

THE ARGOSY

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"Who Shall Be the Heir?" etc.

CHAPTER I.

TOM LATIMER TO THE RESCUE.

"It seems too good to be true, doesn't it, Tom? Just see how beautiful the country is, and to think that we are to live here all the time!"

Jean Latimer and her brother were out for a tramp, a "picnic duet." Tom called it, for he had taken a lunch in his school knapsack, and they proposed to go so far in their exploring tour that they would not get back till night-fall.

"Yes, and it'll be just as nice in winter," added Tom. "The country for me every time."

"And me, too," said Jean. "What happy days we will have here, and how grateful we ought to be!"

Several summers and winters had passed since this touring expedition of two, and truly the Latimers had experienced many happy days in their country home, but nevertheless it was here that they were to have the darkest hours in their experience, and the shadow of them began to fall on this winter afternoon, when the brother and sister, now seventeen and fifteen respectively, were taking a spin on their wheels over the very piece of road where Jean had uttered her fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving.

"Now, Jean, let's have a good coast down this hill. It's as smooth as a board. Range up abreast of me, so we can sail down together."

"Oh, let's try a race, Tom. I'm sure I can keep up with you; perhaps beat you, for all I know."

"All serene, Miss Presumption, try it; I'm willing. One—two—three—and off!"

The two young people darted away, side by side, looking, in their close-fitting dark blue bicycle suits, and perched on their flashing wheels, like two gigantic dragon flies, whirring their gauzy wings down the wide frozen country road between the leafless trees.

Mr. Latimer, their father, held a good position as head manager to the manufacturing firm of Grayley & Co., New York. He had built a pretty home for his family in the quiet New Jersey hamlet, Yantico, within half an hour's ride of the city, and went to his business in the morning, and came home at night every day of the week.

The young folks, as we already know, heartily enjoyed their rural existence. They were fond of each other's companionship as brothers and sisters ought to be, but are not invariably. And any afternoon after school hours they might be seen lying away together on some expedition, on foot or wheel, as now, chattering and laughing with the ever fresh zest of a thoroughly congenial pair.

On this occasion, weather and roads being favorable, they had been far afield, inviting a number of their young friends to join them that evening to skate on the sheet of water near their home; and now they were making their way back before the short winter afternoon should have darkened into night.

Down the long slope the merry pair skimmed, the keen air crimsoning their cheeks and making their eyes sparkle brighter as it rushed past them; sometimes Tom drew ahead, but when he heard the panting breath of his plucky comrade as she put on a spurt to catch up, his brotherly heart always smote him and he slowed down again till she cried out reproachfully:

"There, Tom, I was sure of it. You're cheating."

tant scream reached their ears, and as they turned their eyes in the direction of the sound a startling sight burst upon them.

The road they were traversing was crossed by the railroad track at the foot of the slope, another road ran into it a short distance ahead of them—about half way between them and the track; and on this road they saw through the bare trees a carriage being furiously dragged along by a runaway horse, while its colored

Giving his sister a reassuring smile Tom mounted and was off like the wind. For the coachman had not been able to turn the runaway up hill instead of down, and apparently giving way to sudden panic at sight of the coming train, he had flung himself out of the carriage on to the road, letting his mistress go on alone to a fate which was inevitable unless either the horse or the train could be stopped before reaching the crossing.

Jean sank down on her knees in the



"IT SEEMS ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, DOESN'T IT, TOM?"

"Eh? Cheating?" echoed Tom innocently. "How do you make that out?"

"You're just dawdling along—as if I was a baby that would cry if I was beaten!" said Jean, pouting. "Now I won't have it—I can stand fair play if I am a girl. Do your best, sir, and let me take care of myself."

"I know you've got spunk enough for anything," rejoined Tom. "But I'd rather not see you collapse three miles from home. You can hardly speak now for gasping, you little goose!" and he gave her a brotherly grin of mingled admiration and admonition.

Jean was commencing a warm remonstrance, for her secret ambition was to emulate Tom in everything, when a dis-

driver tugged with all his might at the reins with no effect, and the one occupant of the carriage, a lady, clung to the side to save herself from being dashed out. It was she who had screamed, and a moment after Jean echoed a cry of terror, for a train came into view behind an embankment, and sounded its whistle as it approached the crossing.

"Tom—Tom!" gasped Jean, pointing with quivering finger, "won't they meet? Oh, Tom!" and unable to guide her machine in her agitation she slipped off and cowered, trembling, against her brother.

"If that fellow can turn the brute up this way they're all right," said Tom slowly; "but if not—oh!—oh! Jean, I must try to help that poor woman."

middle of the road, perfectly incapable of supporting her own weight while that horrible drama was being enacted before her. What could Tom expect to do? Even if he caught up with the team (and how could he in that short distance, with the maddening horse galloping like a racer?) what could he do to stop them?

"He will only get killed along with them!" moaned the girl, wringing her hands; but then she knelt rigid and erect, every nerve tense, and scarcely breathing, watching Tom's gallant race with death.

Down the hill he shot, past the coachman just staggering to his feet all dazed and shaken—down the hill with the speed of an express train as it almost seemed!—

would he catch up with the horse before it reached the crossing?

Bit by bit he is gaining. The lady, silent now and kneeling in the bottom of the carriage, looks back at him with ashen face and does not look away again. The train, shrieking a continuous warning, vainly tries to slow up, while the trainmen gesticulate insanely and heads protrude from every window, shouting vain directions.

Yes, the boy on the bicycle is gaining. Is just ahead and the engine close upon it when he puts on one last grand spurt and sweeps directly in front of the runaway, flapping his cap in its very eyes as he does so.

And the brute swerves to escape the new terror, leaps up the bank at the side of the road, and is brought to a halt partly by the hand of Tom at its bridle, and more by the dead weight of the carriage hanging at its heels; and the train passes almost close enough to graze the hind wheels, trainmen and passengers joining in a mighty burst of applause; and the lady descends hurriedly, all a-tremble, and pale as death, but saved by brave Tom!

The thunder of the vanished train was still in the air when she recovered herself enough to go to Tom with outstretched hand, exclaiming fervently:

"I never saw anything so bold and dexterous as what you have just done. How shall I express my gratitude and admiration?"

And she took his hand with such an honest, firm clasp, and looked at him with such genuine feeling that Tom's embarrassment gave place at once to pleasure at having been of assistance to a woman so well worth serving; for it was evident that she was as whole souled as she was brave, and Tom knew that not one in a hundred of her sex could have behaved so quietly through such an adventure, or disregarded their own shaken nerves to show her gratitude as this lady was doing.

"Oh, you mustn't make too much of my part," said he, laughing. "A wheelman ought to be ashamed of himself if he couldn't catch up to a horse. But I can tell you I'm glad I happened to be on hand! How did your horse take fright?"

"Oh, at a mere trifle which would have come to nothing if the man had kept his nerve. A large dog sprang out from a close set boxwood hedge directly in front of the horse, and startled him. The dog meant no harm—he only barked a bit; but poor Nat got scared himself and communicated his scare to the horse, which then took the bit in his teeth and bolted. Then I saw the train coming and got frightened, too." She paled again, but shook off the oppressive feeling with a smile. "Do you know that you have saved my life?" she added earnestly. "I shall never forget you. Please tell me your name."

By this time Jean had reached the spot, and was laying her machine on the side of the road beside Tom's.

The roses had returned to her cheeks, and her eyes were shining like stars with sheer pride of her brave brother, though she dashed away some tears of feminine emotion, too.

"That's my sister," said Tom proudly, for Jean always struck him as "a stunning girl" and "no end of a good fellow," and she was in truth as bonnie and bright a lassie as sound health and sunny temper could make her, and so the lady thought. "Come here, Jean, and see if you can be of any help to this lady. Jean Latimer, ma'am, and my name's Tom," added he, lifting his cap, as the girl climbed the bank and stood before him.

"Latimer?" exclaimed the lady quickly. "Did you say Latimer?" Her smile had faded. She seemed startled.

"Yes, ma'am, Latimer. Not a common name round Yantico, whatever it may be elsewhere," replied Tom, wondering.

"And your father's name?" inquired the lady.

"Thomas—the same as mine—or rather mine's the same as his," said Tom lightly.

"Employed in Grayley & Co.'s?"

"The very man. Do you know him?" asked Tom.

The lady seemed to put resolutely away some disturbing thought.

"I've had dealings with the firm. I know of Mr. Latimer," she said quietly, and then with a return to her cordial manner she shook the brother and sister by the hand, and introduced herself as Mrs. Tryder.

"My home is in St. Paul, Minnesota," she continued. "I am only a bird of passage here. I have been visiting a friend in a neighboring township, and was on my way to visit another before going back West. Now that's enough of me. Tell me a little about yourselves."

She asked a few questions, which elicited the principal facts of the young people's circumstances and future prospects. They had a happy home, presided over by their father's sister, Aunt Amazie Ross, a widow, their mother having died many years ago. Mr. Latimer had the means to give them every comfort, though he was not wealthy. They had both attended the excellent high school of the place, and Tom had graduated with credit last term, and hoped to go to college next year, while Jean expected to finish her education by and by in a ladies' college. And for the rest they were, as Mrs. Tryder perceived, two frank, wholesome minded young people, who had nothing to conceal and nothing to dread from the future.

By the time her little examination was over, the colored driver, Nat, had hobbled down the slope to the spot, and began to abase himself in humble apologies for his bungling; but the lady cut him short with a sweet tempered laugh.

"Never mind, Nat; you'll do better next time. I'm glad to see that you've got off without broken bones, while I am without a scratch, thanks to my plucky young preserver, Mr. Tom Latimer."

"May the good Lawd bless you, Mr. Latimer, for it would have been a murder on my soul if she'd been killed through me," exclaimed the old fellow with all his race's fervor; and he relieved Tom of the horse, now completely calmed down by the lady's caresses, and bucked him down by the road.

Mrs. Tryder drew forth her card case and wrote her address upon it.

"Keep this, my brave boy," said she, putting it into Tom's hand.

And then, looking in his face with singular earnestness, and one would say compassion, she added, "And if ever you are in trouble—no matter what kind—even should disgrace threaten to crush your young life—write to me—I will be your loyal friend."

She gave his hand one of her warm, firm clasps, drew Jean towards her and gently kissed her, whispering, "You are right to be proud of him always," and before brother and sister realized it she had lightly mounted to her seat in the carriage and was being driven rapidly on her way.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE ICE.

"Well!" said Jean, drawing a long breath when the carriage was out of sight, and looking at Tom.

"Well?" echoed he quizzically.

"That was an adventure, wasn't it?" continued Jean, taking no notice of his levity. "My! how the real thing stirs the blood! I'm thrilling yet! And you, you stolid nerveless boy-creature, I don't believe your pulse beat one throb quicker through it all."

"I'll faint, or go into high strikes now, if you think it more becoming to the occasion," suggested Tom meekly.

"Oh, go along with you! You'd make a joke of the grandest deed, you prosaic thing! On Tom, Tom, I'm just bursting with pride of you! How could you be so brave?" and she flew at him with extended arms, longing, girl like, to expend her emotion in one hearty hug.

But Tom, who hated heroics, stepped nimbly aside, and when Jean recovered from her futile rush, and turned to annihilate him, there he was gliding gently to and fro on his wheel, and looking at her with the most exasperating grin on his jolly face.

"All right, you'll be sorry for this some day," cried Jean with mock pathos; "when you're exiled among a set of tough hearted savages like yourself, and have no devoted sister to oppress. Meantime, as you're not worth scolding I'll forgive you, and continue our race." And deftly mounting her wheel she set off at a

pace that taxed even Tom's powers to emulate.

At the foot of the hill they were neck and neck, and declaring it a draw they dismounted and trundled their wheels up the next slope.

"Jean, did you notice anything peculiar in Mrs. Tryder's manner when I told her our name?" asked Tom after a brief silence.

"I was just thinking of that," said the girl seriously. "Yes, I thought she was surprised to hear the name, and—and a little—well perhaps shocked is too strong a word, but I don't think it was a pleasant surprise, though that may be all my fancy, you know," and she glanced inquiringly at Tom.

"It was no fancy," exclaimed he with conviction; "I felt just as you do about it. She had been so cordial, so expansive, as the authors say, and all on a sudden she froze up. I could feel the ice in the air while she was asking father's name, and whether he was in Grayley & Co.'s."

"But she was so quiet and sweet afterwards," added Jean. "And then what she said to you, you know, so anxious to befriend you?"

"Yes, Jean, but it's that very speech that's bothering me," cried Tom, knitting his brows. "If ever I was in trouble—that's all right, any one may be in trouble, but 'disgrace'? What did she mean?"

"Give it up," murmured Jean, then, seeing the touch of anxiety on the bright face she loved, she added cheerfully: "She must have meant that whatever your trouble was, if trouble should ever come to you, that she would be your friend. She mentioned disgrace, not that she knew of any likely to befall you, but because that kind of trouble would keep you from applying to her unless she assured you that she was as ready to help you out of that as out of any other kind. There, don't worry any more over it, dear Tom; she was too kind and good a lady to wish to wound you, and I can't bear to see you vexed when we should be feeling so happy over your 'gallant deed' as I mean to describe it to pa."

"Very good, Captain Jean; if you say 'drop the subject,' dropped it is. All the same," Tom added in a low voice. "I shall ask father if he knows a Mrs. Tryder of St. Paul."

* * * * *

That evening a dozen or so of Tom and Jean Latimer's school and other friends assembled on the small sheet of water adjacent to their house known as McCurdy's Dam to skate by the mingled light of the moon and of a huge bonfire built on a tiny islet in the center of the pond.

McCurdy's Dam had been constructed years before by a capitalist who intended to utilize the water power in his silk mill; but the capitalist failed before the mill's foundations were laid, and nothing remained to tell the tale of his ruined project but the massive masonry which inclosed the water, and the gigantic gates at the end which were slowly but surely rotting in their granite grooves.

The dam was very deep—over sixty feet it was said, and a perpetual current ran straight through the middle, from the stream which fed it at one end to the gates which let the water leak through their widening crevices at the other. Surrounded by tall trees, the pond was always cool in summer, and was the first water to freeze in winter; a few days of steady frost sealed up the current itself, as it ran slowly except when the stream was swollen by rains. However, the young folks were always warned to beware of skating across the weak streak, and hitherto there had been no accident to mar their pleasure.

It was a wonderfully gay sight that was presented that evening on the pond; the bonfire, which was constantly fed by willing stokers, threw its rosy flare across the glassy expanse to the very shores, reddening the close ranked tree trunks which surrounded the dam. The skaters flashed hither and thither, accompanied by their shadows preposterously lengthened, the girls in their brilliant Canadian blanket suits looking like darting humming birds; and over all spread the cloudless winter sky, illumined by the silver ruddance of the full moon.

The hilarious shouts of the boys and

the gay screams and laughter of the girls rang out on the night like joy bells; never had Tom and Jean Latimer been in higher spirits or relied more confidently on their right to be happy.

By and by a new comer shot out from the shore towards the group, performing a variety of fanciful gyrations on the way.

"Hello! there's Walt Smith," exclaimed a tall, lanky lad who was keeping pretty close to Jean, and his tone held considerable surprise and a hint of chagrin as well.

"So it is!" returned Jean, eyeing the fancy skater with small favor; "what's he coming here for? We didn't invite him."

Will Golden's brow smoothed.

"I thought it would be funny if Tom invited Walt Smith to meet the fellows after—" he checked himself, reddening up to his ears.

Will Golden was heedless, but no sneak; he would have felt himself disgraced had he repeated a disparaging story of "one of the fellows."

"It's just like his cheek to show himself though," said he with a grin. "He's been down to Newark learning the latest fancy flourish in skating, so he says, and he's come to astonish the aborigines."

"Isn't that his sister Amy putting on her skates on the bank?" said Jean. "It is indeed; I'm going over to her, poor little thing, she's shy, and doesn't know many of us."

"May I go with you, Miss Jean?" asked Will submissively.

"Why, surely, Will, if you like," laughed Jean, and they skated over to the spot where a child of ten or eleven was struggling with the intricacies of her Acme skates.

"Good evening, Amy, can't you get them on?" began Jean pleasantly.

The child looked up with tears glittering on her lashes.

"No, Miss Latimer, I can't manage them alone," she said dolefully. "Walt took my screw driver to fix his own skates and went off with it in his pocket, and I can't budge this spring without it. And he promised me he wouldn't leave me alone," she went on with a sob. "I didn't think he would do it."

"Never mind him; I'll look after you, Amy," said Will Golden, getting down on his knees on the ice, regardless of the damage to his trousers, a piece of barbarity beyond the magnanimity of Walt Smith, (or Smythe as he insisted on writing his name).

In a trice the little girl's trials were over, and she was skimming along with her feet close together between Will and Jean, and laughing aloud in delight despite her shyness.

Presently they encountered Tom, and Will said aside to him in a significant tone:

"See who's here?"

"I see him and revere his colossal cheek," laughed Tom; "never mind him, though, as he is here; we can't make a fuss with the girls around."

"I'm fairly aching to take him down a peg," murmured Will in his mild voice which made his hostile words seem comical. "The fellow who's mean to his sister doesn't deserve to be allowed to spread himself before the girls the way he's doing. See his antics now! I must give him one little dig. Excuse me a minute, Miss Jean, I'll leave you with Tom, and you too, Amy, till I get back," and lifting his cap he was off like an arrow to the spot where Walt Smythe—"The dude of Yantico," as he loved to be called—was going through his latest learned feats of skating before the admiring spectators.

"Look here, Smythe," called Will authoritatively, "a word with you."

Smythe's grandiose mien wilted; he looked scared.

"What d'ye want?" asked he, joining Will hastily and taking him apart where they were out of earshot of his admirers.

"Have you forgotten the resolution passed by the club, that till Brother Walter Smythe handed over the cash he collected on the club's tickets of admission to last summer's festival he was to be sent to Coventry by all the fellows?" demanded Will very deliberately.

"What do I care what your club resolved?" blustered the dude, looking very

sheepish however. "I'm as free to skate on McCurdy's Dam as anybody here; those who object may clear out."

"Talk tall for a defaulter," commented Will; "I guess moral suasion is lost on you. We'll have to try legal means."

"Do as you like about that," swaggered Smythe, his native insolence rising as he perceived that Will did not intend to expose him publicly; "when I get ready I'll pay up and not before." And with this haughty defiance flung in the teeth of his envious foe, (for thus he imagined the case), he folded his arms, drew his slim body to its utmost height, and sallied away, making wonderful play with his legs, while his upper man remained rigid as an image.

Will confided his little passage at arms to Tom with some laughter, in which Tom joined, for Walter Smythe in his blatant self conceit and shabby trickeries was apt to be an object of contemptuous amusement to his boy companions; and Smythe, catching them at it, filled up with spite, and longed to plant his sting in one or other of them.

Seeing his sister soon afterwards enjoying a glorious rush over the ice between Tom and Will, he intercepted them and called her to him. She went reluctantly, which increased his ill temper, and he dragged her roughly away with him, saying loud enough for them to hear:

"You're not to go with these cads again; I forbid it."

