

THE ARGOSY

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THE DIAMOND SEEKERS;

OR,

The Mystery of the Five Peaks.

BY WILLIAM MURRAY GRAYDON,

Author of "Under Africa," "In the Name of the Czar," etc.

CHAPTER I.

LOST ON THE GOLD COAST.

"Good by to the Sultana! There she goes under full steam bound for Lagos, and not a soul on board dreams of my absence. It was a cleverly managed escape, if I must say it myself. Will they miss the plank, I wonder? I hardly think so. 'Accidentally fell overboard' will be the verdict when they find me missing in the morning. The passengers will be sorry—some of them at least—and they will be shocked when the whole story comes out, as it surely will at Lagos.

"I can imagine the disappointment of some black skinned officer when he boards the steamer with a pair of steel bracelets in one fist, and a search warrant in the other. It was a rare bit of good luck that put that newspaper into my hands; otherwise I would have tumbled blindly into the trap.

"Well, there is no use in crying over spilt milk. I am dead to the world, or will be as soon as the wires flash the tidings to England. The new life begins from this night, and I can't well make a worse mess of it than I did of the old. Everything was against me at home, but here I can make a fresh start. And now for the shore; that light must surely mean either Elmina or Cape Coast Castle."

Inasmuch as the speaker was at that moment adrift on the gently heaving waters of the Gulf of Guinea, his self addressed words sounded slightly paradoxical. With one hand he clutched a long thick plank, and by repeated strokes of the other he kept his head and shoulders above the waves. His face was turned to the west, where against the horizon line of sky and sea the sloping funnels and low, lengthy hull of a great steamer were sharply defined, while from fore and aft her lanterns stained the water with zigzag trails of ruddy light.

Overhead was the mystic vault of the sky, low drooping as though it would kiss the sea, and luminous with that brilliant starlight which only the tropics know. A mile or more to the north could be seen the black, far stretching line of the coast of Guinea.

There lay Africa, the vast and terrible continent which even at this advanced date of the world's civilization stands for all that is savage and barbarous—a name that brings before one's mental eye dim visions of gigantic mountains and rivers, of trackless jungles haunted by wild beasts and wilder men, of burning villages, and merciless bands of Arabs, and poor blacks dragged in chains to the mart of human traffic.

The solitary figure adrift on the lonely waste of water gave no evidence of being thrilled or disturbed by reflections of the

above nature. To him the African coast was merely a goal to be reached as speedily as possible; and with a last glance at the receding steamer he planted his breast on the edge of the plank, and by a vigorous use of legs and arms propelled himself toward a flickering speck of yellow light that was visible against the darkness of the shore.

He paddled on in grim silence—for the task forbade any waste of breath—keeping his thoughts behind sealed lips, and uttering

nothing but a low, steady murmur. The night was sultry, and a slight land breeze wafted to his nostrils the pestilential scent of mangrove swamps and rotting vegetation. The lazy movement of the waves was a help rather than a hindrance and presently the swelling boom of the surf warned him that the critical part of the journey was close at hand.

He could see the glittering stretch of the beach now, and the low hills that rose

before him. For an instant he was torpid with fear; he suffered as keenly as though the great jaws were already tearing him limb from limb. Then the instinct of self preservation woke him to quick action. He struck out vigorously with legs and arms, making as great a splashing as possible. He scarcely hoped to escape his cruel pursuer, but by good fortune a rolling wave shot the plank into the raging surf, whence it emerged an instant later with an impetus that flung it out on the beach.

The concussion loosed the fugitive's hold, and for a moment he lay stunned and dizzy. Then a dash of spray roused him to further effort, and he crawled painfully to the shelter of a sand ridge that was well out of reach of the surf. He rested here for a little while, slowly regaining breath and strength, and finally rose to his feet, revealing in the bright moonlight that was now flooding the beach the tall, slim figure of a mere lad.

His face was a handsome one, and the recent ordeal had not altered its slightly haughty expression. In spite of the water that trickled from his curly yellow hair and slight mustache and the wet clothes that clung shapelessly to his limbs, he had that subtle touch which proclaimed patrician birth and breeding, no matter how cleverly disguised.

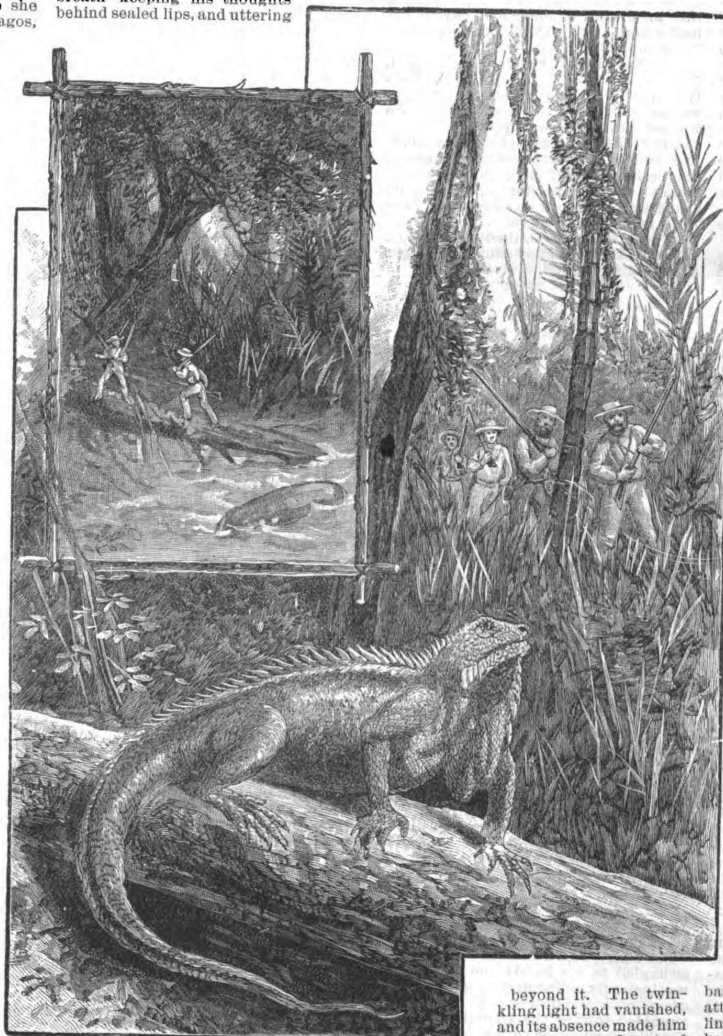
If his face could be taken as an index by which to read his character, it seemed wildly improbable that any taint of guilt or dishonor had forced him to abandon the steamer and seek refuge on the fever stricken coast of Africa. Yet, what other motive could exist? If guiltless, why did he fear arrest at Lagos? His self spoken words incriminated him. He was admittedly a fugitive from justice.

He scanned alternately the sea and the beach, and finally turned a perplexed face toward the inland hills.

"My usual luck!" he muttered. "I've made a mess of it somehow. At sunset tonight the Sultana was off Cape Three Points, and by that reckoning I ought to be near Elmina or Cape Coast Castle now. I don't see a trace of either town, and don't know which way to turn. It's no joke to find one's self lost on the Gold Coast at night. Better that than a berth on the steamer, though. All things considered, I ought to count myself lucky. I must take one direction or the other, so I think I'll go east. There are more settlements that way."

He hesitated an instant, and then started briskly along the beach, barefooted and bareheaded. His sole attire consisted of a soft flannel shirt and linen trousers, and as these were already beginning to dry, he felt no discomfort.

For an hour he tramped the wet sand, listening to the monotonous beat of the surf and straining his eyes vainly for some sign of human habitation. Inland were billowy sand mounds and lagoons stretching clear to the hills, and as his keen glance noted them from time to time he was suddenly startled to see a dark form sinking between two ridges. It vanished instantly, leaving him uncertain whether it were man or beast.



"JUST AS WE CAME WITHIN GUNSHOT OF THE HORRID BEAST WE HEARD A SPLASHING BEHIND US."

no word that might serve to pierce the mystery of his actions.

From time to time he glanced sideways at the fading outlines of the steamer, as though repenting the mad impulse that had prompted him to exchange its shelter for the dubious mercies of the sea. The

ward, until it was fairly caught in the shoreward rush of the waves, and as he paused briefly from his exertions and turned for a last glimpse of the steamer, he saw a low black fin protruding from the water less than ten yards away—a hungry shark in pursuit of a meal.

"A prowling lion or panther, as likely as not," he muttered half aloud, "coming right in my direction, too, and not a weapon to be had—not even a stick or stone."

He contemptuously drew a pearl handled knife from his pocket, and had barely opened the biggest blade when a queer looking object emerged on all fours from the nearest sand hill and sprang suddenly upright, revealing the gigantic proportions of a huge negro.

He was stark naked, save for a strip of calico about his loins; his savage features were surmounted by a mop of bushy frizzled hair of much the same fashion in use among the natives of the Soudan, and in his right hand he held a spear broken midway at the shaft.

For a brief second the two confronted each other in hostile attitudes. Then the negro uttered a peculiar cry and cast himself at the white man's feet.

"You Ingils man. You save Carimoo. You no let be made slave again," he entreated as rapidly as his spent breath would permit. "Where other Ingilsmans? You no be alone. You save Carimoo den he make you rich."

The Englishman returned the knife to his pocket and motioned the negro to rise.

"I'm quite alone," he said. "No one is with me. What is it you fear? I will help you if I can."

The negro rose, trembling in every limb, and glanced nervously toward the sand mounds.

"Me escape from bad Arab's camp," he whispered. "They make Carimoo slave. Me run hard, me kill man with spear. Other mans come quick."

"The deuce you did!" exclaimed the Englishman. "You certainly deserve your freedom after that. But where did you learn my tongue?"

"Oh, me be slave long while down Zanzibar way. Me see many white mans. Me learn their talk."

"What is the fellow doing here if he has been at Zanzibar?" mentally ejaculated the Englishman.

"No Arabs dare hold you in slavery on the Gold Coast," he added aloud. "This is English soul, and no such doings are tolerated."

The negro made no reply. He was watching the sand hills with rigid muscles. Suddenly his face became convulsed with terror, and he thrust out a long black arm.

"See! See!" he gasped. "Bad Arabs come!"

Here and there to the northwest dark figures were stealing over the hillocks, and the moon flashed on polished steel.

The negro turned and made a dash for the surf, but the Englishman overtook him by a single bound and dragged him back.

"Would you make a meal for the sharks?" he demanded. "Better slavery than that."

The negro struggled to release himself. "Carimoo die fore he go back to Arabs," he muttered sullenly.

"My poor fellow, I will save you if I can," exclaimed the Englishman. "I don't care to fall into the hands of those scoundrels any more than you do. Quick! we must lose no time. How far is Cape Coast Castle, and in which direction? Do you know?"

The negro pointed east. "Big town there, much far away. We no reach it."

"We'll have a try for it anyhow," returned the Englishman. "Perhaps we can give these fellows the slip among the sand hills. Come on, Carimoo, if that's your name, and don't part with that spear."

These cheerful words induced the negro to abandon his attempt at self destruction, and he readily followed his companion. As they ran side by side over the beach a burst of angry cries came from the rear, and looking backward they saw the scattered Arabs bounding over the hillocks.

The Englishman was fresh and vigorous, and the negro was scarcely less so in spite of his previous exertions. Their confidence increased as the sound of pursuit grew no louder, and after following the surf line for a quarter of a mile they took to the sand ridges where the

chances of keeping out of sight were better.

The Arabs were undoubtedly much fatigued, and might have fallen utterly to overtake the fugitives, but unfortunately Carimoo stumbled, and in the fall his right thigh was pierced to the depth of several inches by the sharp point of the spear. The wound bled profusely, and the poor fellow, examined it with hopeless eyes.

"Me no run now," he gasped. "You go away, leave Carimoo here. Arabs kill Ingils man."

He seized the spear, and made earnest gestures to his companion to depart.

CHAPTER II.

A GOLDEN CORONET.

"Leave you to the tender mercies of those fiends!" exclaimed the young Englishman. "No, thank you, Carimoo, that's not one of our family traits. I won't desert you just yet."

He glanced hurriedly around, and in spite of the negro's entreaties, knelt beside him, and examined the injured limb with a critical eye. Then he hastily tore one sleeve from his flannel shirt, and ripping it to a convenient size wrapped the negro's thigh an inch or so above the wound. With slight exertion he broke off a portion of the spear shaft, and completed his surgical operation by inserting this under the bandage and twisting it half a dozen times, thus making a clever "tourniquet."

"That's the best I can do now," he said, "but I think it will put a stop to the flow. Give me your arm, Carimoo, I have enough strength left for both of us. We will outwit these rascals yet."

A little help brought the negro to his feet, and he began to pour out heartfelt expressions of gratitude, which the Englishman cut short by starting off on a run dragging his companion after him. They were none too soon, for a fierce shout rang out behind them, then another and another. The Arabs had caught a glimpse of the fugitives.

The Englishman wisely struck inland, knowing that the only hope lay in finding a hiding place. It was a slim chance at the best, and Carimoo's feebleness made it more than doubtful. He had lost considerable blood, and moved with pain and difficulty.

The Arabs gained rapidly, shouting from time to time to call in their scattered companions. They had the fugitives in sight all the while, and were near enough to shoot them down had they chosen to do so.

Beyond the sand hills a fringe of high reeds was now visible, and as the Englishman strove hard to reach this, fairly dragging the exhausted negro at his heels, the latter reeled and fell heavily on his side.

"Carimoo die now," he gasped, looking at his companion with a strange smile. "Go 'way now. No let Arabs get you."

As the brave young Englishman attempted to lift the negro in his arms, a burly figure appeared on the sand ridge twenty yards away, and the bright moonlight showed it to be a white man with a brutal face and a flowing black beard; he was attired partly in Arab costume.

"Here they are," he cried hoarsely, waving one hand at his strange companions in the rear.

The echo of his voice had scarcely died away when a loud shout came from some point beyond the fringe of reeds.

The ruffian heard it, and halted in amazed wonder. The young Englishman heard it, too, and a ray of hope flashed into his heart.

"Carimoo," he cried, "help is at hand. You must try to reach the reeds; make one more effort quick!"

The negro heard and understood. He struggled to his hands and knees, and was instantly pulled upright by the strong grasp of his comrade. Together they stumbled toward the friendly shelter of the thicket whence a second shout at that moment resounded, accompanied by a splashing noise.

It occurred to the Englishman that the sounds might come from other Arabs who had circled around to cut off the fugitives; but the fear speedily vanished when he saw the desperate effort his pursuers were making to overtake him

The black bearded ruffian came on with a rush, but was outdistanced by a fleet Arab, armed with a rifle. The latter raised his weapon to fire in response to a command from the white ruffian behind, who was furious at the prospect of losing his prey.

At this critical juncture the Englishman took a fleeting glance over his shoulder that revealed the peril. With the fearlessness of desperation he stopped and wheeled round. He tore the fragment of spear from the negro's feeble grasp, and hurled it with mighty force at the Arab.

He turned without waiting to see the result, and as he dragged his companion on, he heard a shrill cry, and the sound of a heavy fall. "Shoot the white ruffian yelled furiously. 'Shoot the dogs down! Shoot them without mercy!'"

Crack! Crack! Several sharp shots woke the echoes of the night and the rush of feet came closer. But the plucky Englishman had now gained the reeds with his staggering companion, and both were trampling waist deep through mud and water, safe from the angry bullets that were hissing overhead. Suddenly the bottom seemed to drop from under their feet, and they vanished entirely, leaving turbulent ripples to mark the spot.

They struggled to the surface an instant later, blowing the muddy water from their mouth, and striking out vigorously. They swam on, breaking forcibly through the rapidly thinning corpse of reeds, and came shortly to open water—to a long, wide lagoon, dotted with reedy islets that glistened whitely in the moonlight.

The pallid rays fell on something else, too, on a boat resting tranquilly on its oars, less than ten yards away, and in the boat were two men—men with white and friendly faces.

"Saved! Saved!" cried the Englishman. "Swim on my brave fellow; help is at hand."

Carimoo needed no urging. The cold plunge had given him fresh strength and his muscular arm strokes kept him abreast of his companion. The boat drew closer, those within it realizing the gravity of the peril, and soon the two fugitives were drawn over the side by willing hands.

"Rescued slave—Arabs in pursuit," gasped the Englishman.

This laconic utterance was sufficient explanation. Three pair of oars sent the boat whizzing across the lagoon, and ere it was twenty yards from the fringe of reeds black heads appeared at the edge of the water. Owing to the depth these could not use their rifles, and those in the position to do so, could not see to take aim.

"The rascals can't hurt us," exclaimed a short, corpulent man, who occupied the stern seat of the boat. "They're welcome to take their spite out in howling. I wish they'd split their throats. Pull away, men."

The boat cut diagonally across the lagoon toward the opposite shore, and the Englishman took this opportunity of scrutinizing his rescuers. The short, stout man, was evidently in command, and his appearance was, to say the least somewhat odd.

His cheeks were ruddy and puffed out, and his little twinkling eyes lent a merry expression to his features. His face was smooth shaven save for a longish chin tuft of red hair, and on his head was a broad low crowned felt hat. He wore high hip boots, and a low fitting jacket of dark green cloth.

A perfect armory of small weapons peeped from his belt. In fact, to the young Englishman's eye this individual resembled nothing so much as a jolly burgher of Amsterdam who had suddenly come to life and stepped from one of Rembrandt's canvases—a very fair conjecture in view of subsequent discoveries.

The other occupants of the boat—who were plying the oars—were three in number; a muscular looking lad with dark eyes and hair, and a frank open face, and two middle aged men—one smooth shaven, the other wearing a heavy black mustache that dropped far over his chin.

The Englishman had briefly taken note of these things when the stout man turned to him and said abruptly, "That

little affair is well over now, my lad, so let's have your yarn. It's a good one, I'll warrant. What's brought you to this part of the coast, and where did you pick up that chap?" indicating the negro who was leaning wearily against the low thwart.

The Englishman told briefly of his encounter with the escaped slave and his subsequent adventures.

"Carimoo will tell you the rest when he feels better," he concluded; "he is weak from loss of blood now."

"Aye! aye! that's well enough. But where did you spring from? What brought you here tonight, without shoes or hat and in those flimsy garments?"

The Englishman turned slightly paler, and did not reply for an instant.

"I'm afraid that I cannot answer you," he said slowly but firmly.

The stout man gasped with amazement and then the corners of his mouth tightened. "You mean that you won't answer me?" he demanded harshly.

"Have it so if you will," replied the Englishman, as he turned his eyes wearily across the lagoon.

The other looked angry for an instant, and then, happening to glance at the bottom of the boat, he thrust his hand down and picked up a small morocco card case, water stained and swollen.

He held it to the moonlight, and his little eyes opened to their fullest extent. "Viscount Melgrave," he read slowly from the gold lettering stamped on the cover, "and here's a golden coronet, too, as sure as my name's Peter."

"It's mine," interrupted the Englishman haughtily. "It fell from my pocket. Give it to me."

The hand that he reached for it trembled like a leaf.

"Is that your name?" asked the stout man in a milder, less offensive tone. "Are you Viscount Melgrave?"

"My name is Fulke Melgrave, and that is my property; thank you."

He placed the card case in his pocket, and turned to his bewildered companion. "Least I should seem ungrateful for the service you have just rendered me, I will tell you this much," he said slowly. "I jumped from one of the Cape bound steamers a few hours ago, and reached the shore on a plank. There are certain reasons why I can tell you no more than this at present, but I assure you that no crime, no shadow of dishonor, is connected with the cause that prompted me to this seemingly rash act. The name I bear forbids that."

There was silence for a moment. The oarsmen, interested in what was going on, barely feathered the water. Then the stout man extended a bronzed and horny hand.

"I believe you, my lad. I believe you from the bottom of my heart," he exclaimed earnestly. "Here's my fist on it. I don't care whether your name's Fulke Melgrave or John Smith. I ain't knocked about the world for twenty years without knowing how to read a man's face, and yours tells a plain story. It has honesty and truth writ on it; aye! and pride and good birth as well. You're a man I'd trust with a fortune, and whatever you have to conceal it ain't dishonor. What brought you to this fever stricken coast is not my business, and I'll think no more about it, and now for the proper introduction."

