of Burke Hall was shut off by heavy oaken doors at each story.

"Is there no one watching the building at night?" asked Mark.

"No—why should there be? No one can get into it from the tower," said Teddy. "Of course there's the regular night watchman, but he comes around only about once an hour, and, if we are quiet he can't suspect anything. As soon as he leaves the region of Burke Hall, we can make for the tower, and then we'll be pretty safe for a good while. Two of us must keep watch in the tower so as to warn the rest. The fellows that climb the cupola will carry a piece of twine so the watchman below can signal them if anything goes wrong."

"Well, I must say, you've got this thing pretty well cut and dried," said Mark.

"Been figuring on it for over ten days," answered Teddy complacently. "But come down to my room now so I can show you my outfit. We will talk over the other details there."

Mark put on his cap and lowered the gas. Then the seven boys set quietly out on their expedition.

CHAPTER XVI.
DEEDS OF DARKNESS.

"Careful there! Keep off the gravel walk!"

Teddy spoke in a low whisper, but Mark heard him distinctly and stepped aside on the grass. It was about half past eleven, and the seven boys were approaching Burke Hall with great caution, Teddy and Mark carrying the rope and files.

The campus was quite deserted. The night was cloudy and moonless. All about them was darkness and silence.

"You are sure Dan isn't around?" asked Tracy Hollis anxiously of Teddy.

"Yes, sure of it. He was here ten minutes ago, and started on his regular rounds. I saw him trying the doors of the north tower and then I heard him walk away. He won't be back for an hour. We're all right. Hold this rope a minute while I get in the window."

The boys were now at the north tower. The door here was closed, but, as the casements were out of the windows, an entrance was easily effected.

Quietly the seven conspirators followed Teddy through the window, and tiptoed their way up the stone steps inside.

"Here is the ladder," whispered Teddy when they reached the top floor. "We must lift it up to that window there, climb out on the scaffolding outside, then draw the ladder after us and use it again to climb from the scaffolding to the main roof."

No sooner said than begun. The ladder was moved from its recumbent position up to one of the windows at the top of the tower. Then, one after another, the boys climbed up and out on the scaffold. Here the footing was uncertain and several of the boys grew uneasy.

"Nothing to be afraid of," said Teddy, "see, the boards are all firm."

He stepped boldly out toward the edge of the platform. There came a quick exclamation. The end of one of the planks sank under Teddy's feet. He slipped, lost his balance, and sat down with a hard slap on the scaffolding, while the loose board, displaced in this way, slid down and fell sixty feet to the ground, striking the paving beneath with a hollow thump that echoed startlingly about the silent quadrangle of buildings.

"For goodness sake, be careful!" exclaimed Mark in a loud whisper, while all the boys instinctively crouched down.

They listened in almost breathless silence for fully three minutes. All was perfectly still again. No alarm had been given. Then Teddy broke out into a nervous laugh.

"Phe-e-ew! what a close call!" he exclaimed.

"Look out now, Teddy, or you'll break your neck—and we'll lose the clapper," said Tracy Hollis.

"That's all right. I only wanted to show you how safe it was," answered Teddy. "Come on now—hoist up the ladder."

Treading carefully over the loose boards, the boys lifted the ladder up through the window, and fixed it firmly on the platform, resting its upper end against the roof.

"Now then, one fellow must stay here on this platform and keep watch," said Teddy. "I want Mark, Tracy, and Alfred to come on up with me to the cupola, so perhaps you better stay here, Bobby, and let Cary and Miller keep watch from the roof."

Accordingly Bobby Barlow remained on the platform while the others climbed up the ladder.

The idea of using twine to signal with in case of danger had, on second thoughts, been abandoned, for Mark was afraid the twine might tangle up and trip them.

"If anything goes wrong," said Teddy, "signal Cary, who will stand on the roof near the gutter. He will pass on word to Miller, who will be at the foot of the cupola, just below us."

They were all on the roof now except Bobby, who crouched down by the ladder. Leaving Cary at the edge of the roof, the five remaining boys crawled along over the slippery, slanting slates till they found themselves at the cupola in the center of the old building.

Here came the most difficult part of the enterprise. From the roof up to the belfry was about twenty feet, and there was no means of climbing up there from the outside except by a rope or ladder. The latter would be very dangerous to use on the slanting roof, where foothold was quite insecure, so Teddy had determined to employ a rope here.

Below the belfry and about twelve feet from the roof there was a narrow balcony around the cupola, protected by an iron railing. Teddy's idea was to catch this railing with the large hook on the end of his rope.

Mark took the rope in a coil, and gave it a throw into the air, holding the hook end in his hand. The rope spread out as it rose, and part of it fell over the railing. By shaking and working it, he then managed to get the end that was over the railing down within reach. He now had hold of both ends of the rope. Tugging hard at it to see if the railing was strong enough to hold him, he reached down and set his foot in the hook.

"Here's a great idea, Teddy," he said. "It beats climbing all hollow. Don't let's try to catch the hook on that rail. The rope, you see, is long enough to double over the rail. I'll stand with my foot in the hook and hold on to this end of the rope while you fellows take hold of this other end and hoist me up."

"Good idea—catch hold, fellows!" said Teddy, grasping the rope tightly.

All took hold. There was a sharp tug, and the rope, with a straining, creaking sound, slid over the bar, drawing Mark up slowly, foot by foot, till he found himself on a level with the balcony. Then he grasped the bar and drew himself quickly over.

A moment later Teddy was drawn up in a similar way, and after him came Tracy Hollis, then Alfred Chase.

From this point to the belfry was easy climbing, for the cupola, though stone, was so constructed that the outside surface formed a series of natural steps. With a little "boosting" from the others, Teddy—who was determined to be the first to lay hands on his sworn enemy, the college bell—scrambled up and disappeared inside the belfry. Mark and Tracy came up after him without delay. This left Alfred Chase on the balcony, a poor climber, and with no one to "boost" him. He looked up yearningly at the others.

"Come on—what are you waiting for?" called Mark with a low laugh.

"Can't do it," answered Alfred, shaking his head. "Too steep for me."

"It's just as well, Fred," said Teddy in a loud whisper, bending over the edge of the belfry. "There is precious little room up here anyhow, and three is enough—two to file and one to hold the clapper. You'd better stay there and not try to climb up."

"But I want to," persisted Alfred.

"Well, come on then," said Teddy, laughing. "Nobody is holding you back."

"Stay there, Fred—it's much better—honestly," said Tracy. "We'll tell you all about it."

And with that, Alfred was forced to be content, for a sudden disappearance of the three heads within the belfry put an abrupt end to further talk.

At last Teddy had reached the goal of his ambition. The three boys stood there together in the open belfry, seemingly in midair, above the tree tops—nothing about them but the starlit sky, from which the clouds had now partially disappeared. And before them, within arm's length, looming up huge and black on its heavy oaken supports, swung the great college bell.

"Now for it!" cried Teddy. "Get out your file, Tracy, and don't let's waste a second."

CHAPTER XVII.
THE STROKE OF TWELVE.

Teddy fell on his knees and, stooping low, looked up into the round, yawning mouth of the bell.

"Mighty uncomfortable this is," he said. "We can't work well from underneath. Couldn't we swing the bell sideways?"

"Yes, get up. I'll fix it," returned Mark. "Hold the clapper still, Tracy, while I turn the big wheel around."

Mark caught hold of the large wooden wheel around which the bell rope ran, while Tracy seized the clapper to prevent its striking the side of the bell. As Mark bent his whole force to the wheel, the bell swung half round, its mouth now facing outward instead of downward. A loose piece of timber, slipped between the spokes of the wheel and the beam that supported the bell, held it in position.

"Now we're all right," said Mark, and relieving Tracy of the clapper, he stood well back from the bell so as to allow his two companions room to work in. Tracy and Teddy fell to work at once, one filing on one side the other on the other.

"Phew, how cold this iron is!" exclaimed Mark, shifting his hands after a few minutes. "I wish I'd brought a thick pair of gloves."

"I'll change with you when your hands grow very cold, for my arms and shoulders are getting tire of this everlasting file," answered Tracy.

Nothing was heard for the next two or three minutes but the harsh crunch—crunch—crunch of the files, as Teddy and Tracy bent panting over their work.

"Now then, you take a hand, while I hold the clapper," said Tracy at length, and Mark and he changed places.

Teddy would say nothing of fatigue. What if his hands were numb—what if his arm and shoulder did ache, and the perspiration break out on his face—his heart was set on that clapper, and not minute's rest would he

take till his enemy was completely in his possession.

"Get on to Teddy's motion," laughed Tracy. "How's that for staying power!"

Teddy answered never a word. He saved his breath and sawed away like a good fellow.

Five minutes more passed, and now only a thin partition of metal separated the two files.

"Boo, but this is cold!" exclaimed Tracy, lowering his head as the wind whistled around the belfry. "Much good our having anyone on the watch below. We couldn't hear them if they called to us."

"Oh, I guess we're safe enough," panted Mark.

"Aren't you about through?"

"Yes—almost—careful now, Tracy, hold the clapper tight. She's coming loose—a little more now—another scrape—ah, there she comes, thank goodness!"

The clapper, now completely severed, fetched away, and Teddy Binks fell back, clasping it in his arms. The immortal deed was done.

At that moment a sharp rattling sounded from the top of the belfry. The boys looked up in alarm.

"What's that?" asked Tracy.

"The clockworks," said Mark quick as a flash. "It must be twelve o'clock, and the clock is going to strike—look out for the clock hammer back of you Teddy—quick, it's coming down!"

Teddy dodged just in time. The great iron hammer swung heavily down, barely missing Teddy's head, and struck—not the bell, but the empty air. The bell had been swung around by Mark out of reach of the hammer. Again it rose and fell with a dull, low thud as it reached the extremity of its swing, and the clockworks checked it.

The boys gazed at it in silence a moment.

"Here, we must do something, boys!" exclaimed Teddy. "It's twelve o'clock, and if Dan don't hear the bell strike, he'll know there is something wrong and come up to see what's the matter."

"Strike twelve yourself, Teddy," said Mark.

"What with?"

"The clapper—you have it. It's as heavy as the clockhammer, and nobody will know the difference—hurry now—come round to this side of the bell and bang away."

No sooner had Mark spoken than Teddy was at his side, and, raising the clapper, brought it down heavily on the side of the bell. The silence of the night was broken harshly. With a roar that almost deafened the boys, the voice of the bell went booming out over the slumbering college buildings—echoing—throbbing, and dying away into silence again. Then Teddy struck out the second note—and so, following the measured fall of the clockhammer, he struck repeatedly until the hammer ceased.

"Jerusalem, boys! how many have I struck?" he suddenly asked in consternation, as the creaking of the clockworks stopped, and the hammer stood still.

"Why, you gump, didn't you count?" exclaimed Tracy.

"No—I forgot—I was so rattled," answered Teddy raising the clapper and letting it fall again—for strike he must; he was sure he hadn't struck twelve.

"Well, if you don't know I don't," said Tracy.

"Quick, you fellows—tell me—you must know," cried Teddy anxiously, as he lifted the clapper again.

"I think you've struck ten," said Mark hastily. "Give it two more and let it go at that."

So Teddy did, and then leaned back with a long breath.

"Well, I hope no one is setting his watch by me, that's all," he said. "And now come on—let's start down again."

"Hist!" exclaimed Tracy, who was looking down out of the belfry.

Teddy and Mark hurried to his side. Alfred Chase was making frantic signs of distress from below. Over the edge of the belfry the three boys went in a wink. How they got down without injury was a mystery, particularly Teddy who was holding the clapper tightly; but a few seconds later they tumbled into Alfred Chase's arms.

"What's the matter?" they asked breathlessly.

"Miller tells me something is wrong down there by the north tower. I'm afraid we're in for it. Bobby Barlow and Cary have been making signals wildly for nearly two minutes. Why didn't you fellows answer sooner? I've been calling to you steadily here for I don't know how long."

"Couldn't hear you—I was striking twelve," answered Teddy.

Alfred stared at him in a puzzled manner, but there was no time for further question. Something was certainly wrong, for there was Bobby, just discernible in the starlight, motioning to them to come down.

Noiselessly the four boys slid down the rope and joined Miller and Cary, the latter having left the gutter and crawled to the base of the cupola.

"You must stay here for a while—don't move," he said.

"What's up?" asked Mark.

"Dan is up in the tower. He must have seen that loose board on the ground, and come up to see what was the matter with the scaffolding."

"Did he see that ladder there?" asked Teddy anxiously.