The child made some indignant remark, upon which Smythe, perhaps to frighten her, set off at the top of his speed, dragging her along with him. Tom shouted after him to look out for the current, but he gave no heed; and as it happened, just as the pair were crossing the rippled streak which indicated it, Amy's feet slipped from under her, and she fell down with violence.

As if it had needed but some such shock to tap the shell and let the imprisoned air burst forth, with a loud report the streak was ripped open as by an invisible blade from below, and the little girl went down with a piteous scream to Walt to save her.

CHAPTER III. THE RESCUE.

Walter Smythe stood like a stock, staring at his struggling sister with starting eyeballs.

"Lie down on the ice and you can hold her till we get there," shouted Tom, making for the spot with Will close behind him. "Will, keep back the crowd, for mercy's sake," he added as the skaters made a rush from all parts of the ice towards the scene of the accident.

"I'll try, Tom, but just see that cur; he hasn't budged yet!" exclaimed Will indignantly.

He turned to warn back the skaters; but Jean passed him with an imploring gesture, and hurried after Tom, unwinding her long fur boa as she went.

"Walt—oh Walt—won't you help me?" screamed the poor child for the last time; then her grasp on the edge of the ice broke away, and she went down with a thrilling cry, choked as the water reached her.

"Get out of the way!" cried Tom, as he almost collided with the panic stricken Walt, who was now dodging about at a safe distance from the hole, in an agony of indecision.

"I'll—I'll ~~g-g~~ get a p-pole," stammered Smythe, and overjoyed at the excuse he had found, he set out in hot haste for the shore, followed by a universal groan.

Tom laid himself down gently on his face as near the rift as he dared, and stretching out his arms, was able to grasp Amy round the neck when she rose to the surface again. It took all his strength to hold her against the pull of the current, which was sucking her under the ice; he could hear the portion on which he lay cracking ominously.

"Let no one come near; it won't hold another pound," shouted he, as some one skated up behind him.

"It's I, Tom," said Jean in a voice she tried to keep steady. "There, catch," her boa lit on the ice close by his head. "Can you slip it under her arms? I've made a noise in it."

Tom caught her idea, and as Amy had

consciousness enough left to cling to his arm, he loosed hold of her with one hand and passed the loop over her head and shoulders, and drew it tight under her arms.

"Now crawl back the length of the boa," called Jean, "and Will Golden will take hold of your feet."

Tom was loath to let go of the poor, frightened child, but the repeated cracking of the ice warned him that it would not bear his own weight much longer, still less a double burden, so bidding her keep as still as she could with her arms stretched out on the edge of the ice he cautiously slid backward the length of the fur.

His feet were immediately grasped by Will Golden's strong hands. Will was lying on the ice also.

A line had been hastily made with a number of the boys' belts fastened together, and the end bound securely round Will's feet; the word was given, and half a dozen of them pulled on the line, gently first till the little girl had been lifted out of the hole, then strongly and quickly, and ending in a ringing cheer as the last of the trio reached sound ice and was safe.

Jean and her girl friends surrounded the poor little half dead Amy, some to wring the water out of her clothes and some to wrap her up in their own dry garments; while Tom's club companions pressed about him to shake hands and express in their rough and ready fashion their approbation of his prowess.

But Jean broke up the loves by calling for volunteers to carry Amy to the house where she could get proper attention, and in a trice a procession was wending its way to the shore with Tom and Will bearing the rescued one between them on their clasped hands at its head, and Jean in close attendance.

On the bank Tom disbanded his followers, begging them to go back to their skating as no harm had been done, and promising to return shortly; and the little party of four entered the forest path by themselves.

They had not gone far when they met Walt Smythe, dragging a sapling which he had evidently just hewn down, judging by the axe over his shoulder. He was puffing like a grampus, and mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"Oh, you got her out, did you?" he said, "Not much hurt, are you, Amy?"

"Amy made no attempt to answer except by the audible chattering of her teeth.

"Will you let us pass? She needs to have her wet things off as soon as possible," said Jean with undisguised frostiness.

"Oh, certainly, Miss Latimer, too happy to oblige," returned the dude, taking off his cap with a flourish—his manners were always particularly florid before the gentle sex. And he stepped out of the narrow path which he had been blocking up with his pole. "I saw the little monkey wasn't in immediate danger, and went after a pole to shove over the break, always the proper plan," continued he patronizingly, as the party moved on and he fell into step with Jean.

"But I had to go up to the house for an axe, and then had to cut the pole down, and it all took time, though I tell you I didn't let the grass grow under my feet," and he wiped his face and flapped his handkerchief with a complacency which Jean found insupportable.

"And while you were doing all that—at a safe distance," remarked she dryly, (for Jean was by no means a saint and could scratch when hard pushed.) "Amy might have drowned three times over but for the two cads you forbid her going with."

Smythe was too much taken aback at first to reply, then he drawled, "Oh Miss Latimer, you mustn't believe all you're told."

"I wasn't told," snapped Jean. "I heard you say it, and I think under all the circumstances," coming to a stand at the back entrance to her father's garden, and looking up at him with sparkling eyes, "You won't be surprised if I refuse to know you any more after tonight. I'm sorry to have to say so, but—good evening," and she walked on with her head well up to join her brothers and his companions.

Walt Smythe stood at the little gate glaring after the group with vengeful eyes and clenched fists. Then his rage boiled over and he shouted after them—

"You may be glad enough yet if I, or anybody else, will notice you! Look at home, and you won't be so quick to insult people who've done nothing to be ashamed of."

No one took any heed of the irate dude, but a strange thrill ran through Tom and Jean at the ominous speech, and their eyes met.

Twice that day had disgrace been mentioned in connection with their name. What could it mean?

They reached the house and placed the shivering little sufferer in the care of kind Aunt Amazine, who speedily had her warmed and comforted, and lying on the sofa by the fire to rest a while before Tom should escort her home.

"Hasn't pa come yet?" asked Jean in surprise, as she saw the tea table still waiting for him.

He usually came by the six thirty train in good time to take the evening meal with his family, though now and then he had been detained later. It was now close on ten, and there were only two more trains stopping at Yantic before that night.

"He is unusually late," said Mrs. Ross, glancing at the clock. "Unexpected business, I suppose. I hope he will come on the next train; the last is so very late. And she placidly went on with her knitting."

The three young people returned to their friends on the dam as they had promised, and were glad to find that Smythe had disappeared. For half an hour longer the party enjoyed themselves without a jar; then they all trooped to the house, where Aunt Amazine regaled them on coffee and cookies, and "Sir Roger De Coverley," danced in blanket suits to the piano, finished the evening, when the young folks dispersed and the Latimers were left to themselves.

Tom was not required to see little Amy Smythe home, as her father had called with his dogcart for her—Walt apparently having the grace to keep in the background.

But Mr. Latimer had not arrived yet when Mrs. Ross insisted on Tom and Jean going to bed.

"He will be along by the twelve forty train. I will wait up for him myself," she said cheerfully.

Aunt Amazine was blessed with a serene temperament which diffused tranquillity around her; she declined to meet trouble half way, so was the stronger to encounter it when it found her; and the brother and sister went to their rest without a misgiving.

As the clock struck two Jean awoke to hear Aunt Amazine's gentle step passing to her own room. She jumped out of bed and ran to the door, through which she whispered:

"Well, what kept him?"

Her aunt started, and shaded her face from the light of the lamp she carried, to hide the anxiety she could not help feeling.

"Your papa did not come, my dear," said she in her usual tone. "No doubt he telegraphed that he would not be home tonight, and the telegram will find its way here in the morning. You know Jerry Danville isn't particular. There now, cuddle into bed; you'll get cold," and she passed on.

Jean obeyed, but sleep had fled, and she lay thinking over the pleasures of the evening, with Walt Smythe's fiasco and his spiteful speech; then of Tom's "doughty deeds" that day, and from them her thoughts went to Mrs. Tryder and her obscure speech. Half an hour passed, three quarters, and then she heard the front door being unlocked and her father's step in the hall below.

For the second time that night she rose, but this time she slipped on her wadded dressing robe and her fur lined slippers, and softly, so as not to disturb Tom or Aunt Amazine, stole to the stairs, smiling at the thought of "the lark" who would have presiding at her papa's supper in the dead of night with every other soul in the house asleep. She looked down in the dimly lit hall, and her heart stood still.

(To be continued.)

THE IMPRESSIONS OF YOUTH.
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears
and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clew
That education gives her, false or true.

—Cowper.

[This Story began in No. 56.]

Belmont;

OR,
MARK WARE'S COLLEGE LIFE.

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

CHAPTER XLII.

DOUBTS.

Mark took the receipted bills in his hand and examined them closely.

"Then these last two bills have really not been paid at all," he said.

"So the costumer declares. I don't know whether to believe him or not," answered Herbert.

"If his cashier was dead when these bills were receipted then these signatures must be forgeries," continued Mark.

"It will be a very simple matter to settle. We can easily find out whether the cashier died or not. It would be foolhardy for the costumer to lie about it."

"Then there must be some mistake. Some one in his office who writes like his cashier must have receipted the bills."

"Why should some one else sign the dead cashier's name?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Herbert in a bewildered manner. "All I know is that there must be some strange mistake. Chapin told me he paid the bills. He would not be capable of—of—why, Mark, what do you look at me that way for? What are you thinking?"

Mark gazed straight into Herbert's face. "I am thinking just what you are thinking, Herbert."

Herbert hung his head. "I don't want to think it," he said in a voice scarcely above a whisper. "I am trying to fight off the feeling. I want to think that it is all a mistake—a mere misunderstanding, but for all that, I can't get rid of my doubts—of my suspicions—"

"Have you seen Chapin about it?" asked Mark.

"No—he was not in the room when I was there."

"I think you had better find him at once. He had charge of this money, and he is the only one who can clear the matter up. Ask him to explain these signatures."

Herbert seemed absolutely frightened by the thoughts that filled his mind. He gathered the bills together slowly with trembling fingers, and placed them in his pocket.

"I will," he said in a half dazed manner. "I will find Chapin at once. Perhaps he can explain."

"And perhaps he can explain this, too." While saying this, Mark opened his wallet and, taking out a letter, placed it on the desk before Herbert.

The letter took it up and stared vacantly at it. It was the letter Herbert received the day after his separation from Mark—the letter that had caused so much trouble. Mark had kept it carefully since the colonel had given it to him.

"Ask Chapin to explain this too," continued Mark. "This is another clever bit of forgery. Perhaps Chapin can explain both."

Herbert started up, his face flushing hotly. A clear light seemed to dawn upon him. His manner was resolute and determined.

"Leave this all to me," he said. "It shall be sifted to the very bottom."

With that, he thrust the letter into his pocket after the bills and hurried out.

Mark stepped immediately to the window. Looking across the campus through the trees, he could discern a figure moving about in number 15, Warburton Hall.

"Chapin is in," he said aloud. "We will soon have a complete understanding."

"Understanding! understanding what?" Mark started at the sound of a voice close by him, and, turning quickly around, found Tracy Hollis gazing at him.

"Oh nothing," answered Mark evasively. "I was only thinking aloud. I didn't know you were here."

"What is the matter with Herbert Morgan?" asked Tracy. "I met him in the hallway and he seemed to be terribly worked up about something. He hurried right past me without speaking a word. You and he haven't quarreled again, have you?"

"No," answered Mark. "Herbert is worried over some business matters connected with the accounts of the burial committee. He has gone over to see Chapin about them."

"By the way—speaking of Chapin—tell me something, Mark," said Tracy. "That fellow has plenty of money, hasn't he?"

"Why, I always supposed so. I've always been told that his father was quite wealthy—a broker in New York."

"Then I wonder why he should be so hard up," continued Tracy. "Why should he have to borrow money?"

"Borrow money?"

"Yes, Chapin came to me the day after college opened, and asked me to lend him twenty dollars for a few days. He said that his father had not sent him his allowance, and that he was flat on his back—not a cent on hand and lots of expenses to meet. I had all the money I had brought from home, so I could spare twenty dollars without inconvenience, and, accordingly, I let him have it. He promised to repay it within three days without fail. Well, from that time to this I haven't heard a peep from him. I didn't worry about it, for I thought that he was perfectly square and honest, but today I happened to say something about it to Carver, and he told me that Chapin had borrowed twenty dollars from him too, just yesterday. I'm beginning to think that that fellow has been beating his way around the class. I'll bet Carver and I are not the only ones he has struck for money. I watched for him today but he kept carefully out of my way. I'm beginning to think he is queer."

"I shouldn't be surprised, Tracy," said Mark.

"But, great Scott, Mark; don't you think I will get my money back?"

"Would you like my frank opinion—confidential, and not for publication?"

"Yes."

"Well then, here it is. I wouldn't give you twenty cents for your twenty dollar claim on Chapin. I am sure the fellow is crooked. Now don't say a word, but just wait a few days."

CHAPTER XLIII

EXPLANATIONS.

Mark watched sharply for Herbert at chapel the next morning. He was late coming in, and the moment he entered, Mark could tell at a glance that important news was in store for him. Herbert's face was pale, his eyes heavy and dark, as if he had slept badly the night before.

As soon as the exercises were over, Mark hurried out and waited for his friend by the door. As Herbert came up, he touched Mark nervously on the arm.

"Will you take a walk with me down by the tennis courts?" he asked. "I want to have a talk with you where we will not be interrupted."

Mark said nothing, but fell in step with Herbert, and off they went together across the grass. Neither of them spoke until they reached the tennis courts, at this hour quite deserted. There they sat down on one of the numerous benches flanking the courts.

Immediately Herbert turned to Mark. Even before he could speak the tears started into his eyes.

"Mark, can you ever forgive me for doubting you?" he exclaimed in a broken voice, stretching out his hands.

"Why, of course, old man. Don't speak of it," said Mark quickly. "All I want to be sure of was that you discharged me of all responsibility for that note—that you believed in me."

"You are the best friend I have in the world," continued Herbert. "And I don't deserve your friendship. I have acted like—like—" his voice broke again.

"Don't go on that way, Herbert," cried Mark. "Come, brace up! You are unstrung and nervous. Rest a minute and quiet yourself."

Herbert remained silent for a moment. Then he went on more firmly.

"You are right, I am unstrung. I slept scarcely a wink last night—thinking of this trouble, and of the injustice father and I have done you."

"Never mind me," said Mark. "I am glad to let that drop if you believe in me now. I don't blame you for doubting me. The circumstances were all against me. But no more of that—come to the point. It was Chapin that wrote that letter."

"Yes."

"And it was he that forged those receipts?"

"Yes. There is no need of my repeating all the disagreeable things that were said. From the start I was confident of his rascality. I faced him down with the bills and your letter before he could prepare himself. He made a complete denial at first, but when I told him that the cashier whose signature he had forged was dead, he was completely taken aback, and at length owned up. Then, after having lied to me in the beginning, he ended by throwing himself on my mercy."

"He said that he had been very hard up in the spring, and had taken the money entrusted to him by us, but that he hadn't meant to steal it. He fully intended to repay it in a very short time. He said that he forged those receipts bills merely to satisfy us while he could gain time to replace the money. He kept all the dunning letters of the costumer out of our way, answering them with promises. That is the way we never came to see them until this last one happened to reach me."

"And what need had he of so much money?" asked Mark.

"Well, he had sustained some losses," answered Herbert nervously. "And he said that his father was temporarily hard pressed in business so that no money came to him from home."

"Well, and what was the result of your talk with him?"

"He promised to make the amount good if I would not expose him. He said he expected money from home in a day or two, and would square up the account with the costumer at once if I would only keep the matter quiet. I would promise nothing, but questioned him about that letter you gave me. As he was anxious to gain my protection, he made a complete confession. He said that he saw a chance of getting you away from me when I told him the night of our quarrel that we had had a difference, and that he picked up some of our paper before he left my room, wrote that note in your handwriting, and mailed it that night—the contemptible rascal! I could have strangled him right there. Oh, I wish I had, I let him off too easy."

"Too easy!" exclaimed Mark. "What did you do?"

"I scarcely know what. I only know the sight of that fellow sitting there and coolly owning up to his rascality was more than I could stand. The many evil things he had said of you, the systematic way he had set about undermining our friendship, his lying, swindling tricks—all came upon me with a rush, and for a minute I completely lost my head. Before he had finished speaking I jumped for him, caught him by the throat and threw him into the hall, kicking him half way down stairs. I told him he could have this morning to get his things out of my room, and that he was never to show his face there again. Then I felt a little better."

"Well, and what are you going to do now?" asked Mark.

"I don't know. What do you think?"

"I think he ought to be exposed to the whole college."

"Oh no, I couldn't do that," cried Herbert.

"Why not?" asked Mark in surprise.

"He has been my room mate, and the disgrace of it all—the shame, will react on me."

"Not at all. The moment you discovered his real character you threw him out."

You will not be identified with him in his disgrace."

"Yes, yes," answered Herbert. "He will be spoken of as my chum, and I couldn't stand that."

"I don't think you have a right to shield him. He has committed a criminal act. I think it is your duty to expose him."

"I don't believe he realized what he was doing. He meant only—"

"Herbert," interrupted Mark. "I don't understand you. One minute you condemn this fellow in the severest terms, and then when I say 'expose him' you begin to make excuses for him."

"I know he's a rascal," said Herbert hastily. "I won't try to excuse him. But—well, I would rather not expose him."

"What then do you propose doing?"

"Make him square up the account with the costumer, and then—well, then let him drop."

"Do you think that he will square up?"

"Certainly, rather than be exposed."

"Has he the money?"

"I am sure he has. He has won—I mean he has large allowances from his father and carries plenty of money about him."

"Then why does he borrow so from his classmates?"

"Borrow! From whom?"

"From Tracy Hollis and Carver, for two—and probably from many others."

"How do you know that?"

"Tracy told me yesterday."

Herbert looked puzzled.

"I didn't think that he was in need of money just now. He seemed to have enough."

"Suppose you can't get any money out of him?"

"I can—I know I can," insisted Herbert. "And to make sure of it I will watch for him at the room this morning. He is sure to be there."

"Do as you think best, Herbert," said Mark rising, as the bell for recitation began to ring. "I have given my opinion."

"I will think it over—my first recitation is at ten o'clock, you know, so I have an hour to myself. During that time I will probably see Chapin. I will let you know this afternoon what I decide to do."

The two boys, with a warm and affectionate clasp of the hand, separated, Mark hurrying off toward Burke Hall, while Herbert walked leisurely to his room.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A NEW SURPRISE.

At noon Mark was walking down toward the football field for practice when he heard rapid footsteps behind him. Turning around, he found Herbert running after him.

"Any news?" asked Mark.

"Chapin has gone away," said Herbert.

"Gone away where?"

"Out of town somewhere—probably home. I waited in my room for him till ten o'clock, but he didn't come. Then I had to go to recitation. You know I have two recitations in succession today, one at ten o'clock and one at eleven. During those two hours Chapin went to the room, packed all his things, and left town. He went on the 12.05 train, so the station agent said. I got to the station just too late to catch him. I'm just as well satisfied, though, not to catch him. I hope he will never come back. It will be a great relief to me."

"And how about the account with the costumer?" asked Mark.