Pieter Beerenbroek is my name, sir, born at Amsterdam, Holland, and bred at all points of the compass. This black haired lad here is Clegg Fosdyke, son of my old ship mate, and a better chap can't be found in the two hemispheres. Behind him sits Noah Raffles, a London cockney, born in sound of Bow Bells, and a native of Seven Dials. T'other fellow is Jonas Maghull, born in the States, and lived on salt water from a lad."

A common impulse prompted Clegg Fosdyke and the young Englishman to clasp hands warmly. Noah Raffles acknowledged the introduction by smiling all over his face, and giving his forelock a respectful pull, while Jonas Maghull uttered a few words under cover of his heavy mustache.

"What brings you to this part of the globe is too long a yarn to spin now," said Pieter Beerenbroek. "And this ain't the place for it anyhow. Those rascally Arabs

na by thinking up some plan to circumvent us. Give way lively, men. The sooner we get back to the Dutch Dragon the better. That negro yonder seems to need some attention."

The Hollander's order was obeyed lustily, and the boat moved swiftly down theagoon, skirting the northern edge. The yelling of the Arabs had ceased, and the silence was broken by naught save the distant booming of the surf.

CHAPTER III.

ON BOARD THE DUTCH DRAGON.

Following the devious windings of theagoon the boat came presently to an open space of water that seemed to be the mouth of a creek, for less than half a mile outward a glimpse was to be had of the open sea, and the roar of the surface was plainly audible.

Midway in the channel a trim looking steam yacht lay at anchor. This was the Dutch Dragon, thirty four tons, owned and commanded by Pieter Beerenbroek. The occupants of the boat were soon aboard the yacht, where half a dozen men were visible—four negroes and two Europeans.

The Hollander led his guest across the deck, and thence below to a snug cabin, furnished with unusual taste and luxury. The bookshelves on the wall, and the display of etchings and engravings brought a flush of surprise to the English ad's face, while the negro gazed about him with comical bewilderment.

"Make yourself at home," said the Hollander; "we don't stand on ceremony here; no mistaking, you understand. This lad here is plain Clegg, and Pieter is the only name I answer to. I'll call you Fulke—or shall it be my lord?" This was said half jocularly, half in earnest.

The young Englishman flushed a deeper red, and glanced keenly at his host.

"Fulke will do very well," he replied. "It is the name I am most accustomed to."

"Everything is shipshape then," exclaimed Pieter; "we'll have something to eat and drink—if it is nearly two o'clock in the morning—and after that you can sleep as long as you wish. By the way, Clegg, have you got an extra jacket and pair of shoes that will fit this gentleman?"

"I think I have," replied the lad. "I'll go and see."

As he left the room Noah Raffles entered, bringing a basin of water and a sponge. The negro was then comfortably arranged on a sofa, and Pieter skillfully washed and bandaged his wounded leg.

"That will do," he said, surveying his work with satisfaction. "The fellow will be as well as ever in twenty four hours. He had better lie still, though. I'll see that he is well cared for. He's a queer looking chap, isn't he? If we were on the east coast now, I'd swear he was a Somali. He must be all of six and a half feet high, and look at those powerful limbs. He's been exceedingly well treated for a while."

"He comes from the Zanzibar coast, I believe," said Fulke in an undertone. "There's something queer about the affair."

"Well, we'll have him spin his yarn tomorrow," replied Pieter. "I'll stake my hat that he has a tale to tell."

The negro seemed to understand what was being said. He glanced from one to the other, and then turned his eye on Fulke with a look of intense gratitude and affection. He was about to speak, when Clegg entered the room with a jacket and pair of grass slippers which proved to Fulke to perfection. The two lads were most of the same size and build.

Pieter now led the way to a small adjoining cabin, where Jonas Maghull was still applying the finishing touches to a table that fairly groaned with tempting food.

The hungry men wasted no time in eating. The vands disappeared as if by magic—Carimoo receiving his share on a saucer—and when fruit and black coffee were brought on Pieter pushed his chair lightly from the table and lit a long stemmed pipe, with a huge china bowl, taking a preliminary whiff or two, he began the promised yarn, and Fulke listened with absorbing interest.

The tale was told in a rambling way, interspersed with reminiscences, and need

not be set on paper verbatim; but Fulke gleaned from it much concerning the life and character of his two companions and the object of their visit to the Gold Coast, and this much it is necessary for the reader to know.

Pieter Beerenbroek, though a Hollander by birth, preserved intact only two Dutch traits—a fondness for schnapps and good tobacco. When a lad of twenty a deceased uncle left him an ample fortune, and, being endowed with a wise head and a love of adventure inherited from an ancestor, he had made use of his income during the past thirty years to roam over the globe.

His wanderings had brought him on many previous occasions to Africa, which continent had a constant fascination for him, owing no doubt to the fact that his afore-mentioned ancestor, Dominie Beerenbroek, had founded a settlement on the west coast in the year 1730. Civilized as well as barbarous countries had claimed much of the worthy Hollander's attention, and thus he cultivated a taste for art and literature that was subservient only to his love of adventure and exploration.

Of whatever nationality a man may be, thirty years of knocking about the globe will make him a cosmopolite—a citizen of the world—and so it was with Pieter Beerenbroek. He spoke several languages fluently and had a smattering of various African dialects. His genial heart and quick wits made him a charming companion, but when roused to anger he was a terrible antagonist, being as bold and fearless as a lion.

Though now fifty years of age he looked and felt ten years younger.

A chance meeting twenty years before with John Fosdyke, an American sea captain in the trading service and the father of Clegg, had ripened into a close friendship that death alone had power to sever. The two men had made several voyages together, on one of which they were accompanied by Clegg, then a lad of ten years. The boy made other short trips with his father, but most of his life had been spent in a New England town under the care of an aunt, for his mother died when he was five years old.

John Fosdyke's kind and generous heart led to the fatality which caused his ruin and subsequent death, for in 1822 one of the two vessels that he owned was set on fire off the Zanzibar coast, and destroyed with its entire contents.

The perpetrator of the crime was supposed to be a certain slave dealer named Stonelake, whose dhow, laden with shackled negroes, had been seized by Captain Fosdyke, a week or two before, and turned over to the British authorities. As no positive evidence of his guilt existed the scoundrel was permitted to go unpunished. Captain Fosdyke's other vessel was lost at sea two years later, and he returned to New England, where he died in 1824, leaving little or nothing to his son, then a lad of fourteen years.

Clegg's aunt, however, kept the boy at school with her scanty means until she died in the spring of 1829, at which opportune period Pieter Beerenbroek arrived on the scene, having learned for the first time that his old friend had left nothing to his son.

The worthy man would gladly have shared his income with the lad, but Clegg's pride would not permit him to accept this from even such an old acquaintance. He declared that some day he would be rich, and when pressed for a further explanation by the Hollander he produced several documents which he had found among his father's effects shortly after the latter's decease. One of them was a small parchment map, the other consisted of a page of manuscript in Captain Fosdyke's familiar hand, stating briefly that in 1822 the writer had penetrated the Ivory Coast of West Africa, to a distance of one hundred miles, and had there saved the life of an old Arab, who told him, as a mark of gratitude, of certain diamond mines situated in the interior, between the Kong Mountains and the Bambarra country.

The writer stated furthermore that the Arab had given him several diamonds of great value—which he subsequently lost—and a rude map showing where the diamond mountain was located.

Pieter Beerenbroek examined these documents; with great interest, and at

first expressed no opinion about them. Inasmuch as the envelope which inclosed them was inscribed "To be burnt," it was evident that Captain Fosdyke either had believed the tale to be a myth or was satisfied that the difficulties which would attend a search for the treasure were insurmountable. He had never mentioned the matter to his son or to Peter Beerenbroek.

But, with the indomitable ardor of youth, Clegg gave the tale full credence from the first, and it was the dream of his life to investigate the strange legacy which his father had accidentally left him.

A week's consideration—aided by the tempting prospect of adventure—brought the Hollander to the same way of thinking, and he proposed to Clegg that they should undertake the quest, offering, of course, to lessen its hardships by everything that money could do. It need not be said that the proposal was accepted.

The necessary appropriations afforded Pieter the greatest delight. As soon as possible he chose and purchased a steam yacht, and rechristened it the Dutch Dragon. A portion of the supplies and equipments for the expedition were obtained in Boston, and the rest at London, for which port the Dutch Dragon sailed about midsummer.

Though only nineteen years of age, Clegg was not ill fitted for the endurance of hardships. He was frank, generous and open hearted, with a high sense of honor and an intolerance of anything base or mean. These qualities made him as dear to the Hollander as his father had been before him.

Mention must not be omitted right here of a little incident which may have a future bearing on the story. Some fifteen years before, while at Natal, Pieter Beerenbroek had become involved in a fracas with the same ruffianly slave dealer who subsequently set fire to Captain Fosdyke's vessel, and had received in consequence a bullet through the arm. So both Clegg and the Hollander had wrongs to avenge, and it is more than probable that both concealed a hope of meeting Luke Stonelake at some future day. The long healed wound was a less potent memory to Pieter than the injury done his old friend eight years later.

The above interesting facts were what Fulke Melgrave gleaned from the Hollander's rambling narrative and the occasional interjections by Clegg Fosdyke. Pieter concluded by a brief account of the Dutch Dragon's cruise from London to the Gold Coast.

"We left on September 10th," he said, "and reached Cape Three Points on October 20th—just forty days out. Three weeks is the usual passage, but we touched at Cape Verd and several other points for native carriers. Good men are hard to get; we have only four so far. I have been trying to add to the number ever since we reached Cape Three Points—just a week ago tonight—but so far without success. I didn't like the idea of touching at all the British forts which are scattered along the coast, for fear the authorities would become inquisitive and make trouble, so we ran into this cove by a narrow channel that is very little known, intending to recruit natives from the neighboring tribes. You owe your rescue tonight to the fact that Clegg caught sight of a great lizard-like creature—possibly an iguana—making its way inland along the lagoon this afternoon. He fired us with the desire to try and capture it, so we started out in the small boat, caught sight of the grewsome looking thing about a quarter of a mile away, just as it turned tall and made for the heart of the forest. We ran ashore, and just as we came within gunshot of the horrid beast we caught the sound of the splash you and Carimoo made as you fell into the water. The iguana was at once ignored in favor of the new mystery, and we hurried back to the boat."

"I have been perfectly frank in telling you all this," resumed Pieter after refilling his pipe, "partly because I like your face and partly for another reason, which I may speak of later. You must remember, however, that this is in confidence. Only two others know of our plans—Noah Raffles, my trusty servant of sixteen years' standing, and Dick Mostyn, the man who will assume charge of the yacht during our absence."

"We have decided to enter the Interior from this point and are only waiting until we can get together a sufficient force of negroes."

Pieter yawned and glanced at a clock whose hands pointed to five minutes after three.

"I appreciate your confidence," said Fulke, "and you may be assured I shall not abuse it. I regret deeply that circumstances prevent me from being equally frank with you—at least for the present. I am a little bewildered as yet, and uncertain of my own plans, but it is quite possible that before we part you will hear my story. I have already assured you that I stand innocent of any disgrace or dishonor, though indications point otherwise, I admit."

"We believe that," exclaimed Clegg impulsively, reaching out his hand to Fulke, who grasped it warmly.

"Of course we believe it," added Pieter. "Who doubts it? And now be off to bed with you before the sun comes up. Here we have been chattering over our coffee for more than an hour, and I quite forgot to put an extra watch on deck. No danger from the Arabs now, though; it is too near dawn. It was careless of me, I confess."

Pieter spoke more truly than he thought. As he approached a door in the side partition, motioning to Fulke to follow him, the silence of the adjoining room, where Carimoo lay on the couch, was broken by a loud curdling outcry—a shrill, barbarous yell and a hoarse shout of rage. Then came a heavy fall, accompanied by the smashing of chinaware; and, with pallid faces, Pieter and his companions made a dash for the curtained entranceway.

(To be continued.)

[This Story began last week.]

Lloyd Abbott's Friend.

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.,

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

CHAPTER IV.

THE HAND OF DESTINY.

After a prolonged inspection of the prostrate figure, the man with the lantern set the latter on the ground, and kneeling down, began to feel in Lloyd's breast pocket. That he worked very carefully was evidence of the fact that the victim of the fallen tree was still alive.

He had just withdrawn the pocket-book when Lloyd opened his eyes and looked up directly into his face.

The thief showed that he was a coward as well by becoming panic stricken at once.

"I—I was trying to help you, sir," he stammered, letting the pocket-book fall through his nervous fingers.

"And yourself, too, I see," added Lloyd.

He put up one hand and took the purse, which had fallen on his chest.

"You—you ain't hurt, with that tree trunk on you?" exclaimed the other, appearing to think that Lloyd's ability to talk so unconcernedly was miraculous.

"How can I be hurt when I had a soft mud bed to lie in and the tree doesn't touch me?"

"As he spoke, Lloyd drew himself slowly out from beneath the trunk and got upon his feet. He was a little dizzy yet, however, and reeled for a minute or two, with his hand to his forehead.

"Can't I help you?" asked the low browed individual, coming forward and offering his arm.

Lloyd recoiled from him with a look of disgust.

"You would have robbed me," he said, "and would now, if you thought you could do it safely. Where did you get that lantern? I'll wager it doesn't belong to you."

"No, no more than this watch belongs to you now."

The fellow dashed the lantern to the ground and made a sudden dart for the chain that was strung across Lloyd's vest. Young Abbott grab-

pled with him with all his might, but he was still weak from the results of the blow the tree had struck him. Then the darkness that now prevailed put him at a disadvantage.

The robber secured the watch and made off with it.

"Stop, thief!" Lloyd called out, and then almost laughed at the absurdity of giving such an alarm in the woods, with no one at hand but the thief himself to hear it.

It was hopeless to try and recapture the fellow. Lloyd had not the slightest idea which way he had gone, and besides, he was not in the mood, after his recent experience, to do any fast running.

Stumbling against the fallen tree, which had come very near being his undoing, Lloyd sat down on it for a minute to collect his thoughts, and as a result of this came to the conclusion, that, notwithstanding the loss of his watch, he had good cause to congratulate himself. That he had not been killed outright, to say nothing of not being injured, seemed a miracle.

"I wonder if I dare tell mother," he asked himself.

Then realizing from the dampness that began to make itself manifest down his spine, that the back of his coat must be covered with mud, he reflected that he must give some explanation of his flight.

"And they're sure to miss my watch, too," was his next thought. "A memento of father."

Verily his getting off the train to investigate the cause of the stoppage was to be far reaching in its results. How very far, Lloyd himself had no idea at the time.

He got up and resumed his journey homeward, but not in the same happy mood that had shortened the distance for him before. And as the aspect of things depends on the point of view from which we regard them, so now the recovery of his overcoat did not seem so sure a thing as it had before his other misfortunes had overtaken him.

To add to his unpleasant condition of mind, his body began to rebel at the rough treatment it had received. A sharp pain made itself manifest in his back.

"I may be laid up and not be able to go to the store tomorrow," he lamented, and in this dismal frame of mind he reached the home upon which he had planned to burst with such joyous unexpectedness.

He saw his mother and Myra through the window. They were sitting around the center table, Myra reading aloud and his mother sewing. Evidently they had had tea and the table had been cleared.

"So my coming earlier will only put them to trouble," Lloyd soliloquized in his blue mood.

Well, you can believe they were startled, when the door opened and Lloyd walked in upon them.

"Why, Lloyd, have you lost your place?" exclaimed Myra, springing up and going forward to meet him.

"Not my place, but my watch," answered Lloyd, thinking it well to get the worst over with at once.

"Your watch, my son?" cried his mother. "And look, Myra, see his clothes. Oh, my boy, what has happened to you?"

"And if you haven't lost your place," added Myra, "what brings you home at this hour?"

"The rain, indirectly, which is also responsible for the condition of my clothes."

"But your watch, Lloyd?" persisted Mrs. Abbott. "What have you done with that?"

"I haven't done anything with it, mother. I've been done—out of it by a thief who must be the hired man of somebody here in Willoughby, for he carried a stable lantern."

He then proceeded to relate in detail his adventures from the time the train had stopped between stations.

And when he had told of the fallen tree episode, his mother's gratitude was so fervent for his preservation from death or injury that she seemed to forget all about the loss of the watch.

"But I must get something to eat and go up to Clairmont to see if Conductor Walker has found my overcoat," said Lloyd, breaking off suddenly.

Myra bustled off into the kitchen, while Lloyd was hustled up stairs by his mother to get on some dry things. Then he felt more comfortable and while he was eating told about his day's experiences at the store.

"Do you think you will have to go up to Clairmont tonight, Lloyd?" said his mother when he rose from the table. "It is pretty cold out, and you have no overcoat."

"And perhaps I won't have if I don't go straight off at once and hunt it up," returned Lloyd.

If he had not gone, this story might have had a far different trend, or might never have been written, so true is it that minor events have their unalterable influence in shaping destiny.

Lloyd set out for Clairmont about half past eight, running a good part of the way to keep himself warm. Had he not done this he would probably not have attracted the attention of Ned Baker, who was just entering the club house of the Willoughby athletes.

He called out to know what was the matter, and Lloyd halted long enough to explain that he had had a startling adventure, giving the brief outlines of it.

"I want to catch Walker before he goes to bed and see if he's got my overcoat," concluded Lloyd, "so I must hurry on."

"Stop here on your way back then," said Baker. "A lot of the fellows will be on hand and they'll want to hear about your thief encounter."

"All right; I will," returned Lloyd, nothing loath to have as large a circle of his friends as possible impressed with the fact that he was now a man of business.

So he made quick time to John Walker's home in Clairmont, which was just beyond the border of Willoughby, and found his overcoat hanging up in the hall.

Before half past nine he was back at the handsome clubhouse, surrounded by an interested circle of listeners, as he detailed his early evening's experiences.

"Look out, Lloyd," exclaimed Dave Hurd, nodding his head toward a fellow next to him whom young Abbott had never seen before; "we've got a reporter on a New York daily here tonight. You'll be in print as sure as guns!"

"I should say he would," put in the stranger. "Where did you say you were employed in New York?" and the young man had his note book out in a flash.

Lloyd gave the address of Streeter & Carr and laughingly added that he didn't mind being "immortalized" in this way so long as his face wasn't disfigured by a newspaper portrait.

He was introduced to the reporter afterwards—Theodore Oliphant his name was—and found him a very agreeable fellow. He was visiting at the Munns' and Charlie Munn had brought him to the club. He went back to the city that night and Lloyd started for home at ten, walking arm in arm with Baker and Hurd.

The next day you may be sure he bought a "Universe" of the newsboy on the train. But he had quite a search before he found the item headed:

SET UPON IN THE JERSEY WOODS.

The account was very brief, but all the essential facts were given together with Lloyd's name and the fact that he was with Streeter & Carr, which brought about an incident in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

A MYSTERIOUS CUSTOMER.

On this Tuesday morning the sun shone brilliantly, as if seeking to atone for the time lost the day before. Customers began to crowd the store early. Mr. Streeter went about, rubbing his hands in high good humor.

Lloyd was kept so busy that he had but little time to think of his previous night's adventure, although he was forcibly reminded of it when he began to grow hungry towards noon and realized that he had no watch which would inform him of the arrival of his lunch hour. For this meal the first day he had gone to a bakery on the next block, but what he had been able to procure there was not notable for its staying powers. And on this cold, clear day he was more than ordinarily hungry.

The whistle in some factory on the west side had just blown for half past twelve and Lloyd had started for the coat closet, intending to ask Culver on the way if he could recommend him to a restaurant near at hand, when the latter beckoned over to him.

"This gentleman would like to see you," he said, as Lloyd came up, and then he went forward to wait on two young girls who had just entered the store.

"This gentleman," did not look to be very much older than Lloyd himself. He wore a long overcoat, with sealskin at the cuffs and collar, his face was a singularly handsome one, while his whole "get up" betokened wealth and refinement.