"Oh, no. As soon as Bobby heard Dan coming up the stone steps inside the tower, he scrambled up to the roof, and we pulled the ladder up out of sight. Then we lay down and looked over the gutter. We knew Dan couldn't get out on the scaffold from inside the tower, for we have the only ladder, but we were afraid he might suspect something wrong and watch around for developments."

"Is he there yet?"

"He must be. Bobby is watching, and will signal us when he thinks all is safe. I came over here to keep you from walking across the roof and making a noise. Keep quiet now and wait for Bobby."

The six boys sat down in silence, their eyes fixed on the shadowy figure of Bobby Barlow crouched over the gutter. At last, after what seemed an interminable length of time, Bobby rose and beckoned to them. They filed cautiously along over the slates.

"All clear?" asked Mark as they reached the gutter.

"I think so," whispered Bobby. "Everything is still inside the tower and I saw some one that looked like Dan go off down the stone walk below."

The ladder was lowered quietly but quickly, and a moment later the boys stood on the scaffold. They then took the ladder, and were just about to lower it again, this time into the top window of the tower, when a hoarse cough from within startled them almost out of their wits.

Like statues they stood a moment gazing into each others' faces, their hearts beating tumultuously.

"He must be in the tower yet," whispered Bobby under his breath.

"That settles us. He'll stay an hour. He's in there out of the cold, taking a smoke," said Tracy Hollis as a strong smell of tobacco came up through the window.

"He doesn't suspect anything," said Teddy reassuringly.

At that moment one of the treacherous boards creaked, and the boys heard footsteps inside the tower.

"Come, boys—this is desperate," said Mark. "We haven't a second to lose."

"What are you going to do?" asked the other.

"Shin down the scaffolding poles to the ground. It's our only hope," answered Mark, suiting the action to the word by slipping noiselessly over the side of the scaffolding and grasping one of the poles with his arms and legs.

Without an instant's delay Tracy Hollis followed him. Then came Bobby Barlow and Alfred Chase on other poles, and now the upright beams were filled with black figures sliding quietly downwards.

Teddy was the last to start. A moment he hesitated, gazing despairingly at the window and then at the heavy iron clapper in his arms. Then, his resolve was taken. Leaning over, he threw the clapper far out so that it should fall surely on the soft grass—the next instant he was sliding down after the others. The clapper struck the ground with a bump.

"Here—what's that? Who's there?" called out a rough voice within the tower. The six figures fairly dropped at that. Fortunately the poles were smooth, and no awkward splinters obstructed the conspirators' descent. They struck the ground about the same time, tumbling pell mell. Clump, clump, clump came the sound of Dan's hobnailed boots on the stone steps of the tower, but the old watchman was sixty and slow, and by the time he reached the ground and was out of the tower, the campus was silent and deserted. Only a deep, round indentation in the sod gave evidence that anything unusual had occurred. Teddy and his clapper were safe from pursuit—and so were his fellow conspirators.

In that last scamper it was every man for himself. Mark and Tracy made off instinctively for Colver Hall, and never rested till they were safe within its protecting walls. Once inside the hallway, they regained their composure.

"Come, let's brace up and put on a bold front," said Mark. "It won't do to go chasing up stairs. Take it easy and get your breath. No one can suspect us now."

As they went up the stairs, they heard footsteps behind them. Turning quickly, they found Richards coming up after them, whistling briskly.

His light overcoat, which was open, revealed a dress suit beneath. On his head was a shiny, silk hat. Altogether he presented quite a stunning appearance, as he stepped up, swinging a heavy, silver handled cane.

"Hulloa, boys," he said on seeing Mark and Tracy. "What are you doing around at this hour of the night?"

"Just what we were going to ask you," answered Mark, avoiding Richards' question.

"Oh, I've been out to a Thanksgiving party—some friends of mine live here in town. Say, have you been around here for the last quarter hour or so?"

"Ye-e-s," answered Mark, "why do you ask?"

"A most peculiar thing happened."

"What was it?"

"Did you hear the twelve o'clock bell strike?"

"Ye-e-s."

"Did you notice anything wrong about it?"

"No—can't say we did."

"Well, I was on my way home, and I was wondering what time it was. I didn't have my watch, so when the clock began to strike, I counted. Did you follow the strokes at twelve o'clock?"

"No-o-o—not exactly—why, what was the matter?"

"Well, the clock struck fourteen—that's all."

"Why, how queer!" said Mark and Tracy looking at each other soberly.

"I should say so. The old works must be out of order—good night."

"Good night," said the boys demurely.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW WILL IT END?

It was a faint and sickly sound that broke on the ears of the few students assembled about the chapel door the next morning. No hour had been struck since twelve o'clock the night before; no rising bell had rung as usual at seven in the morning, and now, at eight, the few regular risers stood staring in wonder up at a curious spectacle in the belfry. A man stood there with a hammer, beating the bell vigorously in a vain effort to summon the college to chapel. His effort may have satisfied him. Perhaps the sound seemed loud enough to him up there in the belfry, but to the group at the chapel door it was weak and tame.

The students coming leisurely from various directions, refused to recognize this ridiculous substitute for their lusty bell, and instead of entering the chapel, joined the laughing, wondering group at the entrance. The main body of the students did not appear at all, some of them, like Teddy Binks, still slumbering peacefully, others in their rooms or breakfasting at their clubs, waiting for the usual summons to chapel—a summons too faint this morning to reach their ears.

Five minutes passed. The man in the belfry retired. Members of the faculty approached the chapel, and the sparse collection of students about the door, followed them into the building.

A half hour later and the whole college knew that the clapper was gone, and every one was eager to learn how it had been taken. From Teddy Binks' standpoint the enterprise had proved a grand success. The conspirators kept strictly mum, and to the college at large the matter ever remained a mystery. Only among the freshmen a rumor went round, and a few favored ones were fully informed.

Even to the main body of their own classmates the identity of the conspirators was a secret—a secret that would not be revealed till the class history should be published four years later. But, though the actively interested parties remained unknown to the college, it soon became manifest that the enterprise was an expression of freshman zeal, for within three weeks of the disappearance of the clapper, each member of the class carried as a trophy, a little nickel plated clapper dangling from his watch chain or set as a cravat pin. This, too, was the result of Teddy Binks' enterprise, for he promptly conveyed the old clapper away and had it melted down and molded into a hundred tiny clappers which were distributed as souvenirs.

The inconvenience to the college was very slight. Before the morning was over a new clapper had replaced the old one, and the bell was ringing as usual.

Mark felt the least bit constrained when he first met Herbert the next morning, but the latter's easy manner soon relieved him. No doubt that Herbert's annoyance had now quite passed away.

Mark suppressed his first inclination to speak about their difference of the night before.

"Much better let it go—it will soon be forgotten," he said to himself, and accordingly he made no mention of the glee club, but told Herbert, in the strictest secrecy, of the escapade with the clapper.

Herbert seemed to be very much interested and amused, and gave no signs of any other than his usual friendly feelings. They studied together that night as if nothing had occured, and in a few days the matter seemed to have passed altogether out of their minds.

(To be continued.)

THE OLD ACCOUNT.

For two hours the fashionable lady kept the draper exhibiting his goods, and at the end of that period she sweetly asked:

"Are you quite sure you have shown me everything you have?"

"No, madam," said the draper, with an insinuating smile, "I have yet an old account in my ledger which I shall very gladly show you."

He did not need to show any more. The lady left the shop, saying she would call again another day.—"Tit-Bits."

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WHOM DO YOU GO WITH?

How do you pick your associates? Did you ever stop to think about that? What are the qualities in certain people that inspire in you the desire to have them for your friends?

As a rule we accept the fact and act on it, without troubling ourselves to go back into the why of it. And yet in many cases it would doubtless be a good thing for us if we did this. An analysis of motives is sometimes a very effective eye opener.

If we want to become intimate with a man or a boy because he appeals to the worst elements in us, we should probably not encourage the friendship if we sat calmly down and told ourselves that this was the only reason we had for doing so. It is because we "don't think" half the time that so many evil courses are entered upon.

Another thing: We are in a great measure judged by our associates. We ourselves do it with other people; why should not they do it with us?

THE VALUE OF DISCOURAGEMENTS.

Opposition is said to be the life of trade. And certainly discouragements appear to have acted as inspirations to fresh endeavor. Nearly every great invention that has brought untold blessings to mankind has, in its early stages, been fraught with deep disappointment and in some cases calumny and vituperation to its originator.

Morse, the "father of the telegraph," after trying in vain to get help from Congress to put his great idea in effect, returned to his room in New York, and, with but fifty-five cents in his pocket, sat down strongly inclined to complete discouragement. But his pluck still burned, although it had dwindled to a feeble flame, and he determined to make one more effort. And thus he reached the turning point in his career.

It was the same with Robert Fulton, who tried to induce two governments to assist him in giving the world the steamboat, before he succeeded. Thus history would seem to show that discouragements are but niches in the face of the cliff into which the climber may thrust his fingers and continue his ascent to the top.

THE RESISTING VIRTUE.

As our muscles grow by being exercised, so do our moral qualities. A temptation resisted leaves us stronger to overcome the next one than we were before. We feel that we have ground to stand upon; that what we have done once, we can do again.

There is then a double incentive for us to put forth all our strength when the trying hour comes to us, for if we conquer, we conquer not only for that time, but, in a partial way, for the future too.

SELF CONTROL.

A sudden crisis confronts you. You have need of all your faculties at full command for swift and sure work. Can you meet the emergency? It may be a matter of life and death.

A young girl's dress caught fire from the kitchen stove. The flames had gained great headway before she was aware of her danger. Then she called to a companion to unfasten a roll of rugs that lay near at hand, having just been sent in from the country house.

But they were strapped together and so terrified was the companion at the awful spectacle before her that she could not free the buckles, could only wring her hands and scream. The victim of the fire herself unfastened the rugs and wrapped one around her, but it was too late.

Of course it is difficult to control ourselves in times of strong excitement, but then, if ever, is the period when such control is worth more than millions.

WILD OATS.

"Let a boy sow his wild oats and be done with them. Then he can settle down seriously to the business of life."

Such are the sentiments sometimes expressed by men who pretend that they take an interest in the young and are anxious to see them get on in the world. They hold to an old tradition and imagine that there is that in every boy which impels him to "have his fling," and that permitting him to do this is like vaccination; it gives one a mild attack of small pox and thus keeps off the possibilities of falling a victim to the virulent variety.

But the cases are by no means parallel. When you sow a seed, you must reap a harvest, and if the seeds be wild, so will the fruit be. Can one walk through filth and not be defiled? The impressions made upon the mind alone by a career of dissipation, however brief, are often fateful. Playing with fire is dangerous pastime.

Big Men and Little Ones.

"There were giants in those days," says the Bible, and it seems as if this was the phrase that we shall have to employ ere long when speaking of men who overtopped their fellows. In other words, there do not seem to be so many giants abroad in the land as there used to be. If you notice the advertisements of the dime museums and the circus side shows you will note that big men do not figure so conspicuously as do "freaks" with two heads, or half a one, others with an over supply of limbs, and other like monstrosities.

But it is not to be supposed that gigantic stature would ever become really popular with its exponents, as giants are invariably short lived. The vitality is all expended in creating height, and there is none left to resist decay when maturity is reached. Fortysix years appears to be the limit to which they can live.

The tallest man on record was a German, born not far from Hanover in 1630. He was nine and a half feet nigh, thus overtopping Goliath of Gath by three inches. To be sure, there is the legend of the Scotch giant "Funnum," who is said to have been eleven and a half feet tall. But then this is only legend.

There are instances on record of attempts to make giants to order. One of these was so far successful that the man on whom the experiment was tried, an Irishman named McGrath, measured seven feet, six inches. The details of the process have not been made public any further than that the boy who was the victim of it was stuffed with food very much as one would stuff a pig just previous to Thanksgiving. And of one other thing we may be sure. If there were any cigarettes in these days, he was not allowed to smoke them.

Did you ever hear of a "baby giant?" Well, there was a veritable one in the person of Thomas Hall, who amazed all beholders in the early part of the last century. This remarkable boy was nearly four feet and a half high when only four years old. But height was not his only distinguishing characteristic. When he died at the age of five, he weighed eighty-five pounds and had a heavy growth of beard.

Of men big in other ways than length, a certain Mr. Lambert, at one time keeper of the county jail at Leicester, England, would seem to take the first rank over all fat men. He weighed, just before he died, 739 pounds.