"I will settle it myself. I will be glad to hush the matter up in that way. As the chairman of the committee I feel responsible to the class for the amount, and as the 'chum' and room mate of Chapin I feel a sense of shame. I can quiet both by paying the money—and I'm going to do it at once."

"Can you do it?"

"Yes. Father deposited three hundred dollars for me in the town savings bank this month. He promised me long ago that I should have an account of my own when I became a junior. I will draw on that to settle this business. It will break me for the rest of the term, but I look on it as a cheap way to put an end to the disgraceful affair. Come along with me to the bank and I will get the money

now. I want to satisfy the costumer at once so he won't be making any further trouble. I'll have a check made out at the bank and send it to him in the one o'clock mail."

"You are doing a very honorable thing, Herbert," said Mark, as the two boys set off for the bank. "And it seems to me it is the best thing, all things considered. I only hope it will hush the matter up as you wish. But think a moment—what will the fellows say when they find Chapin has suddenly left college? It is bound to provoke curiosity."

"Yes, it will seem queer, I know—hurry running away like that, but fellows occasionally have to leave college suddenly; and then you know he has told several of us that his father was in business difficulties. That would be an excellent reason for his being hurriedly called away. And, after all, I don't care what reasons the fellows may find for his leaving. They can't positively know about this scandalous piece of business, for you and I are the only ones that know anything about it, and we are not going to publish it, now that Chapin is out of the way."

"No, there would be no object in that," said Mark. "Not unless he comes back."

"Oh, I hope he won't do that—I really couldn't stand it," cried Herbert.

"It isn't at all likely. He wouldn't dare do that."

"It would be awful," said Herbert. Again his tone and nervous manner attracted Mark's attention.

"Why should you feel so uneasy about it?" he asked. "If he should return, you would have him completely at your mercy."

"I know, but it would be terribly disagreeable," answered Herbert hastily. "I can't tell you what a shock this has been to me. Just think of it! Only yesterday I believed in Chapin thoroughly, and regarded him as one of my best friends. Today he runs away in disgrace—a thief and a forger. I can hardly realize it. It seems like a bad dream."

Mark said nothing, and, in silence, the boys traversed the rest of the way to the savings bank. On entering, Herbert took out his bank book, and presented it at the paying teller's window.

"I want to draw out two hundred dollars," he said.

"Very well, sir," said the teller, taking a blank order and filling in the amount.

"I want it in a check, not cash," said Herbert. "I want to send it away by mail."

"All right."

The teller opened Herbert's book to enter the amount.

"Hold on, sir. You haven't two hundred dollars to your credit," he said.

"Oh yes, I have," answered Herbert. "There was a deposit of three hundred dollars on the fifteenth of September, and I have made only two small drafts on that—each of ten dollars."

"You have only thirty dollars to your credit, sir," said the teller. "The rest has been drawn out in three drafts—two of them of ten dollars each, as you say, and a third of two hundred and fifty dollars."

"Two hundred and fifty dollars," echoed Herbert in a quavering voice. "I don't know what you mean. When was that amount drawn out?"

"Why, it was today—must have been some time this morning—see, there is the entry."

"Sure enough there it was; two hundred and fifty dollars."

"Well but I—I didn't draw this money out," stammered Herbert, his head beginning to buzz.

"No, of course not—you would have known about it if you had," said the teller. "But some one must have presented a draft of yours. I was not here and do not know about it, but I can find out for you easy enough—Tom, see here a minute."

One of the bank clerks came forward.

"You were here from ten o'clock to eleven."

"Yes."

"Do you remember this book?"

"Oh, yes. A young fellow came in with it just about ten minutes after the bank opened. He had a draft for—two hundred and fifty dollars—yes, that was the amount. The draft was all right. I compared it carefully with Mr. Morgan's signature in our books, and the handwriting

was unmistakable, so I paid over the money."

"Who was the fellow?" asked Herbert breathlessly.

"I didn't know him, but that made no difference. No identification was needed. He had your book, and the draft was made payable to bearer—"

"But he indorsed it when he got the money."

"Oh yes. I'll find the draft in a minute—that will settle the matter."

The clerk fumbled among some papers for several seconds, while Herbert stood watching the brass railing, his fingers twitching nervously and his heart beating rapidly.

"Ah, here it is," said the clerk, and he handed a slip of paper through the window.

Herbert caught it quickly from the clerk's hand, and ran his eye over its face. There certainly was his signature—the handwriting his own in every particular. The blood mounted to his face. Not a doubt now remained in his mind as to the perpetrator of this new forgery. He turned it over hastily to find the indorsement.

Across the back of the draft, in handwriting quite as "unmistakable" as his own, Herbert read the name, "Mark Ware."

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 567.]

A Bad Lot.

BY ARTHUR LEE PUTNAM,
Author of "Ben Bruce," "Cast Upon the Breakers," "Number 91," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXVI.
PROFESSOR PUFFER BECOMES AN ALLY.

Professor Puffer let his eye glide slowly over Bernard's figure. He noted not only his increase in size, but his neat dress, and bright and handsome face.

"How long have you been in America?" he asked abruptly.

"I arrived yesterday by the Eururia."

"You seem well and prosperous," went on Puffer, with an envious sigh.

"Yes, I have been fortunate."

"It is wonderful. You are elegantly dressed. Yet I left you destitute, or rather you left me without a penny to fall back upon."

"That is true, Professor Puffer."

"It was a reckless step to take."

"It may have been, but you must admit that I had good reasons for taking the step," said Bernard significantly.

"What are you doing? Are you employed?" asked the professor, without comment.

"I am, and I am not. I am nominally private secretary to my kind friend, Mr. Walter Cunningham," said Bernard, with a look at that gentleman.

"The gentleman who advertised in London for a traveling companion?"

"The same."

"I sought the position. I should have been much better qualified than you," said the professor peevishly.

"You don't appear to have prospered," rejoined Bernard.

"No. Is it not disgraceful that a man of my attainments should fill this ignoble position?" said Professor Puffer bitterly.

"Couldn't you get anything better to do?"

"If I could you would not have found me travelling through the streets as a sandwich man. Up and down I walk through the livelong day, and how much do you think I receive for my degrading labors?"

"I suppose it is not much."

"Fifty cents a day," answered the professor bitterly.

"And you live on that?"

"Don't live on it. I starve."

"But I don't see how you became so reduced. Was not Cornelius McCracken, my old guardian, a friend of yours?"

"McCracken! The selfish beast! Don't name him to me. I can't bear to hear his name spoken."

"Has he treated you badly?" asked Bernard.

"Has he not? I was his confidential agent. He selected me to do his dirty work. He placed you under my care, having certain interests of his own to serve."

"I have always wondered what his object could have been?"

As Bernard spoke, he fixed his eyes eagerly upon the face of his old companion. He felt persuaded that Professor Puffer could tell him what he was very anxious to know. He meant before the interview was over to obtain from him light as to his relations with Mr. McCracken.

"Have you seen him lately? Won't he do anything for you?" he continued.

"Listen! When I returned from Europe two months since, I called upon him. I had previously communicated with him by letter. He asked after you. I told him that you were dead."

"Why did you tell him that?"

"Because it was what he wished to know."

"Did he wish me to die?" asked Bernard, started, but not wholly surprised.

"He did. In sending you to Europe with me, he wished to get rid of you, and I had instructions to that effect."

"That accounts for you trying to throw me overboard that night on the Vesta."

"Yes. I was endeavoring to carry out my instructions."

"Were the instructions oral or written?"

"Written. I had a letter in McCracken's own handwriting."

"Don't that give you a hold upon him?"

"It would if I had kept it, but unfortunately I lost it, on the steamer, I think."

Bernard had the letter in his trunk at the hotel. He had always preserved it, thinking that some time he might find a use for it. Of course the professor didn't know this.

"I reported your death," continued Puffer. "I said you had been run over and fatally injured in Marseilles. I could see how much satisfaction this news afforded Mr. McCracken. He ascertained by cunning questions that I didn't have his letter in my possession, and then he became cool and indifferent. 'I am sorry for the boy's death,' he said. 'He was young to die. I think you must have been careless.' 'I was only carrying out your instructions,' I said. 'What do you mean?' he retorted. 'I committed him to your charge. If I gave you any instructions, produce them.'"

"This I couldn't do, and ne bnew it."

"I represented to him that I was very poor, and needed help."

"Really," he said, 'that is nothing to me.'

"Can't you give me employment?" I asked.

"I have no places vacant," he answered coldly.

"What am I to do? I asked. 'I have no money?'"

"Surely you don't expect me to support you," he said impatiently. 'You have no claim upon me.'

"Then I bethought myself of a clever scheme."

"Surely," I said, 'you will repay me the sum I paid out for the boy's funeral.'

"He reflected a moment, and then answered in the affirmative."

"Yes," he said, 'if you will give me a receipt in due form.'

"I went out of the office with one hundred dollars in my pocket."

"It was certainly a lucky thought," said Bernard smiling; "considering that my funeral expenses are paid, I

feel unusually full of life. However, I am glad you got the money."

"It is all gone now!" went on Puffer mournfully. "I lived perhaps too freely while it lasted. When it was gone I called once more at Mr. McCracken's office, and was literally kicked out. What do you think of that?"

Hitherto Walter Cunningham had stood by in silence, listening to the conversation between Bernard and his quondam guardian. Now he came forward with a question.

"Can you tell me, Professor Puffer," he asked, "why Mr. McCracken wished to get rid of Bernard?"

"The answer is an easy one. He was in his possession ten thousand dollars entrusted to him by Bernard's father. It must amount to a good deal more now from the interest that has accrued."

"What proof can you give of this? Did he ever write to you to that effect?"

"No, but he admitted it to me in conversation."

"I am disposed to get this back from him. Are you willing to help me?"

"I wish I could," said Puffer earnestly. "I owe him a grudge. That would be a welcome revenge. But I am afraid there is no chance. If only I had that letter of instructions I could prove at any rate that he wanted me to get rid of him."

"That would give us a hold on him, and with the help of it I think we could bring him to terms."

"But unfortunately I have lost the letter," continued the professor regretfully.

"Professor Puffer," said Bernard, "that letter is still in existence."

"Is it?" asked Puffer eagerly.

"Where is it?"

"I have it in my trunk. I found it on the floor of your stateroom on the Vesta. It is not quite complete, but there is enough in it with your help to fasten a very serious charge upon Mr. McCracken."

"Good! good! I am thankful," said the professor. "I will go with you, and beard him in his den. He shall repent the way in which he has treated me. But you will have to wait till evening. I shall not be through with my work till six o'clock."

"You can leave it now," said Cunningham. "I am not at all sure that you are entitled to the title of professor, but at all events you are fit for something better than a sandwich man. I will see that you are no longer reduced to such humble work."

"I shall be thankful," said Ezra Puffer, "deeply thankful if you will find me a better position. Sometimes I meet a man whom I knew in better days, and then I am inexpressibly mortified to be seen in such a position."

"I think I can promise you some more congenial employment. Do you know where the Brevoort House is?"

"Yes."

"Come round there at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, and call for me. You remember my name?"

"Yes, you are Mr. Cunningham."

"Do you think," asked Puffer, "that you could spare me half a dollar now? I feel quite hungry, and I should like to make a good meal."

"Certainly. Here are five dollars. Now, be sure to call at the Brevoort House tomorrow morning."

"Most certainly I will," said the professor eying the bank note he had just received, with joyful glance. "I should be a fool if I didn't. Through you and Bernard, I hope to have another chance of living respectably. Now I must go and surrender this badge of my servitude," and he glanced disdainfully at the two placards which he had already removed from their position behind and in front. "I hope, Bernard, you will

never be subjected to such humiliation."

"I hardly think it likely," said Walter Cunningham, "especially if through you he obtains possession of his father's money."

"I will do my best, sir. I think, Cornelius McCracken," he continued, snapping his fingers at an imaginary form, "that we shall be too much for you at last. You will be sorry that you did not treat me better."

Professor Puffer disappeared rapidly round the corner of Houston Street, and Bernard and Walter Cunningham walked up town to their hotel.

"Things seem to be turning in your favor, Bernard," said his companion.

"The money left by your father will not be of so much consequence to you now, but it will be a satisfaction to wrest it from the hands of your faithless guardian. Professor Puffer will prove to be a good friend to you after all."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A BAD DAY FOR MR. McCRACKEN.

Cornelius McCracken sat in his office in a complacent mood. He had just closed a successful speculation in Wall Street, by which he had cleared a few hundred dollars. He was not a rich man for the city, and this was of some consequence to him.

Then his mind could not help reverting to Bernard and the accident which had removed him from his path, and averted all danger of restitution of the boy's fortune. Truly all seemed favorable.

He heard a slight noise at the door, and lifting his eyes recognized with a scowl his old ally and confederate, Professor Puffer.

"What do you want here?" he demanded roughly. "I have no time for such as you."

Professor Puffer entered the room nevertheless, and sank into a chair.

"Mr. McCracken," he said, "I am very unfortunate. I am reduced to the position of a sandwich man. I who have occupied the position of a gentleman."

"What is that to me? It is an honest way of earning your living. You are lucky to find work at all."

"I have given it up. I can't stand it. Besides I met yesterday afternoon a person whom I had known in happier and more prosperous days. I felt as if I should sink through the sidewalk."

"see—you are poor and proud," sneered McCracken. "It is out of place in a man like you."

"Mr. McCracken, can't you help me? I have served you faithfully in a matter you know of."

"And you have been paid."

"But think how you have benefited. By the boy's death you have fallen heir to his fortune, and—"

"Who told you he had a fortune?"

"You admitted it yourself in a conversation."

"Well, it was very small—a few hundred dollars."

"On that point I will not speak. Even, admitting it to be only that, can't you spare me a few dollars?"

"No, I can't. Get out of my office!"

"Mr. McCracken," said Puffer, changing his tone, "you have thrown me over, because you think you don't need me any more. Suppose now—only suppose—that a mistake had been made—that Bernard was not dead after all."

"What do you mean?" demanded the merchant nervously. "You told me he was dead."

"Suppose I was mistaken."

"Then you deceived me basely. But you are only trying to play a trick on me. You have mistaken your man. Again I order you to leave my office."

"I will do so, but I shall return."

"If you do, you will be kicked out."

Professor Puffer did not seem

alarmed. He went out, closing the door behind him and immediately afterwards Bernard opened it and went in.

"Didn't I tell you not to come back?" exclaimed McCracken angrily.

"No," answered a young fresh voice.

Mr. McCracken turned quickly, and there stood Bernard Brooks. He had grown considerably, he was much improved in dress, but Mr. McCracken recognized him.

"I see you know me," said Bernard.

"No, I don't."

"I think you do. I am Bernard Brooks."

"I thought you were dead."

"It was a mistake."

"I am not prepared to admit your identity. You don't look like Bernard Brooks."

"I shall have no difficulty in proving myself to be your former ward."

"Well, what do you want? Do you wish to put yourself under my charge? In that case I will send you to Professor Snowdon."

"No, thank you. I can take care of myself."

"I am willing. In that case I will bid you good morning. I am busy," and Mr. McCracken made a motion to return to his writing.

"You asked me if I had any business with you. I have," continued Bernard. "I wish you to give up the fortune my father left in your charge for me."

"You lie! There was no such fortune. Some one has been deceiving you. Perhaps it is that arrant liar, Ezra Puffer."

"Whom you hired to put me out of the way."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. McCracken hoarsely.

"I have in my possession a letter which you wrote to him, from which it will be easy to prove your attempted crime and the motive."

"There is no such letter. I never wrote one of that tenor."

"It is in your handwriting."

"Show it to me, then."

"I can't. It is in the hands of my lawyer."

"You have dared to put it into the hands of a lawyer?"

"I felt that it was my best course," Cornelius McCracken's countenance worked convulsively. He was beginning to be afraid of his ward.

"There was a matter of five hundred dollars," he admitted reluctantly, "left over after my disbursements for you. I will at my leisure look over my accounts, and if there is any money due you, you shall have it."

"I have made the acquaintance of Mr. Oliver Franklin, an old friend of my father. He tells a very different story. He says my father left at least ten thousand dollars."

"Stuff and nonsense! You must be crazy."

"I won't discuss the question with you, Mr. McCracken. I have put the matter into the hands of a lawyer, who will see you about the matter. I only wished to give you notice what I intended doing. Good morning."

Bernard left the office, leaving his guardian in no enviable state of mind. Without dwelling on the legal steps taken, it is enough to say that Mr. McCracken was ultimately compelled to disgorge twelve thousand dollars to his former ward. Bernard and his English friend succeeded in obtaining for Professor Puffer a position as doorkeeper in an art museum, which on the whole he preferred to being a sandwich man. Before this law matter was terminated Bernard made up his mind to visit Doncaster and see his old friend and teacher Professor Ezekiel Snowdon.

(To be continued.)

A KIND ACTION.

Blind Beggar—"You've dropped your handkerchief, sir."

Man in a Hurry—"Thanks; but I thought you were blind."

Blind Beggar—"So I am. But I hate to see a man lose anything without—oh, thank you; thank you, sir."—New York Recorder.

ONLY A WORD.

I have known a sprit, calmer
Than the calmest lake, and clear
As the heavens that gazed upon it,
With no wave of hope or fear;
But a storm had swept across it,
And its deepest depths were stirr'd
(Never, never more to slumber)
Only by a word.

—Adelaide A. Proctor.

[This Story began in No. 574.]

A Mystery of the Forest.

BY E. E. YOUMANS,

Author of "The Lone Island," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A WELL AIMED BLOW.

The feelings of the boys, as the counterfeiter halted so suddenly within a foot or two of them, can be better imagined than described. The outlaw had only to thrust out his hand to become aware of their presence, and they expected him to do so each second.

Indeed George had quickly decided on the only course to adopt, and had clutched his revolver firmly to strike him down the instant he discovered them, when the fellow suddenly moved on.

"The tunnel must be caving in," they heard him mutter, as he passed; "we'll have to look to it."

He was soon out of hearing, and the boys stepped away from the wall with a sigh of relief.

"That was just about as narrow an escape as one could make," said George, in a whisper.

"I should say so," answered Charles, his voice still trembling with suppressed excitement. "Let me tell you I felt pretty queer for a few seconds."

"So did I; but I'd have knocked him senseless as quick as a wink if he had found us."

"Well, I wish we were safe out of this hole, and the whole business over. I'm not particularly afraid, you know, but this is a little more than I bargained for. Besides we should have gone back long ago to meet Tom. He won't know what to make of it."

"I know it," answered George uneasily. "What I've been fearing all the time is that he'll come back, find the cabin and get into trouble there."

"Well, we ought to tell the detective about it, and see what can be done," whispered Charlie decidedly.

Just then the spy joined them. He seemed much perturbed, and they knew he had made important discoveries ahead.

"How did you make out?" asked George.

"I've located the whole business," he answered. "But, boys, we must mark this place so we can find it from the outside, and get out at once. We're in great peril. I overheard 'em talking back yonder, and they begin to smell a rat."

"That dispatch of mine did it. They recognized the difference in my operating, and that first fellow who passed us was on his way to see about it. He should have been back before, and this chap who just came out, and came within an ace of discovering me, has gone back to find out what's keeping him."