Lloyd was very much surprised, however, when he had taken a good look at him, for he was sure he had never seen the fellow before.

"I want to look at your sets of Dickens and Thackeray," began the stranger, which amazed Lloyd still more.

Why could not Culver have waited on the fellow? But then he had asked for him, (Lloyd), so Culver had said at least. In that case though, why had not the customer stated some reason for requesting his choice of salesman? If he had been a German now, the matter would have been more easily explicable.

Meantime, while Lloyd was puzzling over all this inwardly, outwardly he led the way to the shelves where the standard authors' editions were kept. The stranger plucked out the most expensive set of each of the writers he had named.

Taking a handsome alligator skin purse from his pocket, he paid for the purchase and then laid a card down in front of Lloyd.

"Will you please have them sent here?" he said.

Lloyd hoped the other did not notice the start he gave when he read the name on the card:

GORDON F. MARCHMAN.

The address on Fifth Avenue underneath assured him that there could be no mistake. His customer was none other than the youngest son of a well known New York millionaire, whose name frequently appeared in the newspapers.

Well, he would have something to tell the folks at home tonight after all, Lloyd reflected, if it wasn't so exciting as the budget he had to unfold the evening before. But he was as yet by no means through with his present adventure.

"Excuse me," said young Mr. Marchman in a half hesitating manner, as if he had been trying to get up his courage all along to make the remark and had only succeeded at the last moment, "but you are Mr. Lloyd Abbott, I believe, who had the adventure last night in the Jersey woods?"

"Yes, that is my name," replied Lloyd, more surprised than ever.

Of what possible interest could his tussle with the tramp be to one of the Marchmans?

"Well," went on the other, a slight flush coming into his cheeks, "you may think it queer, but when I read the item telling about it in this morning's 'Universe', I became possessed with a strong desire to meet the hero of it."

"Hero?" laughed Lloyd. "There wasn't much of that element in the affair. I think I came out the little end of the horn."

"All the same I'm glad I met you," said Marchman, and he hurried off.

Lloyd forgot all about his hunger for the first few moments after his strange customer had departed. What a remarkable interest this young Marchman had taken in him! It was utterly incomprehensible.

"Who's your swell friend?" Lloyd's reflections were interrupted by this sudden question from Culver.

"I never saw him before in my life," returned Lloyd. "But he bought thirty dollars worth of books." "Whew!" whistled Culver. "You'll stand 'way up with the old man if he finds out that your friends are coming here and dropping their money in that style."

"But how can he be my friend when I tell you I never saw him before?"

"He asked for you straight enough. Is Mr. Lloyd Abbott here?" he said, just as soon as I went up to him. Hello," Culver added, as his eye fell on the card Lloyd had dropped on the counter while he proceeded to tie up the books. "You don't mean to say that was Gordon Marchman, the millionaire's son?"

"He gave me that card as if it was his own, that's all I know about it," replied Lloyd.

"But what made him ask for you?" persisted Culver. "How did he know you were here if he isn't a friend of yours?"

"He saw my name in the paper. Now tell me where I can find a restaurant near here."

But Culver was in no mood to talk about restaurants. He wanted to know why Lloyd's name was in the paper and when the latter declared he was too hungry to explain the story before lunch, Culver suggested that they go to lunch together, to an oyster house in the next block where they could get a stew for twenty cents.

"But can we both leave the store at the same time?" inquired Lloyd.

"For this one time it won't matter. Come on. If the old man says anything I'll tell him you sold such a big bill of goods to young Marchman you couldn't get away on your own time."

There were not many customers just then—not more than one each of the three young ladies who completed the staff of which Culver and Abbott were members. So Lloyd went out with his fellow salesman and fairly held the latter spellbound while he related his adventure in the Jersey woods.

"And the thing was in the paper this morning, you say?" he exclaimed. "I didn't see it."

"It was only in the 'Universe's' little bit of an item."

"But big enough to catch young Marchman's eye. By Jove, Abbott, you're in great luck to be taken up by a young millionaire like that." "Nonsense, Culver. I haven't been 'taken up' by him at all. It was just curiosity to see what I looked like, I suppose. Besides, come to think of it, I'm not at all certain that it was young Marchman himself. It might have been his father's secretary of something of the sort."

"No, sir, I believe it was young Marchman himself."

Lloyd did not argue the point, for they had just reached the store for their return, to be met by Mr. Streeter with a frown and the demand to know why they had both gone out together.

Lloyd waited for Culver to give his

romised explanation, but the latter appeared to forget all about that. He had gone on his time, so he hurried off to hang up his coat, leaving Lloyd to make peace with the chief as best he could.

"I had a customer who came in just as I was about going out at twelve thirty," he said.

"Then you should have made Culver wait till you had gone," and Mr. Streeter turned his back on Lloyd with great majesty.

The boy from Willoughby could not out think this rather shabby of Culver, to leave him in the lurch when it was really his fault that he had laid himself open to rebuke.

They were all kept very busy during the afternoon, so the two had no opportunity to say much to each other, but when a lull came at six Culver remarked with a laugh, as Mr. Streeter went off to his dinner:

"What did the old man say to you about that lunch episode?"

"He said I ought to have made you wait till I got back, and that's what I think myself."

"Well, don't get on your ear about it. Now's our chance to slide off to dinner together. He won't be back or a good hour."

Lloyd turned on his fellow clerk with a decided air.

"Look here, Culver," he said. "I'm not going to begin this underhand business."

"Oh, well, if you want to be a prig, it's all one to me," and Culver walked off with an effort to assume a sense of offended dignity.

So Lloyd went to the restaurant by himself that night, and found it really dismal. But he could see the reason why Mr. Streeter objected to work of his salesmen leaving the store at the same time, and tried to make the best of it.

Culver's attitude annoyed him. "He's selfish," he decided; "but I must try to get along with him as best I can."

When it came time to go home, Lloyd missed his watch terribly. He scarcely saw how he was to get along without it. But there seemed no prospect at all of getting it back, and almost as faint a one of obtaining another to take its place.

CHAPTER VI. DOUBTS.

"I say, Abbott, did you see yesterday's 'Herald'?"

It was the next Monday morning, and as soon as Lloyd reached the store, Culver rushed up to him in great excitement to put the foregoing question.

He was considerably surprised, for since Tuesday the two had been on one too friendly terms.

"No, I haven't seen the 'Herald,'" was Lloyd's answer. "What's in it?"

"An article about the Marchmans, with pictures of all the family, and he fellow who bought those books of you that day is Gordon Marchman. I say, if he comes in again, can't you introduce me?"

"There's not much likelihood of his coming again," returned Lloyd; but he was mistaken. He made his second appearance in the store that very afternoon.

Culver saw him before he stepped inside the door, and rather rudely lured away from an old lady who had opened her mouth to ask him the price of a "Chatterbox."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Marchman," he said, halting in front of the new comer, almost breathless. "What would you like to see this afternoon?"

"I would like to see Mr. Abbott. I notice he is busy now. I will wait."

There was nothing for Culver to do but go back to his old lady, which he did with rather a bad grace. Marchman took up his station close by Lloyd, who was showing children's books to a distraught father of seven youngsters.

Marchman smiled pleasantly when he caught the young salesman's eye and began to look through some art volumes that were lying on the counter. When at last the half-distracted father had decided on what he wanted with the comforting assurance to Lloyd that he would probably change his mind again before he got the books home, he went his anxious way.

"You're awfully busy, I see," began young Marchman. "I'm sorry, for I wanted to get you to help me select a present for a friend."

"Oh, I can do that," returned Lloyd, adding with a laugh: "I'm afraid I'm not a great success at that sort of thing though. I hope you don't want it for a young girl of sixteen, who is neither sentimental, Episcopalian, or prigish," and he gave a brief account of the experience he had had with his first customer.

This amused Marchman greatly.

"I suppose you have lots of funny things happen here," he said. "By the way, did you get your watch back yet?"

"No, and I never expect to."

"I wish—" Marchman began and checked himself suddenly.

"Let me see what you have in the Rider Haggard line," he began again.

Lloyd led the way to the shelf where the adventure books were kept.

"Have you read any of these yourself?" asked Marchman.

"Oh yes, and a funny thing happened when I was reading 'King Solomon's Mines.' I lost the book, and couldn't wait till I could get another to find out the ending, so I made one up for myself."

"You did!" exclaimed the other. "I wish I could see it. Is it anything like the real thing? Have you got it yet?"

"Oh, it's somewhere around the house, I guess. As to whether it's like the real thing or not, I don't know. I've never finished the story." Marchman laid down the book he had been examining.

"I say, Abbott," he began, "why can't you find that finish of yours and bring it around to the house some night. I'd be ever so glad to have you do it."

"But how can I?" said Lloyd, after he had recovered the breath of which he had been deprived by this astonishing invitation. "I have to work here every night."

"Oh, I forgot about that," and Marchman's face fell. Then he brightened up as he added:

"You can come and spend the night then. That will save you a late trip out to Willoughby and an early one in. What night can you come? Tomorrow or Thursday?"

"But I don't—won't it put you out?"

Lloyd scarcely knew what to say. He had never been so surprised in his life. Was it possible some one was playing a trick on him?

"I know it seems rather sudden," Marchman went on. "But I would like you to come ever so much. I want to know you better. Perhaps I'll tell you why when I have a better chance than there is here."

"You are very kind," was all Lloyd could find to say. "I must allow myself time to find that stuff I wrote, so we will say Thursday."

"Good. What time do you close?"

"Ten o'clock."

"Then I shall make a call and stop here for you at that time on Thursday. And by the way, when must you report for duty in the morning?"

"At eight."

"Very good. I will see that James has our breakfast ready at quarter past seven. And now I will take this set of Haggard. How much did you say it was?"

When Marchman had gone, Culver, who had managed to get rid of his old lady, came over to Lloyd, fairly bursting with curiosity. He had

caught enough of the conversation to know that the young millionaire had invited Abbott to his house.

"Well, you have struck a soft snap," he began. "How did you work it? Asked you to come and see him, didn't he? When are you going?"

Lloyd felt strongly impelled to reply that it was none of Culver's business, but he disliked to be rude, so he answered simply:

"Thursday."

"But are you sure the old man will let you off? You know this is our busiest season."

"I shan't need to ask him."

"You don't mean to say you're going to skip out without a 'by your leave.' You'd get the G. B. sure as guns."

"Of course I don't mean to do that," returned Lloyd, seeing that he would be obliged to explain. "I'm going at a time when it won't interfere with business."

Culver had his mouth open to pursue his investigations still further, but just then Mr. Streeter called him and he was obliged to bottle up for a time that portion of his curiosity which remained unsatisfied.

But it was a foregone conclusion that he would find out sooner or later that Lloyd was to spend the night at the Marchmans', and he did so before young Abbott started home that night.

"Maybe he's found out that he's some relative of yours," he suggested by way of solution of the mystery which to his mind consisted of the fact that Lloyd should have been "taken up" by young Marchman instead of himself.

"Maybe," said Lloyd, as the quickest means of getting rid of an argument on the subject.

"You don't appear to entuse much over the prospect," went on Culver. "Perhaps you don't realize the bed of clover you've stepped into. Why, the Marchmans own as much as ten or fifteen horses, keep a yacht in commission all the time, have both a billiard and pool table in their city house, and a mansion up the Sound that beats the palaces of Europe. By hokey, I just wish I was in your boots."

Perhaps Lloyd was not as sensible of his good luck as he might have been. He knew that the Marchmans were people much talked about in the newspapers and that thousands of New Yorkers would be foolish enough to pull several wires, if these were placed within their reach, in order to gain admission to the imposing Fifth Avenue dwelling at which all strangers looked up when they passed it.

But on the way home that night, Lloyd's mind was not as full of elation as it was of cogitation and doubts. He had suddenly recalled reading somewhere that these people of immense wealth were apt to become terribly bored and to stray into all sorts of peculiar fields in search of amusement.

"Maybe that's what this Gordon Marchman is using me for," Lloyd said to himself. "Just going to see how I'll act in unusual surroundings."

His cheeks burned at the thought.

"I wish I'd said I wouldn't come," he reflected. "What's that some poet says about being butchered to make a Roman holiday? Still, I must confess that young Marchman seems to be as quiet and well brought up a fellow as I ever met. Well, I'll see what they say at home about it."

Mrs. Abbott was unfelgmedly delighted that her boy should have made a friend who evidently thought so much of him.

"I don't see anything so surprising in it, Myra," she said in talking it over with her daughter when Lloyd had gone to bed. "Everybody likes Lloyd. Why shouldn't somebody with money want him for a friend as well as the Bakrs or the Hurds?"

"Because these rich folks don't usually do things of this sort. Very likely this Marchman may have made a bet with some of his chums that he could scrape acquaintance with any one to whom he chose to hold out his little finger. I'm sorry Lloyd promised he would go, and I half believe he is himself."

"But surely no harm can come of it, Myra."

"No harm, no; but it won't be very pleasant for Lloyd to be pinned like a beetle to a bit of cardboard, while Gordon Marchman and his cronies watch how he squirms. Well, it will be a lesson to him which perhaps will do him good later in life."

But it would seem the lesson was not to be learned this time. On Thursday Lloyd went to the store with his handbag prepared to remain in the city till Friday morning. Ten p. m. came, the boy put up the shutters, and still Marchman did not appear.

"Hope you'll have a pleasant time," Culver called out in a peculiar voice, as he went off, leaving Lloyd standing in an undecided state of mind on the pavement.

(To be continued.)

[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 XVII.—(Continued.)

MR. PACKARD OF COLORADO.

"Yes," answered Packard and Rupert simultaneously, "the fellow was sitting here less than half an hour since."

"He has stolen my gold watch," said the new acquaintance.

"He tried to sell it to me. He said it cost a hundred and fifty dollars."

"So it did, and more, too."

"He offered it for fifty dollars."

"How did it happen that you did not buy it?"

"I was about to do so, but this boy told me he was a confidence man."

"Then you knew him?" asked the stranger.

"Yes," answered Rupert.

"Can you suggest any way in which I can recover my property?"

"Yes, sir. Report the matter to the police, and ask to have Richard Darke, a well known detective, put on the case. I will give you a line to him. He will know at once who it is."

"I will do so. Where can I find you again?"

"At the Somerset Hotel, on Broadway."

"Thank you. If I receive it I will gladly compensate you for your suggestion."

"I thank you, but do not wish any compensation. If I can defeat this man's dishonest scheme I shall feel well repaid."

"Our cunning friend will soon be overhauled, I suspect," said the cattle man. "Did you say you were off this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am new to the city and want a guide. Are you open to an engagement?"

"Yes, sir," answered Rupert with a smile. "But I don't care for pay."

"Then we don't go. Business is business, and there is no reason why I should take up your time without paying you a fair sum."

"Just as you like, sir."

The two spent the next three or four hours in visiting different objects of interest in New York. The Colorado man seemed much pleased with his young companion.

"You must come out to Colorado some time, Rupert," he said. "You are a boy who would succeed there, or indeed anywhere. We have some men come out there who are failures

at the East, and they are surprised that they don't succeed in the West. But I tell you that it takes as much brains to win success in Colorado as in New York."

"Is that always the case? I have heard of men getting rich at the West who were poor at home."

"That is true. Perhaps they were in the wrong business. I don't mind saying that was the case with me. I was in the insurance business in Hartford, but I wasn't particularly well adapted for it. I couldn't talk. Out in Colorado I have learned to understand cattle and they have made me rich."

"Mr. Clayton can talk."
"Yes, a little too well. Unfortunately he is not honest, and a dishonest man ought not to thrive anywhere. In Colorado he wouldn't live long. Thieves are summarily dealt with."

About seven o'clock Mr. Packard invited Rupert to dine with him at Delmonico's.

Rupert had heard a great deal about this celebrated restaurant, and was glad to accept the invitation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SCENE AT DELMONICO'S.

The two friends entered Delmonico's on the Broadway side, and took seats at one of the windows. Rupert after giving the order looked about him. He was curious to see that famous restaurant. He was destined to a surprise. At the second table, sitting with his back to Mr. Packard and himself, was a person whom he had the best reason to remember.

It was Clarence Clayton.
He touched Mr. Packard's arm and silently pointed to Clayton.
"Well, I'll be jiggered!" exclaimed the cattle man in surprise. "That fellow has got nerve."

Mr. Clayton was evidently enjoying himself. Beside his plate stood a pint bottle of champagne, of Delmonico's special brand. His dinner would probably involve an expense of five dollars.

"He must have sold or pawned the watch," suggested Rupert in a low voice.

At this moment Clayton looked around. He at once recognized the two whom he had last seen at the Battery.

"So we meet again?" he said coolly.

"Yes," answered the cattle man. "You appear to be having a pleasant time."

"I generally do," returned Clayton. "You seem to have negotiated a loan."

"I met a party who seemed to know more about gold watches than you do."

"I congratulate you," said Packard dryly.

Clayton returned to the discussion of his dinner, and soon the two friends were served.

"Shall I order some champagne, Rupert?" asked the man from Colorado.

"Not for me. I have promised my mother to avoid drink."

"You are wise. Far be it from me to tempt you. I have seen too much of the evil done by intemperance."

Clarence Clayton evidently had no such objection to drink. He drained the bottle, and calling for a cigar, leaned back in his chair with a self-satisfied smile.

"That fellow is a curiosity," Packard said. "He probably has good abilities, and would meet with success in an honest career. He has made poor use of his talents. I wonder if he ever reflects upon the inevitable end of his dishonesty."

"It doesn't seem to trouble him much," returned Rupert.

Neither he nor Clayton observed the quiet entrance of a small, unobtrusive man with sharp eyes, who taking rapidly glances at the guests moved towards the table occupied by the adventurer.

Sitting in pleasant enjoyment of his cigar, Clayton's attention was drawn by a slight tap on his shoulder. Looking up in momentary impatience he saw the new comer at his side.

Stifling an ejaculation he stared at him in dismay.

"Mr. Clayton," said Detective Darke in a low voice, "I see you know me."

"No, I can't say I have the pleasure," stammered Clayton.

"You are polite to call it a pleasure. I am Richard Darke."

"Can I offer you a glass of champagne, Mr. Darke?"

"There doesn't seem to be any left in the bottle."

"I will order another."

"I won't put you to that trouble. I have business with you, and must request you to go with me."

"But—"

"I can take no denial," said the detective sharply. "Go up to the desk, settle your bill, and then we will go out together. There will be no scene, and no one will know my errand, if you obey my directions."

Clayton went up to the desk, paid his check, and then, turning to the detective, said, "I am at your service."

By this time Rupert noticed what was going on, and silently called the attention of Mr. Packard to it.

"Poor chap!" said the cattle man, as Clayton and his unwelcome companion left the restaurant, "his punishment has come sooner than I anticipated. He will be punished, but I am afraid the owner of the watch stands a poor chance of recovering his property."

"Probably he will get possession of the pawn ticket, and so secure the watch though it may cost him twenty five dollars."

"It will be some time before the thief gets another such dinner as he has eaten tonight."

After supper Packard said, "Are you feeling tired, Rupert?"

"Oh no, sir."

"Then suppose we go to some theater."

"All right, sir. What theater do you prefer?"

"I leave the choice to you."

"Palmer's Theater is very near."

"Then let us go there."

They reached the theater just as the curtain was rising. Mr. Packard bought two choice seats, and they were soon seated in the orchestra. As soon as he had a chance to look about him, Rupert discovered to his surprise that Mr. Lorimer and Julian were sitting directly in front of him. At the sound of his voice Julian turned, and was greatly surprised to see the bell boy occupying as high priced a seat as himself.

When the first act was ended, he took measures to gratify his curiosity.

"I am surprised to see you here," he said.

"It is a mutual surprise," responded Rupert.

"You know what I mean. It is not usual to meet bell boys in orchestra seats."

"I was not asked at the ticket office what was my employment."

"Are you here alone?"

"No, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Packard, of Colorado."

Julian glanced at the cattle man, and was not impressed. Mr. Packard's clothing was by no means stylish. Julian naturally supposed him to be a person of small means and no particular consequence. He gave him a slight nod, and turned his face towards the stage.