To pass from big people to little ones, Richebourg, a French Lilliputian, was only 23 inches tall at the time of his death, which accurred at the age of ninety, for dwarfs are apt to live much longer than ordinary sized people, for the same reason that giants have the contrary to expect. Richebourg was a trifle shorter than the celebrated Tom Thumb, who, back in the sixties, created a veritable sensation wherever he was exhibited. P. T. Barnum was his manager, who traveled with him through America and Europe, obtained an audience with the Queen of England and arranged a sort of triumphal progress for the little freak wherever the turn led them.

When interest in the one dwarf began to languish, the enterprising showman stimulated it anew by discovering Lavinia Warren, another tiny creature, and arranging a marriage between her and "General" Thumb, as he was called. The crowd that thronged to see the tiny bridal pair were so great that it was quite out of the question for them all to obtain a view by pressing about one platform, so a sort of narrow bridge was thrown across the center of the big exhibition room, just above the heads of the people, and on this elevated vantage ground, the miniature man and wife would promenade back and forth in full view of all.

But Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb were by no means the first pair of midgets to enter the bonds of wedlock. Away back in the Seventeenth century, there was a wedding in the palace of Charles I, King of England, at which the contracting parties were each only three feet, two inches in height. Their names were Richard Gibson and Anne Shepherd, and were both members of the royal household, which indeed boasted three dwarfs among its inmates, for in those days kings were wont to pride themselves on personally possessing anything that was out of the ordinary in their kingdoms.

But that Gibson was a dwarf was not his only claim to distinction. He was an artist of no mean ability, as one of his patrons discovered when her butler one day picked the tiny fellow up and placed him on an upper shelf of a cupboard from which he could not get down without assistance. Unable to revenge himself in any other way, Gibson picked up a piece of charcoal he found at his hand and drew on the wall such a faithful caricature of the butler, that the mistress spoke of it to a famous artist. The result was that Gibson received lessons, proceeded to draw pictures under more favorable circumstances, and some of these coming to the notice of the king, he was invited to court to become Page of the Back Stairs. He continued to paint pictures, which enabled him to support his wife and nine children, after the troubled times of Cromwell and the Commonwealth had driven his patron from the throne. The children were of the stature of ordinary mortals. Gibson died at the age of seventy five, having lived during the reigns of four English kings and one Protector. His wife was almost ninety when she passed away in 1709.

At the marriage of Gibson and Anne, the best man was another famous dwarf, Sir Jeffrey Hudson, also in the service of Charles I, who presented him to his wife Henrietta when he was about eight years old and only a foot and a half high. On this occasion he was served up at a royal banquet, buried beneath the crust of a big venison pie. He was dressed in a suit of armor, and equipped with a tiny sword, which he brandished in valiant fashion as he strode about the table after the pie was cut.

But Sir Jeffrey's disposition was far from being like that of Gibson and Anne, his fellow pygmies. Prosperity and the royal favor spoiled him. He was forever getting into trouble, at one time fighting a duel with a turkey cock and at another with a Mr. Crafts, a full sized member of the Queen's household, whom he actually killed.

Sir Jeffrey (he had been knighted by the king) was compelled to flee for his life. He returned to his native town, where he lived for some years quietly and grew to be three feet, nine inches tall. Afterwards adventuring up to London, he was accused of a conspiracy against Charles II and thrown into prison, where he died in 1682.

Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry. Then plow deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.—Benjamin Franklin.

Who never walks save where he sees men's tracks makes no discoveries.—Holland.

No man can be a successful hypocrite and amount to much at anything else.

AN AUTUMN'S PICTURE.

A soft, gray sky, marked here and there
With tangled tracery of bare boughs,
A little far off, fading house,
A blurred, black mass of hills, that wear
A thickening vale of lifeless air,
Which no wind comes to rouse.

Insipid silence everywhere;
The waveless waters hardly flow,
In silence laboring flies the crow,
Without a shadow, o'er the bare,
Deserted meadows, that prepare
To sleep beneath the snow.
—Robert Kelley Weeks.

A Poor Relation.

BY HALBURTON STACEY.

Two girls were walking across Boston Common from the direction of the Latin School, conversing earnestly upon a subject of evident interest. They were both well dressed, good looking girls of sixteen or so, doubtless belonging to that class of well-to-do families who reside on the lower ends of Beacon, Mt. Vernon and neighboring streets.

Evidently they were not sisters, although each had dark eyes, (but those of one were almost black, while the other's were of a soft, dark brown shade) and possessed the same velvety softness of skin peculiar to the true brunette. In a few years each would be an acknowledged beauty in her own social world.

As a further contrast it was quite noticeable that the black eyed girl was dressed more richly than her companion; perhaps no better, really, but with more of display. This difference might be caused, however, by different tastes in the guardians of the two rather than in their circumstances. The brown eyed girl was becomingly dressed, but with perfect simplicity, while the other was rather fancifully garbed for a schoolgirl.

The latter's black eyes were snapping angrily while she talked to her more quiet companion, though she seemed undisturbed.

"I tell you, Ry Grayson, you can say that you don't care and that you wouldn't mind meeting him if he is poor; but you know you would, and I know that your mother and Uncle Maxfield would object, too. It isn't because he is poor that we refuse to recognize him. As mama says, we don't need to think of money among our relations or friends, for our position in society is assured," and she tossed her head rather grandly, "but Bassett Grayson, though he is, I suppose, my cousin, does not come from the sort of people whom I wish to meet."

"But he's our own cousin, Jeannette, just as much as you and I are cousins," said Cyrilla, opening her eyes very wide in surprise. "His father was own brother to your father and mine, so he is as much a Grayson as we. The only difference is, that he has lived all his life in a Maine seacoast town among his mother's people and has not had the advantages that we have. Mother says she thinks it is a shame."

"'His mother's people!'" repeated Jeannette, with great emphasis. "And what sort of people are they, to be sure? Old sailors and fishermen—clam diggers!" She said this with as much disgust as though the gathering of that bivalve was really the lowest work a man could perform. "And his clothes! Why he came to our house dressed in sailor's rig, and really had the effrontery to say that he was coming up to Boston this winter to take a course at the School of Technology (goodness only knows where he got the money to pay for it; perhaps he expects us to furnish it) and suggested that he come to our house to stay. You can believe that mama disabused him of that idea in short order. Stay with us, indeed!"

"Oh, hush, Jeannette; you really shouldn't talk so bitterly," said Cyrilla. "I'm sure I shan't object to meeting Cousin Bassett, even if he doesn't dress as well as the other boys we know. I know father has often spoken about doing something for him, and it does seem as though he and Uncle Sterry could easily afford to help Bassett along in his endeavor to get a practical education."

"Well, I know mama will object to papa's doing anything of the kind. Uncle Cyrus is expected here this fall, you know, and mama will need all the room we have to spare for him; for of course he will expect to come to our house, as there are so many children at yours. Probably an old dyed-in-the-wool bachelor like Uncle Cyrus won't be particularly fond of children. And as for Bassett Grayson's getting an education, if he has been through the grammar school, that is quite sufficient for a person of his class. Further education would be simply wasted on a boy brought up as he has been."

HE STOOD UPON THE CROSSWALK AND HELD HER HAND.

"Oh, Jeannette, what do you know about 'classes' and his bringing up?" asked Cyrilla, laughing. "You wouldn't want to keep the poor boy down because he is down, would you? It is really father's and Uncle Sterry's fault that he hasn't had any better chance in life. They shouldn't have allowed him to stay down there in Maine all these years without doing a thing for him."

"Well, you can stand up for him if you want to, Ry Grayson. You're just that sort, for you wouldn't hurt the feelings of a sick kitten—if you could help it."

Cyrilla laughed pleasantly, showing that she was good natured as well as tender hearted. By this time the cousins had reached Mt. Vernon Street and their ways parted, each living in an opposite direction.

Some explanation is due the reader that a better understanding may be had of the foregoing discussion, and of the characters introduced. On a large farm in New Hampshire, many years before, lived four boys—Cyrus, Maxfield, Sterry and Henry Grayson—who came of excellent old New England stock, and who were all born with a certain share of Yankee shrewdness and a more or less degree of family pride.

Cyrus, the elder, had left the farm and struck out for himself first, going West in '49 and subsequently to Australia and China, never again coming back to his native land. That he had gained immense wealth his relatives had little doubt; he never spoke of it in his letters, however, although he expected his brothers to tell their own private affairs. He had never married.

Henry Grayson, the youngest boy, had been wild to go to sea, had gone two voyages, married a poor girl in a seaport town, the daughter of his captain, shipped again, and never returned from the voyage, joining that great number who are reported in the newspapers as "lost at sea". In the family lot at Mt. Auburn his brothers Maxfield and Sterry had erected a magnificent monument in memory of the sailor boy; but on the brown, bare hillside, in that little Maine seaport, beside the white spired village church, there was a plain slab also erected "To the Memory of Henry Grayson," and another beside it to his wife, who had soon followed her husband to that "Better Land," leaving to the tender care of the old sea captain (who loved them both and expressed his love for their memory by the poor, plain headstones) a tiny baby boy. This was Bassett Grayson, the cousin Jeanette so objected to receiving as a cousin. The Boston Graysons knew of the existence of the boy and that was all.

Maxfield and Sterry had come to Boston while still young men and had been very successful in the business world. Both had married well; both had all they wished in this world.

Sterry's wife was a woman given much to social life and pursuits; her one child, Jeannette, was like her. Maxfield had married a wealthy woman and probably was worth much more than his brother; but his wife was not given to display, rather ignored society for her home and family of young children, and was much given to good works. Both women had, almost imperceptibly, influenced their husband's natures—and in opposite directions.

"I should think that poor Jeannette would be dreadfully lonesome all by herself in that big house," Cyrilla thought, as she removed her wrap in the hall and listened to a perfect cyclone of childish voices in the nursery up stairs. "I know I should be without the children."

Just then one of her sisters—a child of ten years—came to the head of the stairs and called to her.

"Oh, Ry! come on up. We've got company," she called.

"Well, are you treating your company to a Fee Jee war dance, or a circus?" inquired the elder sister, mounting the stairs.

"Oh, the twins and Lulie are playing menagerie. I'm not," declared Miss Kate, with a sniff of disdain, which meant that she felt herself too old for such games. "I'm arranging an a-qua-rum. He brought me some stones and seaweeds and things."

"And who is 'he?'" asked Cyrilla, and then she opened the nursery door.

The noise was deafening, but Cyrilla was used to that. There upon his hands and knees was a big, strongly built lad, in a faded yachting suit, and with a handsome, sunburned face. He turned the latter up to her smiled, tumbling the twins, who were astride his back, onto the soft rug before the fireplace.

"I guess you're Cyrilla," he said, jumping up at once and offering her his hand.

"And you are Cousin Bassett," she responded, accepting his hand and making a mental note of the favorable impression his appearance made upon her.

That was all she had an opportunity to say to him, for the twins were clamoring for "their effalunt" and Bassett obligingly plumped down upon his hands and knees again and turned into an "effalunt" for their amusement.

At dinner time, however, the children were got rid of, and Mr. and Mrs. Grayson and Cyrilla had the youth to themselves.

"I understand that you want to attend the School of Technology this winter, Bassett," remarked Mr. Grayson, during a lull in the conversation. "If you can make it convenient, and we are not too far away, it would be a pleasure to have you remain with us."

The boy flushed with pleasure but said bluntly:

"That's a good deal different from what they told me over to Uncle Sterry's house yesterday. Mrs. Grayson gave me to understand that she wanted her spare rooms for somebody whom she expected would be here this winter—she didn't say who."

"Oh, yes; your Uncle Cyrus, who has lived away on the other side of the globe, is expected," his aunt hastened to say. "He wrote last winter for us to expect him. But we shall have room enough for you here, Bassett."

"Thank you, auntie, but I should think you had children enough of your own to look after."

"Not one too many," she returned, smiling.

"Well, you see, and Bassett hesitated a little, "we—that is, the gentleman whose yacht I'm on—and I were talking it over last night and he decided to set up an establishment over on the avenue and I shall stay with him."

"On Commonwealth Avenue? He must be quite wealthy," said Maxfield Grayson curiously.

"Oh, yes, I believe so," answered Bas. "He's been very kind to me all my life."

His uncle winced. Here was a boy, the son of his own brother, who had received assistance outside his family

which had been denied him within.

They passed a very pleasant evening—the pleasantest Bas thought he had ever spent, and he half repented refusing his aunt's proffered hospitality for the coming winter.