Here George told how near a calamity had come to befalling them, and the spy uttered a low cry of alarm.

"If he had found you," he said, "all my plans would have been ruined. I was expecting it though, and, after he passed me, I fairly held my breath until sure he had gone safely by you. We must leave this place at once."

It was easy to see the detective regarded their situation as serious, and he was fully warranted in so

doing. The outlaws were in front and behind them, and to make their way out unobserved would be a matter of considerable difficulty.

Then the possibility that the counterfeiter would discover the prisoner in the cabin, and from him learn all that had occurred was grave enough now to demand careful consideration, and it did not require much thought to convince all three how dangerous would be their position if it were known they were in the tunnel.

The outlaws might even now be aware of the fact. It was not to be supposed that two of them would go to the cabin without making a thorough investigation, and in this event the identity of the captive there could not long elude detection.

When this was discovered communication of the fact would be made between the coining room and the cabin by means of the wire, and the whole gang would precipitate themselves upon the spy and his companions with savage impetuosity.

It has taken more time to explain this than was required by the officer to realize it, and his aim now was to get out and away before such a calamity could occur.

He had discovered all he cared to know, and it only remained to get his men together and make the attack. To do this, however, would require several hours, and, as it was now drawing toward the middle of the afternoon, the least delay would be serious.

"Come," he said, "we must be off." He moved away as he spoke, and, followed closely by the boys, began the return. They listened carefully for any indication of danger ahead, but nothing occurred, and at last they reached the point where the passage leading to the cabin branched off from the one they were following.

The spy made no attempt to take it, however, but kept straight on. George was surprised at this, and the officer hastened to say:

"It would be worse than folly now to go back to the cabin. We'd only be discovered. I think this part of the tunnel is a secret exit, and if so, we'll be all right."

At this juncture he stumbled and nearly fell. Recovering himself he turned to see what had tripped him, and found it to be a piece of root several feet long that had been left lying in the path.

"The very thing I wanted," he cried; "now we can mark the place; that is unless the root is too thick."

He took the root and began working it up through the top of the tunnel. Considerable noise was made as the earth dropped all around them. The boys became alarmed.

"The robbers'll hear us," gasped George.

"We must risk it," said the spy firmly. "The place must be marked from the outside, and this is the only way it can be done. Keep your ears open for danger, and I'll soon be through."

By the merest good fortune he had selected a place where the roof was not so thick, and in a few minutes the roof was forced through. He pulled the stick down, and through the hole thus made they could see the trees and underbrush above them.

The detective pushed the root back again, and pressed the earth firmly around it.

"That'll hold it there," he said. "We can locate the course of the tunnel well enough to come somewhere near it when we get out, and the root will help us to find the exact spot, see? Now come on."

They put themselves in motion again, and pressed ahead. Suddenly a glimmer of light could be descried far on in advance. The detective uttered a cry of satisfaction.

"Just as I supposed," he said. "Now we'll soon be out."

They hurried forward as fast as possible, the light becoming stronger

each moment. All at once it was obscured and the trio paused in dismay, as a man was seen to enter the aperture.

He seemed to be in a hurry and rapidly advanced. Were they about to be discovered, or would fortune favor them now as it had done twice before?

On he came, the light behind him causing his form to be distinctly visible to the silent watchers, and they pressed against the wall to make room for him to pass.

Then suddenly an idea flashed into the detective's mind that made him start, grasp his revolver, and gather himself for a spring. The outlaw must not be allowed to pass! They would only be discovered if he were not disposed of.

The moment he was allowed to get beyond them they would be as visible to him as he now was to them, and he would only have to look back once to discover them. This he might not do of course, but the risk was too great to be taken.

"Hist!" whispered the detective warningly, as the outlaw was now only a few yards off.

He passed so close to the boys that his garments actually brushed against them. He paused with the evident intention of seeing what he had touched, when he suddenly uttered a groan and dropped down at their feet, as the detective dealt him a tremendous blow with the butt of his revolver.

It was so sudden and utterly unexpected to the boys that they were unable to realize it, and had begun to think it was the spy himself who had been assailed, when he began to speak.

"That was a lucky blow," he said, trying hard to speak calmly, for he was terribly excited, "and if I had failed all would have been lost."

"Why did you do it?" gasped George.

"I had to; it was our only salvation," and he proceeded to explain, at the same time bending down to examine the unconscious man.

The blow had been a fearful one, and well delivered. Not the least signs of life could be detected, and the officer feared the fellow was dead.

"I've finished him I think," he said. "I'm sorry, but it couldn't be helped."

"It's awful," groaned Charlie.

The detective rolled the outlaw's body close to one side of the passage, then took the lead again, and started on. They soon reached the entrance to the tunnel, and came out on the rocky side of a deep ravine.

The wall dropped abruptly for more than forty feet below them, but there was a small path leading up the side, from where they stood to the forest above.

Along this they began making their way. They were extremely cautious, pausing at intervals to listen and to carefully inspect their surroundings.

As before, the detective was in advance, revolver in hand, but nothing occurred to warrant its use, and they soon reached the top of the ravine.

The path ended in a thicket of bushes, and, parting there, they stepped out into the open forest. The place was well concealed, and might have been passed time and again without being discovered save by those who were aware of its existence.

For some time the trio were unable to locate their position. The forest was entirely unfamiliar even to the detective, who had spent many hours in exploring it, and he was obliged to ponder for some time before finally deciding on his course.

"I think this is our way," he said, as he started off; "and now we must lose no time in crossing the mountain and reaching the village. I must get my men together, and be back here by tomorrow morning at the latest."

"But can't we do something toward letting my brother know what's happened?" asked George anxiously. "I don't want to leave him this way."

"I don't see how we can," said the officer. "We need every second of our time, and, if we should go back that way, too much of it would be lost."

"The village is a good ten miles from here, and the way rough and hard to travel. We'll have to keep moving right along in order to get there in time."

"Of course," he continued. "I know you're anxious to join your brother, and help him find his oxen, but in capturing the outlaws you'll make about three hundred dollars apiece and I reckon that's as much if not more than the yoke is worth."

"It isn't so much for the oxen we care as for Tom's personal safety," George hastened to explain. "He does not know anything about the existence of the cabin or the outlaws, and I'm afraid he'll come back looking for us and be captured by them. He may even be there now, for we should have met long ago."

"Well, if he's been captured already you can do him no good by returning, and, if not, I dare say he's able to look out for himself. When he sees you don't return in time he'll know something unusual has occurred, and will be on the lookout for danger ahead."

There was a good deal of wisdom in the detective's argument, but for all that it was with manifest reluctance that George accepted the situation. Still, as the officer had said, it was more than likely Tom would be able to look out for himself, and George tried to jilay his uneasiness by making himself believe this.

If his brother should return up the stream and discover the cabin it is probable one of the outlaws would be there, and, seeing the place occupied, Tom would not approach as boldly as they had done. Reflecting thus, he followed the detective through the woods in the direction of the mountain pass.

An hour later they made an alarming discovery.

CHAPTER XIX. ON THE ROCK.

It was the detective himself who first made the discovery that all was not right. This conviction had been stealing over him for the last half hour, but he had refrained from mentioning it, not caring to alarm his companions unnecessarily.

The point had now come where it would be folly longer to conceal their peril, however, and at last, suddenly pausing, he turned toward them saying:

"Boys, we're in a serious situation. How bad it is I can't say as yet; but it's serious enough for us to go slow, and be sure of every step we take."

"How do you make that out?" asked George in surprise. "I have neither heard nor seen anything to cause uneasiness."

"No; well just listen a while."

They did so, and for more than three minutes were closely attentive. Then the soft notes of a bird trembled on the air not more than a hundred yards from where they stood, and the spy held up his finger warningly.

"Do you hear that?" he asked in a low tone, at the same time glancing around apprehensively.

"Well, what of it?" asked George. "It's only a bird. I've heard that for the past half hour."

"So have I, my boy, and that's just where the trouble lies," said the officer decidedly.

"How can that be?" continued George uneasily, for he saw that the detective was more annoyed than he cared to admit.

"That's not the notes of a bird, but the signal of the outlaws. Probably

they have discovered us, and are stealing upon us, although of this we can't be sure. Listen a moment, and you'll hear an answer to that call."

The spy was right. In a very short time the same peculiar sound came to their ears from a point some distance to the right. This was immediately answered by the first call, and clearly showed that there was an enemy on each side of them.

As they realized this fact the boys looked at the detective in genuine alarm. If their presence in the forest were known to the outlaws their situation was perilous in the extreme, and this peculiar exchange of signals could admit of only one interpretation. The counterfeiters were stealing upon them with the intention of shooting them down on sight!

It was not pleasant to contemplate exposing themselves to the outlaws' bullets in this manner, and the boys were conscious of a chill of fear creeping over them as a fuller realization of this possibility opened up before them.

They began looking carefully around through the underbrush, while the detective appeared lost in thought as if revolving some plan in his mind. Presently he said:

"It is out of the question to think of going any farther. We must hide somewhere and wait for darkness. The outlaws, after all, may not know we're here, and, if we can keep out of their way for an hour or two, we can manage to elude them entirely. It'll be dark by that time, and we won't run so much risk."

The spot where they had halted was in a heavy growth of underbrush, and they were fairly well protected from discovery unless the enemy should chance to stumble upon them by accident.

In order to obviate this the spy suggested concealing themselves as securely as possible. Just ahead the shrubbery was so dense as to be almost impenetrable.

"That's the place," he said, pointing to it. "I think we'll be safe there, unless our presence is already known."

He approached the spot as he spoke, and a moment later was forcing his way through the thicket. The next instant he uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"It suits our purpose to a T, boys," he said. "There is something here we can use to advantage. Come on through and climb up."

As noiselessly as possible they followed instructions, and soon found themselves on the top of a large, flat rock which was completely hidden from view by the underbrush. It did indeed form a capital place of concealment, and the outlaws might have passed within a yard of them without knowing they were there.

The boys breathed easier as they sank down on the rock beside the detective, and then began listening for some further indication of the enemy. It came in a few minutes, and proved that they had not esconced themselves a moment too soon.

From a point not more than a dozen yards from the spot they had recently left came the notes of the signal, and a moment or so after the footsteps of the outlaw could be heard as he made his way through the bushes.

Then the answer was borne to their ears from the same direction as before only considerably nearer, proving the fact that the men were coming together. The cautious tread of the second outlaw could be heard the next moment as he also entered the thicket.

"Hist!" whispered the detective warningly. "Not a sound. We got out of that just in time."

The enemy could now plainly be heard, and the trio were considerably alarmed as they saw that they would pass close to the rock. It was a critical moment, and they held their

revolvers ready to use at a second's notice.

The men came together at a point alarmingly near, one of them calling in a low tone:

"Hello! Is that you Casper?"

"Yes," came the reply. "Where are you?"

"Right ahead here. Come on; you're all right."

"This is a mighty hard place to get through," growled the other. "Let's get out of it."

"We will in a minute. Did you see anything?"

"Yes; they've reached the pass and gone on through with the oxen."

"Sure?" asked the other, apparently much relieved. "Did you see both of 'em?"

"I did, and I don't think they're spies after all."

"That may be, but we can't risk it. If they come around here again we'll make away with 'em."

As may be supposed the boys became much excited, in spite of their peril, when they caught the conversation above recorded. This would make it appear that the counterfeiters were not connected with the men who had run off the oxen, and the mystery of the whole proceeding was becoming more complicated.

They strained their ears to catch every word spoken, but the outlaws had come together now and were conversing in lower tones. It was only at intervals that a word could be heard, but the listeners were unable to connect them.

Presently the outlaws moved on, coming directly toward the rock. They passed by within a foot or two of it, and the trio heard one of them say:

"Some of the fellows are down in the canyon, and there'll be trouble if they meet the ox drivers."

"I guess not," replied the other. "I hope they're not fools enough to tackle 'em for nothin'."

"So do I; but I don't know about it."

They were soon out of hearing, and though the boys were glad that the chance of discovery was removed, they regretted not being able to hear something more concerning the men with the oxen.

The fact that the counterfeiters looked upon the ox drivers with suspicion showed that it could not have been any of the gang who stole the cattle, and the theory the boys had built up since discovering the cabin near the river began to look shaky.

They had been firm in the belief that by assisting the officer in the capture of the outlaws they would be able to recover the oxen, and on this they had placed their expectations. Now there appeared to be a doubt about it, and they began to believe that the prospect of getting back the oxen was entirely destroyed.

At the same time they could not blame the officer, for he had frankly told them he did not think the counterfeiters were connected with the ox drivers.

These reflections occupied the minds of the boys for more than five minutes after the outlaws had gone. Not a word had been spoken in the meantime, but now the detective broke in on their meditations by saying:

"Boys, you've been on the wrong track from the start."

"In what way?" asked George.

"In supposing the counterfeiters had anything to do with running off the cattle. It is plain that they took the latter for spies like myself, and thought the oxen were only brought along for a blind."

"Now it is absolutely necessary for me to get over to the other side of the mountain and get my men together as soon as possible, for the counterfeiters are clearly becoming alarmed, and they'll give me the slip yet if I'm not careful. I want you to go with me and give me all the help you can, and you can take my word for it you won't be the loser."

"You can't possibly overhaul the men now, and, even if you did set out to do so, would likely run against some of the outlaws and be shot. So let the oxen go, and, when we capture the gang and divide the reward, you'll have more than enough to pay you well for what you've lost."

What the spy said was true, and the boys were not slow in realizing it. If, as the outlaw had affirmed, the ox drivers had entered the mountain pass they were by this time more than half way through it, and any attempt at pursuit would only result in failure.

If Tom could be found and the situation explained to him, the boys felt that they could resign themselves to the loss of the oxen in the prospect of making the price of the cattle twice over through the capture of the counterfeiters.

But it was too late now for even this to be done. If Tom had not already got into trouble himself, he must have discovered long ere this that something had gone seriously wrong with Charlie and George, and would direct his course accordingly.

On the other hand if he had fallen in with the outlaws and was captured, he could be no worse off by being detained a few hours longer, and when the gang were taken his liberty would be secured.

After thinking the matter over the boys decided to abandon all thought of the oxen, and devote their whole time and energy to assisting the detective. The officer was much pleased at this, and assured them again that they would be well paid.

"There's no danger of falling to secure the whole gang," he said, "provided we lose no time. I don't know, after all, but it would be well to start at once for the pass. I don't think we run much risk of meeting the outlaws again, and we only lose time by waiting longer here."

"We wouldn't have to wait much longer," returned George. "It's getting dark now, and perhaps it'd be better to take no risk."

"All right then," continued the spy, "we'll wait a half hour longer, then we'll make a start."

So they remained on the rock till night had fully come; then they slid down, made their way through the thicket, and stole out into the more open forest.

This it was necessary to do in order to make anything like a fair degree of speed. The underbrush was so dense that it was only a constant loss of time to force their way through it, while in the open woods they could push rapidly on.

The moon did not show itself until a late hour, but the heavens were full of stars, and the light from these although feeble, was sufficient to enable them to avoid colliding with the trees, or stumbling over other obstacles that occasionally blocked their way.

The spy was fairly well acquainted with the nature of the forest, and adopted what he supposed to be the most direct course to the canyon.

His anxiety to reach it and get through the mountains as soon as he could, led him to press on so fast that the boys had all they could do to keep up with him. They were as anxious as he was, however, and exerted themselves without a murmur. He had previously urged upon them the necessity of caution, and, by walking as near like the spy as they could, their footsteps were scarcely audible. And it was well they had taken this care.

They pressed steadily on for more than an hour, when suddenly, with a low exclamation, the detective stopped. The boys were so close behind that they very narrowly escaped colliding with him.

The spy began sniffing the air suspiciously.

George was about to speak, when he suddenly checked himself and began imitating the leader. The next moment he whispered:

"Tobacco smoke!"
(To be continued.)



PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

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FRANK A. MUNSEY & COMPANY,
Publishers,
Madison Square, South,
New York.

Lloyd Abbott's Friend.

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.,

Author of "A Publisher at Fifteen," "My Mysterious Fortune," etc.

This story, to begin next week, tells of the trying experiences of a young bookstore clerk in connection with a friendship, formed under peculiar circumstances and fraught with as much pain as pleasure. The narrative abounds with stirring incidents, and once begun, enlists the reader's absorbed attention to the end.

THE "CHANCE" IN LIFE.

The boy who says he has no "chance" is a boy who proves himself incapable by that very speech. The world is still a great undeveloped field, an almost undiscovered country, and the rewards to the man who adds one jot or tittle to our knowledge of it are great.

Think what has been done in the last fifty years. Today the poorest laborer can enjoy luxuries that fifty years ago the richest man on earth could not buy; and it has all been done, bit by bit, by the enterprise of some man. It used to take three months to cross the continent; now it can be done in six days. A man dreamed of a great railroad across the country, and studied the subject until he made others believe in it, and it was done.

Look at the convenience of electricity. Franklin and Thomas Edison were not men who sat down and cried against the luck which had brought them no "chance." They were both the poorest boys, without a single helping hand except their own pluck and determination and observation. The boy who spends his time dreaming of what he would do if his "chance" would come and give him wealth is like a child who expects to eat the fruit before the seed is planted.

Until the world is perfect, until there are no inconveniences or sins, or hurts, or miseries there is just as much "chance" as there ever was. Indeed, there is more, because the drudgery of discovery has in a measure been done. The old artists were obliged to dig their sun colors out of the earth, and experiment with them before they could paint a picture. Today the colors are ready for the canvas. Some man found his "chance" in making them.

A CIGARETTE CRUSADE.

A New York lawyer has inaugurated a public school crusade against cigarette smoking by boys. He was led to do this by a startling occurrence. A youth of eighteen, while delivering a message at the lawyer's office, suddenly went insane. The

cause was found to be excessive cigarette smoking.

This set the lawyer thinking. He is a school commissioner and he proceeded to investigate the smoking among the New York schools. The result was the foundation of the Anti-Cigarette Smoking League, with its pledge requiring the signers not to smoke cigarettes in any form until they are twenty one.

According to facts brought to light by this investigation, it is high time something was done. The principals report the influence of the cigarette on boys to be bad not only physically, but mentally and morally as well. The smokers become listless and have no spirit for study, being eager only to quit school and enter business where the restraint is not so severe and more opportunities will be afforded them for indulgence in their pernicious habit. Then the mad craving for cigarettes impels to theft in order to obtain money with which to procure them whenever there is difficulty in this direction.

If leagues and pledges can help to deliver boys from this dread master who has enslaved so many of them, every friend of youth will wish them kudos.

LETTING THEIR JOY BE KNOWN.

Sometimes—nearly always in fact—people enjoy their pleasures without saying anything about them, saving their breath for complaining when things go wrong. But now and then there are those who think to tell of the good times they have and The Argosy is fortunate to number many of this sort among its readers. Here are two letters furnishing evidence of this fact:

Jackson, Tenn., Nov. 21, 1893.

You have in me one of your most appreciative and enthusiastic readers. I have read nearly all of the boys' papers that are published, but in none do I find such a high class of stories as The Argosy gives.