"What is the name of that boy?" asked the cattle man.

"Julian Lorimer."

"Is he related to Stephen Lorimer?"

"Stephen Lorimer is his father. Do you know him?" asked Rupert in surprise.

"Stephen Lorimer is a cousin of mine."

"There he is next to Julian."

Mr. Lorimer's ears caught the sound of his own name, and turning he recognized Rupert, but not his cousin.

"You here, Rupert Rollins!" he said in surprise.

"Yes, sir. Do you know this gentleman with me?"

Stephen Lorimer regarded the cattle man blankly.

"No," he answered slowly, "I don't know him."

"Perhaps you will remember the name of Giles Packard," said the cattle man, but his tone was cold and not cordial.

"Are you Giles Packard?"

"Yes."

Stephen Lorimer looked embarrassed.

"I hope you are prosperous," he said.

"Thank you—I am doing well now."

"Where do you live?"

"In Colorado."

"Ah—mines?"

"No, cattle."

"Call and see me. Rupert will tell you where I may be found."

"I may do so."

"Is he a cowboy?" asked Julian in an audible whisper.

Giles Packard heard the words, and he looked at Rupert with a smile.

"He is like his father," he said.

They did not again speak. After the play Stephen Lorimer went out of the theater without even a look at his new found relative. Rupert and the man from Colorado, following slowly, made the best of their way down Broadway to the Somerset House.

"How came you to know Stephen Lorimer?" asked Packard.

"He and my father were in business together in Buffalo some years since. They failed, and I have always believed that my father was defrauded. At any rate he lost everything while his old partner had money enough to start in the dry goods business in New York."

"History repeats itself," said Packard. "Many years ago when I was twenty two I was the partner of Stephen Lorimer."

"You!"

"Yes. In fact I furnished three fourths of the capital. At the end of eighteen months we failed. I never could understand why, for our business had been good. Stephen kept the books, and I examined without being able to understand them. The upshot of it was that I was thrown upon the world penniless, while he soon went into business for himself in another place. I have not seen Lorimer for twenty years, till accident brought us together tonight."

"I am glad you have become prosperous again."

"Yes. I have far more money than when I belonged to the firm of Lorimer & Packard."

"Perhaps Mr. Lorimer would take you in as partner again."

"I have no desire to be associated with him in any way. I believe him to be a thoroughly dishonest man. I am sorry that your father has suffered also at his hands."

Rupert accompanied Mr. Packard to the hotel, having agreed to relieve another bell boy from midnight till six o'clock the next morning.

When he reached the hotel he found it a scene of excitement. The bell of No. 61 had been ringing violently for some time.

The other bell boy had come down stairs in a panic.

"I can't get into No. 61," he reported. "There is somebody dead or murdered there."

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT HAPPENED IN NO. 61.

"Come up stairs with me, Rupert," said Mr. Malcolm the clerk. "You've got a head on your shoulders. We'll soon find out what's the matter."

They ascended in the elevator to the third floor, and made their way hurriedly to No. 61.

There was a sound of a child's crying inside. Mr. Malcolm tried the door but it was locked.

"Open the door!" he called out.

"I can't," was the answer in a young child's voice. "It's locked."

"Can't you turn the key?"

"No; I don't know how."

"You will have to get through the transom," said the clerk. "If we only had a step ladder."

"Lift me up and I'll get through," said Rupert. "I have practiced in a gymnasium."

"Very well, if you think you can."

The clerk bent over, and Rupert, standing on his shoulders, was lifted so that he could reach the transom.

Then by a skillful movement he raised himself still farther till he could look inside.

"What do you see?" asked Malcolm.

"There is a man lying on his face on the floor. He must have had an or something."

"Can you get through, and lower yourself to the floor?"

"I think so. I will try."

"It is the only way to get into the room."

In very quick time Rupert accomplished his object. He turned the key, and opened the door.

It was as he had said. A man lay prone upon the floor, and beside him crying bitterly was a pretty little boy of five, who was evidently very much frightened.

"Papa sick," he said.

Malcolm bent over the prostrate man, and tearing open his vest placed his hand on his heart.

"The man is dead!" he said gravely, turning to Rupert.

The child was undressed, and the appearance of the bed showed that he at least had occupied it.

"How long has your papa been lying here?" asked Malcolm.

"I don't know. I woke up a little while ago, and I saw him on the floor."

"Is he cold?" asked Rupert.

"Yes; he must have been lying here for some time. Probably he was about to undress, when he had an attack of some kind, and fell as we see him. Call Dr. Bancroft."

A physician from Massachusetts was one of the guests of the hotel, and occupied Room 57.

Summoned by Rupert he entered the room and immediately made an examination of the body.

"Died of heart disease!" he said briefly.

"Will papa soon be well?" asked the little boy anxiously.

"We can tell you better tomorrow," said the physician pityingly. "You had better go with this gentleman, as not to disturb your father, and we will do what we can for him."

Soothed by this assurance, for the little fellow did not understand that his father was beyond earthly help, the boy was led away and put in charge of a sympathetic lady guest for the night.

"Has he been dead long, doctor?" asked Malcolm.

"Probably for over an hour. What is his name?"

"I have forgotten. It is on the register."

"Perhaps we may find a letter in his pocket that will throw light on the matter."

Malcolm put his hand in the inside coat pocket, and drew out, first, a letter addressed to

PAUL HARVEY.

Albany.

New York

The other had no envelope and seemed to be an open letter.

It ran thus:

To whom it may concern—

My doctor tells me that I am likely at any moment to drop dead from heart disease. I do not dread death for myself, but when I think of my little Fred, soon to be left fatherless as he is already motherless. I am filled with anxiety. I am practically

alone in the world, and there is no one to whom I can confide. Should death come to me suddenly, I trust some kind hearted person will adopt Freddie, and supply a father's place to him. In my inside vest pocket will be found securities amounting to eleven hundred dollars. After defraying my funeral expenses there will probably be a thousand dollars left. I leave it to any one who will undertake the care and maintenance of my dear little boy.

Paul Harvey."

The three looked at one another after the clerk had read the letter.

"Here is a responsibility for some one," said Dr. Bancroft. "I wish it were in my power to take the little boy, but I am only here as a guest, and circumstances will not permit."

"I am a bachelor, and should find it impossible to assume such a charge," said the clerk, "though I feel for the little fellow."

An inspiration had come to Rupert. His heart had gone out to the little boy so tragically deprived of his natural protector.

"I will take the little boy, if you are willing," he said.

"You! A boy! What can you do with him?" asked Malcolm.

"I am boarding in a nice family," he said. "I will put him under the care of Mrs. Benton who has a young son of her own."

"But do you realize what a responsibility you are assuming?"

"I do, and I am not afraid. I never had a little brother, and I shall be fond of Fred."

"What do you think, doctor?" asked the clerk.

"I think from the little I know of this boy, that, though a young guardian, he will be a reliable one. I recommend that Fred, if that's his name, be put under his charge."

"In that case, according to the father's direction the money will go to Rupert."

"Please take charge of it, Mr. Malcolm, till the funeral is over. Then we will place it in some bank."

"It will not go very far towards paying for the boy's board and education. He can't be more than five or six."

"When it is gone I will support him."

No objection was made and it was agreed that Rupert should have the custody of the little orphan not yet conscious of his loss.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. PACKARD'S GIFT.

It was not until the next day that Giles Packard knew of the tragedy in No. 61. He had gone to bed at once on reaching the hotel, and had not heard of Rupert's adopting a child.

"What is this I hear, Rupert?" he asked, on meeting the bell boy. "I hear you have an adopted son."

"Yes," answered Rupert with a smile.

"Won't you get tired of the care and responsibility?"

"I think not."

"Besides there will be considerable expense."

"The money left by his father will pay that till I am older and am earning more."

"Not many boys of your age would dare to assume such a charge."

"Perhaps not, but Fred is such a sweet boy I cannot help loving him."

"Look here, Rupert, won't you let me share the expense? I am rich and have no family ties."

"Thank you, Mr. Packard. I am very much obliged to you, but I should like to feel that I am Fred's sole guardian. I want him to learn to love me."

"I don't know but you are right. I won't interfere if you don't wish me to."

That evening Rupert took Fred to Mr. Benton's.

"I have brought you another boarder," he said.

Mrs. Benton looked surprised.

"Is it a relation of yours?" she asked.

"He is my son."

The good lady looked amazed.

"My adopted son," amended Rupert with a smile, and then he told her of the sudden death at the hotel, and little Fred's bereavement. Mrs. Benton's heart went out to the little orphan, and she stooped and kissed him.

"Will you live with me?" she asked.

"I am going to live with him," said little Fred, taking Rupert's hand.

"He will live here, too."

"Then I will stay," answered the child gravely. "I am to stay with him till papa comes back."

They had told the little boy that his father had gone on a long journey and wished him to stay with Rupert during his absence. He had acquiesced quietly for he was a docile child, and transferred his affection to Rupert, of whose love he felt assured.

"Now, Mrs. Benton, I must make a bargain with you for Fred's board."

Mrs. Benton at first refused to accept anything, protesting that a child would be little expense, but Rupert told her that the father had left money, and finally induced her to accept three dollars a week.

"I am afraid that is too little," said the bell boy.

"No; it will help pay the rent, and I shall like to have Freddie here as a companion for Harry."

So it was arranged, and the little boy was provided with a happy and comfortable home at small expense.

Two days later Giles Packard sought out Rupert during an interval of the bell boy's labors.

"How is the little boy?" asked the cattle man.

"He is well, and he seems to be happy. He thinks his father is away on a journey."

"The journey we must all take some time," said Packard gravely. "Then you won't accept my help towards paying for the child's maintenance?"

"It won't be necessary, Mr. Packard. I am to pay only three dollars a week for his board."

"His clothing will cost something."

"Mrs. Benton will manage that. She says it won't cost over fifty dollars a year."

"I foresaw that you wouldn't let me help support the boy, so I have got even with you in another way."

"How is that?" asked Rupert, puzzled.

Mr. Packard smiled.

"I decided to make you a present," he said. "You won't refuse that?"

"No; I am sure you are a good friend, and I won't reject your kindness."

Rupert fancied Mr. Packard might be intending to give him fifty dollars, or something like that, and he felt that it would be ungracious to refuse.

The man from Colorado drew from his pocket a large sized envelope, and from it took a legal document.

"This," he said, "is a deed of two hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street. The deed is made out to you, and establishes your ownership."

"I didn't know you had any lots in Harlem," said Rupert in surprise.

"Neither had I till yesterday. I bought them through a real estate agent on Third Avenue, after carefully considering several others."

"But, Mr. Packard, they must have cost you a good deal of money."

"Two thousand dollars."

"And you give me such a valuable present?"

"Yes, Rupert, and I am glad to do so. Don't think I have pinched myself to do it. I am a rich man, and I haven't a chick or child, except—well except you," he continued with a smile.

"I don't know that I ought to ac-

cept such a handsome present, though I fully appreciate your great kindness."

"I don't quite see that you have any choice. The deed is made out in your name, and in due time you will find that you will have to pay taxes on them."

"Then I suppose I must submit. I don't know how to thank you."

"Then don't do it. It would make me feel awkward. I will give you some good advice before I leave you. Those lots I believe will advance in price very rapidly. Building is going on very near them, and they are in the path of improvement. My advice is that you hold on to them at least five years. They may realize you a small fortune."

"I will certainly be guided by your advice. Do you know Mr. Packard, I imagine there are very few bell boys in New York who are as rich as I am."

"I don't think I have ever heard of a bell boy millionaire," said the cattle man, smiling, "though I hope the one before me may make the first exception to a general rule. Did I tell you that I expect to start on my return to Colorado tomorrow?"

"So soon as that?"

"Yes; I have received news from my agent there—good news, mind—that makes it advisable for me to abridge my visit. May I hope that you will write me sometimes?"

"I shall be glad to do so, Mr. Packard."

"Mind, it is a compact. Some time I expect you to visit me out there."

"When my child gets a little older," said Rupert with a smile.

"And if at any time you find the expense too great for your means, let me help you."

"I will."

So the two friends parted, and Rupert resumed his regular routine as a bell boy.

CHAPTER XXI. RUPERT BECOMES A CONFIDANT.

Some three months later Rupert's attention was called to a boy of seventeen or thereabouts, with long black hair and a high forehead, who registered as a guest, and took one of the cheapest rooms in the hotel.

The boy seemed to have no companion, and to know very little about the city.

"Can you direct me to Palmer's Theater?" he asked rather diffidently.

"It is on Broadway, corner of Thirtieth Street," answered Rupert.

"And Daly's?"

"That is nearly opposite on the other side of Broadway."

The boy took out a memorandum book and noted down these addresses.

"What can he want at these theaters?" thought Rupert.

Of course he might want to buy a reserved seat in advance, but Rupert did not think it likely.

After getting his information the boy went out (it was about ten o'clock) and did not reappear till four o'clock in the afternoon. Rupert noticed him as he entered the hotel and observed that he looked anxious and despondent. He did not go up stairs at once, but sank into a chair near Rupert, and apparently gave way to sorrowful reflections.

"He has some secret trouble," thought the bell boy. "If he would speak to me I might be able to comfort him."

On the impulse of the moment he went up to the young guest, and asked in a low tone of sympathy, "Are you in any trouble?"

The boy started, flushed and looked at Rupert half suspiciously. But there was something so friendly and sympathetic in Rupert's face that he was assured of his being a safe confidant.

"Yes," he said. "I am in trouble."

"If you will tell me perhaps I can help you."

The boy looked about him hesitatingly.

"I shouldn't like to tell you here," he answered. "There are too many people round."

"I shall be at leisure after six o'clock. Will that do?"

"Yes. Could you come up to my room?"

"I will come with pleasure."

"I want a confidant. I want advice. You are younger than I am—at least, you look so—but you have lived in the city while I am from the country."

"At any rate I will give you the best advice I can."

"Thank you. I feel better for having found a friend. I will go and take a walk, and you will find me here at six o'clock."

When Rupert got through work he found the boy waiting for him in the same place.

"I can go up stairs with you now," he said.

"All right!" said the young guest, rising from his seat quickly. "We will take the elevator, for my room is on the top floor."

"In business hours," said Rupert, "I am not allowed to use the elevator. Now I am no longer a bell boy but your visitor."

The room was a small hall bedroom. It was one that was let for seventy five cents a day, while the better and larger rooms ranged upwards to a dollar and a half. The room contained one chair only.

"Please take a seat," said the young host.

"But where will you sit?"

"I will sit on the bed. I don't know but you will laugh at me," he went on, "when I tell you what brought me to New York."

"Oh no. I shall not laugh at you, but first, as we are to be friends, let me tell you my name and ask yours. I am Rupert Rollins."

"That is a nice name. It sounds like a story name. Mine is Leslie Waters."

"Where do you live?"

"I was born and brought up in Rahway. That is in New Jersey, about twenty miles from New York. My father lives about a mile from the village. He has a small farm."

"And you were brought up to work on the farm?"

"Well, it isn't exactly a farm, but we raise vegetables and fruits for the New York market. I went to school till a year ago. Then I graduated, and since then I have worked for my father."

"Did you like it?"

"No, I don't like working on land. I feel," continued Leslie, flushing, "that I was born for something better and nobler. Besides I don't want to live in the country. I prefer the city. There's something going on here."

"Yes, that is true."

"And I wanted to be in the excitement. I'd rather live half as long in the city. You can live more here in a year than in the country in two years."

"Was there any particular thing that you wished to do?"

"Yes, I am coming to that. When I attended school there was one exercise that many of the boys did not like, but I did. I like to declaim. I began with such pieces as 'Casa-blanca'—you know that, don't you?"

"Oh yes," said Rupert, smiling. "I have spoken it more than once myself."

"But of course I got beyond that after a while. I used to speak pieces from Shakspeare and other dramatic authors. There was one I liked to speak in particular. It begins:

"The warrior bowed his crested head and tamed his heart of fire, And sued the haughty king to free his long imprisoned sire."

"Yes, I know the poem."

"I got a prize for speaking it at one of our closing examinations," said Leslie proudly. "Would you like to have me speak it for you now?"

"I am afraid it would attract attention in some of the neighboring rooms, as it is a spirited piece."

Leslie looked disappointed, but continued.

"Then I have spoken 'Young Lochinvar' also—I liked that."

"Did you never speak any prose pieces?"

"No, I didn't care for prose. I like poetry better. I wish we were alone, so I could speak something for you."

"We will go on an excursion some Sunday—say to Weehawken—and then I shall have a chance to hear you."

"I am afraid I shall not be able to stay in the city," said Leslie gloomily. "I have met nothing but disappointment since I came here."

(To be continued.)



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SNOW CHEERINESS.

Have you ever noticed it? We mean the cheeriness inspired in a good many people by a snow storm. There appears to be something exhilarating in buffeting the flakes as the wind sweeps them into our faces. Where rain would be dismal, with its plunkety plunk as it strikes the pavement, snow, dancing lightly, silently down, and getting in good, solid work without making a fuss about it, seems to call upon one to be in the same lightsome mood.

Of course you will find many who declare that snow is a nuisance, and be got rid of as quickly as possible, and where this is not practicable, to be endured with as much equanimity as can be drawn upon. And yet, if you were to watch these same people when one of the first snows of the winter is beginning to fall, you will be very apt to discover that they are in good spirits and for no reason that they could themselves assign. And, of course, they would not believe you if you told them it was the storm.

A BOY OUGHT TO BE GENTLE.

How few people analyze the word gentleman, and see that it is a gentle man? The stronger and more masculine a man is, the more sympathy he usually has for the weak and the dependent. He is mean and ungenerous when he takes advantage of his strength and independence, and he is making one of those mistakes which he will see after a while. He may seem to be having "more fun" if he neglects the little duties and courtesies which he ought to pay his mother and sisters and the other girls who are not his sisters, but he is jumping rocks, climbing up the wrong path when he does it, and when he gets farther along he will see it. He is putting himself out of the procession of gentlemen. He is not learning the little ways which make a nature lovable and respected by every one.

These things can only come by daily contact with refinement, by a daily practice of refined manners. The boy

is injuring himself, and injuring his own prospects in life, when he lets his mother do a thing which he knows he ought to do for her, he is blunting his own sense of what is right; when he sits still in a crowded car, and lets a lady stand, nobody may know it but himself, but he has lowered his own standard, and has so much less self respect. It is impossible that any man should respect another who does not respect himself. Once lower your own standard, do things which you would not admire in another person, and you have done yourself an injury. Every mean and selfish thing you do, injures yourself. After a while you will forget what is the right thing, and all the world will come to notice that you are a man who is off the right track.

WHAT A BOY OUGHT TO LEARN.

The first thing he wants to learn is, that the world is a big, big place, and that it is ever so much older and more experienced and wiser than he is, and that it is to be treated with respect. It has taken thousands of years to bring the world to its present state of civilization, and in all that time it has been gathering in and hoarding up experience, experience which has come from a realization of its own mistakes.

The world makes mistakes sometimes, but as it goes on it sees them, and tries to rectify them. The boy who sees a practice universal may not understand why he should follow it; he may think it is silly and stupid, and say that "for his part he is not going to waste his time," but he is making a mistake. It makes us think of a country boy who went into town to an academy to prepare for college. After he had been there a week he went to the teacher and refused to study his arithmetic any longer. "Why," he said, "I can do the sums away over here on the last page, all out of my own head. I don't have to learn these rules."

"Do you expect to go on in mathematics?" the teacher asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Suppose John, there was a road up a mountain, where you had to carefully consider every step, but which led you straight to the top, and down near the bottom you could leave the road and get a third of the way up by jumping from rock to rock, but at the end of that third it would be impossible to go on; would you be wise to leave the path, either to stop part way up, or to come all the way back and start again? A great many wise men have thought and worked a long time over that pathway through the arithmetic."

It is so with every pathway in life. There is almost always disaster for the boy who leaves the way that has been marked out. One of the great reasons why so many boys do not succeed in a new country, is because the pathways are not marked there. Keep a close watch on what the world respects and honors and gives success to, and you will see the pathway.

