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A Rolling Stone.

BY ARTHUR LEE PUTNAM,

Author of "No. 91," "A Bad Lot," etc.

CHAPTER I.

WREN WINTER.

Among the passengers landed from the steamer Cottage City, of the New York and Portland line, one bright August morning, was a tall boy, with a look of anxious expectancy on his tanned and sunburnt face.

He wore a suit of gray cloth of decidedly country make, and his whole appearance indicated that he was born and reared in the rural districts.

The boat should have been at her pier the previous evening, but on account of a fog there had been a serious delay so that it was quarter past eight in the morning when it touched the wharf.

Most of the passengers took breakfast on board, but Wren Winter, though he looked hungry did not avail himself of the chance to fortify himself with food for the probably fatiguing experiences of a first day in the great metropolitan city of which he had dreamed so often.

Of the passengers who sat down to breakfast not one gave a thought to the rustic boy who was regarding the table with a longing look. That is, not at first.

But finally a stout, good natured looking young man, a drummer for a New York house who had been traveling in Maine and New Hampshire chanced to look up, and noticed the boy's unconscious appeal.

"I say, sonny, why don't you take some breakfast?" he said.

"It's fifty cents, isn't it?" said Wren.

"Yes."

"I can't afford it."

"Did you eat any meals aboard yesterday?"

"No, sir."

"You don't mean to say you haven't eaten since we left Portland?"

"Yes, sir, I ate; but not at the table."

"What did you eat?"

"I bought ten cents worth of doughnuts before I left Portland."

"Humph! I don't think I could get along on that.'

"No, sir; I s'pose not, but I knew I couldn't afford anything better."

The drummer allowed himself to be swayed by a benevolent impulse.

"Here, take this seat by me, sonny," he said. "You shall have a good breakfast if I have to pay for it myself."

Wren's face lighted up with joyful surprise.

"You're not, joking, are you, sir?" he said with momentary doubt.

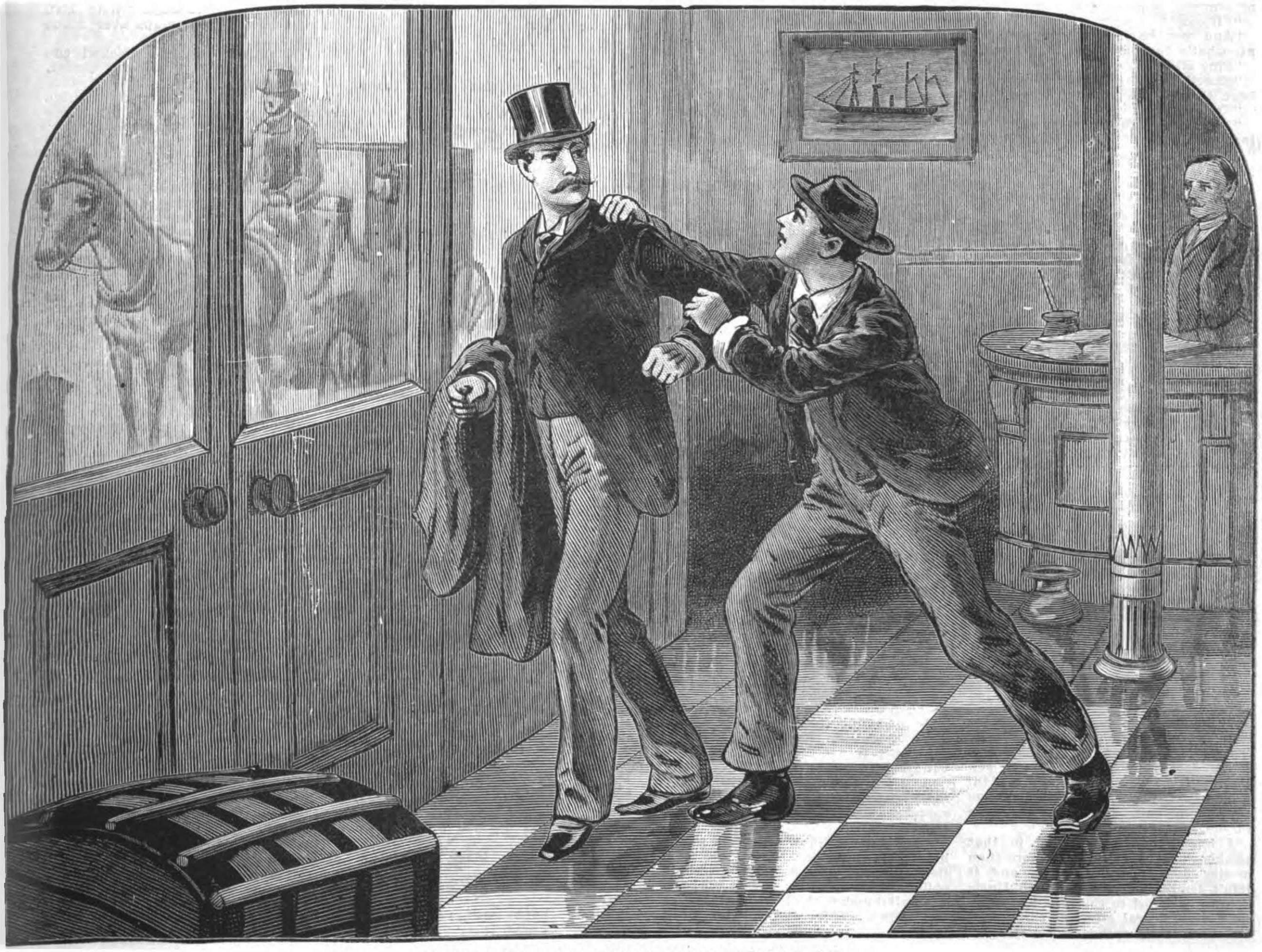
"Not a bit of it. I'm going to fill you up, sonny, and you shall tell me your story while you are eating."

Before he had fairly got out the words Wren sank into the chair.

"I'm awfully hungry," he admitted.

"You didn't find doughnuts a very sustaining diet I fancy," said the drummer, with an amused laugh.

"No, sir. They filled me up, but somehow they didn't satisfy me."



WREN SPRANG FORWARD AND GRASPED HIM BY THE ARM.

The breakfast to which Wren devoted his attention was hardly as good as could have been obtained at Delmonico's, but to a country boy it seemed delicious.

Lynn Palmer watched him with a smile after his own breakfast was finished.

"I see you mean to get your money's worth, sonny," he said.

"Am I eating too much, sir?" asked Wren, feeling a little embarrassed.

"Not at all. You needn't feel at all bashful. If the boat loses anything on you it will make on me. I didn't feel very hungry this morning. I suppose you are not a city boy."

"No, sir, I am from Pine Ridge about twenty five miles from Bangor."

"Yes, I have heard of the place. It isn't a very large town, I think."

"There are only about five hundred inhabitants."

"Farming town, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name?"

"Wren Winter."

"Wren? That's an odd name. You are not descended from the bird family, are you?"

"Not that I know of," answered Wren with a broad smile which displayed a row of even, white teeth.

"Where did you get the name then?"

"There was a man named Wren that father used to be intimate with. I was named after him."

"It wasn't Sir Christopher Wren, was it?"

"I don't think it was."

"Nor I," said the drummer with an amused smile. "How old are you?"

"Fifteen."

"And you have lived all your life at—what's the place you mentioned?"

"Pine Ridge."

"Exactly. Pine Ridge. Were you born there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are your father and mother living?"

"They died when I was quite a young boy."

"And where have you lived since?"

"With my uncle, Ephraim Train."

"What is he? A farmer?"

"Yes, sir."

"How does it happen that you are not working on the farm?"

"That is what I have done, ever since I was old enough to work at all."

"What started you to come to New York?"

"I was tired of living in the country. Pine Ridge is a little place where there is nothing going on. So I went to Uncle Ephraim and told him I wanted to see the world."

"'And what good'll that do you?' he asked. 'Where do you want to go?'

"When I said 'to New York' he held up his hands in surprise. 'New York's a long way off,' he said. 'I've never been there myself, and I'm almost sixty.'

"'You never traveled at all, did you?' I asked.

"'Yes; I've been to Bangor, and I went to Portland when I was a young man,' he replied. 'It's a dreadful big place Portland is.'

"I knew all about his visit to Portland, for he told it over and over, being the only journey he had ever made.

"'I expect New York is a smart place too,' I said.

"'It's too far for you to go,' replied my uncle. 'I've got along without seein' New York, and so can you. It's temptin' Providence for a boy to go so far from home. I'll tell you what, Wren, you stay with me till you're twenty one, and I'll give you a freedom suit, and that one acre lot north of the medder.'

"I knew that land round in that neighborhood wasn't worth more than twenty five dollars an acre, and it didn't tempt me much, though Uncle Ephraim seemed to think he had made me a very liberal offer.

"So I said I'd rather go away."

"Did your uncle forbid you?"

"No, but he said solemnly that I was nothing but a rolling stone, and would never be worth a cent if I lived to be ninety. Aunt Patty, she joined in, too, and said rolling stones gathered no moss. I told her I didn't want any moss, but that only provoked her. Well, the end of it all was, that I left the old farm, and here I am."

"But you must have had some money to help you along. It costs four dollars for passage on this boat from Portland."

"Yes, sir, but I had about ten dollars. It was all the money my father left, and it had been put in the bank for me. I thought I never should need it any more than I do now, so I drew it out. Uncle Ephraim didn't want me to, but he didn't stop me, so I had about enough to bring me here."

"You can't have much left."

"No. I've only got about ninety cents."

"I understand now why you didn't buy any meals on board."

"Yes, sir, it would have been extravagant for a boy like me, to pay fifty cents for a meal."

"My boy," said the drummer seriously, "I am not sure but your uncle was right. For a country boy like you to come to New York with scarcely any money, expecting to make a living, is the biggest kind of a job."

"I suppose other boys have done it."

"Yes, other boys have done it."

"Then I am not afraid to try."

"I applaud your pluck, Wren, but I am afraid you will have a hard time."

"Not if I meet many men like you," said Wren looking up gratefully in the face of his companion. "I have found a good friend just at the start."

Lynn Palmer was pleased at this grateful expression on the part of the boy whom he had befriended.

"I suppose I am rather good natured, and I always feel an interest in boys," he said, "but I am afraid you will meet more men of a different kind. You'll have to work, and work hard."

"I am willing to do that, sir."

"Then again you are inexperienced. You know about life in a farming town, but you don't know about life in a large city."

"I can learn, can't I, sir?"

"Yes, you can learn."

At this point, just as Wren was rising from the table, there was a commotion on deck, and the sound of many voices and many steps overhead.

"I think we have reached the pier, Wren," said the drummer.

CHAPTER II.

WREN ARRIVES IN NEW YORK.

The drummer had to go to his stateroom for his gripsack containing samples and clothing, and meanwhile Wren left the steamer.

He walked up to the head of the pier, and found himself looking up a broad street, which he afterwards learned was Market Street.

Looking about him with considerable curiosity he could not help feeling a sense of disappointment. He had always thought of New York as a gay and brilliant city, but the streets and buildings upon which he now looked struck him as rather shabby.

He had felt the same way as he came down the East River for the great city is not seen to the best advantage from this direction.

"I don't think New York is any nicer than Portland," he decided. "I suppose it is a good deal bigger though."

Wren did not know where to go, so he struck up Market Street, and from that turned into a street running obliquely from it. He had in his hand a small bundle of clothing tied in a newspaper. This was in lieu of a trunk.

Wren had a very vague idea of localities, but he had heard of the City Hall Park. He had read a story somewhere which gave him the impression that this park was the rendezvous of young adventurers like himself, and therefore he resolved to ask the way thither.

While he was looking for a policeman of whom he could inquire, he was accosted by a boy smaller than himself, but looking older in the face. This boy had a blacking box slung over his shoulders.

"Hallo, country!" he remarked in a free and easy way.

He looked directly at Wren, so that the latter was forced to infer that he was addressed.

"Do you mean me?" he asked, not entirely liking the way he was designated.

"In course I do. When did you come in?"

"This morning."

"Where'd you come from?"

"From Portland."

"Never heard of it. Is it a long way off?"

Wren was astonished. Not to have heard of Portland seemed to him to indicate deplorable ignorance. Why, he had heard of Portland all his life. To him it was a great and prominent place.

"It's about three hundred and fifty miles off. It is in Maine."

Maine did not seem any more familiar to the bootblack than Portland.

"Did you walk?" he asked.

"I guess not. I came by the steamer."

"That was bully. I'd like to have a long ride like that."

"Have you always lived in New York?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you black boots for a living?"

"Yes."

"Is it a good business?"

"Sometimes. I ain't made much today."

"How much do you get for a shine?"

"Five cents. We'd ought to get a dime, but them Eyetalians have spoiled the business. If I could get a dime I'd live on Fifth Avenue and keep my carriage."

"Would you?" asked Wren, a little perplexed.

"Yes. What are you goin' to do?"

"I don't know yet."

"Want a shine? Them shoes don't look 'spectable."

Wren gave a glance at his shoes. They were of coarse leather, and they certainly looked dirty. In the country he wouldn't have minded their appearance, but he noticed that most of those whom he met wore much neater shoes.

"How much do you charge?"

"I'd ought to have a dime for shining them shoes. They're pretty dirty."

"I can't afford a dime. I guess they'll do as they are."

"I'll call it a nickel then. Business is poor and I need money."

"All right; go ahead!"

Wren leaned against the side of a house, and the bootblack, getting down on his knees, went to work.

In ten minutes he had completed the job.

Wren regarded his highly polished shoes with complacency. It was the first time they had ever received a professional shine. Why, positively he could see his face reflected in their polished surface.

"How's that?" asked the young bootblack.

"Fine," said Wren admiringly.

Then he looked at the shoes of his young acquaintance. They looked quite as bad as his had been before the shine.

"Why don't you black your own shoes?" he asked.

"Who's a goin' to pay me for doin' it?"