B. O. Stark.

The other letter is from a reader in Portage, Wisconsin, who says—under date of Dec. 2, 1893:

"I think The Argosy is the best story paper that was ever published. The two short stories in this morning's issue were excellent, and I also like 'A Curious Companion' and 'A Bad Lot,' and wish they would never end."

SAILING AWHEEL.

Still another innovation in the bicycle line. This time it is in the shape of a sail which a young Californian has fitted to his machine. With a ten foot mast and an eight foot boom he spreads a stretch of canvas that carries him over the roads at from twenty to thirty miles an hour. Of course "tacking" is out of the question, but with the wind abeam he makes as swift progress as when he has it directly "aft."

The beauty of this sort of sailing is that when becalmed one need not miss his dinner or stay out all night. Available motive power is always at hand—or rather at feet—and the sailing cyclist can afford to snap his finger at a fickle breeze.

A WALL STREET NUMBER.

The fame of the money center of New York has penetrated to the remotest quarters of the globe wherever there are those who speak the English tongue. The theme then is fully deserving of the many pages given up to it in the January Munsey's, which has been denominated a "Wall Street Number." This important contribution is lavishly illustrated and if you want to see what the money kings of the past, the present and the future look like, do not miss this article, which is certain to make a sensation and to be very useful when the history of the metropolis comes to be written.

In addition to the Wall Street paper the January Munsey's contains

"The Story of Faust," "A Sketch of Cardinal Gibbons," "Modern Artists and Their Work," all elaborately illustrated, besides the Etching Department, with its pictures of the funny side of things, and The Stage, containing portraits of Pauline Hall, E. H. Sothern, Theresa Vaughn, two of the new opera stars, Calve and Melba, Lulu Glaser, Katherine Florence and Bob Hilliard.

And the price for all this, and much in the way of stories and departments besides, inclosed in a special cover, is only ten cents. For sale by all dealers. By subscription, one dollar a year.

Odd Things About Bears.

BY JOHN LLOYD.

There is exhibited at Hagenback's trained animal show in New York, a black bear, known as the "dude bear." No one can see this ridiculous creature mincing across the arena without shouting with laughter. As you look at the expression of the small bright eyes, and the leer about the mouth, it is impossible not to believe that Bruin himself appreciates the joke. If he doesn't exactly know what it is that makes him so funny he knows that it is fun, and he enjoys the applause and laughter he elicits.

The bear is the humorist among all animals, not even excepting the monkey. Perhaps after Professor Garner comes back from Central Africa with his cylinders of wax dotted over with monkey talk, we shall learn that the monkey is a wit, but he is too ill natured, too sharp, to be a humorist. The bear is good natured to a fault, except when he is hungry, and ill natured then he is supposed to be paroled even in a man.

Even in this state, the bear is waggish enough to play practical jokes. He will eat anything, and by preference will always steal his food. It seems such a delicious sort of joke to a bear to steal anything. His tenacity of purpose is remarkable. If he knows that there is a pig in a certain pen, not too far from his own home, and his appetite craves pork at that particular time, there is nothing on earth that will save that pig, except killing it and salting it down and heading up the pork barrel, and locking it up—or killing the bear.

The pig is usually gone before the farmer realizes that a bear has set his covetous eyes upon his property. The bear waits until after dark, and then he softly and deliberately steps over into the pen, lays one paw over the pig's snout to keep it from squealing, and tears open its throat with the other, then takes up the dead pig and goes leisurely home. If the farmers have had an intimation that there is a bear in the neighborhood, and are out with guns watching for the robber, the bear gets a partner. If there is one of his friends or relations within calling distance, then when the hunters have concluded that the alarm has been a false one, they suddenly hear a great thrashing around somewhere in the vicinity, and they know that it is the bear. They all rush to the spot, only to be led away by a distinct trail going off in another direction. When they get back home they find more bear tracks and the pig gone. As well as this old trick is known, the farmers always forget to give Bruin credit for finesse.

A bear is a very neat killer of his meat, and he dresses it as carefully as a New York butcher. When he goes to a field and kills a sheep, he skins it and leaves the fleece on the ground. He has no use for sheep skins, and can see no possible advantage in carrying away anything but the meat.

A bear will eat anything, at least anything that is fresh. He will kill a young steer that weighs a thousand pounds, and call in his friends to help him enjoy the steaks, or he will rob an ant's nest, or put in his big paw and fish out the bean-like eggs of the tiniest humming bird, and seem to enjoy them equally.

He is particularly fond of honey, and is unusually happy when he can find a bee tree, or can come across a farmer who is considerate enough to keep bee hives in a bear country.

The farmer appreciates a bear story more than any other, and they are never tired of telling yarns of Bruin's cleverness. They usually take on an element of exaggeration, and are to be discounted to some extent, as when the farmer explains the loss of his two new bee hives by saying that he heard a noise and just got up to the window in time to see the bear walking pluckily off in the moonlight with a bee hive under each arm.

"I hadn't the least idea," this farmer said, "but what that bar set them lives up out in the woods som'ers and gethers in the honey reglar. Plants buckwheat fer 'em to eat, I don't doubt."

The bear loves wild plums, and green corn, and fish. He will sit on the bank of a stream for hours, and when an unsuspecting fish or frog comes too near him, he dips down his paw, and the way to his mouth is a short one. He can go into a corn field and snuck the milky ears, and leave the cobs as deftly as a boy with a fire and a bag of salt. In some ways the bear is very human; he loves children, at least a good natured bear does, not to eat, as unwise nurses tell little ones, but to play with.

Several years ago there was an overflow in a Mississippi village. In a large house which was near the bank, and surrounded by trees, the water came up over the lower floor. There were two little boys in the family, and when the household moved into the second story they went into the attic to play. Their chief amusement was looking out of the attic window at the debris floating by, most of which swept past in the middle current, missing them and their trees. One day they came down stairs telling their mother that they had "caught a dog." She had too much upon her mind to pay any attention to a stray dog, and several days went by before she saw it. The dog stayed up in the garret, and the little boys were continually carrying it food, and she could hear wild mirth coming down the attic stairs, but she was only thankful that the children were happy and amused in this time of anxiety.

One day there was a louder uproar than usual, and a procession came down the upper stairway. One small boy was ahead with a drum, and behind came the other with one broom stick while behind him marched a half grown black bear with another. He had climbed into the window from one of the trees, and had been adopted by the boys as a dog. He had been well fed and taken into comradeship, and he was enjoying himself hugely.

The mother wanted him killed at once, but the boy's father chained him, and let the children keep him. This is a true story, but it has all the elements of a "made up" one. The boys kept the bear for two or three years, until he grew into such a big, lazy fellow that he was troublesome. Then they sold him to a menagerie. Ten years later, when one of the boys was a young man he was riding in a car in St. Louis, when a dancing bear on the street put his paw through the car window and looked at the young man with recognition. The latter recognized the same old leather collar which he had bought with his own money and put on their bear's neck. He always declared that the bear knew him, and would have called him by his name if he could have spoken.

GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

A burden is the soil from which wings grow.—Golden Rule.

It is not enough to have great qualities; we should also have the management of them.—La Rochefoucauld.

Gossip is a sort of smoke that comes from the dirty tobacco pipes of those who diffuse it. It proves nothing but the bad taste of the smoker.—George Eliot.

The mistakes which we mortals make when we have our own way might fairly arouse some wonder that we are so fond of it.—George Eliot.

Experience unveils too late the snares laid for youth: it is the white frost which discovers the spider's web when the flies are no longer there to be caught.—J. Pettit-Senn.

Who neglects a thing which he suspects he ought to do because it seems to him so small a thing is deceiving himself; it is not too little, but too great for him, that he doeth it not.—E. B. Pusey.

FOUR THINGS.

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true;
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow men sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.
—Henry Van Dyke, D. D.

Theophilus Brown.

BY CHARLES E. REDWAY.

He was not a dude, but he liked to dress well, and a good portion of the salary he drew each week from the Loadstone Fire Insurance Company went for nicely creased trousers, silk ties and kid gloves. He also always carried a cane.

His fellow clerks ridiculed him to some extent, but this he did not mind. He managed to do his work fairly well, and being good natured and accommodating, was rather liked by all. He was imposed upon a good deal one way and another, but never took the trouble to resent it.

Theo, as he was called, had one peculiar talent. He could add up a column of figures so rapidly that he would have the answer ready almost as soon as the figures were set down.

Whenever the clerks had a hard sum to compute they would take it to Theo and in a marvelously short time the work was done. They would return to their desks congratulating themselves on having such a valuable aid available.

"After all," said Sam Barlow one day, after Theo had been assisting him with his books for more than an hour, "I don't know what we'd do without Brown. His ability for adding figures is really astonishing, and the best part of it is he never makes a mistake."

"Oh, Theo is all right," said Clinton Collard condescendingly. "He is a little loud in his dress perhaps, but his heart is as big as a barn door."

As none of the clerks had any idea of the dimensions of barn doors in general, the comparison was accepted without question.

The Loadstone Fire Insurance Company was a prosperous concern, and did a flourishing business. George Cummings, a man in whom the company had unlimited confidence, was the cashier. He was somewhat past forty, of a reticent disposition and simple habits. He drew a splendid salary from the concern, and being a bachelor, living in comfortable but moderate style, was generally conceded to be worth considerable money. He was the only man in the office with whom Theophilus Brown did not get on well.

Cummings had taken a dislike to the young man from the first day the latter entered the service of the company, and whenever he had occasion to address the clerk it was always in the curtest possible manner. This of course was very irritating to Theo, and only served to increase his dislike for the man.

One day young Brown found it necessary to consult a certain book on the cashier's desk, and made his way there for that purpose. The book was not in its usual place, and thinking it might be in the drawer, Theo was in the act of pulling open the latter, when Mr. Cummings, who had been in another part of the office, came running over, much disturbed.

"What are you doing at my desk?" he angrily demanded. "Let that drawer alone."

"I want to get the book you always keep here," answered Theo quietly. "I didn't see it on your desk, and was going to look in the drawer for it."

"You didn't open the drawer, did you?" asked the cashier, excitedly.

"Not yet; but I must have the book."

"Well, just mind your own affairs, and

let my things alone. Go back to your desk, and I'll bring the book to you."

"I can just as well take it over," said Theo, making a move as if to open the drawer.

"Let it alone, I tell you," cried the cashier, seizing him by the shoulder and forcibly turning him away. "If you attempt to open it again I'll strike you."

Without further words Theo walked back to his desk. But he was much puzzled. He could see no reason for Cummings' singular behavior, and even though he had been influenced merely by the enmity he bore Theo, the latter felt that the incident of itself was not of sufficient importance to justify the cashier's excitement and rage.

placing it in his own book for future use, went on with his writing. He had hardly done so when Cummings came rushing over, his face like chalk, and his whole manner so perturbed and alarmed that Theo was startled. Before he could speak, however, the cashier seized the book and hurried back to his desk.

Thoroughly aroused now, Theo watched him. He saw him turn the leaves of the volume with feverish haste, then start over again with more care.

Several times he did this, then closed the book and came over to Brown's desk again. His face was even paler than before as he stammeringly asked:

"Did—did you—find a letter in—that book?"



"NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS," HE SAID. "TA, TA, I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN."

Time and again had young Brown gone to Cummings' desk for the book, but never before had he received such a rebuke. The result was it set him to thinking, and he soon decided that there was something behind it all.

"He acted as if he were afraid to let me have it," thought Theo; "yet why he should be I can't understand. I'll watch him."

He did so. His surprise was not a little increased to see the cashier take the book from the drawer, lay it on his desk and look through it. Presently he took something from between the leaves, which he folded up and put in an envelope, on which he proceeded to write an address.

Then Theo smiled and said to himself: "That explains it; he had a letter in the book which he didn't want me to see."

With this thought the clerk dismissed the matter from his mind, and turned to his work. In a few minutes the cashier brought the book over and silently laid it on the young man's desk.

Theo began looking through it for what he wanted, and, having obtained the information, was about laying the book aside when one of the leaves suddenly sprang back disclosing a piece of paper on which something was written. It appeared to be part of a letter that had been torn in two, and, merely glancing at it, the youth was or in the act of closing the book when the mysterious phraseology arrested his attention.

This is what he read:
Dear Cummings:

You thing gives fair indication fire the building on 27th. You must help me col divide the spoils.

That was all, and three times Theo read it over. At first he could form no idea of what it was all about. That some one had written to the cashier it was evident, but who it was or what was intended to be conveyed, the clerk could not determine.

He continued to study the text for a few minutes with no satisfactory result, and

Theo was about to reply affirmatively and yield up the writing when an idea occurred to him like a revelation.

"No," he said, coolly returning his questioner's gaze.

A sigh of relief fell from the man's lips The blood surged back into his face, and Theo could see the artery in his neck beat and throb from the agitation he was trying to suppress. For fully a quarter of a minute he gazed at the clerk, then advanced close to his side and hissed in his ear:

"Don't lie to me, I warn you. Tell me me again, did you find it or not?"

"What's the matter with you, Cummings?" asked the young man, shoving him aside. "You act like a fool. You must be going to do something desperate to judge from your appearance."

"Don't go too far, Brown," whispered the other in a tone of deadly import, and, turning abruptly, walked away.

For a long time Theo sat thinking. The idea that had so suddenly come to him was revolved again and again in his mind. One incident was connected with another, certain peculiar actions analyzed, and finally he rose from his desk, went straight to the manager and got excused for the rest of the day.

He had to pass the cashier's desk as he went out, and stepping from his box, Cummings leaned over the counter and roughly asked:

"Where're you going?"

Theo paused, his hand on the door.

"None of your business," he said. "T. T. ta, I'll see you again."

He passed out into the street, and, with a scowl, Cummings returned to his box.

Theo walked rapidly down the street. A block or two away he met the office boy.

"Where have you been, Joe?" he asked.

"I took a letter across town for Cummings."

"Yes. Who to?"

"I didn't notice the name. It was a pretty tough place where I left it. You know the 'Golden Crown' saloon?"

"Not in that hole?" said Brown, incredulously.

"That's where it was. Rather a lively place for our quiet Mr. Cummings to know about, eh?"

"I should say it was. But don't say anything about it, and just remember that today is the 27th."

"What of that?"

"You'll know later, so long."

Theo went down the street. Presently he turned and began making his way toward the "Golden Crown" saloon.

"There's no use of going to lawyer Jones now," he mused. "I don't suppose he could tell any more about the piece of letter than I have already surmised, and I can probably find out a good deal by

making a visit to the saloon. I think the saloon is closely connected with the letter. How lucky it was I met Joe."

Theo had never before been in that section of the city where the "Golden Crown" was located, but he knew where to find it, and in a little while found himself in that locality. It was a rough and disreputable section, and more than once Theo glanced around apprehensively.

At last he reached his destination. Here he paused for a few minutes in uncertainty. He disliked to enter the place, but it was necessary to do so in order to carry out his idea, so he pushed open the door.

He had prepared himself to meet a crowd of rough and evil looking loungers, and was therefore pleasantly surprised to find the place comparatively deserted. Once inside he walked carelessly over to a table and sat down. The bartender came forward and Theo called for a soda.

This was soon before him, and he began sipping it leisurely. But his repugnance for the place was hard to overcome, and finally, as he could detect nothing unusual, he decided to leave. He was about rising from his chair, when the door suddenly opened and a decidedly tough looking individual came in.

The new comer nodded to the bartender, strode across the saloon, and entered a small apartment partitioned off not far from where Theo sat. The young man became interested at once, and sank back in his chair again.

"It's just possible that I may learn what I want to know," he reflected. "That fellow looks suspicious."

A few minutes later the sound of voices reached his ears, and he managed to overhear something of what was being said.

"I couldn't get here sooner," were the first words that came to him. "Sorry to keep you waiting, but I'm here now, and the first thing I want to know is—how much am I to get for this job?"

"Don't talk so loud, will you?" said another voice. "Is there anybody outside?"

"None who'll take the trouble to listen. I reckon. But you haven't told me yet how much I am to get. Remember the work you want me to do is too dangerous to risk for anything less than a good round sum."

"We'll give you \$200. You must make sure work of it, though, or we can't collect the insurance. I wouldn't have been able to insure the place for so much if it hadn't been for Cummings."

At mention of that name Theo almost betrayed his excitement by the exclamation that fell from his lips.

"Did you call?" asked the bartender, coming forward.

"Bring me another soda," said Theo quickly. The man complied and Theo continued to listen, being careful to keep a watch over himself to prevent arousing the bartender's suspicion.

After a while he heard one of the men say:

"I've got everything ready. Between twelve and one tonight will be the best time for you to do the work. Start it in the cellar, and be sure you make a go of it."

"But when do I get the money?"

"Just as soon as we collect the insurance."

Theo had heard enough. He clearly understood the scheme that was being concocted between these two worthies, and he rose and left the saloon.

"It's the greatest outrage I ever heard of," he told himself as he hurried off, "but if I don't outwit them my name's not Theophilus Brown."

A few minutes later he turned in the direction of the nearest police station. What occurred here is not necessary for us to record, but when the young man, left, he promised to be back at eleven o'clock that night.

The night of the 27th fell over the city dark and cloudy. Around eleven o'clock three men might have been seen making their way toward the "Golden Crown" saloon. When they reached it the place was in darkness.

"That's something unusual," said one of the men. "They've hatched up some excuse for closing early. I reckon we haven't got here any too soon. We'll get into the cellar from the rear. Come on; I know the way."

He passed through a narrow alley, followed by the others and the trio soon reached the back of the saloon. The next moment the leader was cautiously raising the cellar door.

"It's not locked," he whispered. "Left open on purpose, I suppose. Look out coming down these steps."

When they reached the cellar the speaker drew out a lantern, and pulled back the slide. A ray of light flashed through the place revealing a large pile of shavings and small wood in one corner, which upon examination was found to be saturated with oil.

"All the preliminaries seem to have been carefully arranged," continued the leader. "I reckon we'll give somebody a big surprise tonight."

A number of empty barrels stood near by, and behind these the three men now proceeded to ensconce themselves. Here they waited in silence.

The minutes dragged slowly by, and at last the hour of twelve sounded from a neighboring steeple. A little while afterwards some one was heard opening the cellar door.

"Hiss!" said one of the men; "be ready."

Down the steps came the intruder, then a ray of light flashed through the cellar from a dark lantern he carried, and he made straight for the pile of shavings, before which he stopped. The three men behind the barrels cautiously rose up and watched him.

The new comer drew a match from his pocket, and struck it on the wall.

"I don't like this job at all," he muttered. "It's too risky to suit me."

"Then I'd advise you not to do it," said the leader of the party behind the barrels.

With a cry of alarm the incendiary dropped the match, and wheeled around. The muzzle of a revolver stared him in the face, and he fell back with a gasp.

But that fatal match had done its work. The oil, quick to ignite, had caught from the tiny blaze, and, before the men could do anything to prevent it, the whole place was in flames. The entire ceiling of the cellar must have been coated with oil, and so rapidly did it spread that the men barely had time to escape.

In the confusion the incendiary tried to get away, but one of the men snatched a pair of handcuffs over his wrists, and as soon as they were out in the street another quickly sent out an alarm. By the time the firemen arrived, however, the saloon was a mass of flames, and a great crowd had gathered, among it the landlord of the "Golden Crown."