The next morning he started out with Cyrilla at school time, on his way back to the yacht. At the corner where Cyrilla and Jeannette met every morning the latter was standing, but she turned her back toward them upon seeing Cyrilla's companion.

"There is our cousin, Jeannette," said Bas, laughing. "She is too much like her mother, Mrs. Grayson, to suit me, so I'll leave you." He stood upon the crosswalk and held her hand. "When I'm a 'Tech.,' Cousin Ry, I shall run in and see you often, and you must come and see me."

"But I shan't know the gentleman with whom you stay," she replied.

"Oh, yes, you will," responded Bas, laughing roguishly, and then he hurried away.

* * * * *

It was quite a month later that, upon returning from school one afternoon, Cyrilla found another visitor. Her father was in the library with a tall, fine featured man, when she ran in to get a book.

"My eldest daughter, Cyrus," Maxfield said with pride.

"Oh, so this is Cyrilla, is it?" he asked, rising and taking Ry's hand. "Bassett has told me about you."

"Bassett—why—" began Cyrilla in confusion.

"It seems that your Uncle Cyrus and Bassett played a joke upon their relations when Bassett was here before," said her father hastily. "It seems that Cyrus is the gentleman who owned the yacht upon which Bassett came to Boston and is the one who has helped him all his life—the more shame to his other uncles who were too selfish to think of him even."

"Oh, well," said his brother dryly, "you know you and Sterry did the handsome thing for poor Henry and erected a nice monument to him—I've been out to see it—and as I couldn't have a part in that why I hunted up Henry's boy and have tried to make a man of him. Two years ago, when old Captain Bassett (the boy's grandfather) died, I had him come out to me and then we came back together this summer in one of my own vessels."

* * * * *

It is rather suspected by Bas that Mrs. Sterry Grayson is exceedingly sorry that she so coldly refused to receive him as a guest during his course at the School of Technology, especially since Uncle Cyrus has made it distinctly understood that he, Bas, is to be sole heir of his great wealth. She is desirous of smoothing over that little mistake, but Bas, who possesses a great deal of the bluntness and honesty of the Bassets, only recognizes one of his uncles' wives as aunt; he calls Uncle Sterry's wife, "Mrs. Grayson."

[*This Story began in No. 566*]

Under a Cloud;

OR,

OGLE WENTWORTH'S FATHER

BY J. W. DAVIDSON,

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

CHAPTER XI.
MR. GREEN IS PUZZLED.

Guilford took the keys by which he had obtained access to the mill office and carefully secreted them in the stable.

"I may need them again," he muttered, "though I don't really fancy this way of obtaining money."

He was in a feverish state of anxiety all through the day and evening, which his parents attributed to ill health. Mr. Stanton thought seriously of sending for a physician, but Guilford protested so earnestly that his father did not carry out his idea.

Monday morning came, and Mr. Green repaired early to the office. At six o'clock the men were paid for the preceding week and at seven the labor of the day began. As soon as he arrived Mr. Green opened the great safe and took out a box containing the envelopes which held the pay of the men. Then he turned and drew out the money drawer.

It was empty.

"Ogle," he said turning around, "was the door properly locked when you came in this morning?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, wondering at the question. "It was half past five when I got here. I have been here fifteen minutes."

He looked inquiringly at Mr. Green, but the latter said nothing more aloud.

"Is it possible that boy robbed this till?" the man asked himself. "I have had the utmost confidence in him."

It did not seem probable to Mr. Green that Ogle could be the thief. The boy did not appear in the least embarrassed, and went about his work as zealously as usual.

"I will wait," thought Mr. Green. "Perhaps something will occur to throw light on this matter."

In a few minutes the men filed in for their pay, and for three quarters of an hour Mr. Green was very busy. As the last man received his envelope and signed the book, Mr. Green beckoned to Ogle.

"Run down to the basement and send the night watchman here. I saw him go down there a moment ago."

The boy hurried away, and shortly afterwards a man entered the office, accompanied by Ogle.

"Take a chair, Mr. Lynch," said Mr. Green. Then turning to Ogle, he told him to go into the outer room and wait till he called.

"Now," said Mr. Green, "I have something to tell you. I have been robbed."

The man started and looked incredulous.

"Are you sure?" he asked. "What is the amount?"

"Nothing serious,' ' replied Mr. Green. "Only a little more than fifteen dollars. What puzzles me is to imagine who the culprit can be. I don't think the Wentworth boy is guilty."

The watchman shook his head. "I believe the boy is innocent," he said emphatically. "Sunday morning I left the mill by the small gate at three o'clock, and in taking my handkerchief from my pocket I must have dropped my knife. It was one I had carried for some time, and I discovered my loss when I had nearly reached home. I turned round and came back, and I was positive I heard the gate close when I got near it."

"Well, what did you do?" asked Mr. Green, as the watchman paused.

"I lighted my lantern and went all through the building," he replied, "but failed to discover any one."

"Strange," said Mr. Green, "some one must have been here between the time of your leaving Sunday morning and Sunday night. You went on duty last night at six o'clock."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, that will do, Mr. Lynch. I am sorry to have put you to so much trouble."

At this the watchman took his departure. After he was gone, Mr. Green sat and pondered over the matter.

"It was careless in me to leave money in the till," he said musingly, "but I may discover the culprit by means of a circumstance known to no one but myself. There were two counterfeit half dollars in the drawer, both of the same date—1856."

He had a great habit of talking aloud, and Ogle, who was waiting outside, overheard him and popped his head inside the door.

"Did you call me, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Green looked up with a start.

"You may come in now and attend to your work," he said, and then, as he watched the boy, he thought:

"Surely, he cannot be guilty."

Then he went home to his breakfast.

When he returned to his office Mr. Green sent for the foreman, and Ogle once more withdrew. When they were alone Mr. Green told of the theft, and asked Mr. Dodge how he accounted for it.

"To tell the truth," replied the latter, "I lost a set of keys to this building a few days ago, and have been unable to discover any traces of them. It may be possible that the finder of them was the thief."

"How did you lose them?" asked Mr. Green.

Mr. Dodge looked puzzled. "I hardly know," he replied. "I am positive I hung them up in my room, but suppose I must be mistaken."

The matter was dropped for the present, both Mr. Green and Mr. Dodge determining to keep their eyes open for developments.

In the meantime the boys of the village were busy with their preparations for the coming festivities.

On Tuesday, at the dinner table, Mr. Stanton turned to his son.

"Well, Guilford," he said, "I am sorry you have placed yourself in the position you have. The boys are planning to have a good time tomorrow, and if you had behaved properly you could have joined them. I hope it will be a lesson to you."

At first Guilford thought it might be possible his father was going to relent, but this hope was soon dispelled, and he made answer with a very contrite air:

"I know I did wrong, but some of my friends have invited me to join them as a guest, even if I haven't any funds with which to bear my share of the expense."

Mr. Stanton winced at this. Like all niggardly men, he was exceedingly sensitive in regard to his generosity.

"I don't think I'd go with them," he said, with a frown. "You'd be a sort of charitable object, which would not be very becoming to a boy in your position."

"You need have no fears of my being extravagant," Guilford said, looking furtively at his father.

At this Mr. Stanton reddened.

"Well," he said hastily, "I suppose it would be wrong to forbid your going."

He went down to his place of business in an uncomfortable frame of mind. As he entered the office his eyes fell on Ogle.

"Well, my lad," he said kindly, "shall you celebrate tomorrow?"

Ogle looked up with a start.

"I haven't any money to spare," he replied. "Gracie and Mabel are going to the picnic, but I guess I'll stay home with mother. I can see the torches in the evening, and then the fireworks will make quite a show."

A sudden fit of generosity came upon Mr. Stanton.

"You can only be a boy once," he said, thrusting his hand into his pocket. "Here's a couple of dollars, which I will give you on condition that you go to the picnic."

At first Ogle had half a mind to refuse, but he really wanted to witness the games and sports, so he gratefully accepted the proffered money.

"Now I'll have some fun," he thought, after he had thanked his benefactor. "I won't be robbing any one. There's some consolation in that."

All the rest of the afternoon Ogle was unusually lighthearted, even the knowledge of the hidden pencil failing to cast a gloom over him, and when night came he hastened homeward with a buoyant step.

"Mother," he cried, bursting into the room, "I'm going to the picnic tomorrow. See what Mr. Stanton gave me, providing I would go," and he exhibited two shining silver dollars.

Mrs. Wentworth shared his joyful anticipations. "We have much to be thankful for," she said, as she looked into his glowing eyes. "Just think what a change has come in a few short months! I expect great things of you, my son."

The two girls were also greatly pleased at the good fortune of their brother, and the summer evening was bright with thoughts of the morrow.

CHAPTER XII.
OGLE'S PERIL.

As the town clock struck twelve at midnight a crash, such as had never before been heard in Mill City, sounded upon the night air. It seemed as though all the boys in the county must have congregated in the village square.

An old cannon, which had done duty as a hitching post before the residence of Mr. Green, had been appropriated for the occasion, a large quantity of powder placed in the rusty barrel and a fuse inserted in the vent. Just as the sixth note of the clock pealed forth, a match was applied to the fuse. It sizzled and spluttered a moment, the sparks fell in a miniature shower and then a terrific explosion followed, accompanied by the sharp reports of muskets and shotguns, the rattle of tin pans, the discordant blast of dinner horns and conch shells, and the shouts and shrieks of a hundred or more excited boys.

It lasted only a few moments, and then silence once more rested upon the town. But the old fieldpiece, which Mr. Green prized so highly, lay riven from muzzle to breech. The concussion had been too much for its ancient fibers and its voice was stilled forever.

At daybreak the boys were once more astir, and at noon they started in every available vehicle for the lake, a pond of considerable extent, the water of which was deep and clear.

On one side a grove of maples grew down to the very margin, and here the tables were spread and the booths erected for the sale of lemonade and candy, while some dispensed ice cream, in various stages of coolness. Close at hand was a large pasture, where the games and races were to be held.

It was a great day for Gracie and Mabel Wentworth, and Ogle felt especially important as he conducted them about. Josiah Quigley was master of ceremonies, judge in all the races, and he it was who bestowed the prizes.

The boys were forming for a hundred yard dash, when some one accosted Ogle. He turned and saw Caleb Dodge.

"Aren't you pretty good on the foot, Ogle?" asked the latter. "I've seen you do some pretty tall running. Why don't you enter? I would, but I'm no good whatever. See, there goes Gil Stanton. The entrance fee is fifty cents and the prize five dollars. Go ahead, I'll loan you half a dollar, for I know you'll win."

As he said this, Caleb pressed a fifty cent piece into Ogle's hand.

"I've got money," replied Ogle, taking out a silver dollar, "I have no need of borrowing."

"Well, just as you like," replied Caleb, "you'll have more when this race is finished. Give me that cartwheel and here's another fifty. I'll stay here with the girls and see you win the race."

Ogle took the other half dollar and gave Caleb the dollar, then he walked up to where Mr. Quigley was marshaling the boys for the race.

"I would like to compete for the prize," he said respectfully, at which the face of Guilford fell.

"Confound it," he muttered savagely. "He always ruins my good luck."

Mr. Quigley took the proffered fee and entered his name, and then the boys walked away to the starting point.

"If Ogle don't take the conceit out

of him, then I'm a ninny," said Caleb half aloud, as he watched the boys forming in line. There were twelve of them, and Guilford was in the center, while Ogle stood on the extreme right.

Josiah Quigley raised a handkerchief aloft, while every eye was bent upon the line of eager boys.

"Nice looking lot of youngsters," said Mr. Green to his partner, as Josiah waved the fluttering signal about his head three times and then dropped it.

With a bound the agile boys sprang forward, their bodies inclined, every muscle in full play. At first no one seemed to take the lead, the line extending as at the start, but soon it became shorter, as one after another forged ahead and all who could sought the center of the track, where the ground was smoother.

Guilford kept straight ahead, his chest thrown forward, his whole strength concentrated upon his work. He seemed to be in advance of all the rest, and a cheer for Gil Stanton broke from the lips of the excited boys.

Half the distance was covered, and still he kept his lead, though his breath came thick and fast, as he dashed onward.

"Where is Ogle?" said Caleb. "He ought to do better than that. Won't Gil brag if he wins the race."

But see! From that cluster of boys just in the rear of Guilford a sturdy little figure is slowly gaining on the confident leader. Inch by inch he lessens the distance and now Guilford is aware of the fact that, if he would win, he must show a better pace.

Frantically he puts forth his utmost strength, and for a moment seems likely to recover his lead.