"No one, but I should think you would like to have them look well."

"I ain't no dude, and that wouldn't be business."

"Don't you ever shine your own shoes?"

"Yes, last week a gent told me he'd pay me a nickel for doin' it, and I did. Where are you goin'?"

"Can you tell me where City Hall Park is?"

"Yes. I'm a goin' there."

The bootblack shouldered his box, and strode along, followed by Wren.

"What's your name?" he asked with a sudden thought.

"Wren Winter."

"That's a queer name."

"What is yours?"

"Tim Maloney."

"Have you got any family, Tim?"

"I ain't married," answered Tim with a grin.

"I mean, have you a father and mother?"

"I've got a stepfather, but he ain't no good. He's drunk half the time."

"Doesn't he take care of you?"

"No. I take care of myself. I live at the Newsboys' Lodge."

"I've heard of that. Do you think I could get in there?"

"Course you can. I'll interduce you myself. Have you got much boodle?"

"What's that?"

"Cash—spondulicks."

"Not much. I have got less than a dollar."

"I never had a dollar but once. Then I made it playin' craps."

"What's that?"

"Don't they play craps where you come from?"

Wren shook his head.

"You must live in the backwoods," said Tim contemptuously. "Why I've knowed how to play craps ever since I was a kid."

By this time they had reached the square by way of Frankfort Street, and Wren took in at a glance City Hall Park and the stately buildings in and around it.

"That's the park," said Tim.

New York was redeeming itself in Wren's eyes. It looked more like his first idea of it. After all, he thought he should like to live in it.

"Well, so long!" said Tim, with a wave of his dirty hand.

"Where are you going?"

"To get some grub."

"Why it's only ten o'clock. Didn't you have breakfast?"

"Yes, at the Lodge, but they only give you a bowl of coffee and a hunk of bread. That's hours ago. Why, I'm so empty now you can hear my ribs rattle."

"Where do you go for——" Wren hesitated to say grub, not being used to the word—"for a dinner?"

"I go to Pop Dugan's mostly. If I was rich I'd go to the Astor House, but as I ain't I go to Pop Dugan's. If you've got a nickel you can come, too."

"A nickel? Can you get dinner for a nickel?"

"Well, not a square meal. You can get beefsteak with bread for a nickel. He don't scrimp neither. It's as much as a feller can eat. That money you gev me will pay for my grub. Are you comin'?"

"No, I took breakfast just before I left the boat."

"How much did you have to pay on the boat?"

"Fifty cents."

Tim whistled, by way of expressing his amazement.

"Fifty cents for breakfast!" he ejaculated. "Your name ain't Vanderbilt, is it?"

"A gentleman invited me to breakfast, and paid for it."

"That's good. You couldn't give me an interduction, could you?"

"I shouldn't know where to find him now."

Tim turned his steps in the direction of Roosevelt Street and Wren found himself alone. From where he stood he saw some seats in City Hall Park, and crossing the broad street he entered it.

He made his way to a bench and

sat down. The only other person occupying it was a bloated and shabby *man of* middle age, whose red face indicated that he did not practice prohibition or approve of the prohibitory law.

He surveyed Wren with a speculative eye. He was a man who *preferred* to live on other people's money, rather than work for a living.

"Hey, Johnny," he said, by way of *introducing* himself.

Wren turned toward his companion, and felt an instinctive repulsion."

"Haven't you got a nickel for a poor man?" whined the shabby man.

Wren felt no disposition to give money to such a person. He was sure that it would be spent for beer.

"I have no money to give away," he said coldly. "I am poor myself."

"I haven't had anything to eat since yesterday morning."

Wren felt quite sure he had had something to drink since then.

"You'd better ask somebody richer than I."

The man did not reply. Wren began to look about him, first placing his bundle on the seat between himself and his new acquaintance.

Presently he turned from looking in the direction of the Tribune building, and was startled to find that the bundle had disappeared. He had been in New York less than an hour, and had lost his entire wardrobe.

CHAPTER III.
THE FIRST DAY IN NEW YORK.

Wren was dismayed when he discovered his loss. The value of the bundle and its contents was very small, but it was all he had.

He made a further discovery. His seat acquaintance was gone, too. It did not take Wren long to put the two facts together. His disreputable looking acquaintance had no doubt purloined the bundle.

But where was he?

Wren rose from the bench and looked about him. Perhaps a hundred feet away he saw the tramp, for this term describes him, hurrying across the Park with the bundle in his hand.

Wren instantly started to run after him. He was a boy of spirit, and he was resolved to get his bundle back.

The tramp must have heard the steps behind him, for he redoubled his pace. But Wren had always been a fast runner, and he did his best now.

He reached the flying figure and grasped him by the arm.

"Give me back that bundle!" he cried, half breathless.

The man turned at bay.

"Let me alone, boy," he said in a hoarse voice. "Do you want to rob me?"

"No I don't. It's you who are the thief."

"I'll give you in charge, you impudent young rascal! You're a bold kid to rob a man in open daylight."

"What's up here?" demanded a policeman, stepping up.

"This 'ere boy's tryin' to rob me," wheezed the tramp.

"It's a lie!" exclaimed Wren, exasperated. "That's my bundle. I laid it down on the seat and that man grabbed it."

The policeman looked from one to the other, and was not long in deciding how matters stood.

"Come with me," he said, grasping the tramp by the arm. "I know you now. "You're Slippery Jim."

"I'm a good, hard working man!" whined the tramp. "He's a artful young cove. Why don't you arrest him?"

"You can't pull the wool over my eyes," said the officer. "Boy, go along with us, and make a complaint against this man."

Wren followed to the station house and formally charged his recent acquaintance with theft. The latter was locked up.

Wren was now free to go where he liked. He put his recovered bundle under his arm, and walked up Broadway.

Presently he came to a sign, "Boy Wanted."

It struck him at once that here was a chance to secure employment. Accordingly he entered the store, which was a large one, and looked about him with some hesitation.

"Well, boy, what can I do for you?" asked the nearest clerk.

"There's a sign out 'Boy Wanted.'"

"Yes. If you want the place go to the back of the store."

Wren went back and soon found himself in the presence of a tall man of middle age.

"Do you want a boy?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the merchant, surveying Wren closely.

"Will I do?"

"Are you a city boy?"

"No, sir. I have only just come in from the country."

"Then you don't know the city streets?"

"No, sir."

"I am very sorry, but you won't do. Besides I want a boy who lives with his parents."

Of course there was no more to be said. Wren went out of the store slowly.

It was his first disappointment, and he was the more concerned over it because he saw that the same objection which had been made to him would apply in other cases.

It didn't seem quite so easy earning a living in the city as he expected.

An hour or two later he began to feel the pangs of hunger. It was about one o'clock, and he had been walking about the city streets for three hours.

He wished he could meet his bootblack friend, Tim Maloney, and ask him where Pop Dugan's restaurant was. By this time he was in City Hall Park again. His attention was drawn to a boy in the same business as Tim.

"Can you tell me where I can get dinner?" he asked.

"Over to the Astor House," answered the boy, winking jocosely.

"Isn't that rather high priced?"

"If you've got a dollar to spare, you can get a first class feed there."

"Is that where you dine?" asked Wren with a smile.

"No, I don't. It's too high toned for me."

"And for me too. Do you know of any cheaper places?"

"Yes, I'll show you."

They were at the eastern border of the park.

"Go up there," said the boy, pointing up what was then known as Chatham Street. "You'll find some cheap places on the left hand side."

Wren followed directions, and presently came to a restaurant where the prices seemed remarkably reasonable. Meats were eight cents, some as low as five, a cup of tea or coffee was three cents, and other things in proportion. It was suited to a boy or man of limited means.

Wren entered.

The tables were unprovided with cloths, there was a general dingy look, and the smells were not inviting. Still he was hungry, and hunger is not apt to be fastidious.

He sat down opposite a man in his shirt sleeves, who looked somewhat like his dishonest acquaintance of the park, and inspected the bill of fare. He finally ordered a small steak for eight cents, and a cup of coffee. The articles were brought, and eaten, though the steak was tough and the coffee was muddy.

There was besides a small supply of bread and butter.

Wren still felt hungry, and finding that pie was three cents a slice, he ordered some apple pie. This carried the price of his dinner up to fourteen cents.

Still Wren did not feel alarmed. Even at this rate, he could get along for two or three days on the money he had, and by that time he would certainly find something to do, or so at least he argued.

Wren returned to the park , which he made his headquarters. There were benches there, and he was so tired that it seemed comfortable to sit down. He could not hear of any employment, and began to feel despondent.

He soon fell into conversation with a bright lively boy named Dick Quinn.

"Can you tell me how I can earn any money?" he asked.

"You'd better go to Wall Street and speculate in stocks," said Dick.

Wren looked puzzled.

"Don't you have to have money to speculate?" he asked.

"Haven't you got money?"

"About fifty cents."

"Then I guess you'll have to try something else. Why, that ain't enough to set you up in the blacking business."

By six o'clock Wren felt quite tired and decidedly homesick. He began to think he would better have taken his uncle's advice and stayed on the farm.

Where was he to sleep? He thought of the Newsboys' Lodge, and wished he could meet Tim Maloney. Just then he heard Tim's welcome voice.

"How you're gettin' along, country?"

"Not very well," answered Wren with a faint smile. "I haven't found anything to do yet."

"That's surprisin', considerin' how long you've been in the city."

"You said you would introduce me at the Newsboys' Lodge."

"Yes, I will. I'm goin' there now."

Wren followed his young guide, who now seemed like an old friend, to the big building on New Chambers Street, and entered with a crowd of other boys.

"You've not been here before," said the superintendent.

"No, sir."

"How long have you been in the city?"

"This is my first day."

"Do you come from the country?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I am afraid you have made a mistake. If you had a good home, you should have stayed there."

"I can stay here tonight, can't I?"

"Yes. Will you take supper?"

"Yes, sir."

Wren disbursed eighteen cents, the price asked for supper, a bed, and breakfast, and was soon partaking of the simple but nourishing meal supplied by the Children's Aid Society.

At as early an hour as he could he went to bed, first depositing the contents of his bundle in a locker which was assigned to him.

Two days later Wren found himself without a cent, and without prospect of employment.

He was up town, in front of a large hotel when he was witness of a startling incident. A tall, well dressed young man, brushed against a young lady, and then darted into the hotel.

"I am robbed!" ejaculated the young lady. "My watch has been stolen."

"Who did it?" asked Wren.

"That tall man. Oh, go in and tell him to give it back to me."

Wren hurried into the hotel. There—at the lower end of the lobby—he saw the well dressed thief.

Wren was a brave boy, and his sympathies were aroused in favor of the young lady. He darted forward, and seized the man by the shoulder and the coat sleeve, and exclaimed, "Give back the young lady's watch."

The man turned upon him furiously.

"Let go my arm, or I'll knock you down," he cried.

(To be continued.)

A WORD OF WARNING.

"I am very much afraid," said the good old parson as he was admonishing his flock, "that unless you mend your ways some of you, when Gabriel blows his trumpet, will come out at the little end of the horn."—Rochester Democrat.

" THE SWEET BY AND BY."

The heart will be lighter
When times shall get brighter;
When rainbows shall span every sky;
And bells will be ringing,
And birds will be singing
Some time—"in the sweet by and by!"

Our pockets will rattle
From Siam to Seattle,
And none for a dollar will sigh;
But alas, for a twenty
Till cash shall be plenty—
And O, for "the sweet by and by!"
— Atlanta Constitution.

[*This Story began in No. 582.*]

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 XIII.
IN BAD HANDS.

For a brief instant the two confronted each other, and Fulke involuntarily cowered before the slave dealer's ferocious smile, full of malignant hate.

His heart sank as he realized his helplessness. There seemed no way of escape.

"I have a score to settle with you my lad," hissed Japp in a low tone; "but this is not the time nor place. March up that path, and be quick about it."

He nodded his head in the designated direction, and then deliberately trained his rifle on Fulke's breast.

There was a brief pause. Fulke glanced quickly up the ravine catching a glimpse of a white frocked Arab here and there, and then his eyes strayed hopelessly toward the camp where his companions were too intent on fighting to note his absence.

He could hear shrill cries, and the dull sound of blows, but no gun shots.

"Do you hear me?" thundered the now exasperated slave dealer. "March off, or I'll put a hole through you."

A wild hope flashed suddenly into Fulke's mind. He saw that Japp's rifle was an ordinary breech loader, and he felt sure that it had not been reloaded. He still had a chance of escape.

Quick as the inspiration seized him he turned and fled, but he was no match for the slave dealer either in strategy or speed.

Japp had anticipated just such a move, and with a few strides he was behind the lad with uplifted rifle. Down came the weapon, and Fulke was felled to the earth by a cruel blow that deprived him of all sense of consciousness.

Japp bent over his victim for an instant, and then signaled to one of the Arabs, who was quickly on the spot.

Between them they lifted the motionless body, and bore it up the ravine.

It was probably half an hour after when Fulke struggled back to consciousness, and to a painful realization of the situation.

His head felt twice as large as usual, and was full of throbbing pains in spite of the damp cloth that was wrapped about it.

He was propped in an upright position against a tree, and in front of him was a hastily constructed barricade of stones and brush, completely choking up the pass, which at this point was narrow and hemmed in by precipitous hills clad with timber.

Behind the barricade crouched fifteen dirty, greasy looking Arabs with rifles across their knees, and on a flat stone near by sat John Japp in company with the traitor Maghull and two other white men no whit less degraded and brutal than Japp himself.

One of the latter was wrapped in

manifold bandages, principally about his arms and breast, and beyond doubt this was the slayer of the leopard.

Maghull met Fulke's gaze, and returned it with an impudent, defiant stare.

Perceiving that his prisoner was conscious, the slave dealer leaned toward him, and whispered harshly: "If you dare to open your lips, I'll knock you on the head."

The command was accompanied by a look of venemous spite.