Then the incendiary said something to one of the men who held him, which resulted in the latter going up to the landlord, and, before he could realize it, a pair of handcuffs were snapped over his wrists as the detective said:

"I arrest you for conspiracy to defraud the Loadstone Fire Insurance Company. Make no resistance now, but come quietly along."

He led his prisoner back to where the others were waiting, and the party was about moving on when a man suddenly came up and asked the proprietor of the "Golden Crown" what had occurred. Before the other could answer one of the three men said to the new comer:

"I told you I'd see you again, Cummings, and here I am. Your scheme has been discovered, thanks to that piece of letter."

"You shall not live to enjoy your triumph, Theophilus Brown," cried the other, and drawing a revolver, he fired at his fellow clerk.

But thanks to his haste the shot missed. Before he could shoot again one of the detectives knocked the weapon from his hand and forced him to submit to being handcuffed.

Then the discomfited villain turned to the crowd.

"Fellows," he cried, "are you going to stand by and see us treated in this outrageous manner?"

"Not by a jugful," roared a burly tough. "Come on, boys; we'll see about this."

This encouraged several rough looking men began crowding around them.

"Stand back," cried the detectives, drawing their revolvers. "The first man who molests us dies."

For a moment the crowd hung back. Cummings urged them on again, but just at this crisis several policemen came through the gang, and speedily dispersed them.

Then, under the protection of the police, the detectives marched their three prisoners off to jail, and Theo returned to his home. A profound sensation was created the next morning when the papers published an account of the conspiracy and the cashier's downfall.

It was discovered that through Cummings' instrumentality the "Golden Crown" was heavily insured, and its proprietor and the cashier then invented the plan to defraud the company, hiring the fellow to set the saloon on fire, as has been shown. And as the once trusted official of the company, with his two accomplices, was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he had ample time to reflect on the error of his ways.

And Theo. He was not prepared for the extravagant praise showered upon him by his fellow clerks, and as they crowded round him, shaking his hand and congratulating him, he blushed like a schoolgirl on commencement day.

"How did you manage it, old fellow?" cried Sam Barlow. "Tell us all about it."

"There's nothing particularly smart about it," answered Theo modestly. "The torn letter and Cummings' singular behavior aroused my suspicion, and I was going to take the writing down to lawyer Jones, and see what he could make of it, when I met Joe. When he told me Cummings had sent him to the "Golden Crown" I decided to do a little detective work on my own account. I went to the saloon, and by accident heard enough to let me into the whole plot, then I went to the police station, got two detectives, and—you know the rest."

Theo was promptly promoted and his salary raised by the company, who adopted this substantial manner to demonstrate how well they appreciated his clever bit of detective work.

[This Story began in No. 577.]

Rupert's Ambition.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

Author of "Chester Rand," "Lester's Luck," "Ragged Dick Series," etc.

CHAPTER X.

A BELL BOY'S EXPERIENCES.

It was evident that the guest whom Rupert had conducted to his room was a maniac of the most dangerous character. The man's face was terrible to look upon. His small, ferret-like eyes seemed to dilate with ferocious cunning. He was a man not perhaps robust or strong, but too strong for a boy of sixteen. And Rupert was alone with him.

It was terrible to think that he was to become the victim of such a man. Apart from the pain of death it was

made more terrible at the hands of an insane man.

What should he do?

Rupert had read somewhere that to openly combat an insane person is dangerous. It is advisable to humor his delusions. Fortunately he had read a story recently in which a man had escaped death by this very means. It was a desperate chance, but Rupert resolved to make use of it. Instead of showing the fear he really felt he forced himself to appear calm.

"You are mistaken," he said, "the boy you are to sacrifice is under the bed."

The maniac was just about to lunge with his knife, but Rupert's words made him pause.

"Look under the bed and you will see him," continued the bell boy.

The bed was at the other end of the room. The maniac went over to it and getting on his knees began to peer underneath.

Here was Rupert's opportunity. He sprang to the door, turned the key, but did not dare to stop to lock it on the outside, and dashed into the entry. The door of the next room chanced to be open. He darted inside, and bolted himself in.

He was just in time. The maniac, discovering the ruse, rose to his feet and knife in hand ran into the hall with a blood curdling cry. He looked in vain for Rupert, but he was nowhere to be seen. The stair case was near. He ran down, flight after flight, till he reached the office floor and made a great sensation as he dashed through it with his drawn knife.

Here, however, he had some one more formidable than a boy to contend with. Two burly porters sprang upon him, and felled him to the floor. The knife was taken from him, and the clerk, horror struck, leaning over him, asked, "What did you do with the boy?"

"I tried to kill him, but he escaped," said the fanatic. "But I will have him yet!"

"Call two policemen," said Mr. Malcolm. "One of you go up stairs and find the bell boy."

Rupert remained in his temporary refuge, not daring to come out. He heard his unpleasant acquaintance leaving the adjoining room, but was apprehensive that he might return. At length he heard some one calling, "Rupert, where are you?" and recognized it as the voice of one of the other bell boys. He opened the door, and came out.

"Where is the insane man?" he asked quickly.

"He was captured in the office, and his knife taken from him. How did you escape from him?"

"Wait till I go down stairs and I will tell you."

When Rupert reached the office he was eagerly questioned. He gave the particulars of his unpleasant interview with the crank.

"I congratulate you on your presence of mind," said the clerk. "You had a narrow escape from a terrible fate."

"Where is he now?"

"On his way to the station house. You need not be afraid that he will come back. He is sure to be locked up."

Later in the day the proprietor of the hotel sent for Rupert.

"My boy," he said, "you ran a terrible risk this morning. It was in my service, and I feel that I ought in some way to express my appreciation of your remarkable courage and presence of mind. Here are fifty dollars which I hope you will find of service."

It was not alone the gift, but the kind words that gratified Rupert. He was able to buy a new suit for best, and a few other articles of which he had need.

During the day he had a call from a man connected with one of the daily papers who wished his photograph to reproduce in connection

with an account of the incident. This, however, Rupert declined to give, not caring for notoriety. The account of the crank's onset, however, appeared, and a good many curious visitors were attracted to the Somerset Hotel.

Among these was Julian Lorimer. Rupert's name had not been mentioned in the account, and Julian was surprised to meet him.

"How came you here?" he asked.

"I am employed here," answered Rupert quietly.

"What are you?"

"A bell boy."

"Is that so? Can you tell me who it was that was nearly killed by a crazy crank yesterday?"

"I was the one."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Julian in amazement. "Was he really so dangerous?"

"He came near killing me."

"Humph! That was rather unpleasant. Do you get good pay here?"

"Yes, very good—enough to support me."

"It isn't much of a position though."

"If you will find me a better one, I will give this up," said Rupert, smiling.

"I am expecting to go into a wholesale house soon."

"I hope you will succeed in getting such a place. It is rather hard getting business positions now."

"Oh, my father is well known in the city. He can find me one."

"That will be in your favor."

Here Rupert was called off by a summons from the office, and the interview terminated. He had not told Julian of the handsome gift received from the proprietor, as he knew that his old schoolfellow had no real interest in his welfare.

One who is employed in an American hotel has an excellent opportunity to study human nature. It is free to all comers, and among those who sit in the lobby or use the reading room there are always some who are not guests. The larger proportion of these are respectable persons, but some are adventurers who may be on the lookout for victims.

One young man, stylishly dressed and sporting an eye glass and a cane, Rupert had more than once noticed. He came in from time to time, bought a sheet of paper and an envelope at the news stand, and wrote a letter at one of the tables in the reading room. Rupert, whose acquaintance with the city was limited, decided from his dress that he belonged to some prominent family. It was noteworthy, however, that he always entered alone. He sometimes, however, entered into conversation with one of the guests of the hotel. Those from the country seemed to have his preference.

This surprised Rupert, who wondered what attraction rural visitors could have for a young man of his elegant appearance.

One day an old man of sixty registered from a town in Orange County. His face was weather beaten, and he looked like a farmer. His clothing was rusty, and appeared to have been worn for several years.

He might have been taken for a poor man, but Rupert had seen him draw out a large wallet full of bills, and judged that, if not rich, he was in comfortable circumstances. It so happened that the young man already referred to had also seen the wallet, and he at once began to pay attention to the rural visitor. Watching his opportunity he sat down beside him in the reading room one afternoon.

"It is a pleasant day, sir," he said sociably.

"So 'tis, so 'tis," said the old man, feeling flattered by attention from a young man of such distinguished appearance.

"I suppose you live in the country?"

"Yes, I am from Orange County." "The finest part of the State. If my business did not keep me in the city, I should like very much to make my residence there."

"What might your business be?" asked the old man with natural curiosity.

"I am a broker, sir, in Wall Street. Of course you have heard of Wall Street."

"Oh yes," answered the old man, proud of his familiarity with the name of this famous street. "Is it a pooty good business?"

"Well, that depends on circumstances. Sometimes I make money hand over hand, but for the last month I give you my word I probably haven't made over two hundred dollars."

"Two hundred dollars in a month!" repeated the farmer. "Why, that's doing first rate, I call it."

The young man shrugged his shoulders.

"Not for a broker," he said. "Why if I make less than five hundred I don't call it much."

"Five hundred dollars a month?" asked the farmer much impressed.

"Yes."

"Why, that's six thousand dollars a year."

"Exactly. You are good in arithmetic," said the young man languidly.

"Is—is there any chance to go into that business?" asked the Orange County man eagerly.

"My friend, I would hardly advise you to go into it. You are rather old to begin a new business."

"That's so, but I don't ask for myself. I've got a son—he's my youngest son—a young man of twenty five who's anxious to get something to do in the city. He ain't much good on a farm—don't seem to like it. He's read a good many books and stories about New York city, and he wants to come here. I wish I could get him a chance to learn the broker business. You haven't a place in your office, now, have you?"

The young swell laughed in his sleeve. "I've hooked the old man," he said to himself. "Now if I work my cards right, I shall be able to make something out of him."

"My friend," he said, "I can't tell you at once, but I will think it over, and—see you tomorrow morning."

He had not intended to finish his sentence thus, but just then he espied at the door of the reading room a small quiet looking man whose glance rested for a moment upon him. He knew—he had reason to know—that this was Richard Darke a well known detective.

He rose from his seat, and sauntered to the door, and in two minutes he was one of the motley crowd that throng Broadway.

CHAPTER XI.

RUPERT RECEIVES A COMMISSION.

The detective, as he left the reading room, passed Rupert who was just entering.

"Let me see," he said, tapping Rupert on the shoulder, "you are the bell boy who came near being murdered by a crank?"

"Yes, sir."

"You escaped very cleverly. You are evidently a sharp boy. Keep your eyes open, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, except when I am asleep."

"We detectives have to keep our eyes open all the time, but we can't be everywhere at once. Now I feel a little inclined to make you my deputy—not permanently, but for a time."

"All right, sir."

"Have you noticed rather a flashy young man, looking like a dude, with an eye glass and cane?"

"Yes, sir; he is frequently in the hotel."

"You know of course that he isn't a guest?"

"Yes, sir. We bell boys know who are guests and who are not."

"Possibly you may have wondered what his business is here?"

"Yes, sir."

"He is a confidence man. His busi-

ness is to pick up victims, and make what he can out of them. Do you see that old gentleman over by the window?"

"Yes, sir."

"He is an honest and probably well to do old farmer, I judge. That fellow has been having a talk with him. When he saw me he had business elsewhere. But he hasn't given up his scheme for bleeding the old man. Probably he will have another interview with him tomorrow. Now I should like to have you keep your eye on the two. Find out if you can what the man is after. I can't, for he knows me by sight. I want to foil his schemes and save the old man from loss. Here is my address."

The detective placed in Rupert's hand a small plain card bearing the name,

RICHARD DARKE.

Below he put his address which need not be given here.

"Don't say anything about this," he said, "except to me. Should you mention it to any one else in the hotel the fellow would soon see that he was watched, and we might fail to catch him. I am reposing considerable confidence in a boy."

"Yes, sir, but you will not regret it."

"I believe you," said the detective cordially. "I'll see you again soon."

"One moment, Mr. Darke, what is the young man's name?"

"He has several. The one he uses most frequently is Clarence Clayton."

"I will remember it, sir."

Clarence Clayton left the Somerset Hotel in good spirits. He felt like an angler who is on the point of landing a fine fish.

"I wonder if old Darke saw me talking with that old granger," he soliloquized. "I hope not. Probably he knows me, though thus far I have escaped having my picture in the Rogues' Gallery. Those old fellows know everybody. Fortunately there is no regular detective at the Somerset, and I shall be able to finish my negotiations with my country friend before he drops in again."

Mr. Clarence Clayton was getting low in funds. Somehow fortune had not favored him of late, and the sums he had realized out of recent victims were very small. Yet he felt so confident of success in the present instance that he sauntered up to the Sinclair House at the corner of Broadway and Eighth Street, and going into the restaurant, which has a high reputation for choice viands, he ordered an appetizing repast at a cost of a dollar.

He was scarcely half through when a young man, got up in very much the same style, came in and sat down opposite him.

"Ha, Clayton!" he said, "so you're in luck."

"How do, Mortimer? What makes you think so?"

"Your extravagant spread. It isn't permitted to failures like your humble servant to dine in such princely style."

"Then why come here at all?"

"I am only going to order fishballs and coffee, but I want those good, and shall get them good here. Have you made a ten strike?"

"No, business is dull with me, but I think I'm on the track of a fair thing."

"What is it, and where?"

"Wouldn't you like to know, Mortimer?" said Clarence, putting one finger waggishly on one side of his nose. "There isn't enough in it for two."

"Oh, I don't want to interfere with you, of course. I thought I'd like to know whereabouts you are operating at present."

"What do you say to the Windsor Hotel?"

"Isn't that rash? Don't the detective know you?"

"He can't be everywhere, the worthy man. Your friend Clarence knows what he is about. You won't interfere with me?"

"Of course not."

In spite of this assurance Mortimer made it in his way to drop into the Windsor Hotel later in the evening, but of course he did not see Clarence Clayton, who had put him on the wrong scent.

A good dinner was not the end of Clayton's extravagance. He dropped into the Star Theater, and enjoyed an attractive play, though it cost him a dollar.

"Josiah Onthank will pay for it, I hope," he said, for he had ascertained from the hotel register the name of his Orange County friend. "It will cost something," he laughed, "to get his son into my office in Wall Street. Oh, Clarence, you're a sly one, you are!"

Rupert was free from his duties at seven o'clock, but, remembering the commission he had received, he sought out the farmer and opened a conversation with him.

"How do you like New York?" he asked.

"It's a big city," answered the farmer. "I haven't been here before for twenty years."

"Have you traveled on the Elevated cars?"

"No, I'm a little mite afeared to travel so high in the air. Suppose a train should go through?"

"I don't think there's any danger, sir. The road is strongly built."

"I s'pose I'm timid, but I guess I won't venture. My son Ephraim wouldn't mind. I came to the city mostly on his account. He wanted me to see if there wasn't an opening here. He's got sick of the farm, and wants to be a city man. Are you at work here?"

"Yes, I'm a bell boy in this hotel."

"Does it pay you well?"

"Yes, sir. I get five dollars a week and my board."

"That's good for a boy like you. It's more than I pay my hired man, and he's twenty eight. Is your work hard?"

"I have to run up stairs and down a good deal. I got pretty tired at first."

"I met quite a slick young man here this afternoon, he says he's a broker in Wall Street. He knows how to make money."

"Does he, sir?" inquired Rupert, getting interested.

"Yes, he says he made two hundred dollars last month, and he thinks that pretty small."

"I should think it a good deal to make."

"He doesn't have to work very hard either. Ephraim would like being a broker. He always did like to dress up, but at home he can't do it till evenin' after he has milked the cows and finished the chores."

"Did the gentleman mention his name to you?"

"Yes, he said his name was Clarence Clayton. He thinks he may be able to take my son Ephraim into his office."

"Did he tell you where his office was?"

"Well, down in Wall Street somewhere. I s'pose there's a good deal of money made in Wall Street."

"And a good deal lost, too," suggested Rupert.

"When are you going to see Mr. Clayton again?"

"Tomorrow morning. He's goin' down to show me his office, and he'll think it over whether he can take Ephraim or not."

"I suppose he is a rich man."

"I expect he is. He dresses fine. Ephraim would like to dress that way, but he hasn't the shape for it. I should feel proud to have him doin' as well as Mr. Clayton."

"I hope you won't mind my giving you a little advice, Mr. Onthank, even if I am a boy."

"Go ahead, sonny! I'm sure you mean well."

"Don't make any arrangements with Mr. Clayton to take your son till

you have had a chance to talk over the matter with some one. I have a friend, a very experienced man, and I am sure his advice would be worth taking."

"You don't think there's anything wrong about Mr. Clayton, do you?" asked the farmer, startled.

"I don't say that, but if he wants you to pay him some money for giving your son a place, don't do it till you have mentioned it to me."

"I won't. There won't be no harm in that."

"And don't tell him who it is you are going to consult. Supposing he wasn't all right, it would put him on his guard."

"Thank you, sonny, you are a young boy, but I guess you've got a level head."

"I hope so," laughed Rupert.

"Do you know where there's a good place to take supper—a good country supper? I've been to the hotel eatin' house, but it don't exactly suit my country taste."

"Yes, Mr. Onthank, I think I can find a place that will suit you."

Rupert took the farmer to a plain restaurant not far away where he got some cream toast, a good cup of strong tea, and a piece of apple pie.

"That's good," said the farmer with a sigh of satisfaction. "It's better than all them fancy dishes I get at some places. There ain't nothing like plain home livin'."

Rupert didn't part from Mr. Onthank till nine o'clock, when the farmer expressed a wish to go to bed.

"I always go to bed at nine o'clock when I'm to home," he said. "Folks here in York seem to sit up all night."

CHAPTER XII.

CLAYTON'S SCHEME.

About ten o'clock in the afternoon Clarence Clayton entered the Somerset Hotel and looked about for the Orange County farmer. Clayton was clean shaved, his shoes were brilliantly polished, and there was a rose in his button hole.

"My dear old friend," he said with effusion, as he espied Josiah Onthank sitting near the door. "I hope you are feeling in the best of health this fine morning."

"Thank you, Mr. Clayton, I feel pooty smart. Why, you're all dressed up. You look as if you'd just come out of a band box."

"Men in my position have to be particular about their appearance. Now if I was in the country I wouldn't care, but I have an appointment with Mr. Vanderbilt this morning, and of course I must be particular."

"Do you know Mr. Vanderbilt?" asked Mr. Onthank, considerably impressed.

"Intimately. I dined at his house last week."

Mr. Clayton took in with a quick glance the dress and outward appearance of his rustic friend, Mr. Onthank certainly did not look as if he had just stepped out of a band box. His clothing was dusty, and his shoes were innocent of blacking.

"My friend," he said, "if you will pardon the suggestion it would be well to have your boots blacked."

"I didn't bring any blacking with me," responded the farmer. "Besides I had 'em blacked last Sunday."

"As you are going to Wall Street, and may meet some of the prominent people of the city, it will be well to have them blacked this morning. Leave it to me. I will find a boy who will do it for a nickel."

"I always black my own boots when I am to home."