A BOY OUGHT TO BE AN ATHLETE.

There is always a great deal of discussion upon this question, but the fact remains that the athletes in colleges have a finer record as students than the other men average. This is one of the things which experience has proven. When the new University of Chicago was founded, it was intended to contain the very safest and soundest pathway to fine American manhood and womanhood. The very first man put on the faculty was Mr. Stagg, the Professor of Athletics. A man cannot receive a full degree at that university, unless he has taken the course in physical culture. They believe out there that the brain is a part of the body, and that the same nerves and blood run through it, as the rest of the body, and that when you have a sound body and sound brain, you are apt to have a healthy mind.

A man isn't half a man who has not courage, and who has not his muscles so trained that his body is at home everywhere, is ready for every emergency. He must learn to swim, because he not only misses a rare and exhilarating sport otherwise, but because he never knows when the lives of others as well as his own may depend upon the knowledge. He must learn to throw straight, to shoot, because steady nerves and steady eyes are valuable every hour of the day.

And he must not neglect the softer parts of athletics. He must learn to dance. To learn to make alert, graceful movements in time to music is a beautiful art. Best of all, with all these things comes a sense of power. The boy becomes acquainted with his own body, and learns how to manage it. Instead of his being awkward and shy "not knowing what to do with his hands," his body has been trained until it is an obedient and ready servant. It is graceful and easy instinctively. He does not have to give it a second thought.

It is not pleasant to dine with a man whose servants are uncouth and clumsy, however entertaining he himself may be; nor is it pleasant to associate with a man whose body is untrained and awkward. He must be very clever to make you forget it even for a little while.

Some Queer Fish.

BY A. R. LEACH.

It seems as if nature was an indulgent mother who could not see her children want anything very much (and everything living belongs to nature) without bestowing it. But there is one thing which must be always remembered and taken into consideration. Nature does not acknowledge any one single individual as belonging to her. She will not go out of her way to accommodate any one creature. It is the whole race which she looks after.

When a little fish more adventurous than another says that he likes insects, and that too few settle upon the surface of the water, and that he wants to go out on land and hunt, nature pays no attention. The little fish leaves the water and miserably dies. Then another fish, and another and another, tries the same thing. Then nature looks about.

"Dear me," she says, "I need those little fish. They must not kill themselves. Do they insist upon going out on dry land to hunt insects? Then I suppose I must give them a pocket to carry water in."

It is a very grudging little pocket at first, but they distend it more and more, and in ten or fifteen or twenty thousand generations the pocket is large enough to enable them to go quite a little distance from the water and be quite comfortable.

The fish who have the pockets now, know nothing at all about those first ones who went out without any real provision and died. Probably the other fishes in their day and generation called them "cranks," and "fanatics," and all sorts of names, which were undoubtedly well enough applied, but while these fishes brought only death to themselves, they made it possible for their followers to enjoy what they could not. This is a story that we see among men as well as fishes.

There are a great many fish which are not only provided with pockets for carrying water while they go out and hunt their food, but there are others with a great many more interesting peculiarities. The famous climbing perch not only come out of the water and climb trees in search of food, but when they feel that the stream in which they live is about to dry up, they leave in great bodies, and sometimes move for long distances in search of another stream. They usually make their journey at night, but they are sometimes met in the middle of a dusty road, in the glare of the hot sun of India, which country is their home. One of the most curious things is that they always go in a direct line to the nearest stream which suits their purpose.

There are some facts which scientists

have no possible way of explaining. It might all be simple enough were we to allow that animals and insects could talk to each other, or it may be that they have senses and perceptions of which human beings know nothing.

Most curious of all fish is the angler. This is a great, lazy creature that lies inert on the bottom of the sea. It is the color of the gray mud and the seaweed about it, so that even the fish swimming near it cannot see it. It has a fringe soft and waving which grows along its sides, and looks exactly like seaweed. From its upper jaw there projects a waving spine which is exactly like a fisherman's rod and line, baited. There hangs from it a little particle of red flesh. This attracts the fish, and as they are about to seize it, a yawning mouth opens underneath and the poor luckless, hungry little fish is gobbled up. It can hold anything in its capacious stomach, and has been known to swallow the wooden buoys on lobster pots. It is almost the ugliest fish in the sea, wearing an expression of stupid greediness.

The torpedo fish looks something like the angler, but nature has bestowed upon it one of her strangest and least understood gifts. It is heavy and ugly and sluggish, and cannot move about either to seek food, or to defend itself, but in that ugly body on either side is a storehouse of electricity. On either side of the head is a regular electric battery made of plates held in a solution. Two or three weeks ago we spoke on this page of the usefulness of studying natural history for hints upon inventions, because nature never made any mistakes nor took out any patents. Electric batteries are of comparatively recent origin, yet here, lying hidden in the head of this fish, were two perfect ones, strong enough to knock down a full grown man.

Water is a good conductor, and when a fish swims near the torpedo the batteries are put into use, the fish is knocked senseless, and eaten. The torpedo is a regular ogre.

There is a clever little fish which has learned a trick that is much more sportsmanlike than any of the others. It is known as the archer. It is a species of sunfish, and like the climbing perch it took a fancy to insects which would not come within reach. But the ancestors of this little fellow had no notion of becoming martyrs. They had plucky, level heads. They simply began learning to shoot. One would take a drop of water in its mouth and cautiously swimming up near the coveted insect, fire away at it. I suppose in the beginning the bug had to be very near, and even then I suspect that it often sat upon a leaf and jeered at the fish who were making it a target and only succeeding in blowing bubbles. But as years went by the archers became more and more skilled, and now it can often down an insect eighteen inches away.

These fish are found in East Indian waters, and much prized as pets by the Chinese and Japanese. They put them into beautifully ornamented globes and place insects within range to see them shoot them.

There is a fish called the echenesis about which all sorts of curious tales have been told. It has on the top of its head a disk which is so constructed that it has the very strongest sucking power. This fish, when it wants to go anywhere in a hurry, doesn't take the trouble to swim there. It waits until it finds a great fish, like a shark, to which it attaches itself, and sails away. The larger fish often takes an echenesis along and lets it have the remains of a feast. It is probably, like other hangers-on in the world, amusing company, because no one has ever known of the big fish resenting its society.

Some fishermen have trained these fish to angle for them. They attach the echenesis to a line and throw it overboard. It dashes after one of its old friends and attaches itself to the sucker, and before the big fish knows it, it is floundering about in captivity. All of this goes to prove that the ways of fish and men are something alike, and that as there are no inventions which nature has not used long ago, so has she antedated the tricks of men in the lessons she has taught her humbler children.

OPPORTUNITIES.

All common things, each day's events
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

—H. W. Longfellow.

The Burning of the Montauk.

BY MARCUS D. RICHTER.

Not long since I read in the newspaper of the terrible experience of the officers and crew of the coal laden steel ship Cedarbank, which was towed into San Francisco a perfect floating volcano, and it reminded me of a like experience of my own which occurred, however, several years since. The Cedarbank is a steel ship, but the vessel to which I refer was the Montauk, built before steel ships were known to any extent, and upon which we fought fire for nearly as long a time as did the crew of the Cedarbank.

Captain Jared Partlo was the skipper of the Montauk and part owner, beside, so he was always on the outlook for good freights. I was second mate and had been with him for two voyages before the one which ended so disastrously.

We had come out from New York to Sydney, Australia, with a general cargo, and before we were fully unloaded the captain had an idea that it would pay the owners (himself included) to run up to Newcastle (at that time Newcastle was just becoming known as a coaling port) and take a cargo of coal to San Francisco.

Now the Montauk wasn't planned for such work, but she had an enormous hold and was with a very well built, seaworthy vessel, and had, in her time done about every other kind of heavy freighting. Captain Partlo wasn't a man you could argue with if he once got a plan into his head, so we shipped four extra hands, and made a quick run to Newcastle. As a usual thing American ships aren't wanted in Australian waters, but at that time ships were scarce, rates were high, and the skipper had little difficulty in getting a cargo. Well, I'd never been on a coal ship before, and I swore then I'd never be there again. The coal did not find its way into every part of the ship; no crevice was too small for the abominable particle to sift through. On a whaler you expect to eat and sleep in whale oil; but whale oil is preferable to coal dust. It's more palatable in your food, any way.

It took us several days after getting to sea to get the deck and upper works decently cleaned once more, and then, the wind being light and everything snug, the captain advised me, for the sake of keeping the men busy, to have the hatch-combings painted and the rails touched up a little. We had a half grown boy with us that trip named Harry Collins—a likely little fellow who came of sea going folks, and who, when at home, lived not far from Searsport, Maine. They used to say that Searsport babies would swim when they were a day old, and were never too young to steer a boat; however that may be, Harry was a born sailor, and as cool as ice in any emergency.

I set a gang at work on the port rail and ordered the boy to remove the tarpaulin from the forward hatch, and was just going below for my pipe, for Captain Partlo was very easy on us in the matter of smoking, when Harry tapped me on the arm. He had laid back the tarpaulin from one corner of the hatch and with a silent gesture pointed to a thin column of smoke issuing from a crack in the hatch.

"The coal's afire, sir," he whispered, and though the sight seemed to send every drop of blood in my veins surging back to my heart, the lad's voice never shook a particle, and he was as calm as though we were laying alongside the wharf at San Francisco, instead of being more than a thousand miles away from that port.

I tore down to the captain's room like a shot and told him, and if ever the old man was roused, 'twas then.

"Great Peter!" he sings out, when he'd landed on the deck and sniffed the smoke which was coming out faster and faster; "yank off that hatch!"

There wasn't any standing on ceremony, but every man who was near did something and the hatch came off. Then

belched forth a cloud of the thickest smoke I ever saw, and we were all driven back from the hole. Still, it was hard telling how much real fire there was in that twenty five hundred or more tons of coal, and after some discussion the captain ordered the hatch down again, hoping that the conflagration would be smothered.

We had a small donkey engine aboard and we got the fire lit under it and the pumps tackled on all ready for any emergency, and then we waited for four days, hoping that the fire would die out. At the end of that time the captain ordered the hatch off again, and dense clouds of smoke and gas poured out of the hold. There was no use in wishing otherwise this time, for all knew that the hold of the Montauk was a seething volcano which might burst through the decks at any moment.

We were hundreds of miles from land and all we could do with the wind holding as it was, was to keep on toward San Francisco, endeavoring meanwhile to try and control the conflagration after.

The hatches were taken off and we went to work digging down through the coal towards the seat of the fire. And then commenced an experience that I hope may never be mine, or any other man's, again.

The heat and gas were so intense that it was impossible for us to remain long in the hold, and the few minutes we did stay was a period of actual agony. Officers and men worked alike, and I must say that I never saw better work done than was performed there while we were fighting for our lives with the fire demon.

We took coal tubs down with us, and as fast as one was filled the watch on deck hoisted it and emptied the coal overboard. Ton after ton was thrown away, and the hold grew hotter and hotter. After a time the coal became too hot to touch with the bare hands, and as the men were driven back to the deck, one after another, they were all but dead from suffocation. Again the hatches were battened down, and Captain Partlo ordered the boats made ready for instant departure.

Each boat was provisioned, and every man knew his place in his prescribed boat should it become necessary to leave the ship hurriedly. Charts, compasses and clothing were placed in the boats and the sails bent. Then we returned to our work of fighting the fire. The steam pump was started and a heavy stream of water was poured into the hold for nearly twenty hours. Then, to our great joy, the fire appeared to have been checked.

After this rest we were able to once more commence the work of jettisoning the cargo, and we worked like demons for an entire day, making altogether nearly a hundred tons of coal which we had hoisted from the hold. The thermometer which I carried down registered 126 degrees part of the time, and the smoke, steam and gas were something fearful.

At night we were forced to abandon the work, and as soon as the hatches could be closed the pumps were started once more. The volume of steam which at once began to pour out of the ventilators showed that the fire was again gaining, and we began to feel it on deck. In two hours the pitch was boiling between the deck planks, and a thermometer held against the mizzenmast registered 130 degrees.

Nevertheless we kept the pumps at work, but at three o'clock the following

morning the pent up gases in the hold proved too much for the ship, and the forward hatch blew off with an explosion that shook the vessel from stem to stern and might have been heard two miles away.

Following the explosion a column of flame rushed out of the open hatch as high as the maintopmast yard, and word was passed at once to take to the boats. The terrified men rushed to their places and began to lower away the boats, but before the first one struck the water there was another loud explosion which seemed to fairly lift the deck of the Montauk, and again the lurid flames shot up from the rigging, this time setting the sails on fire.

I was belated in reaching my boat, and the second shock threw me with stunning force to the deck. My men were clamoring to be off, for all the other boats were lowered; but young Collins, who

picked up Captain Partlo's boat that night, but missed the mate's, and that got to the Islands afterwards in good condition. My own boat, however, was never heard from again, and it is very likely that, there being nobody aboard it who knew how to navigate, the poor fellows all perished.

I rewarded young Collins' faithfulness as best I could, and am glad to say that at the present time he is commanding a good ship of his own, and has, many times since the burning of the Montauk, shown his coolness and presence of mind to good effect in times of danger.

[This Story began in No. 574.]

A Mystery of the Forest.

BY E. E. YOUMANS,

Author of "The Lone Island," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PRODIGIOUS SURPRISE.

When Tom Hess separated from his friends on the banks of the river he started down the stream, determined to find the continuation of the lost trail, or satisfy himself that it did not lie in that direction.

His intention was to search carefully along on one side of the water for two or three miles, then cross over and retrace his steps on the other. In this way he felt that he would be sure to come upon it, and he pushed on as fast as possible.

He kept his eyes constantly fastened on the soft earth near the water's edge, and, after traveling in this way for more than an hour, suddenly uttered a glad cry. He had found the trail again, its fresh appearance indicating that it had been recently made.

"I don't believe it's more'n two hours old," he exclaimed, examining it carefully. "The men can't be far ahead; if I follow right on I'm sure I can overhaul them before night. How I wish the boys were here!"

He remembered the signal agreed upon, but he was fearful of firing his gun lest it should be heard by the ox drivers, and warn them of the pursuit.

He was sure the men were not more than two miles or so in advance, and could easily hear the report even though the wind was not blowing toward them.

It was clearly out of the question then to announce his success to the other boys, neither did he care to lose time in going back to tell them.

If the tramps had gained such a start as to render the possibility of overtaking them improbable, an hour's delay more or less would not have mattered, but, with a fair chance before him of coming upon them by pushing right on, Tom felt justified in modifying their original plans.

"I've gained an advantage which it would be foolish not to take," he told himself, "and the only sensible course is for me to follow them up. So here goes."

He turned away from the stream and plunged into the woods.

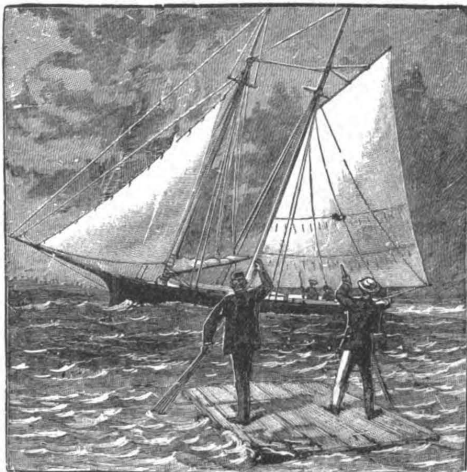
"If I overhaul them," he muttered, with flashing eyes, "I'll make them give up the oxen if I have to wing them both."

He did not forget that both men were armed, but his anxiety to recover his property was so great, and his indignation at the tramps so vehement, that he lost sight of all prudence.

The trail was well defined from this point, and he experienced no difficulty in following it.

He pushed steadily on, his eyes bent upon the ground before him. Haste was the most important point to be considered just now, and to this he gave all his attention.

He made considerable noise in working his way through the underbrush, and was conscious that he ought to be more careful, out the



WE WERE DELIGHTED WHEN WE SAW THAT WE HAD BEEN SIGHTED.

was in my boat, leaped back to the deck for me.

At that instant a third explosion came; the after hatch blew off, and a great cloud of smoke and flame hid us both from the eyes of the boat's crew. They saw us thrown to the deck by the shock, and not daring to remain longer, and thinking the ship already sinking, they let go the falls and left us to our fate.

In two minutes they were out of sight in the darkness, and we were left alone on the doomed vessel.

But the ship did not sink at once, nor did it burn in a moment, for it was mostly the gases which fed the flames. But we two could do nothing to stay the conflagration. I think that if the crew had stuck by her the way those brave fellows stuck to the Cedarbank, the Montauk might have been saved. Personally, I had been so stunned by the explosions that it was several minutes before I got back my wits.

When I did wake up to my duty I found that that cool headed boy, Collins, had got tools from the carpenter's room and was laying out a raft big enough to hold us both. I set to work with him, and just about daylight we launched it. By that time it was far too hot for comfort aboard the ship, and with two oars and a small supply of provisions and water, we pushed off from her side.

We hung about for some hours longer, however, hoping that some vessel would be attracted by the flames and smoke, and we were not disappointed; for, just after the Montauk burned to the water's edge and sank, a schooner hove in sight and bore down upon us. We were delighted when we saw that we had been noticed, and it was not long before we were aboard.

The schooner was the John Harding, of San Francisco, and as I knew all the Montauk's boats would lay their course for Honolulu, the schooner's captain continued his cruise in that direction. We

spirit of recklessness was upon him and his better judgment ignored.

Presently he found himself ascending a small hill, beyond which there appeared to be a deep ravine. When he reached the summit of the elevation he stopped with a cry of surprise, and at once became much excited.

He was closer upon the objects of his search than he had thought. They were not more than half a mile ahead.

From his elevated position he could look down over the underbrush into the ravine, and, as he gained the hill top and cast his eyes in that direction, he was just in time to catch sight of the oxen and the men, as they passed out from a clump of shrubbery into an open space to disappear again a moment later in the underbrush beyond.

That brief glance sufficed to show him that only one of the men carried a gun while the other was armed with a club, and something that glistened in the sunlight like the blade of a hatchet.

Tom's courage mounted rocket high as he saw this, and he started down the hill at breakneck speed.

"If that's all the arms you carry I reckon I can hold my own with you, my fine fellows," he cried, jumping over a large stone that chanced to be in his way, "and when I get—"

At that moment he crashed into a fallen log, and plunged head first down the hill. A clump of wild blackberry vines stopped his further progress. He rolled into them with such force that his hands and face were painfully scratched, and his clothes badly torn.

"Ugh!" he groaned, dragging himself out; "that was a stunner."

Then his eyes flashed vindictively as he continued shaking his fist angrily in the direction of the tramps. "It's all your fault, confound you. That's one more I owe you."

He wiped the blood from his face, picked up his gun, which fortunately had not been damaged by his fall, and started on again, curbing his impatience sufficiently to avoid another mishap. When he reached the bottom of the hill he broke into a run, heading down the ravine.

For more than five minutes he kept up this reckless pace, then gradually slowed down, partly to regain his breath and partly to listen for some indication of the men ahead. He was sure they could not be far away now, and he did not care to come upon them too suddenly.

But he could hear nothing of them, and he put himself in motion again. He was wise enough not to be too rash, and pushed on with as little noise as possible, though he chafed at the delay occasioned. Presently he was started by some one calling:

"Haw! there, Brindle! Where're you going?"

Tom stopped with a gasp of astonishment. The voice was only a short distance ahead, and sounded strangely familiar.

"If that wasn't Charlie Burke's father who spoke then," thought the surprised youth, "I must be dreaming. But what under the sun can he be doing here?"

Then he started as if he had been shot. Could it be possible that Mr. Burke was in league with the tramps and had assisted in driving off the oxen?

But this he could not believe. "I must be mistaken," he muttered. "It can't be Charlie's father."

With the greatest care he began to advance. In a few minutes he could hear the heavy tread of the oxen in the bushes, and soon after he came upon them.

If he was astonished before he was dumbfounded now. As he secured a good view of the two men he recognized Mr. Burke, sure enough, while the other proved to be his own father.

He was so utterly amazed by the unexpected sight that he was unable to suppress a shout.