Fulke had no intention of making an outcry. He leaned back against the tree, dizzy with pain, and tried to collect his thoughts.

He knew the Arabs must have penetrated some distance into the pass, for beyond the barricade, as far as he could see, were the steep gloomy hillsides. The watchful attitude and entrenched position of his captors seemed to indicate that they expected an attack, and as this dawned on Fulke's mind he resolved then and there that he would give an alarm—no matter what the cost—sooner than see his friends march up to be greeted by the deadly rifle fire that was waiting for them.

That Pieter would attempt to rescue him, he did not doubt for an instant.

Happily the lad was spared such a severe test. A rustling in the bushes was now heard, and an Arab dropped lightly into the barricade from the hillside.

The fellow had evidently been absent on a scouting expedition, for general attention centered on him when he began to speak volubly in a strange tongue. Fulke could glean nothing from this, or from the general conversation that ensued, but the tidings brought by the spy were speedily communicated to him by Japp.

"Your friends have deserted you, and you have seen the last of them," said the ruffian with malicious enjoyment. "They have turned back, and they are wise in doing so. But for those negroes who have been foolishly following us for the purpose of murder and robbery, every man of your party would now be lying dead at the mouth of yonder ravine. Our ambuscade was for them, and not for the foolish blacks, who have paid dearly for their blunder.

"Don't comfort yourself with hopes of rescue for you will never see your friends again. They believe you to be dead and will now turn back to the coast. You and I will have a reckoning tonight. It was you who stole my slave and afterwards identified me when I was a prisoner on the vessel. I am not the man to forget such things, as you shall learn to your cost."

Fulke wisely made no reply. Any doubt he may have had as to the truth of Japp's story was speedily cleared away, for the word was now given to start, and in a moment or two the band were marching up the pass, Japp taking the lead with his three white companions.

Fulke came next, with arms tightly bound behind him. He was weak and dizzy with pain, but at the least sign of flagging the Arabs prodded him with their rifles.

There was indeed little room for hope, and the lad realized this keenly.

The mere disappearance of his friends was easily accounted for. They must have learned that he was a prisoner, and were now hastening to the second pass mentioned by Carimoo, with the intention of crossing the mountains, and intercepting the Arabs.

It was far more prudent to do this than to follow up the enemy, and run the risk of perishing in an ambuscade.

Another possibility that occurred to Fulke was that his friends might have been overpowered by the negroes, but he speedily dismissed this from his mind.

There were two things, however, which utterly stifled hope in his heart. In the first place, even should his friends cross the mountain first, and waylay the Arabs when they issued from the pass, what could they accomplish against such a superior force, armed as well as themselves?

On the other hand where would he himself be ere the three days required for threading the pass (the time mentioned by Carimoo) had elapsed?

John Japp had sworn to have a reckoning that very night. No mercy could be expected of the cruel ruffian. He was bent on taking a foul revenge.

With this dark outlook, Fulke's reflections during that day's march may be better imagined than described. Hunger and pain added to his misery, but he strove hard to show a bold front to his captors, and to conceal every trace of fear.

After eight hours' continuous marching, a halt was made in a narrow, rocky valley. A few yards ahead a stream of bluish water emerged suddenly from a gloomy ravine, and dashing across the path vanished as abruptly in a gorge on the opposite side.

John Japp chose for a camping site an elevated plateau of level rock that formed a stepping stone to the left hand wall of the valley, and terminated at the brink of the torrent.

'The Arabs immediately began to gather firewood for defensive as well as other purposes, since traces of wild animals had been seen during the day.

No attention was paid to Fulke and as his legs were fairly giving way beneath him he ventured to sit down on a loose stone with his back against the base of the hill.

The preparations for the night's camp had a terrible significance for him, and his fatigue and hunger were almost forgotten as he watched the burly figure of the slave dealer moving to and fro among his men.

He shuddered when the cruel black eyes met his own for a passing second; their menacing expression was not hard to read.

At either end of the valley Fulke could see clustered mountain peaks, stamped chaotically against the blue of the sky. One that lay to the westward was spattered with the golden haze of sunset, and the glorious sight filled his heart with an infinite longing for freedom.

Never had life seemed a more precious boon than at this moment. He wondered where he would be when the morrow's sun shone into the valley.

Was it possible that his eyes would never see the beauties of another dawn? No! No! It could not be! Cruel and merciless as John Japp was, he surely had no thoughts of murder in his heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SLAVE DEALER'S VENGEANCE.

Fulke's conflicting emotions were interrupted by a light footfall, and looking up he saw John Japp in front of him.

The ray of hope that had animated his heart a moment before faded away, leaving in its stead black despair, for the slave dealer's attitude and expression left no doubt as to his purpose; he had come to claim his revenge.

The ruffian stood for an instant with folded arms, gloating over the fear and helplessness of his captive.

The Arabs ceased their preparations for the evening meal and looked on with evident enjoyment while Dakin and Salter, the two white men, came close to their leader.

Maghull remained in the background. The traitor's conscience was not sufficiently hardened to permit him to witness the sufferings of one whom he had so deeply wronged, and from whom he had received nothing but kindness.

"Well, your hour has come," said Japp finally. "You were brave enough on a certain night a few months ago when you carried off my slave and openly defied me. We shall see if you are equally brave in the face of death.

"It is due to your meddling that Carimoo played us false and confided his secret to new friends, who foolishly imagined that we would allow ourselves to be robbed of the treasure that is justly ours. But for you we should be at the diamond mountain ere now.

"However, your plans have failed and with the aid of the map that came into my possession we shall easily find the treasure.

"I spared your life this morning because I expected to make future use of you, but the action of your friends has changed all that. Your supposed death has led them to abandon the quest, and they are hastening back to the coast. There is no danger that they will cross my path again. Had they persisted in trying to thwart me, I would have served every man of them as I intend to serve you."

The slave dealer paused and showed his white teeth in a ferocious smile. He spoke like a man who had seen better days, and such was doubtless the case.

Self wrought ruin has driven many a poor wretch to hide his shame and disgrace in savage lands, where deeper degradation almost inevitably awaits him.

Some such conviction as this flashed into Fulke's mind, and he thought for an instant that he might awaken a tender chord in his captor's heart by reminding him that they were both Englishmen. It was worth trying at all events, and looking fearlessly into Japp's face he said:

"I am quite in your power, and you can kill me if you wish. You have not always been what you are now, I think, and have possibly known another name. By the memory of the past, I appeal to you for mercy. We are countrymen, and that alone should stay your hand from a crime that will surely cause you bitter repentance."

It was a bold stroke, but it failed utterly. Better by far had Fulke remained silent.

The slave dealer's bronze skin paled, and then grew purple with rage.

"By Allah! You shall rue this insult," he cried hoarsely. "Do you dare to taunt me with my former life?

"Yes, I had another name, but I have forgotten it now. The past is dead. I have embraced the religion of my followers and am become a Mohammedan.

"But know you this: It is because you are English that I am going to kill you. I have cause to hate your countrymen—aye! bitter cause, though the same blood flows in my veins.

"I served once under a man who hated them even more than I do. The glitter of gold tempted him, though, and he went home.

"Not so easily do I forget my wrongs. You have injured me, and you are an Englishman. That is more than enough. I will make you suffer torments before the last breath leaves your body."

Japp fairly ground his teeth as he hissed out the last sentence.

"Selim, bring me a stout rope," he added sternly, turning to one of the Arabs.

As the man hastened to obey Fulke glanced appealingly at the dark, savage faces around him. Not a spark of pity was visible on any of them.

Some were cold and merciless, others glowed with ferocious satisfaction. Even Maghull was looking calmly on with arms folded across his breast.

Fulke resolved to try one last expedient, knowing that failure could not render his situation worse.

"If you kill me," he said in a resolute voice, "my death will surely be avenged; and that sooner than you think. My friends have not abandoned me. They are crossing the mountains by another way, and will be watching for you at the mouth of this pass.

"They know that I am a prisoner, and when they find that you have murdered me they will kill every one of you. Carimoo has friends beyond these mountains, and he will procure their aid. Not one of you will ever reach the diamond mountain, though your bodies may lie in sight of it. I have warned you in time. Now take your own course."

John Japp was not angered by this bold speech. He looked grave for a moment, and then burst into a harsh laugh.

"You won't save yourself by any such trick," he muttered. "This is the only accessible pass through the Kong Mountains, but if you choose to think that your friends are somewhere among the hills, intent on rescuing you, I will save them further trouble by sending you to join them. I hope you will reach them all right."

He laughed again, showing his straight white teeth, and taking the coil of rope from Selim who had just come up, he stepped over to a mass of drift that had lodged against the side of the valley during some flood.

On top of the heap lay a long heavy tree limb shaped exactly like the letter Y. Each fork was about six feet in length, and the trunk was a little longer.

Japp had observed this when he chose the camping place, and its shape suggested to him the plan he was about to carry out.

Summoning three Arabs, he directed them to shoulder the limb, and bear it down to the stream. He waited until they had started with their burden, and then returned to Fulke.

"Come on," he said roughly. "I must have this business over before supper"

Fulke was ashen pale, and for a moment his limbs became so weak that he could not move. Japp mistook this for hesitation, and seizing the lad by the arm he fairly dragged him down the path to the water.

The Arabs had already deposited the limb on a flat ledge of rock that jutted eight or ten feet into the stream, thus forming on the lower side a considerable eddy of swirling black water. Out on this ledge strode Japp, leading his shrinking captive. Selim followed but the others halted on the beach.

"Come here, Maghull, I want your help," cried the slave dealer in a low voice.

Maghull's conscience seemed to trouble him, for he was loath to obey. But the command left no alternative, so he shuffled slowly out on the rock.

Fulke now realized the purpose of his cruel captor, and his fortitude almost gave way.

"Don't kill me," he pleaded. "I have done nothing to deserve this. At least give me a chance for my life."

"Turning coward, are you?" sneered Japp, with a brutal laugh. "I thought so. That's always the way with you white faced, haughty looking Englishmen. They're brave enough until the last moment."

The insulting lying words cut Fulke to the quick, and he resolved to show the ruffian how bravely an Englishman could face death.

"I am not afraid," he said calmly. "I defy you. Do your worst."

"You'll sing another tune before long," replied Japp. "Lend a hand here, Maghull."

The latter readily obeyed, and between the two Fulke was placed in an upright position on the crotch of the limb with his back toward the forks. His legs were drawn down on each side, and secured under the trunk by a rope tightly joined to his ankles.

To render him still more secure the rope was then wound alternately about his waist, and around the circumference of the limb.

The position of his hands, which were bound behind his back, was not altered.

Fulke offered no resistance, but while Japp and Maghull were binding *him his* eyes rested sadly on his gloomy surroundings. The further side of the pass was merged in shadow, *and* the distant peaks were fading against the starry horizon.

He saw the precarious bridge of *jutting* reefs, a little way up the stream, by which the Arabs would cross when they resumed their journey in the morning, and then his glance strayed with an inward shudder to the swirling flood in front of him, and to the black, narrow gorge into which it shortly plunged with a sullen roar.

The last knot was now tied, and Japp stood off to survey his handiwork.

"That can't be improved on," he cried with a brutal laugh. "I wish you a safe and happy voyage, my lad. Don't be afraid of drowning. That limb will ride the waves like a duck, and it is so well ballasted that it can't turn over.

"You will be well spattered with spray, and will be shaken up considerably, but those are trifles. Perhaps you will stick on a rock and remain there for a few months until the rainy season brings a flood to wash your bones out into the open country, or possibly you will be cast on shore to feed some hungry lion.

"There are crocodiles in the stream, I believe, so you won't want for company. I am sorry I can't give you the use of your legs and arms."

These cruel words almost broke down the poor lad's courage, and he was sorely tempted to make a final despairing appeal for mercy; well might he quail at the terrible fate awaiting him. But he choked down the cowardly words that were struggling to his lips, resolved to deprive his enemy of this last gratification, and the next instant a mist seemed to swim before his eyes as he felt the limb slide gently off the rock. Then it rested tranquilly on the water, and he shivered as the swirling ripples surged against his knees.

As though in a dream he heard Japp cry hoarsely, "Jump in there, Maghull, and push the limb down stream, stem first. I want it to have a good start."

There was a brief silence, broken only by a low murmur from the Arabs. Then Maghull slipped from the rock, and waded breast deep to Fulke's side.

He was about to steer the limb into the current when a warning cry from Japp checked him.

"Stop! Stop! Maghull, there is something sticking from the lad's pocket. Bring it here."

It was the card case that Japp saw—the same which had caused Pieter Bierenbroek such undisguised amazement on the night of Carimoo's rescue.

Maghull took possession of it, studiously avoiding Fulke's eyes, and wading to the rock gave it into Japp's hands.

The incident meant nothing to Fulke; it was merely a prolongment of his torture. He closed his eyes and waited, breathing a brief prayer for divine comfort and courage.

Maghull had now returned to the limb, but instead of carrying out his instructions, he shot a swift backward glance at the rock.

Japp was examining the inside of the card case, and the others were watching him.

Maghull smiled grimly, and whipping a knife from his belt he deftly slipped it up one sleeve. Then he bent close to Fulke, under pretense of starting the limb, and whispered without moving his lips:

"Courage, lad! I am going to free your arms. I can't reach your feet without being discovered. You must manage that yourself. Not a sound, or you will betray me."

The words thrilled Fulke to the heart, and nearly unnerved him, but by a strong effort he controlled himself. Instantly the limb began to move, and at the same time he felt the tension on his arms relax.

As the swift current caught the stem of the bough, and sucked it out of the eddy, John Japp turned the card case over in his hand and glanced carelessly at the golden coronet, and the name stamped beneath it.

His swarthy face paled and his hand shook like a leaf.

"Viscount Melgrave!" he gasped in a tone of the utmost amazement, "what does this mean? Can it be possible that——"

He flung the card case on the rock, and looked toward the eddy.

"Bring the lad back," he cried hoarsely, "catch the limb, Maghull, catch it quick!"