"Lie down to it, Gil!" "Another spurt!" "Good boy, Gil!" shriek the boys, now in a perfect fever, and then a howl went up as Ogle bounded forward like an arrow from a bow.

"No use, Gil!" "Your cake is dough!" and cries of a similar import greeted Guilford, as Ogle drew up beside him.

On, on they came, neck and neck, as the horsemen say, Guilford's face fairly ablaze, the veins in his forehead and neck swollen almost to bursting, while Ogle was comparatively cool.

Only a few yards more now, and Guilford made a supreme effort.

"Hurrah for Gil Stanton!" shouted the boys in a perfect frenzy, as Guilford gained a trifle.

The goal was almost reached, and Josiah stood watching the contestants eagerly. "Surely Guilford must win," he thought, when suddenly Ogle gave another terrific bound.

The line was crossed, but there was no exultation in the face of Guilford Stanton.

Ogle had won by a single yard.

"Sorry for you, Gil," said Caleb in a tone of condolence. "You did well, though, and you're sure of the swimming race."

Guilford turned his flushed face toward Caleb.

"That fellow's my evil genius," he said angrily. "If he'd kept out of the race I'd have had a walk over. I wonder if he can swim?"

"Don't believe he can," replied Caleb. "Oh, you're sure of that race."

Reluctantly Mr. Quigley bestowed the prize, a five dollar gold piece, upon Ogle, and then other games followed and dinner was eaten beneath the shade of the trees.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the grand event of the day, the swimming match, was to take place. The pond, at the place chosen for the contest, was some twenty-five rods in width and the water was clear as crystal.

The swimmers, eight in number, were about embarking in a boat to cross the pond so as to swim toward the spectators, when one of them, either from timidity or real sickness, declared himself unable to take part.

To the relief of both Guilford and Caleb, Ogle was not among the contestants, but now the lad who had decided not to swim beckoned to him.

"Don't you want to try?" he asked, as Ogle approached. "Take my rig. I want to see it used."

"Thank you," replied Ogle. "I used to swim a little, and perhaps I can now."

He took his place among the others in the boat, and the order was given to pull away. A dressing room had been improvised from a piece of canvas and some blankets, and from this the boys soon emerged, equipped for their plunge in the waters of the lake.

It was a novel and pretty sight to see those well rounded, boyish figures, arrayed in gayly trimmed bathing suits, awaiting the signal to start.

It came at length, and eight forms sprang forward to the edge of the water, where a little pier had been built, eight pairs of hands came together to cut the surface and with a splash the boys were in and away.

A cheer broke from the multitude, as the swimmers put forth their utmost strength and skill. Three of them came to the front at once, and Mr. Green raised a pair of field glasses to his eyes.

"Your boy is in the van," he said to Mr. Stanton, "and the Dodge boy and Ogle are side by side."

In fact, Guilford was a remarkably fine swimmer, though he carried his shoulders a trifle high for speed. Ogle swam as nearly flat on the water as he could, the waves just lapping his chin at every sweep of his arms, while Caleb worked as though his life depended upon his speed.

By the time they were half way across the pond, Guilford had begun to weaken, and Ogle and Caleb were abreast of him. The other boys were considerably behind, and the boat in which they had crossed the pond brought up the rear.

Now the real race began. Caleb put forth every effort, and for a few strokes took the lead. At this Guilford strove to recover his vantage ground, making some wild movements and splashing the water to a foam, all of which retarded rather than aided him. Then Ogle quickened his stroke and gained surely and steadily upon Caleb, and soon took the lead.

"It's Ogle Wentworth's race, sure as fate," exclaimed Mr. Green, who was looking through his glass with intense eagerness.

Mr. Stanton frowned. "He seems to have about everything his own way," he said, and at this moment he half regretted giving Ogle the means to attend the picnic.

They were two thirds way across, and Ogle three or four lengths ahead of Caleb, while Guilford struggled desperately, about a length behind the latter.

Suddenly Ogle heard a gurgling gasping cry, and turning saw Caleb's frightened face disappearing beneath the water, his outspread hands clutching wildly at the air. Cramps had made him helpless.

Guilford paid no heed to the struggles of Caleb, and Ogle turned and swam rapidly back to where the boy had disappeared.

"He's drowning," cried Ogle, while a shout of horror went up from the multitude on the shore.

But Guilford looked neither to the right nor to the left. His eyes were fixed steadfastly upon the spot where Josiah Quigley stood, frantically waving a red silk handkerchief.

When Ogle came to the spot where he had last seen Caleb, the other boys were some distance away. He knew there was no time to lose, and at once dived beneath the surface. The water was nearly twenty feet deep, and not till he came near the bottom did he find the object of his search.

He made an effort to seize Caleb by the back of his bathing suit, but the latter turned quickly and clasped his arms around the neck of his would be rescuer. The clutch of a drowning person is something frightful, and Ogle strove in vain to break from it.

He felt himself being dragged down to the bottom of the pond, and realized his desperate situation. A sense of suffocation came over him, and his heart beat with terrible velocity.

He thought of his mother and sisters, and then the sense of life faded away from him entirely.

CHAPTER XIII.

OGLE'S PROSPECTS BRIGHTEN.

With all possible haste the boat was pulled to the spot where Caleb and Ogle had been last seen, and the swimmers likewise did their best. A couple of the stronger boys immediately dived and those in the boat and the three remaining swimmers waited anxiously for further developments.

"There they come," cried a man, peering over the side of the boat down into the clear depths of the pond.

A moment later, and the heads of the two rescuers appeared above the surface. Between them they held a pair of lifeless forms, the arms of Caleb still clutched about the neck of Ogle.

Strong hands drew them into the boat, and then the rowers bent to their work. The sharp prow of the boat cleft the water, and the foam curled away on either side and streamed out behind in a shimmering wake.

The eager multitude on the shore crowded down to the water's edge, and it was with the utmost difficulty that a landing could be effected.

As good luck would have it, there were persons present versed in the art of resuscitation, and under their manipulations Caleb was soon restored to consciousness, but Ogle bore every appearance of death.

"I'm afraid the little fellow has passed beyond the aid of human hands," said Mr. Green, looking down into the white upturned face, but the man who was working over him did not cease his efforts.

"There's life here yet," he said. "I've saved more hopeless cases than this."

Sure enough, the flickering flame did not wholly expire, and breath came once more to the nostrils of Ogle.

"Am I dead," he asked faintly, opening his eyes, and then closing them wearily.

"No, you are worth a dozen dead boys," said Mr. Green cheerfully, "though you came near losing your life trying to save Caleb."

"Is he alive?" asked Ogle. "It was dreadful down there under water with him clinging to my neck."

He shuddered, and Caleb went and bent over him.

"I didn't know what I was doing when I grabbed you," he said. "I was sure my time had come."

Guilford kept aloof, and at length Josiah Quigley approached the spot where Mr. Stanton and Mr. Green were standing.

"I suppose, according to strict racing rules," he said, rubbing his hands together slowly and carefully, as though there were danger of breaking them, "the prize for the swimming contest belongs to Master Guilford Stanton. He reached the goal first."

"No," thundered the father of Guilford. "If this Wentworth boy had not stopped to save the life of another human being he would surely have won it. He is entitled to it."

The crowd cheered at this, and Mr. Quigley began to expostulate, but Mr. Stanton cut him short.

Turning to the assembled people he asked in a loud voice:

"To whom does the prize belong?"

And like the voice of one person came the response:

"Ogle Wentworth!"

Guilford slunk away, and was seen no more, not even amid the torch bearers in the evening parade. Neither did Ogle take part in the celebration that followed. As soon as he had regained sufficient strength he was taken home.

Mrs. Wentworth was nearly overcome when she learned of the dangers through which Ogle had passed, but there was a smile on his white lips as he assured her that they made it out worse than it really was.

The parade with torches and the fireworks were a complete success, and it added something to the enjoyment of Caleb Dodge as he thought what a failure the day had been to Guilford.

"If father knew I stole those keys wouldn't I catch it?" he said as he crept into bed, tired and sleepy, after the last Roman candle had sent forth its many hued balls of fire and the last rocket had shot skyward.

The next day Ogle went to the office at the usual hour, though he looked pale and had not wholly regained his strength. Mr. Stanton was present and greeted him kindly, but said nothing about the occurrences of the preceding day.

Shortly after, Mr. Green came in and the two partners were busy nearly all the forenoon looking over some plans and specifications.

"If we only had some one to draw these plans with the alterations we wish," said Mr. Stanton, "it would save us considerable trouble and expense. The architect will be here tonight, and it is quite essential that these changes should be made at once."

Then he turned to Ogle. "I have it," he said. "My boy, couldn't you make a draft from these plans? We are about building a new mill, and have two plans from which we want to make one."

"I will try," replied Ogle quickly.

"Very well," said Mr. Stanton. "After dinner you may make the attempt, and if you do as well as you did when you drew my partner's portrait I shall be well satisfied."

At this Mr. Green laughed heartily, and after dinner Ogle was set at work. He labored faithfully under the directions of Mr. Stanton till four o'clock, when his task was finished.

"There," said Mr. Stanton, with the air of a man well satisfied, "if that doesn't make Richardson open his eyes then I am greatly mistaken."

He held the plan up before Mr. Green, and the latter expressed his surprise and pleasure in the warmest terms.

"It's very easy to see what you are best fitted for," he said, patting Ogle on the head. "Some day you will be a famous architect."

At this the boy reddened with confusion.

"I would like to be for mother's sake," he said, when he had recovered from his embarrassment. "I don't mind poverty on my own account."

"A very commendable trait of character," said Mr. Stanton, rolling the plan up carefully with the others.

At this moment a knock sounded upon the door, and Ogle hastened to answer the summons. He ushered in a tall, heavy bearded man, and Mr. Stanton stepped forward to greet him.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Richardson," he said, grasping the new comer by the hand. "We concluded to use both the plans you sent us; make a sort of compromise between the two, you know."

"But that will necessitate considerable drafting," said the architect gravely. "I wish I had brought a draughtsman with me. The fact is, though, I am short handed just now. One of the best men I have is sick."

"How will this answer?" queried Mr. Stanton, unrolling the plans and exhibiting Ogle's handiwork. "Didn't we do a good job?"

"That is admirable," said the architect, examining the drawing critically. "You are not a draughtsman, I know that. Who did the work?"

"Well," replied Mr. Stanton slowly, "I drew the plan in my mind and this boy"—pointing toward Ogle—"put it on paper."

Mr. Richardson looked sharply at Ogle from his keen black eyes, and then examined the drawing again.

"This will be a great help to us," he said, after he had looked over every detail. "I like it much better than either of the originals."

When Ogle went home that night his pulse beat high with pleasure.

"Mother," he said, coming into the room with a beaming face, "how would you like to see me an architect?"

"What do you mean?" she asked. "I do not understand you."

Then he recounted what had happened, adding that Mr. Richardson had asked him how he would like to become a designer of buildings.

(To be continued.)

[*This Story began last week.*]

Kit Cummings' Sloop.

BY CHARLES F. WELLES.

CHAPTER IV.
DRUGGED.

Kit Cummings' sleep was decidedly uneasy that night.

Ruffians of all types were continually bobbing up and choking him in his dreams, and he awoke unrefreshed.

As he turned out of his bunk and started a fire in the little stove standing close to the back of the room, let us take a look at the interior of this young hermit's cabin home.

Though everything was rough there was an air of comfort within. The floor was carpeted and three or four chairs stood about as companions to the plain square table in the center of the room.

The walls were of bare boards with a window on each side of the door that stood in the center of the front of the cabin, and there was a window in each of the other sides, except the back.

On a shelf on the rear wall ticked an old clock; on another shelf by it were some well thumbed books; a rack supported a brass mounted telescope; a jointed fishing rod rested on another, while prints of marine scenes were tacked in different places.

A cupboard also stood in one corner, and from this Kit was now bringing food, and cooking utensils.

It is needless to state what his bill of fare was—it is sufficient to say that his breakfast was simple and well cooked, for Kit had been too long under a good teacher not to know something of the culinary art.

"Ah, hum," yawned Kit, after he had cleared away the dishes. "I don't feel good this morning. I rested poorly, and my head feels dull and is inclined to ache. I believe I will stay home today and rest. Last night's adventure was too much for me."

Taking a chair outside he tilted himself back against the side of the cabin.

The cabin was in a sort of rocky pocket.

Behind it was a steep, high cliff, and a little distance from the cabin on each side, a high ledge of rocks ran down to the beach, the space between covered with velvety grass and broadening until it met the sands of the shore.