The men turned quickly, both crying out in surprise as they recognized Tom.

"What under the sun are you doing here, my boy. Didn't you find my note?" asked Mr. Hess.

"What note?" repeated Tom, slowly coming forward.

"Way the note we wrote and fastened to a tree near the place where we found the oxen."

"We didn't see any note, and didn't know that you had kept on searching for the oxen. What does it all mean anyhow?"

Mr. Hess proceeded to explain. "When the oxen first wandered away I set out to find them, leaving word with your mother that you and George were to follow as soon as you came home. I would have waited for you, but didn't care to lose the time, as it was necessary to find the cattle before they got lost in the woods."

"Mr. Burke happened to meet me just as I was entering the forest. He was in search of some of his cows that had also wandered off, but they were soon found and driven back home. Then he offered to help me find the oxen, and we set out together. We found the trail near a stream of water, but there it ended, and the animals must have waded through the brook, for we had to travel a long way before we came upon it again."

"We then followed rapidly on, and some time after found the oxen. Then an idea came into my mind. I knew you had sold the yoke to Mr. Bell, and it was just about as near to drive them through the woods and cross the mountain, coming around thence to Bell's farm, as it would be to go all the way back home and take the road around the hills."

"Mr. Burke agreed to help me, and, after we had explained all in a note which we fastened to a tree where I thought you'd be sure to see it when you came along, we started. We had a rough time of it and had it not been for Mr. Burke's hatchet would have been stuck time and again. We reached another stream, and purposely drove the oxen through the water for a long distance as it was easier going, and not very much out of our way. In fact it brought us nearer to the mountain pass."

"We had considerable trouble with 'em at night and many times they were very unruly. They're quite wild now, and I'm glad you have come, though I'm sorry you missed finding my note."

Tom then proceeded to explain all that had befallen them since leaving home, and the two men looked very serious when he had finished.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH SEVERAL EVENTS OCCUR.

Mr. Hess and Mr. Burke were both very much disturbed at what Tom had told them, and for some time they were undecided what to do. If there was any danger likely to befall Charlie and George back in the forest they felt that they ought to return and find them, but in order to do this the oxen would have to be abandoned.

After consulting a while, however, it was decided to continue with the oxen to Mr. Bell's farm, and get back as soon as possible. So they started again, Mr. Burke going on ahead selecting the smoothest way for the oxen. With Tom's assistance they were easier to manure, and a fair degree of progress was made.

By sunset the pass was reached, and the journey through the mountain begun. A little later Mr. Burke came running back, somewhat excited.

"I just saw a fellow with a gun in his hand, standing on a rock a little way ahead. Look out for him

when you pass," he said warningly. "He may be some hunter, of course, but I don't like the way he acted. I halted him and he wouldn't answer."

"I reckon it doesn't signify anything," replied Mr. Hess. "He may be some old hermit from back in the mountains."

At the same time they kept a sharp lookout for the man as they passed the rock, but nothing was seen of him.

Just beyond, the canyon narrowed to a small defile, but after passing through this it spread out to its usual width again, and from this point to the other side of the mountain the journey was comparatively easy.

The hands on Mr. Hess' watch had not reached the hour of eleven when they at last emerged from the pass and entered the highway leading around the hills to Mr. Bell's farm. It was not much after that hour when they reached their destination, and drove the oxen through the gate and up to the barn.

The farmer had of course gone to bed, but he was soon awakened, and came out, considerably surprised, to see what had occurred.

"Wal, I be dined," he said, when the situation was explained. "That's what I call luck. I wanted to use 'em badly tomorrow, an' when you didn't come with 'em this afternoon I gave up the idea of gettin' 'em in time. Now h'kosh here they are. Good enough. Wait till I get a lantern."

He returned to the house, coming back a few minutes later with the lantern in his hand, and the yoke were carefully housed in the barn.

"They're a fine couple, I think," said Mr. Bell, holding up the light to get a better look at them. "I'm well pleased with my bargain. Come into the house, and I'll give you your money," he added, turning to Tom.

They followed the farmer into the kitchen, where they were surprised to find his wife placing a cold lunch on the table, together with a pitcher of milk.

"I thought you'd be hungry," explained Mr. Bell, "so I asked Maria to get you something to eat. Set right up now, and pitch in."

This they did without a second invitation. They were very hungry, and there was not much remaining on the table when they finally arose.

Meanwhile Mr. Bell had counted out the money for the oxen, which he now handed to Tom. The youth received it with a thrill of pleasure.

"Now I can get my gun," he said, as he put the bills in his pocket.

"Your what?" asked the farmer.

"My new gun. I'm going to buy me a breech loader with some of this money," Tom explained.

"Shucks! is that so. Maybe we can make another dicker. I've got a good one I'll sell. I'll show it to you."

He went into an adjoining room, reappearing in a moment with a fine weapon, and a belt full of shells, already loaded. Tom seized the gun with a cry of delight.

"It's a dandy," he said, when he had examined it. "What do you want for it?"

"It cost me twenty eight dollars. I'll sell it to you for twenty, and throw in the belt and shells."

"I'll take it," said Tom, counting out the amount.

The deal was soon concluded, then Tom buckled on the belt, picked up the gun and declared he was ready to set out on the return.

Mr. Bell invited them to stay all night, but this was not to be thought of.

Accordingly they bade the farmer good by, and started for the mountain, Mr. Burke carrying Tom's old gun, having thrust his hatchet through his belt. They reached the vicinity of the canyon just in time to see a man emerge from it, and break into a run down the road.

"That must be the fellow we passed

on our way through before," said Burke, and no further attention was paid to the incident.

They entered the gorge, pressing steadily on, and came at last to the narrow defile. Passing through this, they cast a quick glance around among the bowlders, for here was where Burke had seen the man, but all was quiet and they continued on their way.

Suddenly they came to an abrupt halt.

"Surely I heard something then," said Mr. Hess, grasping his gun and looking carefully around.

"So did I," added Burke. "It appeared to come from behind that rock yonder."

They advanced toward the bowlder, and the next moment two figures stepped out, two guns were leveled at them, and a voice that made Tom jump, sternly cried:

"Halt! Up with your hands!"

"It's George!" yelled Tom.

So it was, and as the two boys, recognizing Tom's voice, lowered their weapons and advanced, the newcomers fell back with cries of amazement. But their astonishment was nothing compared with that of George and Charlie as their eyes fell upon Mr. Hess and Mr. Burke.

For several seconds they were unable to speak, but as soon as George could find his voice he demanded:

"What does it all mean?"

Tom proceeded to explain while the two boys listened in amazement.

"Who'd have thought it was our own people who were leading us such a chase," gasped George, when his brother concluded.

He then proceeded to relate all that they had passed through since parting with Tom on the river bank.

"By George, that is serious," said Mr. Burke, as the youth concluded. "Hess," he continued, turning to that gentleman, "we got here just in time, eh?"

"So it seems," replied Tom's father, "I'm willing enough to give the detective a hand. That must have been he who came out of the canyon when we were approaching, and the fellow you saw on the rock, Burke, I'll bet was an outlaw."

"I think so, too," was the reply. "I didn't like the way he acted at the time."

It was now agreed to wait where they were for the detective and his posse, and the whole party put themselves under the shadow of an immense bowlder from which point they had a clear view up and down the canyon.

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 570.]

Brought to Book.

BY ANNIE ASHMORE,

Author of "The Hetherington Fortune," "Who Shall Be the Heir?" etc.

CHAPTER VII.

SUNSHINE THROUGH THE CLOUDS

When Tom presented himself in the great manufacturing establishment of Grayley & Co., he was immediately led into the presence of Mr. Grayley himself, and shut in with him. The tall, stern old man, who had meted out such hard lines to Tom's father, wheeled round in his office chair the moment the clerk was gone, and fixed a piercing gaze upon the lad, which Tom met modestly but firmly, and probably with some accusation as well if his eyes mirrored the thought in his mind.

"Have you seen your father?" asked Mr. Grayley bluntly.

"No sir," answered Tom, with a flush of anger, for he suspected the hard old man of wishing to know whether his father had laid in wait for him to coach him in his part. "Here is the telegram, if you wish to

see it," and he held it out with a gesture of unconscious defiance.

"Thank you, I have already seen it," returned the chief, waving the sheet aside. "Sit down there, and tell me in consecutive order the incidents which roused your suspicions of the young man, Walter Smythe."

Tom sat down, fearlessly facing the clear afternoon light, and told his story simply and briefly, Mr. Grayley listening with his keen eyes fastened upon the boy's face. He made no comment, but after reflecting over the information he had received, he asked:

"Do you know whether the young man has any relatives or friends in this city or elsewhere with whom he might hide himself?"

"I have never heard of any outside of Yantico," said Tom.

"Thank you; that is all I wanted to ask you," and the chief rang his table bell for the same clerk who had ushered Tom in.

"Tell Mr. Latimer I wish to see him," was his direction. "And you, young man," to Tom, "may wait outside for a few minutes; your father may have something to say to you before you return home."

For the first time during the interview a sign of human interest softened the hardened exterior of the successful man of business, as, with a faint smile, he rose and shook the lad by the hand, giving it a distinct pressure before he dropped it. Was he moved by the truth and candor which spoke in the boy's every look and tone, to make some small reparation for the unmerited harshness he had showed the father?

Be that as it may Tom felt no answering warmth; his dear father had suffered too much for the rich man's flattering graciousness to salve over the wound.

The clerk led him to one of the bare wooden benches, which were ranged in the whitewashed vestibule for the convenience of waiting customers, and left him to himself. Tom's eyes wandered through the open door of the great ground floor counting room, where groups of desks, with men bending over them or standing at them breast high, could be seen through cage-like compartments of brasswork.

At the opposite end by the rear wall of the building was a row of apartments inclosed by partitions of ground glass, and Tom knew that his father's former office had been in one of them. The juniors' room must be next it, he thought, and he would have liked to go and have a look round the scene of the misfortune which had fallen upon his blameless parent. He thought of the torpedo throwing urchin who had been seen by no one save Smythe—he could at least view that part of the field, and off he ran to do it.

Grayley & Co.'s was a huge building, detached from its neighbors on either side by a narrow passageway, which brought Tom out on a lane scarcely wide enough for the company's drays to turn round in.

Tom discovered the windows of the junior clerks' room immediately by the groups of youthful heads which were visible from the street; and he guessed that the window adjacent, which showed no heads, belonged to the manager's office. Between these windows stood a mouldering structure which had once been a low, covered porch; Tom looked inside and saw a place where a door had been bricked up. Then he noticed a patch of fresh bricks about three feet above the pavement; he felt the cement and found it still soft.

Wondering greatly, and making many guesses at the meaning of this mended spot in the wall of the manager's office—one of which guesses came very near the truth—Tom hurried back to his post, and was just in time to greet his father.

Mr. Latimer appeared to be greatly

excited, and immediately drew his son outside, where, passing his arm through his, he walked him up and down the pavement, talking in a low tone.

"God has been merciful to me today," he began reverently. "Your testimony, after the discovery of last night, was all that was needed to convince Mr. Grayley that he had suspected me wrongfully. Last night the watchman detected Walter Smythe in the act of breaking through the rear wall of the manager's office, exactly behind the safe."

"That's what the new patch means!" exclaimed Tom. "I've just been round looking at it; I wondered whether that hadn't something to do with Smythe. And has he confessed anything about the money?"

"He escaped; the watchman was careless, and Smythe jerked free and darted off like a shot into the darkness," said Mr. Latimer.

"He's good at taking to his heels," grumbled the disappointed Tom. "So the fourteen thousand are as much lost as before, but what could Smythe's idea have been? That he could blow up the safe?"

"It's hard to conceive what his plan was. He could hardly have hoped to make unheeded, an explosion heavy enough to wreck the solid iron; it takes a very skillful burglar to do such a thing, and the lad appeared to have no accomplice; he was alone."

"Walt Smythe was always a stupid blockhead, you know," remarked Tom. "He must have been by himself in the business, for if anybody else had been in with him they wouldn't have let him try such an impossibility as that. So he hasn't shown up since?"

"No, nor has he been heard of at home since noon yesterday. He was not at Grayley's at all."

"Aha! His little interview with me happened just before noon," cried Tom. "My promise to inform Mr. Grayley that he was tattling about their private business outside must have made him desperate. I suppose he went straight off to the city to prepare for his little adventure last night. But it is too bad that he wasn't bagged; he has been proved a would be thief, but that doesn't say that he's the thief who stole the fourteen thousand."

"Well, a jury mightn't feel justified in returning a verdict of guilty," said Mr. Latimer, "but viewed in the light cast by your narrative, Mr. Grayley declares himself morally convinced that Smythe is the thief. He has completely exonerated me, and reinstated me in my old position."

Mr. Latimer's eyes sparkled, his cheek flushed; his honor was dearer than life to him.

"I'm so glad, father!" said Tom simply, but the clasp he gave his father's hand spoke the loving pride for which he had no words.

"Yes, Tom; the burden of disgrace has been lifted off my shoulders, and I have hope and courage to believe that a few years will rid me of my burden of debt also."

"Mr. Grayley still holds you responsible for the money?" murmured Tom sadly.

"No, Tom, he does not, but I myself do," returned his father firmly. "If I had been on the alert, as those who handle the money of others should always be, the most adroit of thieves could not have got at the package of notes. Mr. Grayley generously offered to let the firm bear the loss, but I could not consent to that. No man shall pay for my blunders."

Tom walked by his father for a minute in thoughtful silence, then looking up with earnest eyes he exclaimed:

"Father, I hope I shall be as honest a man as you; I'll try to be."

"Thank you, my son," murmured

Mr. Latimer with emotion. "That's the gladdest assurance you could give me."

Tom returned home happier than he had been since the blow fell. He carried joy to the loving hearts so patiently waiting there. The poisoned fang of misfortune—which is infamy—had been withdrawn, but its heavy impress was on them yet, and would not relax until the last dollar of Mrs. Merton's loan had been repaid her. In the family conference that night after Mr. Latimer's return, it was decided that despite his restoration to his well paid position they would continue to live where they were, saving every possible cent, and all working hard to increase the monthly remittances to Mrs. Merton.

Walter Smythe's father appeared to be completely taken by surprise when he learned the cause of his son's mysterious disappearance from home; indeed he made several mortifying blunders while pushing his first inquiries after him, which would seem to prove that for once he had been wrongfully suspected by those who had connected him with Walt's late exploits.

He had begun by loudly accusing Tom Latimer of having again assaulted his boy, and fiercely called upon him to confess where he had left him lying helpless; and although Tom assured him that he had not seen Walter since he had given him a dressing for having scandalized his father, old Smythe continued to berate him till the postmaster, in front of whose house the oration was being delivered, called him from the door and delivered to him a letter marked immediate.

"You were so busy talking I was afraid you'd forget to come in for your mail," grinned the postmaster, "and as I guess it's news of Walt, I thought I might's well fetch it out to you."

Surrounded by the inquisitive crowd his angry voice had attracted, and coldly watched by Tom and Will, who had caught the printed address of Grayley & Co. on the envelope, and guessed the nature of the contents, old Mr. Smythe tore open the letter and began to read it. His anger flushed face grew ashen white, his crafty eyes dilated in helpless terror, and his mouth, fresh from uttering furious invectives on Tom, gasped out a tremulous "Lord help me!" Then he staggered away, completely crushed under the blow which had so unexpectedly fallen upon him.

"I guess skinflint Smythe wasn't in it with his hopeful son after all," remarked Will Golden as he and Tom turned away.

"That seems very plainly evident," rejoined Tom; "indeed, if he had been, the job would have been better done. Well, old Smythe is innocent of that particular misdemeanor after all. I declare I'm almost sorry for him, though he is such a mean old fox; I guess he thought everything of Walt."

"More fool he," muttered Will, the obdurate.

A week passed, and all Smythe's efforts to trace his son had come to naught, as he owned to his neighbors, who continued to ask after him, having been kept in the dark concerning his reason for seeking out fresh fields.

If Mr. Grayley kept up the search no one knew it; the whole affair had been discreetly hushed up on all sides.

And of course the Latimers and Will Golden disdained to bruit abroad the lad's disgrace.

At the end of that week a most unexpected event happened. Tom received a letter from Mrs. Tryder, at St. Paul, Minnesota, which ran as follows:

"Dear Tom Latimer—
I have heard in a roundabout way that your father has suffered a reverse in his pecuniary affairs, and that you have had to give up your home and your bright prospects of a

college education. This grieves me greatly, and I cannot help reproaching you a little bit for being too proud to let me know from yourself about your misfortune. I own that I am only a woman, and I know how spirited young men feel about getting help from my sex, but I affirm that I have the right to help you; the right of one who owes her life to your gallantry; and I earnestly desire you to allow me to pay my debt, as far as merely giving you an opportunity to earn a good salary can pay it. The firm of Tryder & Tryder, of this city—doing similar business to Grayley & Co.—is in want of another clerk, and as I have some little influence there—through my relative the late Tryder—I have nominated you to the vacant position, subject of course to your consent. And you will not wound my feelings by refusing, will you? I believe that your father will advise you to accept, and so, in that conviction I inclose the usual check for traveling expenses, and, in the hope of seeing you by the fifteenth of the month, I remain,

Yours gratefully,
Caroline M. Tryder.

P. S.—You will be met at the rail way station if you will mention you train. The salary is \$50 a month and board.
C. M. T."

"Shall I go, father?" asked Tom, half dazed.

"Surely," cried his father, "and Heaven bless Mrs. Tryder!"

CHAPTER VIII.

SURPRISES IN ST. PAUL.

On the fifteenth of April Tom Latimer descended from the New York train to the platform of the St. Paul station. He marched down to the gates among the stream of travelers, carrying his modest valise, and wondering who would meet him, and how the person was to identify him unless Mrs. Tryder came herself, which was not likely.

Suddenly a burly negro coachman stepped forward, and blocking Tom's further passage touched his hat with a bland:

"Good evening, Mistah Latimah, sir; missus is in the carriage out dar. Jist step this way please."

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Nat—I don't know your last name," returned Tom cordially, for by the piercing electric light he recognized the same colored driver whose blundering had brought about Mrs. Tryder's peril and his own chance to serve her, and was, indirectly the means of his present good fortune. "I'm glad to meet a face I know in this strange place," and he shook hands with a boyish heartiness that simply delighted the old fellow.

"Nat's my name, Mr. Tom, an' nothin' else, to you," grinned he. "Hand over dat valise here. Law! but ain't missus pleased at your comin'! 'Twould hev most broke her heart to be disapp'nted; she sets mighty store by you, Mr. Tom, she do dat."

Thus agreeably chatting, Nat led Tom out to the pavement, where a close carriage of unusual elegance was drawn up, a gamin holding the magnificent black horses. The door was instantly opened by Mrs. Tryder herself, who stretched out both her small gloved hands to Tom, crying eagerly:

"Here you are then, safe and sound! A thousand welcomes to St. Paul, my dear boy, and may you have cause to bless the hour you came to it, as I do. Get in—set in. Oh I am so glad to have you here."

Before he could utter a word he was seated by her side and the carriage was rolling through the brilliant streets, so brilliant that he could see the happy expression of her face and the tears of joy in her eyes. Strange as it was that she could care

so much for him, Tom felt that her emotion was real, and he gazed with wondering interest at her, recognizing her personal beauty and distinction, and the wealth which surrounded her, and finding her more of an enigma every moment.

"If you are so good as to be happy at my coming, what must I feel?" said he. "You are so kind to me that I don't know how to thank you."

"Hush! There must be no talk of thanks, dear Tom, just accept what I am able to do for you as you would accept it from—shall we say an aunt who had a natural right to help you?"

Then assuming a lighter tone she continued: "My home is conveniently near Tryder & Tryder's, so I have arranged that you are to stay with me. I hope you won't find it dull, for I am a 'lone widow' and have no family, but you will make friends of your own speedily, and by and by, when you are quite at home in St. Paul, we can ask your sister to come out on a long visit."

Tom heard her with astonishment. She spoke of filling his life with every happiness he could desire, in the most matter of fact way, as if nothing was more natural, while at the first word of gratitude, she checked him and hurried on to another subject.