Too late! The raging torrent had claimed its victim, and as Japp's command echoed down the gorge, the limb swung into midstream, and shot off at dizzy speed.

Maghull snatched at one of the forks, but lost his footing and fell. Luckily, he was still on the verge of the eddy, and by a hard struggle he regained the rock.

Japp threw up his arms in despair, and burst into a torrent of profanity.

"I'll give fifty pounds to the man who saves that lad," he shouted. "Fifty pounds in hard money. Fools! Blockheads! Cowards that you are! Don't stand there looking at me. Why don't you act?"

The slave dealer's rage was a greater incentive to his followers than the promised reward. They started hastily down the shore of the stream, tumbling and slipping among the rocks, but ere they reached the mouth of the gorge, the limb had vanished in its dark recesses.

The agony of that first wild dart through the rolling blue waves, with its accompaniment of drenching spray, wrung a terrified cry from Fulke's lips. He tore his arms free from the partially severed cords that held them, and immediately felt a sense of relief, which was increased a few seconds later when the limb settled down to a swift, steady rush.

His brain was in a whirl of confused emotions. He had heard everything—Japp's cry of amazement, and his frantic appeal to the Arabs—but why the discovery of the name emblazoned on the card case should have changed the slave dealer's murderous purpose he was quite at a loss to understand.

Turning his head he saw the Arabs scrambling along the shore, and when the narrow mouth of the gorge loomed up an instant later he forgot everything but the dangers that lay before him. What little hope of life was in his heart vanished almost utterly as the current whirled him on through the deep gloom of the ravine between two frowning walls of rock that towered hundreds of feet overhead.

Maghull's unexpected compassion promised to be of little account, for though his arms were free it was impossible for him to reach the cords that held his legs straddle-wise about the limb.

No, he must abandon hope. There was not even a chance of drowning, for the limb kept its balance well as it shot through boiling rapids and over submerged rocks. He shuddered to think of the fate that awaited him. He would stick fast in mid-channel to suffer the agonies of a lingering death, or would be flung on some barren shore to die of starvation or be mangled by wild beasts.

Such were the reflections that kept the poor lad company as he sped on and on through the blackness of the night. His body was racked with pain, and he was weak from hunger.

Almost was he tempted to pray that death would come by drowning, so dreadful and hopeless seemed the future.

Suddenly the pallid gloom of the gorge changed to pitch darkness, and he felt a wave of cold air surging on his face. As he tried vainly to pierce the blackness, the awful truth burst upon him, and chilled him to the bone with horror. The stream had whirled him into an underground cavern.

CHAPTER XV.

A FORCED MARCH.

We left Pieter Bierenbroek and his companions face to face with the dozen or more desperate negroes who had swerved aside in their flight down the gorge, and burst upon the camp.

The Hollander was averse to shedding blood unless it was absolutely necessary, and seeing how the savages were armed, he ordered his men to repel them with clubbed guns.

This move was a surprise to the foe, for they were under the impression that they had blundered into a second ambuscade. As they were more anxious to escape than to stop and fight they contented themselves with a brief scrimmage, and when an opportunity offered, they made off in haste, dragging with them the wounded men who had gone down before the gun stocks of the Ashantees.

One of the latter had a spear hole in his arm, but no one else was injured, and Pieter felt very much elated over his victory until he suddenly discovered that Fulke was missing.

Then there was wild excitement for a moment, during which no one seemed to know what to do or say. Finally Kalcalli managed to explain that he had seen Fulke make a dash toward the ravine with an angry negro in pursuit, and immediately the whole party started in that direction, led by Pieter.

Arabs and negroes had utterly vanished, but a few yards up the pass lay the body of Fulke's pursuer. It was not hard to deduce the truth from this, and the fact that the missing lad was a prisoner in the hands of the slave gang was accepted without questioning.

Carimoo's grief and rage were pitiful to see, and he had to be restrained by main force, from rushing after his young master.

It was a difficult problem that now confronted the party, but a partial solution was presented by Kalcalli, who offered to creep up the pass and reconnoiter. The offer was gladly accepted, and the Ashantee went nimbly off, dodging from tree to tree, and from stone to stone.

He came in sight of the Arabs as they stopped to erect the barricade, and from a safe hiding place he saw Fulke propped against a tree with a bandage about his head. He did not linger long, but started back shortly before Japp sent out his spy, and was soon relating what he had seen to his companions.

Pieter turned the situation over in his mind for a moment or two, and then, having ascertained from Carimoo that the other route through the mountains was but a mile or two distant, he outlined the plan that he had decided upon.

"I won't deny that this is a pretty bad business," he said, "for every one of you knows that it is. But we won't spare any pains to rescue the lad, and the only chance we have of doing it is to cross the mountain by the other route and get the drop on Japp and his gang when they come out the other end of this pass. The rascals will fool away a few hours here, expecting us to attack them, and meanwhile we can get a good start of them."

"Don't you think it would be a better plan to keep in their rear?" asked Clegg. "We might have a good chance to rescue Fulke by a night attack."

Pieter shook his head decidedly.

"No," he replied, "that won't do. The Arabs will be constantly on the watch, and ten to one we would all be shot down in an ambuscade. The pass is narrow, and we could not overtake the rascals, or get ahead of them without being discovered. They will relax their caution if they see and hear nothing of us, and by strategy we may rescue Fulke without difficulty."

"Unless they murder 'im in the meantime," suggested Raffles. "Them Arabs don't think no more of killin' a man than I do of spittin' a rabbit."

Clegg looked startled and glanced uneasily up the pass.

"The same thing occurred to me," he said. "That is why I would rather push right on after the Arabs."

"You need have no fears on that score," replied Pieter. "Japp don't intend to kill his prisoner or he would not have taken the trouble to capture him. Not that he is incapable of the crime, but he hopes to make use of the lad in some way.

"However, let us leave the matter to Carimoo. The faithful fellow cares more for Fulke than any one of us—and that's saying a great deal as far as I'm concerned."

Clegg protested that this was unnecessary, and that he had changed his mind, but Carimoo was consulted nevertheless, and having a sensible head on his shoulders, he took the same view that Pieter did. He was in haste to be off, and his actions and manner showed that he was quite prepared to sacrifice his life in the rescue of his young master.

Now that the question was settled there was no delay. Cautiously the little party went back to the camp, shouldered their loads, and struck off to the east, following the base of the mountain.

Barely five minutes later an Arab spy stood on the site of the abandoned camp, smiling exultantly at the conviction that the hated Europeans had turned back to the coast.

A little more than an hour's march brought the travelers to the second pass through the Kong range.

At first sight it seemed to merit the evil reputation bestowed upon it by Carimoo, for it was nothing less than the partially dried bed of a stream which evidently had its source somewhere in the depths of the mountains, and flowed southward toward the coast. However, the walking proved fairly good, barring some ugly pools that had to be splashed through, and about noon the stony ravine was exchanged for a scarcely perceptible path that led through heavy forests and crawled painfully over the brow of dizzy mountain peaks.

All that afternoon the little band toiled on, sick and anxious at heart, but utterly heedless of fatigue. Nor did they stop when the sun went down.

Trusting to Carimoo's knowledge of the way, Pieter resolved to cover as much ground as possible during the night. None thought of objecting to this, and for hour after hour the straggling column followed the negro's unflagging steps through the gloom, risking life and limb on slippery rocks, and in jungle coverts where lurked hungry and savage beasts.

At about two o'clock in the morning, as they were marching through a dismal gorge deep down amid the hills, a roaring noise was heard in the distance and presently Carimoo halted his companions on the banks of a mountain torrent.

The despair which this discovery seemed to cause the negro was better understood when he explained that he had expected to find here a bridge of vines stretched from shore to shore. No trace of it was now visible. The floods must have washed it away long ago.

By Pieter's command a heap of driftwood was collected and set on fire, but the effect of this was merely to show how serious was the situation. The stream was not very wide, and from each bank a ledge of rocks jutted out towards midchannel, but the gap between them—about ten feet in extent—was a dizzy slope of swirling blue water. The strongest swimmer would meet certain death in such a place.

The valley through which the torrent had its channel, cut almost at right angles across the pass that the travelers were following. It was not so wide, however, and appeared to be choked up with timber and rock.

With a rather unsatisfactory torch chosen from the driftwood, Pieter examined the stream for some distance in each direction, but returned from his quest with a look of gloomy despair on his face.

"No fording place in sight," he announced. "It is not worth while to venture farther in the darkness. We will wait for daylight, and then we must find a way to cross.

"The distance we have traveled today entitles us to a few hours' rest. Get out some of that tinned meat, and a few biscuits, Raffles. We can't go to sleep on empty stomachs."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Noah as he turned his attention to the cases. "I'll have things shipshape in a moment."

Pieter's dejection seemed to deepen about the time the repast was ready, and the others were no whit more cheerful, though they ate the meager food provided with great gusto.

The last morsel had been consumed, and Pieter was giving instructions relative to guard duty, when with startling abruptness, a loud, shrill cry floated down the gorge of the torrent, and was carried on in shuddering echoes among the hills—a cry wrung by acute terror from a human throat.

Once more the dreadful sound was heard, and ere its echoes ceased to ring, Carimoo snatched a spear that lay near by, and sprang to his feet.

Two leaps carried him clear of the firelight, and with the third he vanished in the darkness.

(To be continued.)

[This Story began in No. 583.]

A Mountain Mystery;

OR,

The Miami Conspiracy.

BY W. BERT FOSTER,

Author of "In Alaskan Waters," "A Lost Expedition," etc.

CHAPTER X.

TOM DOES SOME SCOUTING.

For over an hour, Major Peterson, and his two companions in the disguised Sylph, kept the topsails of the schooner in view; but the breeze was evidently better with the Jeannette than with them, and she slowly drew away from her pursuer.

This was maddening to Tom, for had they overtaken the smugglers, his impetuosity, unless restrained, would have led him to board Captain Rolf Ericson's craft and demand the deliverance of Jack Hardwick.

Gradually the distance between the Sylph and the Jeannette increased, and at length the latter entirely disappeared behind one of the islands which was rather higher than the others of the archipelago.

The pursuers kept right on, nevertheless, hoping by good fortune to follow in the track of the schooner, but night came down upon them without their again catching sight of the vessel.

At Dan's suggestion they went ashore on one of the smaller islands and camped for the night. Traveling as they were in light marching order, they had no protection from the elements, except such as their blankets supplied; but the weather was fair and warm, and they hardly missed the tent which had been left back on the Outer Duck.

Provisions were plenty and during the afternoon Tom had trolled for fish and been very successful, too, so their supper was a generous one.

Although they were in the "enemy's country," as they might say, the major did not consider it at all necessary to guard the camp, for the smugglers, he was sure, had no reason to suspect their presence, and other inhabitants of the island were few.

Toward morning a thunder storm came up, however, and they were glad to seek the shelter of the sailboat's cabin till the tempest had passed. Then it being so near daylight, Tom lit the alcohol stove and prepared breakfast, after which they got under way.

About two hours after sun-up the Sylph passed through the group of islands and reached the open stretch of bay which lay between them and the Canadian shore; but just then the wind died down to a calm, and the sails of the catboat hung as limp as rags.

"Well, we're in for it, and it's going to be a scorcher today, too," Dan declared, fastening the tiller in a becket and filling his pipe.

"Out with your fishing tackle, Tom," said the major. "Fishing and hunting is our supposed business up here, and we must keep up the fiction. No knowing how many glasses are leveled at us already from yonder shore."

Tom complied with a groan. Inaction was terribly galling to him just then.

"I'd give a cent to know where that schooner went yesterday afternoon," he declared, baiting his hook savagely. "She came this way, I'm dead sure."

"She may be still somewhere among these islands," returned his father, "or hiding in some cove along the main shore. There are plenty of them, I presume, eh, Dan?"

Dan nodded, still puffing calmly at his pipe.

"Some of 'em," he said, "you never suspect until you come right onto 'em. A whole fleet of smugglers could find safe hiding places along there," and his arm swept the line of the wooded and rocky mainland.

Just back from the shore the bluffs rose to miniature mountains, forming a chain which hid the interior of the country from the bay. Heavy timber covered the sides of some of these eminences, while others were as barren as though of volcanic origin. The rude shores at certain points extended in reefs and high promontories some distance into the bay, presenting a most formidable coast line to the view.

Tom fished in a desultory fashion for some time, but finally threw down his line in disgust, although his success had been very fair.

"This makes me sick!" he exclaimed; "we're not getting ahead one bit. Come, father, let me take a gun and go ashore in the small boat for an hour or so. Perhaps I may run across something which will help us. The wind doesn't seem at all accommodating and it isn't liable to be any better all day."

"I don't know about letting you go off alone, Tom," objected the major, thoughtfully eying the shore. "You may get into trouble."

Tom grunted disdainfully, but made no defense. Just here, however, Dan Cheney spoke up.

"I don't know but what it would be a good thing to let him go, major," he said. "He's old enough to keep out of trouble and it is a fact that we're just losing time here."

"Well, Tom's got a level head, I know," responded the major, rather proudly; "but this is a serious business. It might go hard with him if he should fall in with Rolf Ericson again. If you go, Tom, remember that it may depend upon you whether we set Jack at liberty again, so do be circumspect."

Taking this for a consent, Tom quickly wound up his line, took his gun and ammunition, and entered the small boat.

"If the wind springs up while you're gone we may take a cruise among the islands," Dan called after him, as he pulled slowly away. "If we're not here when you come back, go over to the island yonder and wait for us."

Tom waved his hand to signify that he understood and was soon out of hearing. It was altogether too warm to row very rapidly, however, but the exercise gave him a certain sense of satisfaction. He was no longer inactive, at least, and to a youth of Tom Peterson's temperament, inaction was the hardest cross to bear.

He pulled the small boat directly toward the shore, but arriving within a few rods of the rocks and seeing no good place to make a landing, he turned to the eastward and rowed steadily on, keeping a sharp lookout for openings in the bluffs.