The place was invisible, except to those passing by water, and to such passers, the glimpse of a grassy plot, and a vine clad cottage shut in by the rocks, was most picturesque.

An invigorating breeze was blowing off the Sound, and playing among the morning glories that covered the front of the cabin.

Kit's skiff was lying close to the shore, while further out, riding leisurely at her anchorage, lay a trim looking sloop, with a snow white hull, the gold letters on her stern flashing "Imahead" into the eyes of the observer.

Kit gazed admiringly at it, and his pride may be pardoned. He took in every detail of her build, and measured with his eye her graceful lines, her mast, and long tapering topmast, from which a blue silk pennant was lazily unrolling itself, her long boom and straight bowsprit, and the slender wire rope that composed her standing rigging.

"She's a beauty," declared Kit. "She cost me a good sum of money, but she is getting it back for me. She is all that I have got in the world, and I think I may be excused if I love her like the Arab does his horse."

Then he thought of his adventure of the night before.

"What does it mean?" he wondered. "Was the man crazy or not? He must have been, or why should he want to strangle me? I have not an enemy in the world, and who would want to kill a poor boy like me unless he was demented?

"I wonder if he was drowned?" he continued. "I should not know the fellow unless he spoke as he did last night. I should know that voice again. It was a strange and fearful experience."

Out on the sparkling waters of the Sound steamboats, sharpies, schooners, sloops and all sorts of craft were passing.

Kit gazed carelessly at them until he saw a sail far out that looked familiar.

"That's Bob Williams' sloop, and she is changing her course this way."

As the sloop drew nearer he could see Williams at the helm.

Closer came the boat.

"I believe he is coming here," thought Kit.

The sloop drew in, the jib let out and over went the anchor.

A moment later and her skipper, in a boat he had been towing, rowed ashore.

"Good morning, Kit," said he briskly, as he stepped up to the cabin. "Taking it easy I see. By George," looking around admiringly, "it is a snug place you have here."

"Yes," replied Kit. "You have never been here before, I believe."

"No," replied Williams, interpreting in this a desire for an explanation of this, his first visit. "I came now on business."

"Yes? Of what sort?"

"Well, you see," said Williams, attentively mashing a morning glory blossom, "there's a man up at Greencove that's getting up a picnic party to go to Warner's Grove, and he wants two good swift boats. Mine's engaged as one, and I spoke of yours as another. If you will take a run down there in my sloop you can make arrangements with him. He wants the boats tomorrow morning."

"All right," replied Kit, "I will do so."

So he seated himself in Williams' boat while the skipper pulled out to the Swan.

In a few minutes the sloop was skimming out into the Sound.

"By George, I'm thirsty," said Williams, at the helm, as he wiped his face with a bandanna. "I think it's going to be a warm day. Hold her a moment, Kit, while I get something to drink."

Kit took the helm and Williams disappeared in the little cabin.

"After liquor, I suppose," muttered the boy, but in a moment Williams appeared at the cabin door sipping a glass of lemonade.

"Have some," said he. "I always keep it on board these days."

"If you please," replied Kit, and Williams again disappeared in the cabin, and came out directly with another glass, which he offered to Kit who drank it with avidity.

"That is fine," said he. "Shall I keep the wheel?"

"No, I'll take it," and Kit seated himself.

Suddenly he felt a strange, sensation, as of drowsiness stealing over him; surrounding objects grew indistinct; the waters seemed whirling in all directions; everything grew dimmer and dimmer, and as he felt the power of sense and movement leaving him he murmured, "Drugged" and then came oblivion.

CHAPTER V.
BOUND FOR AUSTRALIA.

Some time must have elapsed before Kit came to his senses, for when he realized a dawning consciousness he felt as one awakening from a dreary, dreamless sleep.

His mind was heavy and confused.

"Where am I?" he muttered. "Oh, yes; in the Swan. But how dark it is! Can it be night? No, this is not the Swan. Where am I any way?"

No, he was not on board the Swan.

The semi-darkness which he first noticed on opening his eyes, and which he had thought to be the dusk of twilight, he now saw was caused by his being shut in on all sides by walls.

He was not in a house, for the walls on two sides swelled outward and huge curved timbers were placed against them at equal distances. Planks, supported by heavy beams, were overhead, and a hard floor beneath him.

These details, absorbed in one glance, told Kit the truth, startling though it was.

"I am on board some vessel," he thought. "But what vessel, and whither bound, and how far out? And why should I be treated in this way?"

These, and other perplexing questions, rushed in upon him.

Lighting a match he noticed a door, and was glad to find it unlocked.

He passed through.

Boxes, barrels, bales and crates were piled high on both sides of him, leaving only a narrow passageway, but ahead he saw a stream of light entering from above, and going to it found himself at the foot of a ladder leading up to an open hatchway, through which the clear sky could be seen.

He lost no time in ascending the ladder.

Once on deck he looked first of all out over the water, and his heart gave a thump of joy when he saw the vessel was still in Long Island Sound, and though probably making nine knots, would not be out of the Sound for several hours to come.

Then he looked curiously about him; at the vessel and her crew.

The craft was a brig, of, perhaps, five hundred tons. The top and topgallant sails, the only square sails spread, were dingy in appearance, as were the jib, flying jib and spanker, and the whole vessel had the appearance of a sea veteran, but everything was in shipshape order.

How many comprised her crew Kit could not tell, as only four were visible; a fellow seated on the foot of the bowsprit, idly puffing a pipe and gazing off the bows, and a burly looking man, whom Kit took to be the skipper, talking to another thick set individual, whom he imagined was the mate.

These three had their backs to the boy and did not see him, as he was just forward of the mainmast, but turning round he saw the man at the wheel intently eying him.

Kit had plenty to ask, and walked back to the wheel to satisfy his curiosity.

"I notice yer looks kinder lost like," commented the man. "I seed ye when they fetched ye aboard, an' I thought ye was dosed, 'cause ye didn't look like a drinkin' chap. Yer shanghaied fer sure. Dunno what craft this is nor where bound fer, I'll bet."

"No, I don't," replied Kit, "but I'd like very much to find out."

"Yer in fer a long v'yage. This is ther 'Jennie Smith' from Greencove bound fer Australy. We've been out about two hours."

"Australia?" gasped Kit.

"That's it. Ye hev a good long v'yage before ye, and it'll be a long time before ye see these waters again."

Kit was stupefied with amazement.

He asked, and received a description of the men who had brought him aboard, but neither of them bore any resemblance to Williams.

"Two of ther boys rowed ye in a boat from some point on ther shore a little this side o' Greencove."

This was all the man could tell of the kidnapping.

"Who were the men who brought me out?" asked Kit.

"Billy Sully and Sandy Rollins, but ye couldn't get nothin' outer them. They was both half drunk when they brought ye here. They're down below now, sleeping off ther boze."

"Suppose I speak to the captain?" suggested Kit.

"No good, fer he knows all about it, and he'd only give ye a kick fer yer pains. He's a terror, he is, and yer'll find him out before long."

Kit was getting desperate.

No sail was within hailing distance, and had land been a little nearer he would have been tempted to leap overboard and try to swim ashore, but he knew they would send a boat out after him and bring him back.

As Kit thought it over he began to think that this incident and the attack on his life the night before were the result of a plot to get him out of the way, though for what purpose he could not imagine.

He made a confidant of the man, to whom he had taken a liking, and told him the whole story.

"Looks as though somebody wanted to put ye under. My boy, ye're in some one's way and he wants to get rid of ye. Jack Stevens, our skipper, has evidently undertook the job and ye see it's being carried out to the letter. If he has agreed that ye shall die before the v'yage is up, why die ye will and nothin' can save ye. Ye'll never come back if that's in ther bargain, though I don't want ter scare ye too much, but just give ye a few facts in the case."

Kit shuddered.

"Thar's a third party that's running this here game. Do ye know who he is?"

"Haven't the least idea," replied Kit. "Why, I can't see why any one should want to injure me. I'm only a poor orphan boy."

"Nevertheless, ye may be in somebody's way. Ye can bet that this unknown feller that's working in the dark has got money or he couldn't get this kind o' work done. Look at that sloop ahead. She's steering plumb fer us, and coming like blazes. Wonder what she means?"

At this sudden changing of the subject Kit looked in the direction in which the man was gazing.

Sure enough, about half a mile ahead and a little off the starboard bow, a big sloop was bearing down upon them.

The man's words had awakened a hope in Kit that the sloop might contain some one who had seen the kidnapping and was coming to the rescue, but a first glance dispelled the illusion.

The sloop was a stranger to him and was coming from the wrong direction.

On she came like the wind itself.

Kit could see the man at the tiller.

"Lor'," said the man at the wheel, "I thought she was going ter run plump inter us, but now she's sheered well off—no—Great Caesar! She's going ter run spat inter us!"

The sloop, which had sheered off, suddenly whipped sharp to starboard and came head on for the brig.

The man at the wheel began to grow excited, and even Kit, in his unenviable position, became oblivious to everything but the strange maneuvers of the sloop.

He rushed to the rail to see the collision that he felt sure would take place.

The sloop was not a hundred yards away, and if she kept to her course, would strike the brig amidships.

And she showed no signs of altering this, but with her big wings spread rushed upon the brig.

Suddenly she sheered to port slightly, enough to bring her starboard deck into view, and standing out on the bowsprit, Kit saw a boy of about his own age, with a coil of rope in his hand.

When the sloop was close on the brig the boy on the bowsprit sang out, "Jump overboard, Kit, if you want to escape. We'll pick you up."

Kit's heart leaped for joy.

"It's Darby," he cried. "Heaven bless him. Here goes."

"Hey! hey! stop that chap," roared the brig's skipper, running aft and

storming at the man at the wheel, as he saw Kit leap upon the rail and disappear over the side. "Why didn't you stop him, I say?"

"Couldn't leave the wheel," was the calm reply.

The skipper stamped and swore, but was forced to gaze in idle rage at the sloop, which was now brought to, and lay idly rocking the waters a couple of hundred yards astern.

With bitter maledictions he was forced to see his intended victim, wet but active, assisted from the water to the deck of the waiting vessel.

Then she swung around, the wind filled her sails, and she swept on and drew rapidly away astern.

"A clever escape," murmured the man at the wheel, "and I'm glad of it."

CHAPTER VI.
DARBY'S STORY.

Down into the water Kit plunged feet first.

He bobbed up in a moment, puffing and blowing, and looking for the sloop, now close upon him, saw the boy on the bowsprit cast the rope to him.

It fell within reach, and he grasped it tenaciously.

There was a noose in the end, which he threw over his head and shoulders and under his arms, and then struck out vigorously for the sloop, which was lying to.

Kit was aided by the boy, who was now standing on the sloop's deck and pulling at his end of the line.

Kit reached the sloop and was helped on board.

Looking apprehensively for the brig distance astern, and her skipper at the rail, gesticulating wildly.

"They can't get me now," Kit murmured exultantly, "the wind is with us," and turning to the boy, shook he was gratified to see her a safe his hand heartily, adding "Well done, Darby."

"Well, done, Kit, I should say," the other replied, laughing as he returned the greeting. "It all worked to a T."

He was about Kit's age, and his eyes, like Kit's held a mixture of merriment and pluck in about equal proportions.

He was free and easy in his manners, better dressed than Kit, sported a gold watch and a silk tie and was evidently the son of wealthy parents.

This was true, but among all of Kit's friends, Darby Ellsworth held first place.

Kit followed Darby into the cockpit, where they seated themselves.

"So, youngster," said the owner of the boat, "we snatched you out of the lion's den that time."

"But how did you learn that I was on board against my will?" said Kit, much puzzled.

"I'll tell you," said Darby. "Some friends and myself went in my yacht a little this side of Greencove, and anchored behind a rocky point that reached out quite a distance from the shore. We fished, went ashore and dug clams, etc. After we had been here some time I went out to the end of this point to see how the fishing was, and when out there saw the Swan entering the bay on the other side of the rock, and a rowboat from the shore pull out to the sloop with two men in it. Then I saw Williams lift you and give you to the men in the boat. 'Kit is drugged and is being kidnapped,' I thought, although I had never heard of such a thing being done in that locality before. I kept still and watched. Soon the brig hove in sight around a headland, pretty close in, and the men pulled out to her and I saw you taken aboard.

"I knew that I could not sail out to the brig and demand your release, so I got the boys and we sailed back to Greencove. The next place along the coast is about twelve miles away and when I got in Greencove I got a carriage from a stable there and drove like the wind and arrived in the town before the brig was more than half way there or a little over.