Tom's perplexity reached its height when the carriage, after traversing some of the finest streets in the city, turned into the broad driveway of a magnificent residence, passing under a beautiful marble arch between two iron gates that looked like exquisite metal lacework, and so round a tree shaded curve to the foot of a stately flight of white marble steps which ascended to the pillared portico of the mansion.

Mrs. Tryder stood on the lowest step and clasped Tom's hand between her two dainty palms, crying gaily:

"Welcome to the old Tryder home—my home, and yours for many a day to come, I trust." And then she led him into what Tom told himself was decidedly the grandest house he had ever entered.

Built by a millionaire, it was crowded with the treasures gathered from many lands by generations of succeeding millionaires; and to find this gentle, loving woman the mistress, and apparent possessor of all, took Tom's breath away. How he wished he had Jean, or Will Golden to talk the wonder over with, that he might know what to think about it! At all events, here he was installed in Mrs. Tryder's house, not at all like a boarder, but like a favorite and welcome guest; and when he went to sleep that night in a chamber fit for a young prince, he felt more like the hero of a romance than a poor boy whose father was drowned in debt and who had to work his college years away.

Next morning Mrs. Tryder announced that she would accompany him to Tryder & Tryder's and introduce him to the manager; and accordingly, a little after nine he found himself walking through the unfamiliar streets by her side, while she pointed out objects of interest and named the various thoroughfares in her pleasant way. Tom felt quite proud to be seen walking in intimate converse with a lady of such elegance, and, she on her part seemed actually proud of him, often glancing up at the tall, bright faced lad with a smile which made him think her more agreeable than ever.

By and by they reached the great ugly building in which Tryder & Tryder had made their millions by the manufacture of what the trade calls "fashionable specialties," to wit, all the elegant and costly trifles which give the last touch of style to my lady's toilet, from airy chiffons which a breath might blow away, down through the list of embroideries, passementeries, laces, to bead cuirasses

and hoopskirts, all to be had in wholesale bulk sufficient to stock a store, or in retail packages, tiny enough to be sent by "pattern" post.

Mrs. Tryder marshaled Tom through the spacious ground floor counting room, where not a scrap of "fashionable specialties" was visible, it struck him that the lady caused quite a sensation among the clerks; heads were raised from bending over desks in all directions, a hush as of awe preceded her and a murmur as of admiration followed her. It might have been a royal progress!

She had said that she had some influence in the firm, but Tom was not prepared for this.

Apparently undisturbed she walked straight to a door on which the words were painted:

THE MANAGER'S ROOM.

And after a brisk tap on the panel she opened it and led Tom into the awful presence of the man who, since the death of the last of the male Tryders, had held the reins of the great business.

He was a stout, bald headed sexagenarian, with an apoplectic face and ill tempered brows; as he looked up from the pile of morning correspondence he was sorting, those brows grew yet more ill tempered, as it were involuntarily, before he recollected his manners, and rose with a bland and oily smile.

"Ah, Mrs. Tryder, I declare! This is an honor!" cried he, holding out his fat hand, which she touched with a smile. "Take this chair—I'm ashamed to offer anything so hard and ugly to a lady, but Tryder's little dreamed the day was coming when a woman would have as much right as me to sit down in this house."

"Even a little more, eh, Mr. Sleath?" laughed the lady, seating herself in the leathern office chair and looking quite at home. "But don't begin on that old grievance; the deed's done and can't be undone, so you might as well try to be resigned. I believe I communicated my intention to place a young friend of mine in the business, and indicated the desk at which he is to work; I expected an answer, but you probably forgot it?"

"There was no need of an answer, ma'am," said Mr. Sleath bluntly, the scowl returning to his brow. "The place was filled already."

"Ah? By the youth you spoke about, probably?" suggested Mrs. Tryder, looking more amused than annoyed.

"Yes, by my nephew, ma'am," was the dogged reply.

"I'm sorry to interfere with your private arrangements, Mr. Sleath, but as your nephew is not my choice I cannot accept him. I will now introduce that choice—Mr. Latimer, a young man with whose credentials I am entirely satisfied."

Tom, who had not been asked to sit down by the manager, bowed politely, but Mr. Sleath stared at him so hard that he quite forgot to make any acknowledgment of the introduction.

"What Latimer's he?" asked he sourly. "Where's he from? I don't know any Latimers in them parts."

Tom discovered that when Mr. Sleath was perturbed he was apt to lapse into the vernacular.

"You know one now," returned Mrs. Tryder, for the first time betraying a little vexation. "There, Mr. Sleath, you may as well swallow my young friend, Mr. Tom Latimer, as you've had to swallow me; outrageous as it may seem there's no help for you."

She ended with a gay little laugh at the surlily old fellow, and signed Tom to seat himself close to her side. "And am I to turn my own nephew out at a moment's notice for a youngster that I don't know anything about?" grumbled the manager, as unmoved by Mrs. Tryder's sweet temper as he was by her vexation.

"You are to do that very thing, my excellent Mr. Sleath, and you're in error about the moment's notice; the moment was a week long," retorted she.

"Well, you'll have to tell him yourself that you've taken his place from him; I ain't got the heart to do it," said Mr. Sleath bitterly, and without waiting for her permission he put his lips to a tube and roared: "Send my nephew up here."

Mrs. Tryder's eyes met Tom's. They were shining with merriment, and she was forced to put her handkerchief up to her mouth to stifle the laughter that threatened to burst forth.

Tom smiled back, but it was with admiration of her good humor; for himself he felt like "punching the old bear's head" for his insolence.

Suddenly the door burst open, and Walter Smythe marched in as if he owned the place.

"Hello, uncle, what's up—" Thus far he got in the most free and easy style, then he saw that others were present and shut up with ludicrous dismay.

"Don't you see who's here, Walter?" snapped Mr. Sleath, and he watched him curiously as he stared first at the lady, and recognizing her, hastened to make her as low an obeisance as his state of fluster would admit, and then turned his eyes on Tom Latimer's stern face.

"Oh Lord!" gasped Smythe, recalling as if he had trodden on an asp. "What's Tom Latimer doing here?"

Then he recovered himself, and encouraged by his uncle's malevolent glare at Tom, added insolently: "I guess if I told all I know about the fellow he'd be bounced out of this in mighty short order."

CHAPTER IX.

TOM SCORES ONE.

Tom's face crimsoned and then grew pale with anger; his eye, as it met Smythe's, flashed dangerously.

"How dare you say such a thing, Walt Smythe; you of all people?" cried he. "You know well that I've never done anything to be ashamed of, while you—" But here he stopped, biting his lip and blushing more hotly than before in his mortification at having almost acted the tale bearer.

Mr. Sleath, who had listened to his nephew's attack upon the unwelcome new comer with a mixture of alarm and expectation, took in Tom's retort with lively curiosity, and transfixed Walter with a piercing glance. The latter was squirming in the agonies of terror, and had no eyes but for Tom, whose next words he awaited with sinking heart.

"How is this?" inquired the calm voice of Mrs. Tryder, who, no doubt, had formed her own opinion of the two lads, assisted thereto by the manner of each—Walter Smythe, the attacking party, showing the white feather already as if he had not the courage of his convictions, and Tom Latimer, the denounced, facing him with unflinching indignation. "Your nephew seems to have said more than he meant, or is it Mr. Latimer's presence that discourages him from going on to 'tell all he knows.'"

She looked at Walter who felt the sarcasm in her question and quailed in visible panic. How he wished he had thought first and spoken afterwards! Tom Latimer was an ugly customer to wake up, knowing as he must the cause of his flight from home, and here he had jumped on him the minute he saw him. Instead of doing his best to stroke him down the right way and get him to keep quiet, not only here, about that scrape with Grayley & Co., but to his folks at home about him, Smythe, being in St. Paul.

"Why don't you speak up, nephew?" snapped Mr. Sleath, whose private plans were becoming sadly deranged

by his young relative's lack of grit or ready wit. "Mrs. Tryder wants to hear what's agin the firm takin' in this young feller, and if you're knowin' to it, or anything wrong among his family, it's your dooty for to speak up." And Mr. Sleath frowned significantly at Walter to remind him of the trump card he held.

For Tom's heart fell; he saw that Walter had already traduced his father to his uncle Sleath, and now he would repeat the slander to Mrs. Tryder. And how could he convince her how little Smythe's representations were worth, without, on his part, telling her all he knew against Smythe, a meanness from which he revolted?

But Smythe had screwed up his courage to the speaking point at last. "It was only a little matter between ourselves," stammered he. "I'm sorry I said what I did."

"What's that you say, Walter Smythe?" cried his uncle angrily. "Sorry you spoke? Well then I ain't, and I'll tell just what you—"

"No, no, Uncle Sleath!" almost screamed Smythe, going close to the old man. "It's a mistake; you didn't understand. Wait!" he hissed in his ear. Uncle Sleath looked dazed and said no more.

"All the same I desire to hear what you meant, Mr. Walter Smythe," remarked Mrs. Tryder in a tone of quiet determination, "when you stated that if you told all you knew about Mr. Tom Latimer, he'd be bounced out of this in mighty short order," and that you may have ample time to ransack your memory for facts to his discredit (that was the kind of knowledge you referred to, I believe) I will appoint a meeting at eight o'clock this evening at my house, where I will hear your tale."

Smythe began a voluble remonstrance, but she waved her hand for silence, and went on: "And now to return to the business which brought me here, Mr. Sleath has been so unfortunate as to give you a situation in the firm which was designed for another. The other has now arrived to take his place, and you will be so good as to retire at once."

Smythe stared in dismay, and his uncle broke out roughly:

"And what am I to do with wait, then? Is he to starve?"

"Oh, surely not with such an uncle as you to befriend him!" smiled Mrs. Tryder.

"I can't have no idlers hangin' round my throat," growled the manager. "I've got to work, and a sight harder nor I'll ever get paid for." The last he had the grace to mutter to himself, but it was quite audible for all that.

"You are so good at pushing your nephew that I am sure he has nothing to fear," said Mrs. Tryder carelessly, and Tom saw that even her patience was exhausted. "Come, Mr. Sleath, I want to see Tom installed before I go."

The discovery of the identity of the new clerk for whom he had been thrust out was the last straw to Walter Smythe. He slunk out of sight, completely demoralized, while the manager, bursting with rage which he dared not wreak on its cause, waddled off to the small compartment next his own office where stood the vacant desk.

Seeing some crumpled papers scattered upon it, papers that were evidently the property of his nephew, he swept them up, and said to Tom with his own peculiar scowl:

"There, young man, git to work, ef you know how. And mind you, I'm death on shirkers."

After which, addressing a grunt and a nod to the lady, he waddled out and slammed the door.

Tom looked ruefully at his friend. She seemed to be thinking over matters with more gravity than she had

care to show in Mr. Sleath's presence.

"I'm sorry Mr. Sleath doesn't like me; I'm afraid I was the cause of his treating you so disrespectfully," ventured Tom.

"Don't judge the poor old man by what you've seen of him just now," returned Mrs. Tryder. "He has been so long in the firm that he feels it hard when things don't go his way. You have nothing to fear from him, Tom, or from his nephew either, as long as you remain the manly, truthful lad I believe you to be," she added, fixing her clear eyes upon his.

These did not flinch, but she read trouble and indecision in them. "Good by for the present, my dear," she went on, shaking his hand as if to check him from uttering the words on his lips. "You'll find your way home all right at six, will you? For your lunch, I would recommend you to Park's restaurant on the end of the block; we passed it, you remember."

She left him, sending back a last kind and encouraging glance.

"She's a lovely woman!" thought Tom. "She guessed that I wanted to make a clean breast of the trouble at home, and she was too generous to let me without giving me time to think it over first. What will she say when she knows about the missing cash? For of course I must tell her everything. And what am I to say about Wait Smythe's part in the affair?"

Tom was pondering thus and clearing up the litter left by his predecessor when Mr. Sleath came in with a bundle of papers, which he slapped down on the desk in front of the new clerk.

"Answer them letters; the notes are on 'em," ordered he.

Tom turned them over; they were letters from country customers containing orders or discussing the prices of the firm, and a memorandum on the back of each told how it was to be answered. This was simple enough, but when Tom came across several German and French letters he saw the old fellow's game. He hoped to prove the new corresponding clerk incapable of filling his place at the very start.

"That's all right, Mr. Sleath," said he, clearing a place to begin his work. "I guess I'll manage the foreign letters the way Smythe did."

"Eh? And how was that?" demanded Sleath.

Tom wheeled round on his stool and stared at him innocently. "How did he manage them?" he asked.

"You'd better look out, young man; no shirkin' here," cried Sleath, getting purple. "If you can't do the work, say so an' git out."

"As poor Walt did," smiled Tom, who could not help teasing the big bully a little.

"You know well enough it was for nothin' of the kind my nephew was turned off," blustered Sleath, getting hot as well as purple, and mopping his bald head vigorously. "It was because a silly woman has took a fancy to your Jack-a-dandy doll-face, and set you in the berth that should've been mine to give where I liked.

(To be continued.)

A SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING.

Miss R. Ural (to clerk)—"I want some pink collars and cuffs."

Clerk—"Certainly, miss. What's your size?"

Miss R. Ural (in slight surprise)—"I don't know exactly. But I weigh 117."—New York World.

ISLANDS TO ORDER.

Mrs. Parvenue—"I want one of those globes."

Clerk—"Here is one, madam, that is used in all of our schools."

Mrs. Parvenue—"Well, if you will have me a few more islands painted on those empty spaces I'll take it."—Vogue.

THE LOVE OF PRAISE.

The love of praise, how'er conceal'd by art,
Reigns, more or less, and glows in ev'ry heart;

The proud, to gain it, toils on toils endure;
The modest shun it but to make it sure.
It aids the dancer's heel, the writer's head,
And heaps the plain with mountains of the dead.

Nor ends with life! but nods in sable plumes,
Adorns our hearses, and flatters on our tombs.

[This Story began in No. 565.]

Belmont;

OR,

MARK WARE'S COLLEGE LIFE.

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFATT,

Author of "The Crimson Banner,"
"Dirkman's Luck," etc.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

REGAINING LOST GROUND.

When Herbert approached Tracy Hollis and Alfred Chase a day or so later, he found them quite prepared for him. They had anticipated just such a development from the moment when Herbert and his father came over to Colver Hall for Mark, and though they were sorry to lose him, they recognized Herbert's claim upon his old room mate, and accordingly let him go cheerfully, refunding Mark the share he had paid in the room.

Everything now settled down to its former pleasant and tranquil routine. It meant, of course, very hard work for Herbert, but the boy knuckled to it bravely.

It was no weak resolution that he had formed. He was now intensely in earnest. No study hour was omitted, no recitation or lecture slighted. He found no difficulty in ridding himself of his fast companions; for now that their leader, Chapin, was gone, and Herbert's habits were so completely changed, they found no attraction in No. 15, Warburton, and kept away of their own accord.

Hall and Granby could not, of course, be entirely discarded, for Herbert met them at every glee club rehearsal and a certain amount of civility had to be sustained. But, though pleasant enough in manner, Herbert cut off all intimacy with them, and confined himself to the Medford boys and the set of good fellows that they had drawn about them.

Their company was enough for the little leisure he now had. Most of his evenings were spent in hard study. To regain all the ground he had lost was no simple matter, to say nothing of winning back a high position in the class.

At the first, he went to the "old governor," in accord with Mark's suggestion, and, making a partial confidant of the professor, asked his advice. Professor Fuller readily guessed the whole of Herbert's story, for he knew boys well from long experience, and had watched Herbert anxiously for some time past, though the latter never knew it. He talked to him pleasantly and encouragingly, and promised to help him in every possible way to make up his losses. Between the "old governor" and Mr. Dykes, who tutored him in several branches, Herbert covered ground rapidly, and by the Easter vacation in the following April, was quite on his feet again and abreast with the upper half of his class.

Meantime Mark had kept his promise to Herbert, and had tried for the glee club, with a success that was assured, for, as Herbert had said, there really was no one to fill the place of warbler now that Chapin had left.

The glee club practice and rehearsals, with the tour that followed, formed a perfect dream of delight for Mark. The club set out the first day of the spring vacation, and remained away for three weeks, making a more extensive tour than usual, and visiting all the main cities within three hundred miles' radius of Belmont. The tour was a glorious success throughout, and Mark enjoyed every minute of it.

The boys were received everywhere with kindness and generous hospitality, the Belmont graduates turning out in force in every town, giving the singers a

royal reception, and sending them on their way rejoicing.

When they reached New York, Herbert took opportunity to make inquiries concerning the Chapins, father and son. Nothing had been heard of them since the day of the bank crash. They had slipped completely out of the world that had known them; their whereabouts could not even be guessed at.

The glee club tour was over. The three weeks flew by only too quickly with an unbroken chain of pleasures, and the boys found themselves back at college again with only the short third term between them and the long summer vacation.

Herbert was now confident of a good grade. Mark and he worked side by side in their studies, and though Mark had the advantage that unflagging and thorough application through three years had afforded him, Herbert was not far behind, and trusted fully to securing a place on the honor roll in June.

The examination passed wearily along during the first ten days of the month; then came the few days' rest preceding commencement. These days were anxious ones for Herbert, who was eagerly awaiting the results of examination.

Burning with impatience, he and Mark besieged Mr. Dykes at every opportunity to learn from him if the grades were all in. They stopped at the college office one evening about eight o'clock, suspecting from the light shining from the registrar's room that the reports were being made up. They were not amiss. Mr. Dykes was busy copying off the grades when they entered.

"Against the rules," he said smilingly, when Herbert plumped his question right at him. "I can't give out the reports till after commencement."

"Well, am I on the honor roll? Tell me that much," urged Herbert. "I'm simply dying to know."

"Oh, I don't mind telling you that," said Mr. Dykes, "and if you will let it go no further," he added confidentially, "I will tell you your actual place. You must not tell—it would be simply overrum—"

"I won't," I'll not say a word. Quick, where do I stand?" cried Herbert. "Fourteenth—and very good, too, Mr. Morgan. I feel proud for you. It gives me a sense of satisfaction in having tutored you."

Herbert gave a long sigh of relief, while he and Mark shook hands.

"And where am I?" asked Mark.

"Seventh. One place ahead of last year."

The boys were in high feather as they thanked the registrar and hurried out. Afraid that they could not keep their promise of secrecy they would not trust themselves in the usual crowds that assembled on the campus during the spring evenings, but made at once for their room. There they gave free vent to their joy, undisturbed, until after about ten minutes of lively conversation Mark suddenly paused.

"There's some one at the door," he said.

"Wait a minute."

A low tap sounded.

"Come in!" cried Herbert.

The door opened, and a young gentleman about twenty five entered. He was unusually handsome, and was dressed faultlessly in the latest style, carrying over his arm a light spring overcoat.

He seemed a little nervous at first as he faced the two boys.

"I beg your pardon," he said, pulling at his soft brown mustache, "but I am a graduate of the college, and I am here on a visit for commencement day. This is my old room, and I couldn't resist the impulse to come and see what the quarters looked like. I hope I don't intrude."

"Not at all," exclaimed Herbert. "Come in and welcome. Let me take your coat."

This sort of a visit was no surprise at all to the boys. It is a common occurrence at all colleges during commencement week. Then the old birds fly back for a time, and seek out the nests that have sheltered them during the four years of their college life. Then, for a brief hour or so they sit in their old quarters and live over again the happy days gone by, tasting once more the pleasure of the past, and refreshing themselves thereby for the hard, severe, exacting struggle of life into

which they must plunge anew. It is the Mecca to which the college graduate makes his yearly pilgrimage. It is his "Alma Mater"—can human words say more?

The stranger seated himself and a pleasant conversation ensued. Mark and Herbert were both fascinated by their guest. His handsome face, his pleasant voice, his agreeable manner and conversation impressed them most delightfully.

A half hour sped rapidly, and then the stranger rose to go.

"I suppose you know the traditions of this room," said Herbert, as they walked to the door. "This is the room of baseball and football captains."

"Are you one of them?" asked the stranger.

"No, but my room mate here is our football captain."