Not far ahead was a high promontory, which served to hide entirely that portion of the shore which lay beyond, and Tom did not at all fancy rounding this point without first reconnoitering.

With some difficulty he landed at a spot where the boat could be shielded from the waves, and with his gun in his hand (the lock wrapped in a piece of rubber cloth to protect it from the spray which flew all about him) he stepped ashore and pursued the line of the beach on foot.

The stones were slippery and broken, and once or twice he scarcely saved himself from receiving an ugly fall among them. The waves, dashing spitefully against the rocks, threw great sheets of spray far up on the shore and wet him to the skin; but this he did not mind, for the sun beat down upon the path so hotly that he was really glad of an occasional ducking.

In about half an hour he reached and rounded the extreme point of the promontory, and saw stretching before him for more than five miles, a broad, placid cove, surrounded for the most part by wooded shores, rather lower than that portion of the mainland he had already seen. Not a vessel was in sight, however, for even the Sylph was hidden by the point on which he stood.

"This cove seems clear enough," Tom thought, resting the butt of his gun on the ground and leaning upon it, while his eyes swept the expanse of water and shore in view from his position, "and I suppose I might bring up the boat and row across it to the next point; but had I better?"

He was silently thoughtful for a few moments, gazing abstractedly at the wooded promontory, which hid from his sight the shore beyond the cove.

Suddenly his eyes became fixed upon a particular spot on the opposite shore. Surely he saw something move among the trees there. The next instant his suspicion was made a certainty, for he plainly saw a man step out from among the trees and move slowly along the edge of the water.

The man was quite five miles away, but in that clear atmosphere Tom could not make a mistake. He watched the figure for several moments until finally it turned into the woods again and was lost to view.

"Now I wonder who that can be," thought young Peterson, shading his eyes with his hand and trying to follow the course of the stranger among the trees. "I think that it will be tolerably safe to look into the matter and find out who is occupying yonder hill.

"Second thoughts are usually the best, they say, and I guess I won't row across the cove. It might bring me under the surveillance of some sentinel of the smugglers. Who knows? Perhaps the Jeannette is lying, hidden, at this very moment, behind that promontory."

He at once turned his eyes upon the coast line on which he stood and a very little scrutiny led him to believe that with some little difficulty he could climb the cliff which towered above him, and follow the line of the shore on the highlands, where he would be much more sheltered from possible observation than if he remained on the beach.

Having decided to make the attempt of reaching the cliff's summit, Tom slung his rifle over his shoulder, and seeking the most favorable spot within sight, began to mount upwards. The path was treacherous indeed at points, but he pressed on, escaping a fall almost miraculously at several places and finally, after a climb of some twenty minutes, reached the top.

From this point of vantage he could trace much more of the interior of the country than he had been before able to view. The land sloped up from the cliffs to the higher eminences beyond, but between the mountain tops in sight (and there were several) were valleys which extended deeper into the interior, and gave him a view of a long chain of mountains—far greater than those near at hand—some miles back from the bay.

But he spent but little time viewing the topography of the country. The top of the cliffs were bordered for the most part with open groves, and he started off at once in an easterly direction, hidden from the water and the farther promontory by this convenient screen.

CHAPTER XI.

TOM OVERHEARS A CONVERSATION WHICH SURPRISES HIM

From the spot on which Tom Peterson had stood when he saw the stranger on the opposite promontory, to the further shore of the cove, was not much over five miles in a direct line, but by the path he was forced to follow in reaching the place, the distance was quite twice that.

It was noon ere he arrived at the spot where he had seen the stranger disappear among the trees on the hillside.

Leaving the Sylph in haste, as he had, he had not thought to supply himself with food, and to kill and cook game was out of the question so he pressed on, subduing his hunger as best he could.

Having reached the base of the hill on which he had seen the stranger, he plunged into the woods and made his way toward the summit, believing that the man he had seen had gone over the eminence to the further side.

This climb was moderately easy for the woods was quite open and particularly free from underbrush. As he pressed on up the hillside, his movements became more cautious, and upon arriving near the summit, and coming to quite an open space, he carefully reconnoitered the whole vicinity before venturing out of the shelter of the trees.

Once out in the open the first discovery he made was the fact that a breeze had sprung up and was blowing quite freshly from the northwest. He looked toward the anchorage of the Sylph, but the western promontory of the cove still hid the spot where he had left the catboat and he could not therefore tell whether his father and Dan had got under way again or not.

Then he hurried to the other side of the hill and found that here was still another cove, but inclosed for the most part within high and almost barren cliffs. It was more like an inlet than an anchorage, for it extended deeply into the land—so far, in fact, that its end could not be seen from his position, being hidden by a high cliff which extended out into the placid water, almost dividing the inlet in half.

Behind this point a whole fleet of schooners of the Jeannette's size might lay, for all he knew, and he would have been none the wiser. The man he had seen several hours before was nowhere in sight nor did he see a single living object anywhere on the shores of the inlet.

While he stood there undecided as to which course to pursue in gaining a view of the upper basin—whether to go down to the shore and keep within the fringe of the bushes which seemed to extend along the margin of the water, or to retrace his steps in part, and seek the highlands north and west of the inlet—the sudden appearance of a boat around the eastern promontory which guarded the inlet, attracted his attention.

He sheltered himself still further behind the bushes and watched the craft with interest.

It was a wide beamed Indian canoe, laden to all appearances quite heavily and propelled by four men who may have been either French Canadians or Indians—Tom was rather inclined to think that both were represented among the paddlers.

Just as the first canoe was well in sight the bow of another appeared from the same direction—the eastern end of the bay—and that again was followed by a third and fourth until there were ten of the craft, making directly across the inlet toward the strait which passed into the inner basin.

Tom watched them curiously and plainly saw that each canoe was laden with bales and boxes of goods, but of course he had no means of knowing what goods were thus being taken into the inlet. But the reason for taking them he could easily divine. Without doubt the Jeannette was in the upper basin and this was the manner in which she received a portion of her cargo.

The last of the ten canoes contained, besides the four men at the paddles, a person who reclined in the stern and seemed to have the direction of the fleet in his charge.

He was clothed in the dress of a city man, but whether he was light or dark, or how he looked, he was too far away for the watcher on the hilltop to discern.

"There's something going on here that I want to look into," Tom muttered, when the last canoe had disappeared within the strait which separated the lower part of the inlet from the upper. "I must get nearer the shore and follow around until I can get a look at the Jeannette, if she is really up there."

He started down the hillside at once, but bearing in mind the fact that there might be others in the woods beside himself, he moved with great circumspection, being careful not to disturb even a bush, that the movement might not draw the attention of any sentinel, posted on the neighboring heights, to himself.

"This is regular Indian warfare," thought Master Tom, using his gun barrel to carefully push aside the interlacing branches of the underbrush and peering through at the hillside below him. "By jings! there's a path."

He scrambled hastily down the hill for several rods and brought up in a well defined footpath, sheltered from view on both the water and landward side by tall bushes and tree clumps, and running parallel with the shore of the inlet. The path gave every evidence of being in constant use.

He moved stealthily along, keeping a sharp lookout both behind and ahead of him, and soon approached a spot where he could, by pushing the bushes to one side, view the upper end of the inlet.

Greatly to his satisfaction the first object he saw was the Jeannette, lying at anchor less than a stone's throw from the further end of the basin. Her crew were hard at work hoisting the contents of the canoe fleet into the waist of the ship.

Evidently Tom had discovered the rendezvous of the smugglers.

"Now I wonder where this goes to?" queried the youth, looking along this path in the direction of the mouth of the inlet. "It must be a path used by the smugglers or some of their friends; but where does it lead them? However, I'll find that out when I come back. Just now I am more anxious to discover where it leads from."

The shore of the basin, at least that portion of it near the Jeannette's anchorage, was high and rocky, barren but for a few clumps of hardy trees, and sloped steeply up toward the summit of the mountain chain. Not a building appeared on the shore of the basin, although Tom had expected to find quite a settlement at the place which the smugglers made their headquarters.

"Now I wonder," he began, when a sound proceeding from some spot along the path before him caused him to stop and lend his ear in a listening attitude.

In a moment he was assured of the fact that two or more men were approaching along the path from the direction of the head of the inlet, and that they were engrossed in earnest conversation. Casting a hasty glance about him and seeing no good place of concealment, Tom darted back along the path for several hundred yards to a spot where it was wider and where a great oak tree on the upper side of the track sheltered a mossy bank, and cast the shade of its broadly spreading branches far out upon the bosom of the water.

Springing up the bank, Tom dodged behind the tree, determined to see who the approaching party were and to find out, if possible, where they were going.

Glancing upwards as he reached this shelter he saw, not far above his head and easy of access from the ground, a huge incision in the trunk where, years before, a limb had been torn off, and the tree had rotted and formed a retreat sufficient to comfortably hold a man. Without second thought he climbed hastily up the tree trunk, by the aid of knobs and branches on the side nearest him, and ensconced himself comfortably in the hole, with his rifle before him, ere the men he had heard came in view.

There were two of them and as soon as they came in sight Tom recognized them.

The first was Captain Rolf Ericson, and the other was the man whom he had seen a short time before in the last canoe of the fleet, which was now being unloaded at the Jeannette. Evidently these two worthies had come to this out of the way place to talk over business, away from the prying of their subordinates.

Captain Ericson's companion was strongly in contrast with himself in personal looks. He was a small, lean man, with dark complexion and of a pronounced French Canadian appearance.

He was dressed in shiny broadcloth and looked the well to do, though foxy merchant, from top to toe. Evidently this man was the smugglers' "fence" on this side of the lake, and either supplied him with goods, or disposed of those Ericson brought from the United States.

"Come, sit down; we shall be undisturbed here," Captain Ericson said, as they came under the oak. His companion complied and after lighting a cigar Ericson seated himself beside him on the bank.

"I'm glad you're satisfied with returns on that last run," he said, puffing away cheerfully on the cigar. "I went over myself, as I told you I would, and found everything identically as the skipper declared. We've got a jewel in him."

The other nodded, but made no verbal reply.

"The trip took us rather longer than usual," went on the captain, "for we ran down to a place near Detroit with a passenger who was willing to pay a good sum for the privilege. That old Indian, Ossinike; d'ye remember him? A queer duck, he is, and getting queerer every year of his life.

"I wonder how long he'll last?—those Indians are tough, unless they happen to run into consumption. You know old Ossinike has an idea that the Indians—his tribe, I should say, the Miamis—will rise and wipe out the whites. He's as crazy as a loon on the subject."

"Not so crazy, perhaps, as you think, captain," replied the Canadian. "The old man has fairly depopulated two or three of the Indian villages to the east of here, men, women and children following him into the wilderness. He is preaching a 'new crusade,' and the ignorant ones believe him."

"Mighty few, I reckon, really believe that the 'Great Spirit' as they call their god, will overthrow the whites; but the lazy rascals are ready to follow anybody who will promise them plenty to eat and no work to do. I suppose Indian Joe will be clearing out and going with Ossinike when he leaves here."

"What, is the old man here?"

The captain winked and nodded mysteriously.

"He's not far off," he said. "You see I took the old fellow over to Freysburg—that's near Detroit—where his nephew was at school——"

"His nephew? One of these educated Indians?" inquired the Canadian.

"Didn't you ever hear about that nephew?" asked Ericson in surprise.

"Mon chére garcon. I nefer listen to gossip," responded the other, with an airy wave of his hand.

"'Twon't hurt you to listen to this, old man," said Ericson, with a laugh. "Old Ossinike had a half brother, who was chief of the tribe years ago, and that brother had a daughter who was educated by one of these fools of missionaries, and went off and married a man in Michigan—I knew the fellow—Tom Hardwick by name.

"They had a son and that is the nephew I spoke of, and old Ossinike has been trying to get possession of the boy ever since his birth. He believes that boy—Jack Hardwick—is destined to head his tribe in successful battle against the whites.

"Well," continued the captain, flicking the ashes from his cigar, "the boy graduated from the academy at Freysburg a few weeks ago and old Ossinike went down there to try to persuade him to come back to his people.

"The boy isn't such a fool as to come of his own free will, so he had to be captured and brought over here, and for a certain sum (I wonder, by the way, where the old man gets his money) I performed the feat and the old chief has his grand nephew safe. But I wish him joy in his success, for the boy has no intention of turning Indian if he can help it."

"You speak as though there was somet'ing behind it beside money for you, captain," said the Canadian shrewdly.

"Yes, there is," he admitted. "The boy's guardian, a fellow who calls himself Major Miles Peterson, is an old enemy of mine and the boy is one of the 'apples of his eye,' as the saying goes. The satisfaction I derive from knowing that he will be perfectly wild when he finds Jack Hardwick gone, is considerable, I admit."

"So Ossinike expects to make this lad lead his tribe against the people of his adoption, eh?" asked the Canadian.

"Yes, he expects to," replied Ericson, with a laugh, throwing his cigar away; "but what he really does do we shall see."

CHAPTER XII.

TOM ATTEMPTS A STRATAGEM.

To the listener in the hollow of the oak tree the foregoing conversation was of course most interesting, and especially was Tom surprised to hear that Ossinike, the Miami chief, had been aboard the Jeannette during the time he had spent on the schooner.

And further, the Indian was still in the vicinity, and probably with him was Jack Hardwick.

Tom listened "with all his ears" to the further conversation of the two men, but was unable to discover Jack's whereabouts.

"When does the schooner get away again?" inquired the Canadian.

"In a few days now," replied the captain. "We've got a fair cargo, and I never fancy taking big risks in this business. I only went the last time because you were so sure that there ought to have been bigger returns. I hope you are satisfied now that everything is straight."

"Of course," returned the other. "I could never doubt your word in the matter. We haf been mooch too long together to play each other false. I s'pose old Nance still guards the point, does she not?"

"Oh yes," returned the captain, with a yawn. "She's the best sort of a sentinel, and that girl of her's is as good as a telegraph between the point and 'tother place. She's worn this path pretty smooth running on errands between the point and the head of the inlet."