"I found Mr. Brown here with his sloop, and told him the story and proposed the plan that we have carried out, only if you had not been in sight we should have boarded the brig and demanded you.

"I got out on the bowsprit so you could see me and understand our actions, but Mr. Brown steered so that the jib would hide me until he hanged his helm. And when he did and I shouted, you know the rest. That brig's skipper must have wanted a hand pretty badly to go to such extremes to get one, but I should not have thought that Williams would have aided him in such a scheme. But yonder is my yacht, Mr. Brown, you may steer in here."

In an inlet to their left a small yacht was lying anchored and towards it the sloop was turned.

"On that rocky point out there, where you see the boys fishing, is where I was when I spied the Swan coming in on the other side, and behind that headland yonder the brig appeared later."

Kit and Darby stepped over to the deck of the latter's sloop, and the vessel that had brought them was cast off and turned toward the Sound, after hearty adieus had been given.

The boys on shore, anxious to learn the exact success of Darby's plan, had left off fishing and were pulling out to the yacht in a skiff.

The sloop had been hurriedly sailed back after taking Darby to Greencove.

The boys were all Kit's friends, and were intensely interested in the recital and gave a yell of approval when Darby related Kit's leap from the Jennie Smith.

"Now," said Darby, when the story was told. "We'll weigh anchor and set sail for 'Hermit House'—the name Kit's dwelling place was known by among his friends. Bob, take the helm."

Up came the anchor, and up came the mainsail and jib, and when the vessel moved out to where the wind could strike her, her sails filled and she dashed away with gathering speed into the rougher waters outside.

Darby sat with his legs sprawled out, his hands in his pockets, his hat pulled tight over his eyes to prevent the gusts from blowing it off, and a look of cool satisfaction on his face as became a gentleman of leisure.

"Yes, sir-ee, Kit," he was saying, "I feel pretty well satisfied with that job, don't you?"

Kit did not reply. He was not as exuberant as his friend, for he now felt that some unknown and powerful enemy was working for his destruction.

"Yes, sir, as I was saying," Darby rattled on, "that rascally skipper must have been hard pressed for hands, to try and steal a man. But I can't see why that Williams should dare to help him, and that, too, in the guise of a friend. But now you can put him down for an enemy."

"Yes, and there are other enemies back of him," whispered Kit, significantly. "Come out toward the bows where we can talk without being overheard. I've got something to say."

They climbed out of the cockpit and stretched themselves comfortably on the deck between the mast and the bowsprit.

"Go ahead," said Darby. "What is is?"

So Kit told him, as he had told the man on the brig.

"Well, I declare," broke from Darby's lips. "It's more romantic than comfortable for you. Who do you suppose this enemy—this mysterious unknown—is?"

"I cannot tell, as I have no foe that I know of."

"Williams is your enemy. Perhaps he is doing all this on his own hook."

"I might think so, only the fellow who attacked me last night was lighter built than Williams, who is, as you know, extra large. The fellow I fought last night wore a beard, and as near as I could see in the dark, was stylishly dressed. But he was so muffled up and it was so dark that I would not know him again.

"He must be the head fiend in this business," said Darby. "But do you know whether he is alive or not? I have heard of no missing person today and should have if such happened to be the case. So he must have been saved."

"I think so myself," replied Kit. "I have an idea that the sloop that put out her light picked him up. She was where his voice would reach her, but I was too far away to hear him, I suppose, if he did call for help. Perhaps he put the light out when he was taken aboard, so I could not run him down and find out who he was."

"I tell you, Kit," declared Darby enthusiastically, "here's a chance for a little detective work. A secret enemy! Who is he? What is his object? How can we foul and corner him? We must work this out. I am in for it with all my might. Between us both perhaps we can unravel the tangle a little."

Kit made a confidant of Darby because he knew he was as discreet as he was courageous.

The boys were close friends, because their tastes were alike, especially in nautical matters.

Darby was as good a sailor as Kit, and his yacht was built for speed, for he was fully competent to handle a racer.

She was flying along now at a good rate, every inch of canvas strained, seemingly trying to put the greatest number of miles behind her in the shortest possible space of time.

But her gallant behavior was unappreciated except, perhaps, by the helmsman, who kept a critical eye upon her, at the same time chatting with his companions, while Kit and Darby lay with their heads together, absorbed in conversation, and careless alike of rolling off the rocking deck, or the spray that would now and then fly in a cloud over them.

Miles were being too quickly covered for this to be kept up forever and finally the rocks above Kit's home hove in sight, and Imahead lying peacefully at her moorings.

The yacht did not drop anchor, but waited until Kit had been taken ashore. Then, after promising to come again and see him, the boys on the yacht sailed off, and the sloop vanished around the rocks.

"Well, I declare," said Kit, as he stood there alone. "I wonder why none of us saw it before."

What caused his surprise was a small catboat anchored by a piece of iron laying on the sand, and itself as near the shore as the water would permit.

"Some one is here," he muttered. "This boat does not belong to any one I know. Who can he be and what is going to turn up now?"

He turned his eyes from the strange boat to the cabin.

A man was coming down the path toward him.

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 567.]

A Curious Companion.

BY GEORGE KING WHITMORE.

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

CHAPTER X.
MR. MIDGERLEY STEPS INTO THE CASE.

A chill fell upon the little circle. Max hurried off to resume his packing, while Al, thinking only of securing an oportunity to explain matters to Seagrave, rose to his feet and abruptly said that they must be going.

Marjorie made no demur. She saw that something was amiss.

"Tell Max to come around to the house as soon as he is through with his valise," said Al, as they shook hands at the door.

"But shan't we see you again before you go?" exclaimed Marjorie.

"Yes, certainly. I'm coming to say good by in the morning," and then he went out with Seagrave.

"Now, Allerton Hall," began the latter, as soon as they were outside of the grounds, "what does this mean?"

"I know what you think," returned Al. "That I told Marjorie what you confided to me this morning. But I di not; I have had no opportunity of doing so. It is merely a coincidence."

Seagrave made no reply for an instant. He seemed to be buried in thought.

Suddenly he looked up and placed his hand on Al's shoulder.

"You are right," he said quietly. "I have made a fool of myself. What must Miss Purdy think of me! Be thankful, Al, as you never were thankful for anything in this life, that you have not a sensitive disposition. Now I've spoiled your afternoon for you."

This might have been the case if Al had not found his companion such an interesting subject for study. But one thing worried him greatly. He feared that Max might state his suspicions in regard to the Beechwood mystery, to the parsonage family.

"But that half past four business ought to clear up that," he reflected. "The man could not possibly be in two places at once."

Yet when Max did not return for tea his fears took deeper root. Seagrave shut himself up in his room at noon as they reached the house, and Al was left to his own devices. He tried to read, but could not fix his attention on the book. He started to play, but fearing that the piano might disturb Seagrave, desisted.

"I wish father were at home," he said to himself more than once.

He looked forward to seeing Seagrave at supper, and finding him in happier mood, but he did not appear at this meal at all, telling Al through the door that he was not feeling well and would go straight to bed.

Al had never felt so lonesome in his life as he did this Sunday evening, eating by himself in that handsome dining room, with an empty place on either side of him.

"I wonder if Max is afraid to come back?" he asked himself.

As soon as he had finished his tea he put on his hat and went over to the parsonage.

He met Max at the gate.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came!" exclaimed the latter. "I was just starting out to your house. But where's he?"

This last in an impressive undertone.

"Gone to bed. He says he made a fool of himself over here. What does Marjorie think of him?"

"She thinks he's splendid, and has been giving it to me all the afternoon for putting her up to telling his fortune."

"It was rather an insane thing for you to do, Max. What did you learn by it? Absolutely nothing. Is your father at home?"

"No; he's been called out to old Mrs. Moseley's. Do you want to complain of me to headquarters?"

"No; don't be silly. I wanted to tell the whole story of this affair to your father. Or perhaps you have done so."

"No; I didn't dare without your consent. Good evening, Mr. Midgerly. Father has just gone out."

Max broke off to add this last as the prosecuting attorney of the county, who was also a prominent member of Dr. Purdy's congregation, entered the gate, near which the two boys had been standing.

"Thank you, Max. It isn't your father that I want to see this time though, but this young man," and he laid his hand on Al's shoulder.

"But my father is away, too," laughed Al. "Out of town, and really I can't tell you where he is till I receive a letter from him in the morning."

"It is not your father I want to see though, but you," returned Mr. Midgerley. "I have just come from your house. The servant told me I should probably find you here."

Al was mystified enough. It seemed strange that Mr. Midgerley, who was nearly sixty, should want to have an interview with him, a boy of sixteen.

"I'll go back with you at once, Mr. Midgerley," he said.

"No, no," was the hasty response. "We can have our talk here, I guess. Come to think, Master Purdy is as deep in the mud as you are in the mire. Oh, don't be anxious," he added, as a startled look came into the boys' faces. "I meant that merely as a figurative expression."

"Won't you come up on the piazza and sit down, Mr. Midgerley?" said Max.

The attorney looked at the verenda, noted the open windows behind it, and then answered:

"No, thank you, Max. On second thoughts we had all better stroll toward Al's house. I may want to stop there after all."

The three started off, one boy on either side of the portly form of Musquanna County's prosecuting attorney.

"Now, my dear Allerton," the latter began, after clearing his throat two or three times. "I don't want you to be unduly startled by what I am going to ask you. Remember that I do not attach any blame to you for what you may unwittingly have done."

He paused here and glanced searchingly, first at Al, then at Max. The latter was fairly bursting with excitement, but Al said quietly:

"I think I know what you are going to ask me about, Mr. Midgerley. It is about the young man, Mr. Arthur Seagrave, who is now at our house."

"Precisely," rejoined the lawyer, evidently relieved at not being obliged to pave the way any further to the matter in hand. Now what do you know about this young man? Is he an old friend of yours?"

"I never saw him till yesterday afternoon," answered Al simply.

"A very rapid growth of friendship it seems to me," remarked Mr. Midgerley dryly, adding hastily: "Mind you, Allerton, I am not blaming you in the least. These men are very skilful and specious. Has this—has this Mr. Seagrave told you much about himself?"

"He has told me that he comes from Philadelphia, is bound to Altoona and may change his mind and go to Chicago with Max and myself."

Mr. Midgerley gave a short little laugh.

"Oh no," he said. "I think he will not go to Chicago with you."

"I hope he won't prevent our going," Max put in.

"I think we can arrange that, if

you boys will be perfectly frank with me."

"I am ready to be so, Mr. Midgerley," returned Al, "if you will tell us just what you want to get at."

Of course he knew that the Beechwood murder mystery was at the bottom of all this, but he did not care to be the one to say so.

Again Mr. Midgerley cleared his throat.

"Remember, my boys," he began, "that I do not implicate either of in any way, but I have learned within the past hour that last evening you brought from a cave in the neighborhood of Beechwood, a young man, a stranger in the vicinity, who wears dark clothes and who is now in your house."

"Would you mind telling me, Mr. Midgerley," said Al quietly, "just how you learned this."

"I will directly, my boy. Our maid Rosalind, had it from Finnegan, my man, who said——"

"James, our man, told him," finished Al.

"Precisely. But before making any official move in the matter, out of my strong friendship for your father, I determined to come myself and ask if it is so. Is it?"

CHAPTER XI.
"CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCE."

Mr. Midgerley seemed to expect some hesitation from Al before his question was answered. At any rate he appeared surprised when Al replied at once.

"Yes, Mr. Midgerley, you were informed correctly. I did meet Mr. Seagrave in a cave near Beechwood."

"How very extraordinary!" exclaimed the prosecuting attorney. "And you say he is not an old friend of yours?"

"I never saw him till yesterday afternoon. But I know what you are thinking and you are altogether wrong, if you will excuse my saying so, Mr. Midgerley. Arthur Seagrave had nothing whatever to do with the murder of Mr. Peterson."

"Ahem! you speak very positively, young man," remarked the lawyer, a little testily.

"For the best of reasons. One man cannot be in two places at the same time. At half past four Max and I were with Seagrave in the cave. It was just at this time that Mrs. Tompkins saw the man in the dark suit leave the place next door."

Mr. Midgerley did not appear to be nearly so much taken back by this assertion as he had been by the readiness of Al to admit the fact of his relations with the man from the cave.

"That may all be," he said. "But what sort of account of himself does this Seagrave give? What was he doing skulking in a cave?"

"He had his gun with him. He may have gone in there after some game."

"'May have' you say. Then you do not know positively the reason?"