"In the city we employ bootblacks."

"Five cents seems pooty good pay for blackin' boots. It don't take more'n five minutes."

"Oh well, the poor boys need the money. I look upon it in that light."

"To be sure!" and Mr. Onthank began to look upon his companion as a very kind hearted man.

Out in the street they came upon a boy who was quite ready to undertake the job. Before he got through, however, he began to think there wasn't much profit in it. The farmer's shoes were of cowhide, and absorbed a great deal of blacking. Still the boy was an expert, and made them look better than they ever had before.

"That's worth a dime," he said. "I won't pay it!" declared the farmer. "Ten cents for blackin' a pair of boots! Why it's ridiculous!"

There might have been an angry discussion, but Clayton drew a dime from his pocket and put it into the boy's outstretched palm.

Very likely he's got a mother to support," he said. "Besides he's made your boots look fine."

"That's so!" assented the farmer, looking complacently at the boy's work. "He seems to know his business. Mrs. Onthank would be surprised if she could see me now."

He walked along with unwonted pride, ever and anon glancing delightedly at his renovated boots.

"I can't make 'em look like that," he said. "They look better than they did when they was new, but ten cents is an awful price to pay."

They walked along Broadway till they reached Wall Street, down which they turned.

Mr. Onthank was considerably impressed by the tall and stately buildings on Broadway.

"Is your office near here, Mr. Clayton?" he asked.

"Yes, quite near."

Near the junction of Wall and New streets Clayton led the way into a handsome office occupied by a firm of well known brokers.

"This is my office," he said. "Don't ask me any questions till we come out."

They entered the room, but many were entering and no particular notice was taken of them.

"There's a sight of clerks," said the farmer. "You must do a big business."

"We do. Wait here a minute till I speak to my cashier."

He went up to a window and in a tone inaudible to Mr. Onthank asked the price of a particular stock. Of course an answer was given, so that they appeared to be conferring together. Then he rejoined his Orange County friend, and they walked slowly to the end of the counter.

"Now we'll go out," said Clayton. "I have one or two calls to make on the street."

"Do you trust your clerks to do the work while you are away?"

"Oh, yes, they understand their duties. Things will go on like clock work. You see we have a perfect system."

"You don't do business alone, do you?"

"No, there are several of us in the firm. I may say frankly that I only have one fourth interest in the business. Still I am well paid, very well paid."

"I s'pose you have to pay a big rent."

"Ten thousand dollars a year."

"You don't say? Why you can get a big store where I live for only twelve dollars a month."

"Very likely, but there is a good deal of difference between the country and the city. Now let us walk along Broadway, down to the Battery. We will sit down there, and I will tell you what I can offer your son."

In a few minutes they were sitting on one of the benches, looking out to Governor's Island.

"It's a great privilege to live in New York, Mr. Onthank. I think your son would enjoy it."

"I know he would. Why, Ephraim would give all his old boots to be at work here."

"If they were all cowhide boots like yours, they offer wouldn't be very tempting," thought Clayton.

"Yes," he said, "I can easily believe

W. May I ask what wages your son would expect?"

"Well, I reckon twenty five to thirty dollars a month would satisfy him."

"Twenty five to thirty dollars a month! Why, my dear friend what are you thinking of?"

"I thought he couldn't live in the city in good style for less," said the farmer deprecatingly.

"Of course, of course, but you don't understand me. I wouldn't think of offering him less than seventy five dollars a month, to begin with."

"Gosh! you don't mean it?" said the farmer, his eyes opened wide.

"Certainly I do. That is the minimum salary I pay my clerks."

"Why, Ephraim would feel as rich as a king with that salary. When can you make room for him?" he asked anxiously.

"I must ask a few questions first. Has your son a fair education?"

"He attended the district school till he was fifteen."

"Then I suppose he is well up in the fundamental rules of arithmetic?"

"What's them?"

"I suppose he can add, subtract and multiply."

"Oh yes."

"And write a fair hand?"

"He's pooty good at writin'."

"I presume he will do. Now, Mr. Onthank, I will tell you how I am placed. There will be a vacancy next week, but a merchant up town wants me very much to take his son. He will pay a liberal premium."

"What's that?"

"We always expect our clerks to pay a premium on entering our service. How much money have you brought with you to the city?"

"I've got two hundred dollars in my wallet. But what has that to do with it?"

"A great deal, my friend. The premium must be paid down at once, and that guarantees your son the place."

"How much do you ask?"

"The merchant I refer to is willing to pay two hundred dollars, but between ourselves I don't favor engaging his son. I have been told that he drinks. I hope your son doesn't drink?"

"Ephraim drinks cider at Thanksgiving," but he never drinks anything stronger."

"I am glad to hear it. Intemperance is very objectionable in our business. Now about the premium. I will agree to take your son for a hundred and fifty dollars, though I have never before accepted less than two hundred."

"A hundred and fifty dollars is a good deal of money," said Ezekiel cautiously.

"So it is, but think of the advantages. Think of his getting seventy five dollars a month, to begin with. Why in six months I shall probably raise him to a hundred dollars a month."

Ezekiel Onthank was dazzled, and Clayton saw that he was. He felt that he had almost landed the fish for which he was angling.

"I guess I'll take a day to think on't," said the farmer.

"I would advise you to accept at once. The other party may get in ahead of you."

"Can't you give us the refusal of it for a day?"

"Really I don't see how I can."

"A hundred and fifty dollars is a good deal of money, and I want to think it over."

"My dear friend, I don't see the need of it. Such situations are not to be had every day. Why, the young man's salary the first year, supposing he were promoted in six months, would amount to over a thousand dollars. Deducting the premium, that would leave your son nearly nine hundred dollars. That's a good income isn't it?"

"Yes, so 'tis. Why our minister only gets six hundred dollars a year, and he's a man of forty odd."

"Exactly. You see what a brilliant prospect Ephraim will have. Really I ought to insist on the full premium of two hundred dollars."

Clayton did his utmost to induce the farmer to decide at once, but Mr. Onthank had promised Rupert not to do anything without talking the matter over with him, and he kept his word.

"Well," said Clayton, "I'll give in to you. I'll give you twenty four hours to think over the matter, but of course I must ask you to pay me something for the favor. Give me five dollars on account of the premium, and you shall have a day to make up your mind."

This Mr. Onthank finally agreed to, and when the matter was settled, they walked back to the Somerset Hotel.

"You had better not say much about our negotiation," Clayton advised, "till the matter is decided."

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 367.]

A Curious Companion.

BY GEORGE KING WHITMORE,

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

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW THINGS TURNED OUT.

Max need not have worried himself about the disposition of their prisoner. The policeman was a stalwart fellow, and with Seagrave and Max to guard one side of the captive, he was abundantly able to look out for the other.

And there being apparently no one else in the house, no opposition was met with in carrying Begum off to the station house.

"What does this mean?" he demanded on the way.

"It means that you've been come up with, my man," replied the officer, and this was all the satisfaction the fellow got.

It was after midnight when the party arrived at the station house, and Max was so tired that he fell asleep, leaning against Seagrave, during the ride back in the car.

The latter got off with him at the Edgarton where they found Al sitting in the office, his head dropped on the writing desk in front of him fast asleep.

There wasn't half the talking done at the reunion each had expected there would be. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak, and inside of an hour both boys were wrapped in a slumber so deep that it was dreamless.

But they made up for lost time the next morning.

At breakfast Gladys Moreland greeted Max with an extremely contrite air:

"I feel that it is all my fault," she said, "that you have suffered so much."

"Suffered?" exclaimed Max. "Why, this adventure of mine has been the means probably of saving a human life."

He had not had time yet to tell Al of his encounter with Andy Begum, and now he was not sure that Seagrave would care to have Miss Moreland know about the Peterson affair, so all he would say in reply to the eager questions of both was that he was telling the absolute truth and that they would both know all about it very soon.

"And now you're coming to the Fair grounds with us, Max," said Al, as they rose from the table.

"Not I. I've got more important business than sightseeing on hand."

"A gentleman to see Miss Moreland," interposed a bell boy, appearing at this moment.

"That Shillings!" exclaimed Gladys, shrinking away, even from the messenger.

"Has he been following you right up?" asked Max.

"No, we threw him off the track down at the station along with yourself," replied Al. "The papers must have printed the list of guests here and he has traced us in that way. But never fear, Miss Gladys, I shan't let him get near you. I'll go out and see him myself."

"He ought to be arrested," said Max, when Al had gone on his mission. "I've put two men behind the bars since I saw you last. I ought to reach the charmed number and make it three. Hello, what's come over Al? If he isn't bringing the fel—"

"Oh, papa, papa!" exclaimed Gladys, springing up and throwing her arms around a fine looking middle aged gentleman who had just entered the dining room, regardless of the presence of the other guests.

The Harristraw boys withdrew after hearing Mr. Moreland explain that a sudden death in his brother's family had prevented the uncle from meeting the niece according to appointment. Max took the opportunity to tell Al about Andy Begum.

"And oh, Al," he added, "just hand me over my money, will you? I want to pay what I owe to the old German at the ice cream saloon and the police officer. Now I'm going over to Mrs. Opdyke's hotel to get Seagrave. Want to come?"

"I should say I did. I don't trust you out of my sight again while we are in Chicago."

Leaving word for the Morelands that they had an important engagement for the forenoon, they set out for the other hotel, where they found Seagrave and Percy Hart standing in the doorway.

Percy wrung Max's hand again and again.

"Hello, Pennsylvania," he cried, in his rollicking way, "here we are again. It was queer enough, wasn't it, that I should fall in with your friend after I left you? By the way, the little fellow's been inquiring for you this morning."

"Who? Morris?"

"Yes; here he comes now."

"The very chap I want to see," cried Max, catching him by both hands. "Now tell me, young man, what became of you last night after I dropped you out of the window?"

"I stayed quiet right close by the house as you told me to till I heard somebody come up in the room. Then I was afraid whoever it was would look out of the window and see me, so I ran out into the road. Then I thought it would be so nice if I could only get back to mamma and send some one after you to take you away from the bad men."

"But how did you find your way down here?" Max wanted to know.

"You had no money either."

"Oh, I just remembered which way we'd come from the railroad station and went there. And there was a policeman. So I told him who I was. And he'd seen something in the paper about me, so he knew where I was to go. But he couldn't take me right away. That's the reason, I only got to mamma a little while before you did."

"Let's have a rousing big party of all of us go into the Fair grounds together," suggested Percy Hart. "That'll be a show in itself—to let people see that the separated ones can stick together."

But Max and Seagrave had important business on hand, and as a matter of course Al accompanied them to the police court.

It was a long siege for Max. He had to appear against Kenny, to state the facts in regard to the kidnapping of Morris Opdyke, and against Begum with his suspicions of the latter's connection with the Peterson murder.

The Kenny case was soon disposed of the bold kidnapper being sentenced to twenty years in State's

prison. There was more trouble over Begum.

He stuck to the story he had told Max about the marriage that had been nipped in the bud, and refused to go to Harristraw without extradition papers.

But Max succeeded in convincing the authorities that he ought to be held pending an investigation, so he was remanded to his cell and communication opened with prosecuting attorney Midgerley.

"When the fellow is sent on to Harristraw," the judge told Max, "you must of course be on hand there to state your suspicions."

"Well," ejaculated Max, "there seems to be a conspiracy all round to cheat me out of the Fair. Before we start we have a narrow squeak of it from being detained as witnesses against Seagrave, and now we're here. I'm to be sent back before my time to testify against Begum. Do you realize, Al, that you and I haven't been within the gates together yet?"

"Well, rather. We'll make a try for it this afternoon."

So Al, Max and Seagrave, who had not yet had a chance to tell his story to young Hall, repaired to the Marine Cafe and over a bounteous repast Seagrave repeated for Allerton's benefit, the narrative he had already told Max.

"I knew I was right in trusting you," was Al's remark at its conclusion, "if you did give me a good scare after that gun went off."

"I acted like a brute, but I tell you I was mighty scared myself when that shot was fired."

"What on earth did you leave your gun outside for?" Max wanted to know.

"Because I was afraid to take it in with me. I thought I might accidentally crawl up on the trigger and set the thing off."

"But what I can't understand," said Al, "is why you crawled into that place at all for."

"It was just this way," explained Seagrave. "I got to thinking for about the hundredth time what a fool I'd made of myself and wandering around till I came across that hole in the ground, it struck me that that would be just the place for me to hide myself in. It was an absurd freak, to be sure, but I was in that state that I was scarcely accountable for what I did."

"There's one thing I'd like to ask," added Max, after a brief pause.

"What's that, my boy?"

"Where did that blood come from that we saw when the match was struck?"

The color came into Seagrave's cheeks.

"It came from a scratch I gave myself against the stones when I crawled in," he said in a low voice. "Can you forgive me, Al?"

"With all my heart," and the two clasped hands under the edge of the table cloth.

And now, that Seagrave has ceased to be a curious companion because the mystery surrounding his actions has been explained away, my story is told.

For the benefit of those readers, however, who always want to know "how everything turned out," I will add that after all Max and Al had a full week in which to see the wonders of the Fair; that they became very well acquainted with the Harts and the Opdykes; that they saw a good deal of Gladys Moreland and her father, who never saw anything more of Oscar Shilling; and last, but not least, that on his trial in Harristraw, Andy Begum was convicted of the murder of Amos Peterson, on the testimony of Mrs. Tompkins, who remembered his walk. And oh yes, one thing more: Max and Al have both become fast friends with him who was once only A Curious Companion.

THE END.

GOD'S GIFT.

God thought to give the sweetest thing

In his almighty power

To earth; and deeply pondering

What it should be, one hour

In fondest joy and love of heart

Outweighing every other,

He moved the gates of heaven apart

And gave to earth a mother.

—Frank Leslie's Weekly.

[This Story began in No. 571.]

Checkmate.

BY WILLIAM LIEBERMANN.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RALPH SETS SOME WHEELS IN MOTION.

Instead of blurring out then and there the whole secret, Ralph started off for the doctor's house as soon as he could decently excuse himself. He had a horror of "scenes" and preferred to state the whole case to the doctor, and let him convey it to Mrs. Hernden.

"Tell Mrs. Sherwood I shall drive over this afternoon, and see her," was Mrs. Hernden's last message, as Ralph, refusing her invitation to stay to dinner, started back.

Ralph was so full of his discovery that he actually forgot Grace, and never gave her a thought during the whole of his walk. It was quite a distance to the doctor's house, but he never noticed it; he felt as if he had wings—or better, as if he were so light that wings were needless.

His very eagerness to save time hindered him, for he once or twice tried to find short cuts, and instead lost himself. But he got to his destination at last.

"Well, my boy, what have you been doing all the morning?" asked the doctor. "I'll warrant you didn't telegraph to Mr. Seaman yet?"

"Why, no," said Ralph, "I really forgot all about it."

"I thought so," rejoined the doctor, with a laugh. "Well, there's no harm done. I telegraphed myself."

"Thank you," said Ralph. "May I speak with you for a few minutes?"

"Certainly, my boy. But I hope it's nothing too important to wait till after dinner? For dinner's on the table, and I'm as hungry as a bear."

"Oh, of course," said Ralph, "any time will do." But he was disappointed, none the less. A secret like his was a hard thing to keep, even for so short a time as during dinner.

The meal was ended at last, however, and Ralph followed the doctor into his study.

"Well, Ralph, what is it now?" asked the doctor.

"It's about Mrs. Hernden," began Ralph.

"Well, what about her?"

"You know she had a brother, sir?"

"Why, yes. He was lost at sea, I believe."

"I don't believe he was lost at sea!"

"Indeed? And what do you think, then?"

"I think—I am sure, he is the gentleman I am living with, in St. Louis, Colonel Clifford."

"Really?" said the doctor. "I believe his name was Clifford, too. And what makes you think so?"

Ralph once more told his story, this time, however, leaving out nothing. He added that he had that very morning seen Mrs. Hernden, and told the doctor what had been said.

"Well, my boy," said the doctor, "if this proves to be true, you've done something worth remembering. We shall all of us be glad you managed to get into trouble here, and have reason to thank the accident that made you miss your train at this particular place of all others. But why didn't you tell this to Mrs. Hernden herself this morning?"

"I wanted to ask your opinion about it," answered Ralph. "I wanted

to be sure it all seemed as reasonable to some one else as it did to me."

"It seems very reasonable indeed," said the doctor; "so reasonable that if you have any proof whatever of the various links in your chain, there can hardly be a doubt."

"And then, too," continued Ralph, "I didn't like to tell her myself. I hate scenes."

"Oh, that's it?" said the doctor, laughing. "Well, I'll take the weight of it on my shoulders, and break the news. Only, you'll have to be near at hand, to explain what I don't know. Suppose we drive over there this very afternoon."

"There's no need to," said Ralph. "She gave me a message for Mrs. Sherwood, which I forgot all about. She said she was coming here this afternoon."

"Well," rejoined the doctor, "then we'll wait till she comes. And I hope, my boy, I sincerely hope, it turns out as you think it will—as you and I both think it will."

As soon as Mrs. Hernden drove up, the doctor summoned her into his office. Ralph waited anxiously, to know what Mrs. Hernden would think of it.

"Ralph!" called the doctor at last.

Ralph hurried to the study. There sat Mrs. Hernden, radiant, her face a happy mixture of smiles and tears. She rose, and held out her hand to him as he entered. He was half afraid she would kiss him, which would be humiliating. But she only said:

"Thank you, Ralph, thank you!" in a rather choked voice, and pressed his hand very hard.

The doctor had explained to her that Ralph didn't like "scenes."

Then began a lot of questioning about the small details. Mrs. Hernden could scarcely believe in the treachery of Harvey Coltwood. But Ralph was sure about it, and described Harvey carefully, that there should be no mistake.

He described the colonel, too, and Jackson, and the house, and many of the curiosities the colonel had sent home during his wanderings. Mrs. Hernden recognized them all, or nearly all. There could be no doubt whatever.

"Well, what's to be done now?" asked the doctor.

"Of course I shall go to my brother at once," said Mrs. Hernden.

"Of course. But I think it would be wise to write first."

So a letter was written then and there to Jackson, explaining everything, and enclosing a letter from Mrs. Hernden to the colonel, to be given to him with whatever explanation Jackson might think wise.

"I shall start by the nine o'clock train tomorrow," said Mrs. Hernden. "You will go with me, I suppose, Master Ralph?"

"Yes—is Miss Grace going too?"

"Miss Grace is going too," answered her mother, with a smile.

"Do you know," said the doctor, "I've half a mind to go with you."

"You! Oh, if you could!" exclaimed Mrs. Hernden.

"I think I could manage it. I'll get Dr. Parsons to look after my practice for a week. The trip would be a change for me, and I want to see your brother."

So it was decided. Ralph, Mrs. Hernden, Grace and the doctor left Porson's Hollow for St. Louis the next morning.

Ralph had reason to be happy enough on this journey, for he had Grace as a traveling companion, instead of Adolphus Jones, A. B. And then, too, Grace regarded him as even more of a hero than before, now that he was going to give back to her the uncle she had so long thought lost.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE REUNION IN ST. LOUIS.