"A peculiar creature is Nance," remarked the Canadian.

"Yes—a little odd," responded Ericson, who seemed rather ill at ease at the turn the conversation had taken. "There can't a boat come within sight of the inlet without her seeing it. She sent the young one over to tell me you were coming, long before the first canoe rounded the Eastern Head."

"By the way, where did the old woman get that child?" inquired the Canadian, who seemed disinclined to leave the subject. "It's not hers, is it?"

"You'll have to ask Nance that herself," replied Ericson, almost angrily, and getting up he paced the path before the oak tree with a nervous stride.

Evidently his friend's curiosity was not fully satisfied, but he thought it best to drop a subject which so unpleasantly affected the captain. It was plain that he stood in wholesome awe of the latter.

By this time the sun had long since disappeared behind the hill above them and the shadow of the eminence quite shrouded the lower portion of the inlet; the upper portion Tom could not see from his position in the oak tree. But the approach of night had not seemed to disturb the captain and his friend until now.

"Allons! We will go back," the latter exclaimed, springing up and turning toward the head of the inlet. "Night in the woods haf no charms for me."

The captain shrugged his shoulders scornfully and was about to follow his companion when his eye caught the shadowy outline of a boat coming up the inlet, and close into the shore on which they stood.

"Who can that be?" he exclaimed, peering through the bushes at the approaching craft. "It must be one of our men or Nance would never have allowed him past the point without warning us. I'll bet it's that rascally Joe."

In a few minutes it was evident that there were two boats, not one, and that the single occupant of the first one was towing the other slowly toward the strait.

Ericson plainly thought the individual a friend, for when the boats arrived abreast of the oak tree he hailed him.

"Is that you, Joe? Come ashore here."

The individual addressed responded at once and quickly reached the shore. Tom, from his position in the tree, had already recognized the boatman as the half breed whom he had first seen with Ossinike back at Freysburg; but he also recognized something further, that fairly astounded him.

(*To be continued.*)

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CHANCE SEED SOWING.

It is related of Spurgeon, the famous preacher, who died not long since in London, that he was led to turn his thoughts to the calling which he made his life work, by the chance pointing of a finger at him by a circuit preacher.

Spurgeon as a boy was sitting in the gallery of the church, thinking, doubtless of anything else but the minister's words. Suddenly the latter raised his voice, and gesticulating directly at Spurgeon, cried out: "Young man, what do you intend to do with your life?"

Spurgeon brought his wandering gaze back to the pulpit. The preacher seemed to be talking to him alone, although, as a matter of fact, it was mere accident that he had chosen to make his appeal in this direction.

The clergyman went on to the next town and probably never knew the effect his impassioned outburst, accompanied by the pointing forefinger, had had on one of his hearers. Spurgeon went home very thoughtful, and from that evening determined to walk in the path which he afterwards trod with such eminent success.

Thus one never knows when he may be influencing another—for good or ill. For instance, when the editor of the "Part Hope Weekly Guide" inserted in his columns as a filler the following: "My son, observe the postage stamp—its usefulness depends upon its ability to stick to one thing till it gets there," he could not foresee that the homely good sense of the advice tucked away in the "humorous" paragraph, would furnish us with the text for an editorial.

And now, lo and behold, our sermon has all been preached before we came to the text, or rather the text is the whole of the sermon. Look through the fun, young man, and you will see a lesson that shines out with startling brightness.

AN EMPEROR'S CRUSADE.

Emperor William, of Germany is making a crusade against gambling in his army. It is reported that his abhorrence of playing for stakes was caused by the suicide of a young lieutenant, a great friend of the emperor when he was as yet only a prince.

This lieutenant, while playing at one of the fashionable clubs, staked his entire fortune, lost it and went out to the Thiergarten where he put a bullet through his brain.

Alas, how many tragedies of this sort are yearly enacted. The "haste to be rich" is responsible for them all.

A UNIQUE PERIODICAL.

If you have a big desire to become a publisher and a small sized purse from which to supply the necessary capital, you may find a useful suggestion in the device employed by a Philadelphia bicycle club. This enterprising organization, known as the Park Avenue Wheelmen, being desirous that its members shall be constantly kept in touch with one another, has started a paper called the "P. A. W. Gazette." This is a common enough custom, but the novelty of this particular sheet consists in the fact that it isn't a sheet at all, for it is printed on the back of a postal card.

"There isn't much of us," say the editors, "but we are jammed full of news."

Writers for such a periodical must certainly obtain capital schooling in the all important art of condensation.

FICTION REPRODUCED IN FACT.

An experience that not long since befell a steamer in a storm recalls a thrilling episode in Victor Hugo's novel, "Ninety Three." The vessel carried as part of its cargo a screw propeller, which during the storm broke loose from its fastenings and started on a mad career back and forth across the deck.

The rolling of the steamer furnished it with the momentum, and from side to side it crashed with a fierceness that forbade any to approach in an effort to secure it. The sailors had a narrow escape with their lives and a taste of the dangers of the deep that, although very novel, was far from agreeable.

In "Ninety Three" it is a gun carriage that escaped from its lashings between decks and threatened to stave in the sides of the vessel from within.

A DREARY ROUND.

How would you like the task of writing your own name every day in the week, from nine o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon You would find it rather monotonous, would you not? And yet this is almost the sole duty of the Register of the Treasury.

Then there is another employee of the government who gets $1,200 a year for putting President Cleveland's name to land warrants.

This affixing of his autograph to appointments, commissions and so forth grows into such a proportion that the Chief Magistrate cannot possibly attend to it all personally. Hence the necessity of hiring some one to help him in the task.

When you hear of men sighing for a government appointment, recall these facts and you will realize that there are many more desirable positions than those in the gift of Uncle Sam.

ON THE SALARY OF PAGES.

It is not often that any one can have cause to complain because of the high salary he is paid. But the "Cleveland World" thinks that better boys would apply for the position of page in legislative assemblies if the pay were one dollar a day instead of $2.50, as it is at present.

The "World" argues that this is about ten times as much as a boy not yet in his teens could earn in any other employment, and that when he outgrows the service, he is fit for nothing but a "dude" or a "tough."

Why this should necessarily follow, we fail to understand. Boys young enough to serve as pages ought to be young enough to be under the control of their parents, who should certainly have sufficient foresight to see that the son's salary, or a large portion of it, is set aside to serve as a nest egg when he makes his real entry into the world later on.

WHERE PRINCES ARE TOO COMMON.

"What's in a name?" says Shakspere.

If by this term we mean a title and are referring to Russia, there isn't much. In the Caucasus it seems that every man who owns a large flock of sheep arrogates to himself the title of prince and is addressed by his neighbor as " Your Highness."

This custom is a thorn in the side of members of really noble families, who date their right to the use of the cognomen from remote ancestry. Such is their fear of being confounded with these "shepherds" that they refrain from using the prefix at all.

Thus we see that in everything distinction comes only through rarity. If diamonds were more plentiful than pebbles, no one would be anxious to wear them.

Flying Through the Air.

BY SAMUEL N. PARKS.

Whenever a man wants to make a new fairy tale, he dates his story a century ahead and causes all the dreams of all the inventors to come true; and the very first thing he talks about as a real certainty is the air ship.

It has been the dream of every boy to fly ever since Darius Green had that remarkable and disastrous experience which most of us know by heart. The man who goes up in a balloon and lets himself come floating down with a parachute probably has come the nearest to understanding the sensation, but his machine can only bring him down. A balloon is a poor sort of an air ship, as it is practically unmanageable. What we really want is a great mechanical bird which will lift itself up from the ground and go sailing in "a bee line" for the point toward which it is steered, and move like lightning. We want to get on its back in New York, and be lifted lightly and easily and swiftly over the country to be gently landed in San Francisco.

There is not the least doubt in the world, but that it will all come to pass sooner or later, because nature has shown by the construction of birds that it is the simplest thing in the world. Nature creates everything she needs without the least trouble or waste of time or material, and the only thing the inventor has to do, is to follow in her footsteps, and construct upon her models.

There is a man in the South now, who has made a great air ship upon the plan of the buzzard. It is not finished yet, but engineers who have seen it say they see no practical reason why it should not work. The problem is certain to be solved some day, and they know no reason why this man should not have discovered the secret.

He is going to put his great wings to the test within the next few weeks, and everybody is waiting to see what will come of it.

Herr Otto Lilienthal of Berlin has made several experiments with a flying machine which he does not try to take any great distance above the earth. It does not go up far enough to get into the great air currents. He only desires to go entirely above all trees and houses, something like one hundred feet into the air.

The machine very much resembles a bat. It has great wings made of willow and covered with canvas, and the wings open and close. The great objection to this machine is that it will only go for short distances, and it must always be started from a tower. It can only be used as a pleasure air boat at the very best. It might serve as an attraction at some county fair like a merry-go-round, or a toboggan slide, but we will not allow that this is anything but a toy, or has anything to say to the real great air ship which is waiting to be invented.

Professor George Wellner, the well known scientific man of Vienna, the professor of engineering and mechanical construction at the Technical High School at Brunn, has patented a great air ship which he claims will sail and float through space at the rate of ninety miles an hour. Unfortunately, there isn't any evidence that he has taken any such journey in his aerial monster either before or after patenting it.

There are so many machines which are very perfect and wonderful on paper, in the plan, but when they come to work, there is some fatal little lack, some small cog that ought to be turned by some other small cog which isn't there, and which if it were, would in its turn need a power.

But Professor Wellner, like the man down South with his big artificial buzzard, is going upon a trip next month, and if either voyage is a success, you may be very sure that you will hear all about it, and that just such a machine will float across your own sky just as soon as new ones can be made.

The world is patiently waiting for anything useful and new. There aren't any unappreciated geniuses who are real geniuses.

Professor Wellner's machine is made of the finest steel and this trial size will only hold two persons, a pilot and an engineer. It will cost $12,000. There are plans for larger ones which will hold as many as twenty persons, but these are not yet constructed, and will not be until the small one is pronounced a perfect success.

Professor Wellner's machine is nothing like a bird. He has his principle patented in England, as "a rotary sail for flying machines."

The wheel works on a fixed eccentric. An eccentric is a contrivance for varying motion, which any machinist can show you in five minutes. In this case it gives the air blades attached to the spokes an oscillating as well as a rotary motion. When one of these air blades reaches the highest part of its circle, and when it is descending, this peculiar movement causes it to suck in air and force it down into the wheel. There are four of these blades to each wheel.

This motion supports the machine and sends it forward, or Professor Wellner says it will. The sail wheels have a diameter of about fifteen feet; the tubes are all hollow like the bones of a bird, and the entire weight less than one ton. The car contains a small compressed air engine of twenty-five horse power.

This machine does not need a tower to start from, but can lift itself (or Professor Wellner says it can) from a cleared space upon the ground. The engines start the air blades revolving at 180 turns a minute, and upward we soar at an angle of 28 degrees.

After an altitude of 150 feet is reached, the blades revolve at 135 turns a minute, which keeps the car stationary in the air.

Professor Wellner calculates upon a speed of one mile and a half a minute. It is guided exactly as a ship is guided through the water.

When alumnium, the light white metal with which all clay soil abounds, but which it is so hard to take out, can be cheaply manufactured, it looks as though the material for air ships was at our hand. The vessels when they do come will be useful in many ways, for they will open up new fields. The whole world will be free to the explorer. The air ship need not fear icy mountains in the search for the North pole, nor the miasma, nor poisoned arrows of savage Africa. The whole earth will lie beneath the eye of the scientist.

The great death rate that comes of building railroads in mountainous countries will be a thing of the past. The air ship will drop down upon the spot where precious metals are, pick them up as a bird picks up a grain of corn, and fly away again.

There will be no such thing as a spot being out of the world. There will be no such thing as a product suffering for a market. Every great new invention, revolutionizes the world, but perhaps nothing, since the discovery of the usefulness of steam, or the transmitting power of electricity, would mean so much to civilization as a really successful air ship.

YOUTH'S REPENTANCE.

Youth has spent his wealth, and bought
The knowledge he would fain
Change for forgetfulness, and live
His dreaming life again.

—L. E. Landon

A Grass River Episode.

BY W. BERT FOSTER.

I believe that Grass River is the only stream in Florida which has a current of any degree of swiftness. Most of the streams have no more perceptible motion than have the lagoons; but Grass River has sufficient fall to make rowing up it somewhat of an arduous task.

Nevertheless, there are fewer alligators in this stream than in almost any other in the State and that is a great comfort, especially if you are a girl and object to seeing the ugly, black snouts of the creatures sticking up out of the dark water at every turn.

The fact of the small number of 'gators in the stream was one reason why Kate Marchant enjoyed (in anticipation at least) the picnicing trip she took with her brother John and Fred Kimberly, up the Grass River last winter. Kate is not one of those girls whose nerves are continually "to the fore," as Fred says, for she is a healthy, happy creature, with what careful mammas often speak of as "peculiar" tastes.

Her peculiar tastes in question (spoken of by these same careful mammas with an uplifting of the eyebrows and a little shudder) are a fondness for outdoor sports, such as tennis and rowing and riding, a promptness to take care of herself upon all occasions without waiting for assistance from male companions, and the possession of a sure eye and steady hand at rifle practice.

It doesn't do, of course, to criticise too closely a girl who is almost a millionaire in her own right; but nervous ladies who are bringing up their own delicate, languid daughters in the proper manner (to be peevish, nervous invalids the remainder of their natural lives, allow me to say), shake their heads over Kate's abundant energy and flow of spirits, and vow that all her peculiarities are due to the training of Mr. John Marchant, her brother, who, since Kate's tenth birthday, has had full charge of the orphaned girl.

Kate, likewise, instead of playing the fashionable young lady at eighteen, as all well conducted girls at the hotel did, utterly ignored many of the young sprigs who, in swallow tail coats and sprouting mustaches, hovered about her every chance they got. She plainly showed her fondness for the genus boy, however, and confided to Fred Kimberly (who, although nearly a year her senior, still retained sufficient good sense to remain a boy for some time longer) that she liked him forty times better than any of the men at the hotel who acted so stupid and made such silly speeches to her.