"No, I do not."

"Have you ever asked him for an explanation?"

"Yes." With some reluctance.

"Did he give it?"

"He hasn't told us all the facts yet, but he is in a very disturbed state of mind over something or other that happened in his home before he left Philadelphia. It may be a love affair for all I know."

"So, I suppose I can see this young man?"

They had now reached the Hall house.

"He had gone to bed when I went out," replied Al, "but I will go up and tell him you are here. Won't you take a seat on the piazza Mr. Midgerley?"

Inwardly Al did not enjoy the equanimity of which he made so fair an outward show. As he walked up stairs—and he did so rather slowly—he was turning over in his mind what reason the attorney could have for not thinking that evidence about the time conclusive.

Was it possible that the word of himself and Max was doubted? Or had Mrs. Tompkins confessed to making a mistake, or finding that her clock was wrong? Nevertheless, and in spite of all his odd ways, some of them exasperating enough, Al could not find it in his heart to doubt Arthur Seagrave.

He knocked on the door of his room. There was no answer. Another knock, louder than the first, still no response.

"He must be sleeping extra soundly to make up for last night," and he gave a thunderous rap on the panel.

But its echo was the only answer he received.

"Maybe he's ill or——"

Al hesitated no longer, but tried the knob. The door was not locked, and he walked into the room. There was no one there. The bed had not been disturbed.

Al began a rapid search through the house. Seagrave was not to be found.

He questioned the servants. Nobody had seen him or heard him go out. He had disappeared completely.

Al was more than provoked. He was alarmed. There seemed to be but one construction to put on his sudden departure and he was sure that Mr. Midgerley would not be long in doing this.

He must return to the piazza now with his report. He had already been gone nearly fifteen minutes.

"I cannot find him," he announced briefly, as he stepped out on the verandah. "He must have gone while I was away."

"Ha!" exclaimed the lawyer. "Confirmatory evidence. Have you looked, my dear Allerton, to see if he has taken anything with him?"

"No, sir. I'm sure he wouldn't do anything like that. He is a gentleman."

Mr. Midgerley got up and crossing to where Al stood, laid his hand with a kindly gesture on the boy's arm.

"I can understand how you feel at being deceived this way, but rejoice rather that you have made good your escape from the influence of such a dangerous companion. Dear me, dear me, what would your father say if he knew whom you had been entertaining?"

Al did not speak for a minute. It certainly did look as if he had been deceived, in spite of the alibi he thought he could prove.

But he was determined to make at least one effort to justify himself.

"I must tell you something else, Mr. Midgerley," he said. "That will partly explain my feeling toward this young man. I came very near killing him."

There was no doubt about the lawyer's being astonished now.

"What is that you say, Allerton?" he exclaimed.

Al briefly explained the incident already known to the reader, and added:

"You don't know what a feeling you have for a fellow you've nearly taken out of the world."

"Well, my boy, you need not worry yourself any longer on that score. If he is caught, he will not be very long for this world any way."

"Then you are positive he committed that Beechwood murder?" exclaimed Max, in horror stricken tones.

"All the evidence seems to point that way. I must go now and put a man on his track."

"But that question of time, Mr. Midgerley?" interposed Al, grasping at the last straw.

"Are you sure your watch was right?" asked the lawyer.

"Perfectly."

"Then probably Mrs. Tompkins' clock was wrong. The first thing to do is to confront her with this Seagrave. Good night, boys. I must see the chief of police at once."

"But, Mr. Midgerley," exclaimed Max, running after him, "we won't have to give up our trip to the World's Fair will we? You know we were to start tomorrow."

"Give it up! Why should you give it up?"

"I thought we might have to because you'd need us to identify this Seagrave if you caught him."

"True; your presence would be quite essential."

"There!" exclaimed Max bitterly. "I knew something would turn up to interfere with our trip."

"Let me think if I can't get over this," returned the prosecuting attorney. "One of you would be sufficient to do the identifying."

"But you might just as well have us both. One doesn't want to go to Chicago without the other."

"Is there anybody else who can identify this man as Seagrave?" asked Mr. Midgerley, after a pause.

"There's father and mother and Marjorie," answered Max. "They've all met him. Al introduced him at church this morning and he was over at our house this afternoon."

"You don't mean to say that handsome fellow you had with you this morning, Allerton, was the man you found in the cave?"

"The very same. He doesn't look much like a murderer, does he?"

"But you can't trust to outward appearances these days. And I haven't said yet that I believed him to be a murderer. Now as to that testimony business, if you say your father knows him, Maxwell, I guess that will be sufficient, and you two boys can go along and enjoy yourselves."

With this Mr. Midgerley hurried off:

"What do you think of your fascinating friend now, Al?" asked Max as he sank into the comfortable depths of a steamer chair.

"I still think him innocent," replied Al gravely.

"Innocent people don't usually run away."

"He was not bound to stay. I had not invited him for any specified time."

"Invited him!" laughed Max. "That's good. He invited himself. Well, there's one thing, we shan't be troubled with his company at the Fair. I wonder which way he's gone?"

"I know where I'm going," returned Al.

"Where's that?"

"To bed."

"I'm with you. But honestly, Al, do you think Seagrave had anything to do with that murder?"

"No, I feel sure that he hadn't. I don't think it's quite right for me to go away either, for if they catch him and we are not here, there will be no one to prove that alibi for him."

"We can leave our address with Mr. Midgerley, and if they capture Seagrave, tell him to call us up by long distance telephone."

CHAPTER XII.
A CASE OF PERSECUTION.

"I can't quite realize it yet. I almost wish I wasn't on a vestibule train, so there'd be more sway to the cars. Then I couldn't help being sure I was going somewhere."

Max lay back in his seat and looked across at Al opposite him.

"Altoona!" called the porter a moment or two later, and the train came to a standstill.

"I'm going to stretch my legs a bit," said Al. "Come on, Max.

"And use your eyes, too, watching for a sight of that Seagrave. Now what would you do if we did come across him?"

"I haven't thought that out yet. It would depend a good deal on what he did. But I'm not worrying about him any more. I think Harristraw and all the inhabitants thereof have seen the last of him."

It was fortunate that Al had come to this determination, for after the train left Altoona a new object of concern claimed his attention.

The section just across the aisle from that occupied by himself and Max had been vacant up to this point, but now it was occupied by a lady and gentleman.

They were both young. In fact the lady was not much more than a girl. She had a sweet face, over which Al had seen a few tears drop as she bade good by to her friends in the Altoona station. She was travelling alone and was evidently not acquainted with the man who sat opposite her, with his back to the engine.

He might have been twenty three, had small black eyes, a weak chin, and a flaring red necktie, brushed slightly to one side to reveal to view a big diamond stud that flashed from his shirt bosom.

"If that fellow doesn't leave off staring at that girl, I'll get up and make him."

This was what Al whispered to Max when he had drawn the latter to the rear door of the car on the pretense of getting a better view of the Horseshoe Curve.

"Is that what makes her so uneasy?" returned Max, who had been sitting in the forward seat. "He must be a brute. And to think she has to share the section with him! Poor thing, she must be shaking in her shoes."

"And the worst of it is, I don't see what we are going to do about it. She'd probably be as much afraid of either of us if we attempted to interfere as she is of him. But when I think that Marjorie might have the same thing happen to her, it makes my blood boil."

"I tell you what, Al. We'll keep our eyes open without seeming to stare, unless it is at him, and if he goes too far, we'll just step in and say something or other that will show him what's what. And we're so near of her age that she certainly can't take it as amiss in us as if we were beards."

"That's philosophy for you," laughed Al, as they returned to their seats. "Look there," he added, the mirth suddenly dying out of his voice.

He of the red necktie was leaning far over toward the young girl, pointing out the horseshoe bed of flowers in the heart of the famous curve. But she shrank as far away from him as she could, with such a look of terror on her face as caused Al to grind his teeth and clutch the arm of the seat as though to keep himself from laying violent hands on the aggressor.

At last the curve was left behind, and there being no further excuse for his leaning forward, the black eyed passenger resumed his place, and gazed placidly around the car, as though calling on everybody in it to envy him his environment.

The Harristraw boys were now sitting side and side where they could both watch the enemy's movements.

"I never saw anything of the kind happen before," Al whispered, "and I've traveled quite a good deal too, you know. I've always been proud of the fact that in America a lady could travel safely alone as with an escort."

"And she can yet," declared Max with patriotic fervor. "Do you know what I think?"

"What's that?"

"That there's some underhand business in this affair that isn't due to a chance meeting on the cars."

"What do you mean, Max?"

"That fellow doesn't look like the usual run of passengers who travel on limited trains, does he?"

"No, not in the least."

"Then he's here for a special purpose."

"And that purpose you think is to——"

"To get in with this girl whom he may have admired in his own town and found utterly unapproachable; or it may be that he expects to rob her. They both got on at Altoona. He may be some sharper who knows all about her affairs, how much money she's got, where she carries it, and all that."

"Well, you may be visionary, Max, but the fellow looks to be just the sort to fill that bill. I'm going to continue to keep my eye on him if I have to lie awake all night to do it."

"Same here. We'll go halves on it. There's the first call to dinner. We'd better look sharp or he'll get at the same table with her."

"But how are we going to prevent it?" Al wanted to know. "We can't go in and tell the head waiter not to put them together."

"Here's what we can do though. Wait till we see them start and then trundle along, look sharp and slip into the nearest places ourselves."

"But it strikes me that would be making us two as objectionable as Mr. Black Eyes yonder. We've just been finding fault with him for his presumption."

"Just look at me and then in the mirror at yourself and tell me whether any self respecting young lady wouldn't rather have you or me presume than that individual yonder."

"You are a queer one, Max. But ten to one the girl won't go to dinner at all. She hasn't made any move towards it yet."

"And Mr. Enemy is hungry. I can tell by the way he works his lips and eyes the people on their way to the dining car. It's a regular siege, isn't it?"

"I've got an idea, Max. If we can only get that fellow out of the way for a few minutes it would give the girl a chance to get her dinner. She didn't bring any lunch basket with her. I wonder if the brakeman wouldn't help us. He's a civil looking fellow. I'm going to sound him."

"But what good can he do?" Max wanted to know.

"Wait here and you'll see," and with this Al sauntered off toward the rear end of the car.

Here the flagman of the train sat in the doorway, his eyes fixed on the double line of rails that flew out from beneath the platform as though from the roll of some mighty rolling mill.

"We're right on time aren't we?" Al began, after watching the fascinating sight for a minute or two.

"To the minute," was the reply.

"You've got a full train tonight," Al went on.

"Yes, a bigger crowd than we've been carrying lately."

"But it's not a nicely assorted crowd in every instance."

"Eh! what do you mean by that?" and the brakeman looked up in the speaker's face curiously.

"Simply that there's a young lady in the section across the aisle from ours who has an unpleasant companion, and I think you can help her to get rid of him for a little while at least. Would you mind trying it?"

"Tell me what you mean."

Al related the details of the scheme that had suggested itself to him. When he had finished the brakeman took a farewell look at the red lights and rising, said: "All right. I'm your man. I'll do it."

(To be continued.)

Something About Our Thermometer.

When your thermometer marks zero on some cold winter day do you ever wonder how that wonderful little instrument came to be invented, and why 32 should have been chosen as the freezing point? Here is the story in brief, which we quote from the columns of a contemporary.

From a boy Gabriel Fahrenheit was a close observer of nature. When only nineteen years old, in the cold winter of 1706, he experimented by putting snow and salt together, and noticed that it produced a degree of cold equal to the coldest day in the year. That day was the coldest the oldest inhabitant could remember. Gabriel was struck with the coincidence of his discovery, and concluded that he had found the lowest degree of temperature known in the world. He called the degree "zero," and constructed a thermometer, or rude weather glass, with a scale which he numbered 212, and the freezing point 32, because, as he thought, mercury contracted the thirty second of its volume on being cooled down from the temperature of freezing water to zero, and expanded the one hundred and thirtieth on being heated from the freezing to the boiling point.

Time showed the arrangement arbitrary, and that these two points no more represented the real extremes of temperature than "from Dan to Beersheba," represented the exact extremes of Palestine.

But Fahrenheit's thermometer has been widely adopted with its convenient scale, and many people cling to the established scale. The three countries which use Fahrenheit are England, Holland and America.

WHERE THE DIFFICULTY LAY.

Mr. Crimsonbeak—"Isn't it hard work minding the baby?"

Nurse Girl—"Not half as hard as trying to make the baby mind me."—"Yonkers Statesman."