"Oh, are you Ware, whom I have read about in the newspaper accounts of the games? I am very glad to know you. Percy Randall told me you were chosen captain, and he gave me glowing accounts of you. I expect great things of our team next year."

The stranger shook Mark warmly by the hand.

"You know Percy Randall, then?" said Mark.

"Yes, well. He was a college chum of mine. I often see him in New York, and we love to talk over college days. I would be very glad to see more of you, Mr. Ware, before I leave town. I am an old ball player myself, and I would like to have a talk with you about football prospects. I shall be here all the week. Couldn't you and—"

"Mr. Morgan," supplied Mark.

"And Mr. Morgan—couldn't you both favor me with a call some evening? I am staying with Professor Fuller."

"We will be glad to come," answered Mark. "You are in very hospitable hands at the old governor's. He is a lovely old gentleman."

"No one knows better than I do—I am his son in law," answered the stranger.

"Indeed," said Mark. "May I ask your name?"

"Ray Wendell!"

"Why!" exclaimed Mark. "I've often heard of you. You were one of our successful captains."

The young man bowed modestly.

"It was my nine," he said, "that won the Crimson Banner that hangs now in Burke Hall."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE PRELIMINARY GAMES.

Summer vacation had come and gone—a delightful summer for Mark, that recalled his happy days at Medford. The boys are back again at college, and standing now on the proud eminence of senior year.

"Senior!" What graduate so hardened that he can recall that word without something of the old time thrill? Who can forget the proud days when to be a senior was greater than to be a king?

The last milestone has been reached. The last course in the race lies before them. In the college world they recognize no superior. They are masters and reign supreme.

It was with a keen sense of satisfaction that Mark took hold of college life again. All through the summer he had been planning for the football season before him—the season in which he was appointed to play so prominent a part, and which he was determined to carry to a successful issue. He had been impatient to get back and begin work with his team. The very first week after his return he inaugurated the training season. The spirit with which he took hold inspired the boys from the start.

"That's right, old man," said Tracy Hollis one day. "We haven't been handled like this since, Percy Randall's time. Keep it up."

No fear of flagging. Mark was heart and soul in the sport, and he was backed enthusiastically by undergraduates and graduates alike.

Percy Randall and Richards turned up faithfully every Saturday, and coached the team with unremitting zeal, urging the boys on to better work, and constantly suggesting improvements in play.

Past experience had taught Mark several things. In the first place he was

convinced that the rough, brutal, bucking game of the last two years was utterly bad, and he was determined to change it. In the previous year's games the flying wedges, and heavy play of combined masses of men battering against the opposing lines had been fatal. It had cost them several men through injuries, and it had accomplished nothing.

In the second place no attention had been paid to passing, kicking, or open play of any kind. This year entirely new tactics were to be adopted—or rather old tactics, for Mark determined to return to the plan followed by Percy Randall three years before. He intended to cultivate skill in quick passes, sudden changes of play, and considerable kicking. He intended to perfect his rush line in guard and defense, leaving him free to kick at the goal at every available opportunity.

Of this change of play, and of the many tricks practiced, nothing was said. Everything was kept as quiet as possible, that their opponents might be taken completely by surprise.

The game between Park and Halford was, as usual, the first of the season, and formed an interesting experience for the Belmont boys who went over to see it. The first five minutes were enough to convince them that this was Halford's Waterloo year. Their team was raw and badly trained, and completely at the mercy of the Park men.

Of the strength of the Park team no accurate judgment could be formed, for their opponents were too easy prey to fully test their mettle. The score was 26-0, the worst defeat Halford had sustained in years. The results of this game suggested an idea to Percy Randall.

"Why not play a regular rush line game with Halford, and not show off your strongest point," he said to Mark. "We can easily beat them that way and we will hold our best plays in reserve for Park."

This suggestion was immediately adopted, and the results proved the wisdom of it. Mark's team met Halford the following Saturday, and handled them without difficulty, and without having to resort to any new form of play. They pushed the Halford men back steadily and won two touchdowns, from both of which goals were kicked, thus making the score 12-0.

The results of this game left the Park men who witnessed it quite confident of beating Belmont. Had they not won 25 points where Belmont had won but 12? They imagined they had fully measured Belmont's strength and skill, and they looked forward to the decisive game with perfect complacency sure of another victory.

The Park-Belmont game this year took place on the Park College grounds, but this apparent advantage did not discourage Mark in the least.

"Only give us fair play and a sufficient backing—that's all we want," he said.

No fear of sufficient backing this year. The college had regained all its old spirits, and looked with hope to the decisive game. Every one had confidence in Mark, and the showing the team had made against Halford encouraged the students to believe firmly in their champions.

More than half of the college went over to Park to see the game, and though the day was cold, cloudy, and raw, it could not dampen the enthusiasm of the several hundred wearers of the blue who completely lined one side of the field on benches, and on improvised stands, shouting, cheering, singing, waving flags, and blowing horns.

As the Belmont team came out on the field led by Mark and Percy Randall, an uproarious cheer greeted them. Mark turned a moment toward the long line of swaying, noisy men, and ran his eye along over their heads until it rested on a particular coach on which was assembled a small group of six.

One was a small, graceful girl with a flushed, excited face and sparkling eyes. As Mark turned, she waved her flag encouragingly, while Herbert Morgan, who sat beside her, blew exhorting blasts on a tin horn. Mark smiled, and then gripping the ball tightly in his arms, started up the field at a brisk run, his team close behind him.

A moment later the Park team came out, and, as the hour for starting was at

hand, the men were lined up without delay. In looking over Mark's men an old graduate would have been struck by the resemblance in appearance between it and Percy Randall's team. There was the same uniformity of weight and size in the rush line, the same wiry little half backs, and there was Mark, the same full-back, behind it all.

The only difference was that old Cincinnati was not an end rusher, but occupied the center of the line, where his massive frame towered over his opponents, and formed the keystone of that solid rush line of which Mark felt so justly proud.

But there was little opportunity for reflection. The umpire and referee were in place. It was time to begin.

CHAPTER L.

THE DECISIVE GAME.

Belmont had the ball, and Mark stood in the midst of his men in the usual position for the running wedge. As the referee called out "Play" the wedge formed and started down the field. Immediately the Park men gathered to receive them.

As the wedge advanced, Mark suddenly parted from it, slipping out behind, and, just as the two opposing groups of men met, he darted off toward the left end, with Tracy Hollis close beside him. The whole Park rush line, with the exception of their end rusher, was concentrated on the wedge, so this trick left Mark almost an open field.

The Park end rusher was easily pushed off by Tracy, while Mark went flying down toward the goal.

At the fifteen yard line he was tackled by one of the Park half backs. Knowing how precious every second was now, Mark did not attempt to fight off his opponent, but passed the ball quickly to Tracy, who darted off to the right. Just in the middle of the field and on the ten yard line, Tracy was tackled by the other Park half back and thrown heavily. The wedge, with Rogers at its head, had, in the meantime, gone through the Park line, and by the time Tracy was tackled, old Cincinnati was just behind him.

As Tracy fell he tossed the ball lightly to Rogers. The latter caught it neatly, and, without relaxing his speed in the least, made straight for the goal.

There were now two Park men in front of him, but with his exceptional strength and the impetus of his run he had a fair fighting chance. Like a battering ram old Cincinnati bore down on his opponents, veering neither to right nor left. One man tackled him and was knocked roughly off by the sheer force of the shock. The second leaped on Rogers' back.

He was a heavy fellow, and for a second or two it looked as if he would bring his man down. Rogers staggered heavily, almost losing his balance—then, straightening again, he plunged forward, carrying his opponent bodily for five more yards. Here he tripped and fell, but, fallen as he was, he wriggled, squirmed, and worked his body several feet forward—the goal line was reached, and before the mass of Park rushers could pile upon him and pin him fast, old Cincinnati had scored a touchdown.

Amidst a storm of cheers the ball was taken out, and Mark kicked a goal without difficulty. This made six points won in the first five minutes. The Belmont contingent became frantic with delight. The Park students looked startled and amazed. It was a complete surprise party to them. They had expected an easy victory, and this unexpected development of strength and activity took them entirely aback. The Park captain saw at once that he would need all his resources to meet his opponents, so he rallied his men bravely to the middle of the field for the renewal of the fight.

Now began a new order of things. The Park men put themselves on the offensive, playing with the dash and recklessness of maddened tigers. Mark urged his team to the front and met the onslaught boldly, but the rough sledge hammer style of play adopted by the Park men seemed to tell.

They succeeded in pushing the ball down to within twenty yards of the Belmont goal, and there for fully fifteen

minutes the fight waged sorely without either side gaining advantage.

There was some ugly play now. The Park men were desperate and determined to rush ahead at any cost. Two men were badly hurt by the frightful shock of the colliding lines—one had to be taken from the field unconscious. It was the regular Park style of play—brutal and heavy, but it did not avail materially against the Belmont lines. The latter sustained the shocks pluckily, and held their ground.

Suddenly a signal was given, and the ball was started around the right end of the line by the Park half back. He would have been tackled promptly by the Belmont line but for the atrociously foul interference of the Park rushers at this point. They caught and held their opponents plainly, and yet the umpire's eyes seemed blinded. He granted no claim of foul interference—he was apparently determined to see nothing but the Park half back with the ball.

The latter, with the help of such interference, slipped easily through the lines, and, in a few seconds, had crossed over the line making a touchdown. All claims were refused, and Mark soon found that a discussion of the matter availed nothing with the umpire. It was merely waste time, so he allowed the point to go, more resolutely to fight the hardier.

"We will have to," he said bitterly to his men. "We have the umpire against us as well as the other team."

A goal was quickly kicked from the touchdown, and the first half closed with the score tie, 6-6.

The neutral element in the crowd was now heartily in sympathy with Belmont. To every unbiased mind the foul interference was quite apparent, and many jeers and unfavorable comments greeted the umpire as he left the field. He seemed a little disconcerted at this.

"If you don't like my services you can get some one else. I resign," he said angrily.

"As he accept," exclaimed Mark quickly; "at least I do."

The Park Captain looked doubtful. After some discussion, to Mark's great relief, another umpire was chosen—and it was well, too, for it looked as if the crowd was about to take a hand in the matter.

The Belmont boys received a very general greeting when they once more came on the field. They had now the backing of all but the exclusively Park College crowd, and although this was by no means a majority, it was a very respectable minority.

The moment the Park men resumed play, Mark smiled with confidence. Two of their men had been laid off by injuries, and the rest presented a very battered aspect as the result of the brutal, reckless play they had adopted during the first half. They were limping and sore, while the Belmonts, though scratched and bruised to a certain degree, were in good fighting condition, and as full of "ginger" as at the beginning.

"Now then, boys, good and hard, and play every point to win!" exclaimed Mark as the ball started off.

The first ten minutes told the story of that terrible second half. Steadily and with the irresistible power of a huge machine, the Belmont rush line pushed their opponents back yard by yard until they reached the twenty yard line. Here the Park men made a stand, when the ball, instead of being pushed further, was suddenly passed back to Mark.

Before the Park men could get through and upon him, he dropped it neatly and drove it with a quick kick straight between the goal posts. This gave Belmont five points more, and it was only the beginning of the end.

The play now remained steadily in the Park territory. Never once did they succeed in pushing it up as far as the center line. They fought hard and desperately, but they were evidently over-matched. Even their own backers and friends were now compelled to acknowledge it.

The Belmont rushers broke through their line again and again, bearing the ball along in terrific rushes as far as the twenty yard line. There the Park men seemed to be able to rally and hold their ground.

It was a plucky but losing fight, however, for whenever the Belmont line was checked in its advance, back would go the ball to Mark, and sure as fate was the kick that would follow. Again and again he drove the ball over the goal, till the Park men, all hope lost, fought blindly and aimlessly, confusing the signals, losing their places, fouling repeatedly, and even tackling their own men.

During the last half hour five goals were kicked from the field, and when the game finally came to a close in the semi-darkness of the short November afternoon, the score footed up 31-6 in favor of Belmont.

The vast assemblage of students was glum and dejected. The people gathered together their things, and left the field dazed and stupefied. Such a defeat had never been heard of at Park College.

Few could realize it. It completely staggered the oldest athletes and sporting men. Of the Belmont team only one thing could be said; it was the finest set of players the college had ever put into the field, not excepting the great team of Percy Randall's time—as Percy freely acknowledged while he ran from man to man after the game, shaking hands and patting his champions on the back.

Of the scene that took place on the field when time was called no description can suffice. Mark said laughingly afterwards that it seemed like a cyclone. It was nearly a half hour before the field was finally cleared and the long line of coaches set out for Belmont, making the quiet country roads ring with the answering echoes of shouting, singing, and horn blowing.

And to the triumph that followed what words can do justice? A bonfire that dwarfed that of the sophomore burial into insignificance was burning brightly on the back campus as the coaches came into town. The good news had preceded them by telegraph, and the celebration was well under way when they arrived.

It was a red letter night in Belmont's history. The championship had been won back at last, and by a score overwhelming beyond all precedent. The bonfire and noisy festivities of that night were but the beginning of the triumph that celebrated this signal victory. For nearly a week event followed event, closing with a great college banquet which was attended by members of the faculty and many graduates, and was distinguished by many patriotic speeches full of enthusiasm for Belmont athletes.

Aside from the immediate impetus it gave to all college sports the great triumph was a boon for Belmont that projected its influence far into future years. It was the beginning of a new era in the college, for it brought first to the attention of all the importance of active graduate interest. Thereafter it became a regular habit for the graduates to attend closely on the affairs of the college.

Alumni associations were formed in all the great cities, and the sporting men no longer relinquished at graduation their interest in the athletics of the college, but such as could spare the time made a rule of returning periodically to help, encourage, and coach the teams as Percy Randall and Richards had done. It is this unfulfilling graduate interest that distinguishes Belmont today, and it is largely by this means that she has succeeded in maintaining her splendid record in the field of sports.

Of all these festivities, the team was of course the center, and Mark naturally the most prominent figure. It was a proud and happy week for him, and it was sweet to hear on every hand the unstinted praises and congratulations of his many friends and admirers.

And yet today looking back on it, he confesses freely to himself that of all the events, not even excepting the great banquet, the happiest and proudest was the evening of the return from the game, when he stood at the window of his room in Warburton Hall together with Patty, Herbert and others, gazing out at the huge blaze on the campus and the wild turbulent, noisy crowd of students—when Patty, unobserved by the others came close to him and pressing his arm with both her little hands, smiled into his face and said: "I knew you would win, Mark. You know I always believed in you."

(To be continued.)

DOGS TO THE FRONT.

They have a queer way of regarding the rights of animals in some of the European countries. A writer in the New York Tribune tells some interesting facts in its connection:

In Belgium the government, which owned and controls the entire railroad system of the country, has just issued a decree which, for as railroad travel is concerned, places the dog on absolutely the same level as a woman or man, and infinitely higher than a child. For whereas the latter is merely entitled to half a place if under nine years of age, a dog has a right to a full seat, providing he has his ticket. That to say in compartments licensed to hold travelers, if there are eight adult human beings and two dogs in the compartment, the latter is regarded as "complete," or full, and other passengers are admitted, and if the aid happens to be filled partly with dogs and partly with human beings, any additional passengers will have to be left behind rather than that the dogs should be forced to yield up their seats.

The government decree, however, contains no intimation as to the manner in which the canine travelers are expected to conform to the regulations which prohibit passengers from putting their feet on the cushions; and, it must be admitted that the seats of railroad carriages as at present constructed are not suited to the dog's style of pose. Inasmuch, however, as the government has already given him the preference over children by according to him an entire seat, instead of merely half a one, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that it may course of time be permitted to modify the law in such a manner as to add to the comfort of the canine passenger at the expense of the human traveler.

At Berlin and in other German universities the principal personage of each corps association of students is not the president or the treasurer, nor even the "fuchs," one of the principal dignitaries of the city is designated, but the corps dog. It is him that all the available financial resources are lavished and the various corps with each other in providing their own particular dog with the finest collar anduzzle that money can buy. If he is handsome, he is kept combed and brushed to show off his good looks; if he is ugly, his illness is cultivated to its utmost limit by remarkable cutting and shaving of his ears, tail and his coat, and even dyeing is resorted to in order to add piquancy to his appearance.

The corps dog takes part in every official ceremony of his corps, except at the duels, from which he is strictly excluded, lest his morals should be tainted by the example. He generally dies of gout or rheumatism, brought on by the enormous quantities of beer which he drinks and by the dissipated life which he leads throughout the various scholastic terms.

In England, too, animals are held according to all appearance, in far higher esteem than human beings. Vulpicide, or killing of foxes, is a infinitely more heinous offense in the eyes of the general public than theft, robbery or assault, and one of the most popular and at the same time characteristic stories is that told of a political refugee from somewhere in the East of Europe who came to England with the reputation of having committed all kinds of horrible atrocities, including murder, pillage and brigandage, all of which merely seemed to render him more interesting in the eyes of his British entertainers. He was the lion of the season and a welcome guest at the various country houses, until in an evil moment he admitted the fact that he had shot a fox, fox shooting being quite common on that Continent. That ended his social career as far as England was concerned, and the bitter ostracism which took the place of the generous hospitality until then accorded to him rendered his departure from England almost a necessity.

CHICKENS AT TABLE.

All of our readers have doubtless seen in the magazines specimens of the black and white work of the artist, F. S. Church, who makes animals his specialty. And yet he says himself (in a recent article in "Scribners") that as a boy he never had any pets except a few chickens. But of these he was very fond.

"I remember once," he continues, "a neighbor sent over and wanted to buy one of me to make a broth for a sick lady. I didn't stop to say whether I would sell him one or not, but I started on a run for the chickens, drove them into the coop, went in with them myself, and we lay in a state of siege till I thought all danger was over. I remember confiding to them (I was about ten) the situation, with assurance that if the enemy came, it would be over my dead body. I would have as soon consented to have my mother made into broth as one of my chickens."

"There was a boy who lived next door who had about the same number of chickens, and he was as fond of them as myself. I know we conspired once to give them a Thanksgiving

dinner. We made a sort of a long table, such as you see on picnic grounds, boring plenty of holes in the seats. Thanksgiving morning we captured all the chickens (both sets were very tame), and collected during the day part of the food we were to give them. At the regular dinner (our two families dined together that day) we put surreptitiously in our pockets as much of the dainties as we could, and hurried off soon after to the chickens.

"They were brought out, each boy's chickens tied by their feet to the seats, the two old roosters at either end, and the dainties put before them. There was a good deal of excitement and some remonstrance, but they were hungry, and soon disposed of the dinner. I imagine the two roosters had the least appetite, as they seemed anxious to get at each other. It was a sight!"

HATS ON AND OFF.

The etiquette of hat wearing in England's House of Commons is a singular one. T. P. O'Connor speaks thus of it in the course of an article in "Harper's Magazine":

The first thing that strikes the visitor to the House of Commons is that—here also it is exceptional among the legislatures of the world—the House of Commons permits its members to retain their hats during the sitting. Indeed, it is the rule to wear and the exception not to wear the hat. Mr. Gladstone never wears his hat—there have been exceptions; nor did Mr. Smith, the late respected leader in the House of Commons on the Conservative side; nor did Disraeli; nor does Mr. Balfour, nor Sir Charles Russell. A member, however, can keep his hat on only when he is in his seat. If he rises to speak, he of course takes off his hat; if he rises to leave his seat and go out of the House, he has to take off his hat; so long as he remains standing in any part of the House, he has to keep off his hat.

There are some of the old members who, even when they lean over their seats to converse with a member on the bench in front of them, take off their hats. And it is usual, too, when a member interjects an observation across the floor to take it off. It was also the invariable custom when a member was referred to that he should raise his hat, but this rule is falling into desuetude.

A STEP IN ADVANCE.

Visitor—"So your brother is taking lessons on the violin. Is he making progress?" Little Girl—"Yes 'm; he's got so now we can tell whether he is tuning or playing."—Selected.

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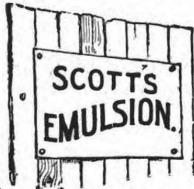
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