On their way the party was joined by Adolphus Jones, who had been

telegraphed to meet them at Chicago. For once in his life that gifted young man seemed embarrassed and ill at ease. In fact, having once met them, to assure them of his presence, he seemed to be glad to get away to the smoking car, where he remained till the end of the journey.

At the station they found Jackson waiting for them, and with him was Ralph's friend, Captain Miles Burnham. As there was so large a party Ralph and Burnham decided to walk. Jones, too, preferred to go with Ralph. So the doctor, Mrs. Hernden, and Grace got into the carriage with Jackson and drove off.

As we, with Ralph, 'hate scenes,' it will perhaps be best to leave them, and follow Ralph, the captain and Jones.

Ralph introduced them.

"Oh!" said the captain, "you're the fellow, are you?"

"I believe I am the fellow, captain. Have a cigar."

"Well, I like your confounded cheek."

"Try the cigars. You may like those, too."

The captain laughed, and took the offered cigar.

"Well," he said, "I don't see that I have any call to quarrel with you, if Master Ralph here is satisfied to let by-gones be by-gones."

"That's in the terms of the agreement," said Jones.

"And what are you to do here?" asked the captain.

"I'm sure I don't know. Ask Ralph."

"Only to explain what you know about Coltwood."

"By the way," said the captain, "Seaman told me this morning that this is the very day Coltwood set for his interview with the colonel."

"What interview?"

"Didn't you hear about it? You remember that queer looking corder in a linen duster and green spectacles, we met on the platform the day you left? Jinks, I think you called him."

"Mr. Jonathan Jinks?"

"Well, he fell in with Harvey Coltwood, took up his cause, and called on the colonel to give you an all-fired raking down, and to set up Coltwood in his uncle's favor, once more. He succeeded in getting the colonel to consent to a meeting with Coltwood, and this afternoon he's coming. From what Seaman tells me of your doings, however, I gather that he's hardly likely to be received with so much favor as he hopes for."

"I suppose," said Jones, "he's going to make use of those letters somehow."

"I don't see what use they could be any way. Do you, captain?" said Ralph.

"Davus sum, non Oedipus," quoth the captain. "Ask me something easier."

"We shall find out soon enough, I suppose," said Jones.

Arrived at the house, they found the colonel and his sister waiting to thank Ralph for the reunion which he had brought about. Ralph would willingly have gone without thanks, if he could have chosen; but still, when Grace added hers to those of her mother and uncle, he felt that they more than repaid all his embarrassment.

"Well," said the doctor, "it's an ill wind that blows no good. You see, if you hadn't missed your train at Porson's Hollow, Ralph, we might never have seen this day."

"So that I, for once, was an humble instrument of Providence," added Jones, lightly.

"You were, young man," said the doctor sarcastically, "but if I were you, I wouldn't boast of it."

"Who is this?" asked the colonel.

"He is Adolphus Jones, or—" began Ralph.

"Oh, never mind the other names," interjected Jones, "Jones is good enough for me."

"Well," said the colonel, "after the way you treated Ralph, and the trouble you caused him, I suppose I ought to be angry with you. But, as you say, you have been an instrument in the hands of Providence; I suppose we must overlook the rest." Just then a servant brought up a card.

"Here's Harvey," said the colonel. "What shall I say to him?"

"Say nothing about us," returned Ralph. "Just hear what he has to say. I want to know what he intends to do with those letters."

"Very well," said the colonel, and left the room. In the parlor he found Harvey Coltwood and Mr. Jonathan Jinks.

"You see I've brought him," began the latter, the moment he saw the colonel, "you see I've at last united the loving nephew with his uncle, in spite of that hopeful young villain."

"Gently," interposed Coltwood, "gently, Mr. Jinks. There may be some excuses for Master Walpole's conduct."

"There may be," said the colonel grimly, not seeming to notice Coltwood's offered hand.

"Only your good nature makes you say so, Mr. Coltwood. If you knew the hardened young rascal as well as I do."

"Or as I," suggested the colonel.

"I hear," said Coltwood, "that he has not treated you properly, uncle. Mr. Jinks told me he had gone off with some of his low associates, and left no word as to where he had gone to. But he may come back, and justify himself."

"He may!" said the colonel, grimly as ever.

"But I hardly came here to plead his cause, but rather to show you that in spite of the estrangement of the last few months, I have ever had your interest at heart."

"So I believe," said the colonel, but he hardly meant just what Harvey meant.

"No doubt you were right to be angry with me. But I've given up playing now, so there's no more cause for your anger. And when Mr. Jinks here, brought me word that you were willing to see me, I was at that very moment engaged in a work that was undertaken entirely on your account."

"Indeed!" said the colonel.

"You see," put in Mr. Jinks, who felt that he had been silent long enough, "you see the difference between a dutiful nephew, who even when under the weight of your displeasure still keeps your good at heart, and a good for nothing rascal like Ralph Walpole, who—who—who—Here was a good speech spoiled for want of a good ending."

"Never mind him now," said Coltwood. "Worthless as he seems to have turned out, Mr. Jinks, there may be some excuse for him."

"So you said before," remarked the colonel.

"You see, I don't wish to speak ill of any one," went on Coltwood.

"That's the kindness of your heart!" observed Jinks.

"As I was saying, uncle, I had been working on your account when I got your kind message."

"Well?"

"Of course it must be a painful subject, uncle, to speak of my unfortunate Aunt Hernden. But you remember that from that day to this we never found any trace of her. Well, I never gave up. I knew it would be a comfort to you if you could know even where she was buried. So I have all the time kept a man employed searching along the track of the flood for any definite traces of her."

"Well?" said the colonel, curiously unmoved by the allusion to his great loss.

"Well, the very day your message came to me, another message arrived that told me the search had suc-

ceeded at last. I hurried to the spot, to make sure. There can no longer be any doubt.

"A few days after the Johnstown disaster a woman and a young girl were washed ashore at Greenville, a village some distance down the river. They were unrecognized, and were buried in the churchyard there. The description tallies exactly with that of my aunt and her daughter. But not only that. These letters, almost unreadable from their soaked condition, you will, I think, still be able to recognize."

"Perfectly," said the colonel. "Will you let me introduce you to some of my friends."

Harvey looked at his uncle, a little surprised at his manner.

"Certainly, uncle," he said. "But—"

The colonel led the way, followed by Harvey and Jinks, to the study.

"Let me introduce to you," said the colonel, as they entered, "the lady and her daughter who lie buried in the village churchyard at—what did you say the place was? And the agent who so carefully sought for the evidence of that sad fact. And that worthless rascal, Ralph Walpole, who may, perhaps have some excuses to offer for his conduct."

Harvey Coltwood, gazing from face to face, from Mrs. Hernden and her daughter to Jones, and to Ralph, was so thoroughly amazed that he scarcely heard the bitter scorn of the colonel's words.

"Omne tult punctum!" said Miles Burnham. "That is, we'll take all the tricks. Do you remember me, eh?"

Coltwood stared at him with dull eyes.

"I hope," said the doctor, to Burnham. "I hope you're not teaching Ralph that kind of Latin?"

"That's not fair, doctor. I don't always give the exact translation, I suppose. But I give the sense of the proverb."

No one spoke to Coltwood, who stared helplessly from face to face, seemingly only half awake. There was a moment's pause during which his eyes wandered to where the colonel stood, still holding the door open. At the sight of him, Harvey muttered an imprecation between his teeth, and flinging the letters to the floor, turned and left the room. A moment later they heard the hall door slam behind him.

The most surprised man in the room was Mr. Jonathan Jinks. "But—but—but—" he stood exclaiming, unable to get out another word.

"The fact is, Mr. Jinks," said the doctor, taking pity on him, "you've been on the wrong side all along."

"Eh? Then you're not a rascal, after all, young man."

"I hope not," said Ralph.

"Well, well, well," murmured Jinks, shaking hands with him. "Nor you, either?" turning to Burnham.

"Well, I'm more or less honest," replied the captain, with a laugh.

"And you?" said Jinks, turning to Jones.

"No, leave me out. I'm a rogue, pure and simple. Only for once in my life I've made a speculation in honesty."

"Which shall not be a bad one," said the colonel. "I'll pay you handsomely for having been an instrument of Providence, and for having been willing to help Ralph, at the last. Don't you think you could manage to live honestly altogether?"

"May be I could. I've saved a little money."

"Well," said the colonel, turning to the doctor, "I think if you will have us, Ralph and I will spend a few weeks with you. Then we can all come back here in the winter."

"Have you! We shall be only too glad, you know well enough."

"Well, well, that's settled. Jackson, see about the trains. And all of you will dine here tonight, of course.

Well hold a little festival in honor of the occasion. Thank Heaven, I've got you back, Nell."

"It was Ralph's doing," said Mrs. Hernden. And the rest of them echoed the words.

THE END.

THE BOY WHO RUNS A TOWN.

As steam is king of the nineteenth century, so is electricity destined to be monarch of the twentieth, and he who trains himself to understand this wonderful force may count on being excellently equipped for the battle of life. There is in a New Jersey hamlet a boy of fifteen who already has an important branch of the science at his finger's end, and "runs the town," so to speak. His name is Edmund Perry, and he controls the fire alarm system of Bloomfield.

Over thirty miles of wire are under this boy's entire management. He has a lineman and at times an electrical expert to work under him, but the miles of wire and nineteen alarm boxes distributed throughout the scattered town are directed only by young Perry. The knowledge required for such a task, which is one that the preceding superintendents, all experienced men, have failed to accomplish successfully, came to this boy entirely from his own efforts. Never until this autumn had young Perry learned anything about electricity, except what he read in the books that he began to buy as early as five years ago. Now he is attending the lectures of the University Extension society once a week in Newark.

"I can't remember now," said the boy to a reporter for the New York "Sun," "how I first began to work at electricity, but it was before I was ten years old. The first thing I ever did was to put up electric bells. I did that in my own house and for the neighbors, and made enough money to buy the books I wanted to read. Then some other fellows joined me and I started to form a telegraph company here in the town. I was going to call it the Bloomfield District Telegraph Company and got permission from the townsmen to put up the wires. I hung four miles of wire on the telegraph poles and had communication with twenty five different houses. I did most of the work myself, and just as we were going to get the business started the town committee said we would not be allowed to use the wires if we were going to charge for the message, so we had to give up the company and just use the wire among ourselves."

After the scheme of the telegraph company fell through, Perry set to work on an electric car. He has the completed model in his workshop, and it moves easily along the tin tracks he has constructed for it. This was done without the assistance of any person experienced in electricity, and the invention is entirely the boy's. But he spoke rather contemptuously of it.

"That will never do," he said. "but I have learned enough from it to know just how to make a good one when I've got the fire alarms in order and have time for other work. As soon as I've finished one of these things I begin right away to see how much better I can make the next one."

It was three years ago that the fire alarm system was installed in Bloomfield, and among the crowds that stood about watching the wires hung on the poles and the mysterious little iron boxes with their complicated machinery put into their places was Perry, then a boy in short trousers. Every day he was on hand, observing and remembering far more of the world than any one who saw him supposed.

When the system was under way it did not prove successful, and the townspeople thought it must be the fault of the superintendent, who sat in the tower on top of the hose company's building and tried to keep the electric wires in order. Another superintendent came, but matters were not improved, and the alarms would ring when there was no fire, and kept dangerously still when they should have done their best to make a noise. Then the townspeople, confiding still in the system, thought it was time for a new man to be put in charge.

It happened that Edmund Perry had

just learned at the Edison factory at Orange that there would be no place for him in the laboratory of the factory this winter. When the Bloomfield fire committee heard this, having known all along of young Perry's skill as an amateur electrician, they argued that, as the superintendents had been men and failed, a boy might succeed. So the committee went to young Perry's grandfather, who is postmaster of the village, and offered the situation to the young man on probation.

Almost a month has passed since the new superintendent was appointed. Since that time he has been a familiar figure in the streets, standing at the bottom of the poles directing the lineman. Every mile of the wire has been inspected and remedied where it was found faulty, and none of the eccentricities of the system under the old superintendents have been noticed. So far everything has gone smoothly, and Perry's situation is an assured one.

THE TRUTH ABOUT PETRIFIED BODIES.

There are a great many fictions which are repeated over and over again until they have the stamp of truth, and in nothing is this so true as in so called scientific facts. If you deny them, there is always somebody who is speaking from "actual experience" to enlighten you. Over and over the story is told of petrified bodies. But the real scientist knows that there never was such a thing as a petrified animal body. He says: "Petrification is not a transformation of the original animal into stone. It is merely the displacement by mineral substances of certain organic tissues as they decay. But it is only the bones which are thus affected, never the flesh. Most of the bodies reported as found petrified, are examples of a phenomenon long familiar. They have been transformed, not into stone, but into a substance called 'adipocere,' or 'grave wax.' This is a true soap, into which the corpse of a human being will ordinarily be metamorphosed if buried in a graveyard or other place where water has access to it. This 'adipocere' is one of the most enduring of substances. It is not subject to decay, and the body which has assumed this constitution may preserve its form for many years, and even for centuries. Nay, for ages, since evidence on the point has been obtained from the orthoceras—a mollusk that became extinct millions of years ago, of large size, and built after the pattern of the chambered nautilus, but with a straight shell."

THE EYES OF LOVE.

"But, Ethel, how do you know that this young man loves you? Has he told you so?"

"Oh, no, mamma! But if you could only see the way he looks at me when I am not looking at him!"—Life.

WHERE LITERARY TASTES DIFFERED.

Miss Waldo, of Boston—"I do love Swinburne. His melody is so—so melodious."

Miss Lakefront, of Chicago—"Yes, and I do love his odes. They are so odious."—Philadelphia Record.

NO REAL DANGER.

Friend—"Jove! that's an ugly looking dog of yours. Does he ever bite strangers?"

Owner—"Once in a while—but there's a doctor boarding with me who will fix you up in a jiffy; he's had lots of practice."—Puck.

A SUGGESTIVE EXPEDIENT.

Uncle St.—"Marthy, them cows is gone wanderin' off ag'in, an' I can't find 'em nowhar. I do 'no' what to do." Marthy—"Why don't ye go daem to th' railroad people an' ask 'em to sell ye a secon' hand cow-ketcher?"—Harper's Weekly.

PHILOSOPHY OF PAIN.

Stranger—"Just listen to that yelling. There must be some one in pain."

Citizen—"Yes, there are a lot of people in pain around here, but they are not the ones who are doing the yelling. There is a school for voice culture in the third story of the block."—Washington Star.

The Mainspring of Man.

Really, when one stops to consider it, there is nothing more interesting in the world than an himself. Not the most intricate piece of mechanism designed to economize labor carry us at lightning speed over the rails through the water, can compare in the arvels of its workings with the human body. The chief motor in keeping this running is the heart, concerning which important organ a writer in the "Pittsburg Dispatch" has the following to say:

Prominent among the ills to which modern man is heir, is the total collapse resulting from the sudden cessation of heart action. The heart is a prime factor and performs a most important function in dynamic economy of the physical system. It may be made the basis of some observations. Here is a wonder, yet in its principles a simple, part of mechanism, that is set going, and from that to the first feeble cry, through all the vicissitudes of a long life, may never dare to stop. Through infancy, through the long and slowly passing years of childhood, this is something whose operation must not be interrupted for a moment. Other organs may temporarily suspend action, but not the heart. The stomach may not digest; other organs may not secrete; the brain may waver, yet in some discomfort, the sufferer may be tried through, but the heart must not stop. Instantly forget its vigil. The child merges to boyhood and goes through the years of social life. With high and glowing hopes closes a collegiate course; graduates, dances with fond anticipation at the world around him, nor one thinks of the little engine within that in all this time, sleeping or waking, kept uninterruptedly at its silent work. The boy has changed into a young man; a new line of emotions now makes him the object of their play. He awakes to the thrill of love; it is in the spring time of life, and the vernal exuberance of this new fledged wing he woos and wins. His heart has never stopped an instant. The years accumulate; his children come, and he sees them grow up and become the heads of families; he may roam the earth; he may achieve to his most bent honor, power, glory, fame, and down—all these may come, and yet all his honor and power, his glory, fame and position, all these may be his, and yet all his pirations and achievements hinged on the ceaseless vigilance of that silent and hidden

sentinel on whom he seldom, if ever, stopped to bestow a thought. The man has reached the years of the octogenarian; he has seen 29,220 days; he has lived through 701,280 hours or 42,076,000 minutes and, at the rate of 4,300 heart pulsations per hour, this organ has struck the amazing number of 2,945,376,000 strokes! "Think of it! Place an index finger on the wrist and count one hundred, and then consider that in eighty years there has not been a single five seconds of a stop; never once a demand for a holiday nor a moment's cessation of its toil—not once through the long line of decades following decades, for cessation meant suspension and such suspension is what we recognize as death. But what is it that keeps the heart in action? How is it that when we sleep, or are unconscious and know not that this action goes on? It is really a simple arrangement, and as to its action continuing when we do not know, our not knowing has little or nothing to do with it, or the most of us should be in a sorry plight. Life need not be a "mystery."

Avoiding all technicality, it may be said that the heart derives the force that impels its pulsations from the cerebellum or lower brain, and the force itself is an electric current. The brain mentioned is an electric storage and generally carries a sufficient "head" in advance of immediate necessity. A mill dam or a steam boiler does the same thing analogously.

Both the water and the steam are forms of force, and dam and boiler must be replenished to replace the force taken from them. The same law holds good as to the brain. The stomach is the generator. The digestion, or, in other words the conversion of food or fuel that there takes place under normal conditions, is attended with the release of electricity precisely to the extent that electricity was absorbed from the sun in producing the food.

This explains briefly why we must eat. A prime consideration involved in securing this electricity under the most economic conditions is to stoke the stomach or fire box only with proper fuel, in proper quantity and have it well masticated before going to its purpose. Here is the first intimation that the coal that is shoveled into the fire box of a boiler should first be somewhat masticated, or pulverized, to get economical results. Proper food, then, is required, and not material that not only has no heat of its own, but must absorb heat from outside of itself and be a hindrance to digestion or combustion.



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Whether asleep or awake this generation, this storage and application of energy, goes on automatically, our part being but to supply the proper fuel.

The heart is simply a pump, and in ordinary lifetime exerts many thousands of tons of force in moving the blood and impelling respiration. Is the blood too thick, too ill supplied with air in laced lungs? Too much in volume and too much laden with deleterious ingredients? Then, extra or over effort of the heart is the result.

Is the stomach fired with dirt? Then the heart has not force enough to impel good action. Conceive of the vast hydraulics of the case—the blood that must be moved through the furlongs of arteries and veins, the manager generally ignorant of his calling—the wonder is almost that any one reaches mature years or long life at all. Who stops to study and ascertain the wants and condition of the human machine and then has nerve—well, say good sense—enough to recognize the law and obey? But some day a jar takes place, the capacity for resistance to outraged nature falls short, the curtain is rung down and another actor has retired from the stage.

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A SENSATIONALIST.
"I know I play a poor game of billiards now," said the man with the cue in his hand but—"You used to play a great game," interrupted the sarcastic bystander. "But," continued the man with the cue without noticing the interruption, "but, as I was saying, I used to play a far poorer game."—Chicago Record.

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