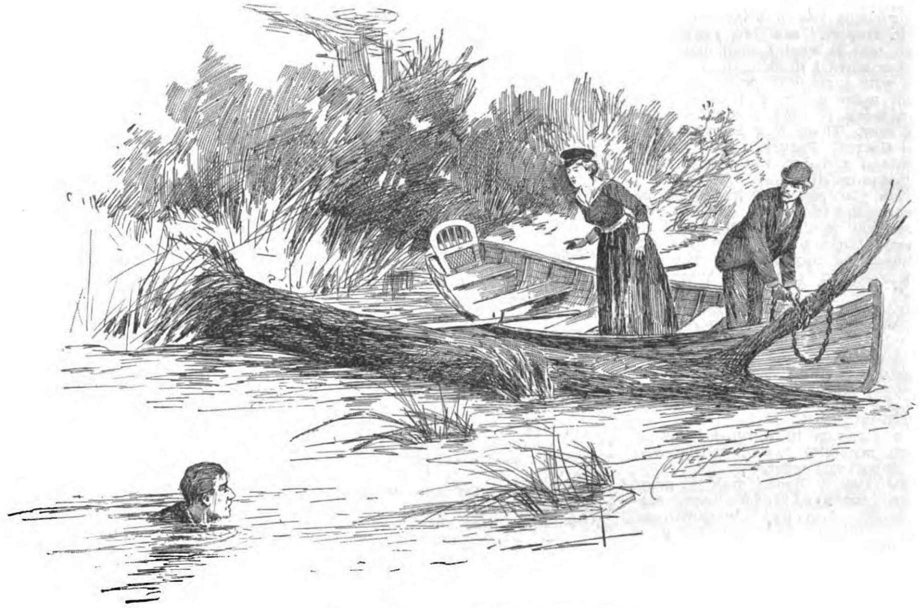
Brother John smiled quietly over the friendship of these two, for Fred's father was his dearest friend, and John Marchant would have been only too happy if—but there, I won't betray any secrets which might cause people to think John Marchant, staid old bachelor that he is, a matchmaker. He looked on the young men at the hotel with as little favor as did his sister, for he plainly saw that it was her dollars, not the true worth of the girl, that attracted them, and he mentally pronounced the entire obnoxious crowd, "empty headed idiots."

"Next to overdressed and overdone monkeys," Kate said audibly, as she seated herself in the light cedar boat that morning. "I detest aligators, and I am glad that there are so few in Grass River."

John was not quite ready and Fred was holding the boat against the wharf. At that moment young Howard Vandewater, who possessed the bluest blood and the most addle pated manner of any of the "young bloods" at the hotel, strolled down to the pier's end. Howard would have given his new monocle for Fred's chance in that boat, and at that time the monocle was very precious in young Vandewater's eyes.

"I—er—hope you will have a very pleasant day, Miss Marchawnt," remarked the scion of the house of Vandewater, in oily accents.

Kate, her face hidden by her parasol, made as though she did not hear him. I won't say that was just right, even in a heroine of whom I am as fond as I am of Kate.



FRED QUICKLY CAME TO THE SURFACE.

"I say, I hope you will have a very pleasant day, Miss Marchawnt," repeated Howard, and, as again Kate seemed unconscious, Fred, inwardly chuckling but outwardly perfectly sober, repeated the words for her benefit.

"Mr. Vandewater says he hopes you will have a pleasant day, Kate."

"Tell Mr. Vandewater that I thank him exceedingly for his kind wishes," said Miss Kate, without moving in the least.

"Miss Marchant says she is greatly obliged for your kind wishes, Mr. Vandewater," interpreted Fred with marked gravity, but the audible titter from the group of hotel people on the wharf who had come down to see them off, was too much for even Howard's assurance, and he turned away in discomfiture.

John Marchant took the oars just then and sent the boat spinning up the stream, and then Fred lay down in the bottom of the craft and laughed until he was purple to his eartips.

"I—I couldn't help it," declared Kate, laughing a little herself, yet a little shamefaced. "The impudent puppy! and after his escapade at the hop the other night when he was so intoxicated that he spilled cream all over Madeline Creston's gown."

"Yet I saw Miss Creston smiling very sweetly at him only this morning," remarked John slowly.

"That is because he is rich and Madeline's folks are poor; she, poor thing, has been brought down here this winter because he was to be here," said Kate, with more venom than usually showed itself in her speech.

"Oh, well," said Fred, trying mildly to excuse the absent Vandewater, "lots of the boys get a little high on such occasions—"

"I hope you don't, Fred Kimberly," exclaimed Kate.

Fred flushed to the roots of his hair and flashed a reproachful look at her.

"I hope you don't think I would," he said quietly.

"I beg your pardon, Fred," she exclaimed penitently. "I know you wouldn't," and they looked at each other in a manner which caused Brother John to hastily suggest a new topic of conversation.

"By George!" he muttered, a moment later, "I don't want that to happen for four or five years to come."

Perhaps, however, he found that he had set in motion that which he could not wholly control.

Half an hour after leaving the hotel wharf they entered Grass River and John and Fred took turns at the oars, mounting the stream for several miles before noon. John had brought his rifle along and Kate amused herself most of the time by target practice; and she made some very creditable shots, too, although most of her game fell so far into the swamp, which lined the river on either hand, that it was utterly useless to hunt after it.

At length they rounded a log which lay in the stream, its roots still fastened to the low bank, and finding no better place they halted here for lunch. Fred got out his rod, too, but in stepping upon the log to make a cast the misfortune of the day occurred. The log, which had seemed so firm, rolled a little and Fred, fishing rod and all, was thrown into the water.

"Souse!" he went into the swiftly flowing current and as he went under there was a sudden thrashing among the reeds and bushes along the opposite bank, and a huge object splashed into the stream, the ripples on the surface showing where the alligator was swiftly approaching the spot.

Fred quickly came to the surface, but the current had borne him down the stream and the wicked looking snout of the alligator was just behind him.

"Oh, Fred! Fred! the alligator!" Kate screamed, and stood up in the boat, wringing her hands.

John, meanwhile, was endeavoring to unfasten the chain from about the log, but it had become fouled, and precious moments were lost while he tried to untangle it.

Fred, however, warned by Kate's cry, sprang to one side, and although weighted down by his clothing, endeavored to swim to the shore.

The alligator, one of the few to be found in the river, and a precious big one he was, went by on the other tack with a vicious snap of his jaws. Then he swerved about and made at the defenseless young man again.

Then it was that Kate stopped wringing her hands and betrayed some of the presence of mind and courage that John Marchant had tried to foster in her. She seized the rifle lying at her feet, pulled back the hammer and took deliberate aim at the horrid reptile.

"Right in the eye, Kate," exclaimed John, from the bow of the boat, and at that instant the piece spoke.

There was a bellow from the alligator and he sank like a stone; but the bubbles of blood which quickly rose to the surface, showed that the shot had told.

John had the chain unfastened now and taking the oars he pulled down stream after Fred, who weakened by his fright, was floating with the current.

Kate sat in the stern sheets, very white and still, but she smiled faintly as John said gravely:

"God bless you, dear; I'm proud of you!"

* * * * *

It was impossible to keep the adventure secret, for they had to take Fred back to the hotel in his wet garments, and the nervous ladies were inclined to hold up their hands in horrified amazement and exclaim over "what that awful girl would do next!" To let poor Fred serve as a dinner for his alligatorship would have been rather bloodthirsty, perhaps, but eminently more proper in their eyes.

Howard Vandewater showed that he possessed some brains at least, for in talking over the affair with some of "the boys" he declared:

"That settles us, fellows. We might as well all take back seats, for young Kimberly has—er—cut us all out, don't ye know; for you let a woman do anything like that for a man and you can bet that he's got the inside track forever after."

Which is not, perhaps, very elegant, but isn't it so?

[*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 XXXII.

AN UNPLEASANT BEDFELLOW.

Rupert was provided with a hunter's outfit and a gun by his host, and in company with his guide started out on Monday morning.

"I suppose you won't mind roughing it, Rupert," said Mr. Packard.

"No, that is what I shall like. I remember when I lived in the country I went with some other boys to a point fifteen miles away, and camped out for a week. I wish I could see the boys now. There was Harry Bacon, and George Parker, and Eugene Sweetland and—but you won't be interested in hearing about it."

"I am glad you have had some experience in that kind of life. Of course you won't have the comforts of home, but you may meet with adventures. At any rate, if you get tired you can start for home any time."

"Mr. Boone," said Rupert when they were fairly on their way, "are you related to Daniel Boone?"

"I don't think there was any Daniel in our family," answered Ben in a matter of fact tone. "Where did he live?"

"In Kentucky."

"I never was in Kentucky myself though my wife has a cousin who lives there somewhere."

"This Daniel Boone was a great hunter," explained Rupert, rather surprised that Ben had not heard of him.

"Then he must be a relation to me. All my family were fond of hunting."

At the end of ten miles they struck a river, which was pleasant as it afforded them a change of travel. They had brought with them a skeleton skiff, a sort of frame work, with skins to cover it, and they were able to launch it on the river. The stream was narrow, and bordered on one side by mountain scenery. The channel seemed to be deep, and as the skiff moved rapidly on, with comparatively slight exertion in the way of rowing, Rupert felt that he was indeed in a wonderful land.

The country seemed very sparsely settled. Once in a great while they caught sight of a rude cabin which appeared to contain but one room.

"Have you ever been up on those mountains, Mr. Boone?" asked Rupert.

"Well, I've never been to the top of any of the peaks. I reckon I've been half way up Pike's Peak (that's north of us) and Long's Peak. It's dreadful hard climbing, and there don't seem to be any good in it when you've done it. Did you want to climb up any of the mountains?"

"Well, I might like to some time, but perhaps I'd better wait till another trip."

"I reckon you'd better."

It was clear that Mr. Boone had no desire to go mountain climbing. He was not fond of exertion; it was easier getting over level ground.

They kept to the river for as much as fifty miles. Occasionally they landed, and made a little trip into the woods, but after a while they returned again to the river.

At night they slept on the ground, covering themselves with blankets. They shot a few birds, but thus far they had met with no large game.

One morning Rupert had a fright. It was about four o'clock, and the light was indistinct. As he turned from one side to the other he was startled by finding that he had a bedfellow. There coiled at his side was a large rattlesnake, apparently asleep.

Rupert did not start up suddenly. He did not dare do so, for fear of rousing his unpleasant neighbor, and perhaps receiving a bite. Rupert was naturally a brave boy, but he turned very pale, and his heart came up in his mouth.

With extreme caution he moved somewhat to the opposite side, and managed to raise himself to his feet. He was not sure whether rattlesnakes had a quick sense of hearing, and this made him unusually circumspect. He wondered that the snake, which must have taken his position after he was asleep, had not attacked him before.

"But I suppose he was not hungry," he reflected, and then he shuddered as he thought that had he slept two or three hours longer, the snake might have waked up and felt ready for breakfast. In that case he would have been a ready victim.

However, he was on his feet and unhurt. Ben Boone lay ten feet away. He was snoring loudly, so loudly that Rupert wondered he had not waked up the rattlesnake, who could hardly be accustomed to sounds of that nature.

He approached his companion, and, bending over, called out, "Mr. Boone," but Ben never moved. He was a sound sleeper.

Rupert shook him, first gently, afterwards more roughly, till at last he opened his eyes, but seemed dazed and not quite conscious.

"Eh? Eh? What's the matter?" he ejaculated at length.

"Look there!" said Rupert, pointing to the rattlesnake.

"Oh, yes, a rattlesnake," returned Ben, wholly without excitement. "There's a good many of 'em in these parts."

"That one coiled himself up close to where I was lying."

"Yes, it's a way they have. Seems as if they liked company," answered Ben coolly.

"But—aren't they dangerous?"

"Well—they might be, if you interfered with 'em," drawled Boone. "As long as you lay still and didn't meddle with 'em they'd be all right."

"But suppose in my sleep I'd thrown out my arm, as I sometimes do, and hit the snake?"

"Then there'd be a chance of his biting you."

"And I suppose that would be fatal."

"I've been bit myself," said Ben in a reminiscent tone.

"And did you die?"

It was upon Rupert's lips to say this, but it occurred to him that it would be rather an absurd question, so he changed it to, "How did you get over it?"

"I filled myself full of whiskey—it's the only way. I was never so drunk in my life. But when I got over it, I was all right."

"I suppose the whiskey neutralized the poison," suggested Rupert.

"I reckon so," answered Boone, who was not quite clear in his mind as to the meaning of the word which Rupert had used. "What time is it?"

Rupert consulted his watch.

"It is fifteen minutes past four."

"That's too early to get up. I'll have another nap."

"I can't sleep. I shall be all the time thinking of the snake."

"He won't do you any harm."

"You are more used to such sights than I. Can't we kill the snake?"

"We might, but it's likely there's more not far away."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go into the boat and see if I can't stretch myself out there."

"Just as you like," said Boone drowsily.

He turned over, and in two minutes he was snoring as noisily as ever.

Rupert shared the repugnance that most persons have for snakes, and he had read so much about rattlesnakes and the fatal effects of their bite that he had an unusual dread of them. It would have been a relief if this particular snake were killed.

How would it do for him to shoot it in the head which he judged must be the most vulnerable part? Only, if he missed fire, and the snake were only wounded, he would probably be roused to anger, and in that case would become dangerous. Doubtless Ben could cope with him, but Rupert felt that it would be imprudent in him, a mere boy, and unaccustomed to hunting to arouse such a dangerous antagonist.

So, giving up all thoughts of an encounter, he proceeded to the river, and lay down as well as he could in the boat. It was not very comfortable, but he felt relieved from all fear of the snake, and after a while he fell asleep.

When he woke up he got out of the boat and went on shore. He looked at the spot where the snake had been coiled, but could not see him. He had evidently waked up, and vacated the premises.

Rupert glanced over to where the guide was lying and saw that he was still asleep. The fact that the rattlesnake was so near had not interfered at all with his ease of mind or his slumbers.

Rupert looked at his watch. It was already seven o'clock, and that was the hour when they generally got up.

"Seven o'clock, Mr. Boone!" he called out, giving Ben a shake.

"Oh, ah, is it?" and Ben stretched himself out in a sleepy way.

"Yes. Isn't it time to get up?"

Ben took the hint, and rose from his recumbent position.

"Didn't you wake me some time ago?" he asked. "What was it all about?"

"There was a rattlesnake lying beside me."

"Where is it now?"

"It's gone."

"Then there's no harm done."

Ben Boone was not only the guide, but the cook of the little party. They had brought with them materials for camping out meals, and it was his work to make a fire and prepare their simple repasts. Sometimes they caught a fish or two in the river, and it made a pleasant addition to their fare.

Rupert found that in this new life he always had a good appetite for breakfast—more even than for their other meals. He had never had so good an appetite at the Somerset House, though the cook at that establishment was probably superior to Ben Boone in his chosen line.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BEN BOONE'S TEMPTATION.

The reader may naturally expect to hear something of Rupert's experience as a hunter. But so far as this story is concerned, this is not called for. He had other experiences which will speedily be set forth.

For, after all, it was not so much the hunting that Rupert cared about. He thoroughly enjoyed his opportunity to travel through the wild scenery of middle Colorado. It was camping out in a much more interesting way than when as a boy he went but a little way from home and knew that only a few miles intervened between him and his ordinary life.

Then he was interested in his guide. At the East he had never met such a man as Ben Boone. He seemed a product of the country. As for Ben he carried out his contract, and served as a guide, philosopher and—I was about to say friend, but on the whole we'll substitute companion.

Though Ben was a skillful hunter and mountaineer he did not particularly enjoy his work. He was a thoroughly lazy man, and would prefer to have remained at home in the rude cabin which passed for such, and lying on his back with a pipe in his mouth have drowsed and dreamed away his time. He did not understand, for his part, why city people who could live comfortably should want to rough it, incurring the fatigue of hunting just for the sake of amusement.

"I am tired," he said on the night after Rupert's adventure with the snake.

"Yes," said Rupert, "I am tired, too. We have come a good many miles."

"Do you like it?"

"Oh yes," said Rupert enthusiastically; "it is grand."

"I don't see what good it is," rejoined Ben, lying back with a sense of exquisite enjoyment in his chance to rest. "You are not making any money."

"No," replied Rupert, laughing, "but I enjoy the wild mountain scenery, don't you?"

"No; a mountain isn't much to see."

"Then there are the valleys, the woods and the waterfalls."

"Oh, I've seen plenty of them. I don't care for them."

"I suppose that is why you don't care for them. You are too familiar with them."

"I reckon so," drawled Ben.

"Don't you enjoy seeing anything? Is there anything you would rather see than this wild and romantic scenery?"

"Yes, I would rather see cities. Where do you live when you are at home?"

"In New York."

"That is a wonderful city, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"I expect it is a great deal larger than Denver?"

"Yes, forty or fifty times as large."

At this time Denver probably had a population of less than thirty thousand.

Ben Boone's eyes opened.

"And I suppose there are some grand buildings?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes," and Rupert told his guide something about the great city, of the horse car lines, the elevated trains running thirty feet above the ground, the big hotels, the Brooklyn bridge, and other marvels, to which Ben Boone listened with rapt attention.

"I should like to see New York before I die," he said.

"Have you ever been there?"

"No."

"But you have probably seen other cites, St. Louis, or Chicago?"

"No; I have only seen Denver. Well, yes, I saw St. Louis when I was a boy. It seemed a large city to me then, but I reckon New York is much bigger."

"Yes, it is a great deal larger—several times as large as St. Louis was when you saw it."

"Does it cost a great deal of money to go to New York?"

"I think one might go there for fifty dollars, ten less by second class."

"Second class is good enough for me."

"Yes, you would be a good deal more comfortable traveling second class than we are on our hunting trip."

"Then I should be satisfied. I ain't used to living first class."

"I should think you would like to go to New York. Is there any reason why you should not go?"

"There's the money."

"But, as I told you, it doesn't cost a very large sum."

"Fifty dollars is a good deal to me. I never had so much money in my life."

"Because you don't save up your money."

"I don't know how to save money," said Ben Boone in a listless manner.

"But you could. Now how much money is Mr. Packard paying you for going with me?"

"Three dollars a day."

"Now suppose we are out ten days—that will make thirty dollars won't it?"

"Yes, but I had to leave some money with my wife."

"You will at any rate have twenty five dollars. Now why can't you put that aside, and add to it when you can. Then by and by you will have money enough to go to New York. When you get there you can find work and earn enough to keep you and pay your expenses back."

"Yes, I reckon I might," said Ben, not knowing how to controvert Rupert's statement.

"If you really try hard to save, I will give you something toward your expenses myself."

"Are you rich?" asked Ben looking up quickly.

"No, but I have some money."

"How much?"

This question Rupert did not care to answer. Ben Boone was a very good guide and hunting companion, but he was not exactly the kind of man he would choose as a confidant.

"I think everybody is rich that lives in New York," said Ben with a touch of envy.

"What makes you think that?"

"I have had New York people with me before. I have traveled with them, and hunted with them. They always seemed to have plenty of money."

"It may be so with those who come out here, but there are plenty who never travel at all, who live in poor houses in a poor way, who earn small wages and are no better off than you, perhaps not so well off. I was very poor myself once, and had scarcely money enough to buy myself food."

"But you got over it. You got rich after a while."

Rupert protested that he was not rich, but Ben Boone was incredulous, though he did not say so. He talked more and more about New York. He seemed to want to learn all he could about it.

Rupert was not surprised. He remembered that when he was a boy in the country, he, too, thought and dreamed a great deal about the great city. After he lived there and grew familiar with its marvels, he became indifferent to it, as much so as Ben Boone was to the wonderful mountain scenery. He felt disposed to joke a little about it.

"There is one thing you have here that we don't have in New York," he said with a laugh.

"What is that?"

"Rattlesnakes."

"No. I reckon not. I shouldn't miss rattlesnakes."

Ben Boone said this so gravely that Rupert could not forbear laughing.

"Nor I," he said. "I am willing that Colorado should keep all her rattlesnakes."

Ben Boone, for a wonder, lay awake beyond his usual time. He could not get New York and its wonders out of his head. The more he thought of it the more he longed to see it.

And there wasn't so much time either. He was forty nine years old, and yet he had never been on the other side of the Mississippi river. Yet here was Rupert, who couldn't be more than sixteen or seventeen years old, who had actually lived in New York, and now had wandered to the far West and seen that also. If a boy could have those happy experiences why not he?

Why not?

The question was easily answered. The difference between them was money. He didn't know how much money Rupert had, but probably he had more than the sum necessary to carry him to New York. Ben felt that it was not fair that a mere boy should have so much, and he so little.

This was a dangerous path of thought, and led to a strong temptation. This temptation was increased when, waking at an early hour, he looked across at Rupert, lying not many yards away, and noticed that his pocketbook had in some way dropped out of his pocket, and was lying on the grass beside him.

Ben's eyes sparkled with unholy excitement. An eager curiosity assailed him to learn how much money the pocketbook contained. It was a temptation which he did not seem able to resist.

He looked over towards Rupert again. The boy was sleeping calmly, peacefully. There was little chance that he would wake up.

Ben rose from his couch and with a stealthy step he made his way to the sleeping boy. He stooped down and picked up the wallet and then opened it, peering eagerly at the contents.

There was a thick roll of bills. He counted them in a quick, stealthy way and his heart beat with excitement when he ascertained that the roll contained eighty one dollars.

"Why, that will take me to New York," he thought.

Yes, it would take him to New York. There would be no weary waiting, no probable disappointment in the end. The dream of his life might be realized and at once.

Ben was not naturally dishonest. If he had not had a special use for the money it would not have tempted him. But he wanted to go to New York, and the temptation seemed too great for him to resist.

His resolution was taken. With one backward glance at the sleeping boy he thrust the wallet into his pocket and started for the river, where the skiff awaited him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RUPERT'S PREDICAMENT.

Rupert did not wake till later than usual. The previous day had been unusually fatiguing and nature had asserted her rights.

He turned over and mechanically looked over to where his companion lay at the time he went to sleep. He was a little surprised to find that he was not visible. Usually Boone slumbered till Rupert went over and waked him up.

"Ben has gone to take a walk," he said to himself. "It must be later than usual."

He looked at his watch and found that it was eight o'clock.

"Well, I did oversleep myself?" he said, as he rose to his feet. "No wonder Boone got the start of me."

Upon reflection he decided that Ben had probably gone down to the boat, which was tied to a small tree on the river bank not more than five minutes' walk distant. He turned his steps in that direction. When he reached the place where the skiff was fastened, a surprise awaited him.

The boat was not there!

Still he had not the faintest suspicion that his guide had played him false, and deserted him in the wilderness.

"Ben must have taken a row himself," he decided. ':It is rather strange for he isn't generally enterprising enough for that. He must have had a headache or something that prevented his sleeping. Well, I might as well take breakfast."

There was something left from supper of the night before. Rupert ate this with a hearty relish. He did not stop to make any hot coffee. Ben usually attended to this duty, and he was likely to appear at any moment.

"I will wait for Ben to come," Rupert said to himself. "I hope he hasn't gone very far."

After eating he lay back on the ground, for he still felt a little tired.

"It seems odd to be alone," he reflected.

He had not formed any particular attachment to Ben Boone, but he had a certain satisfaction in his companionship. They had become closely acquainted, and, though Ben was not especially sociable, they had had some long talks together, so that Rupert felt a certain interest in his rough companion.

Half an hour passed, and Rupert began to feel impatient, as well as solitary.

"Why doesn't Ben come?" he asked himself. "It is very strange that he should go away so early and stay away so long."

As this thought came to him he happened to put his hand into the pocket where he usually kept his money.

The pocket was empty.

A suspicion for the first time dawned upon him that startled and alarmed him. He made a hurried examination of the ground around him, for he knew that it was possible that the pocketbook had slipped out of his pocket.

But his search was fruitless. The pocketbook was nowhere to be seen.

Was it posible, he asked himself, that he had been robbed? Was Ben capable of such black treachery?

The thought that his companion had proved false disturbed him more at first than the sense of his loss, but he began almost immediately to realize his predicament.

Probably he was a hundred miles away from the ranch of his friend Giles Packard. Not only this, but he was without money and without provisions, except the small supply of food which remained over from his frugal breakfast.

Then again he was without a boat, for the skiff had been carried away by Ben. He was alone in a wilderness!

There were very few houses within the distance over which they had traveled. If he had been in any portion of the Eastern States, among settlements and villages, he would not have minded his destitute condition—that is, not so much. He would have felt sure of getting along somehow. But as it was, there was no one to appeal to. There was no one to lend him a helping hand.

If only Ben had left him the boat, matters would not have been so bad. He would of course have instantly started on his return. He didn't feel at all tempted to explore farther. The fine mountain scenery which he had enjoyed yesterday had no attraction for him now.

"I'd give fifty dollars—if I had it—" he added as the thought came to him that he had no money whatever, "to be back with Giles Packard on his ranch. Shall I ever see him again, or am I doomed to starve to death in this wilderness?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

RUPERT MAKES A DISCOVERY.

It was not easy for Rupert to form plans in his present destitute condition. The money which he had lost was a minor consideration. The boat and provisions were much more important.

Besides this, he still had his gun, and his watch. Both these were likely to prove useful.

He wondered a little why Ben had not taken the watch. But his wonder diminished when he remembered that Boone had told him one day that he had never owned a watch.

"How, then, do you tell time?" Rupert inquired.

"By the sun," answered Ben.

Rupert had tested him more than once, and found that from long and close observation his guide could always guess within a few minutes of the correct time. To Ben the watch had no value, and it didn't occur to him that he might raise money on it when he reached the settlements.

Rupert felt that he must lose no time in forming some plan of reaching the point from which he started. He went down to the river, faintly hoping that he might see Ben returning in the skiff, but this he owned to himself was extremely improbable.

Ben was ten, perhaps fifteen miles on the way back. What his object could have been in playing him such a dastardly trick, or what possible excuse he could make to Giles Packard for returning alone, Rupert could not conjecture.

He took it for granted that Boone would go back to his old home at Red Gulch. He did not dream of his plan of going to New York. If he had, this would have explained his sudden defection.

Rupert stood on the shore of the river and looked up the stream. Everything was calm and placid, and lonely. At the East he would have seen houses on the banks and passing boats, but here he found himself alone with nature.

Without thinking especially what he was doing, he started to walk up stream, that is, along the river bank in an easterly direction.

"If I could only come across a boat," he soliloquized, "no matter how poor, I should think it a piece of great luck."

But it was too great luck for him. Still he kept on walking and looking about him, but he not only saw no boat, but no indication of any human presence.

He had walked quite five miles, as he judged from the passage of time, when at last he made a discovery. Moored to the bank was a dismantled raft, if such an expression is allowable. Rupert remembered now that on their trip down the river Boone had called his attention to it, saying: "It must have been left there by some party of travelers."

Rupert little thought how serviceable this would prove to him.

His eyes lighted up with joy, for he hailed the finding of the raft as a good omen, and foresaw how important it would prove to him.

"But was it in a condition for use?"

That was the important question.

Rupert bent down and examined it critically. The boards were still pretty firm, though water soaked, and seemed to be securely fastened together. The rope that fastened it to the small sapling on the bank was quite rotten, and it was a wonder that it had not parted.

Rupert pulled on it to see how secure it was, and it broke. This, however, was of little consequence. He selected a long stick to serve as an oar, and getting on the raft, pushed out into the stream.

The stick, however, made a very poor substitute for an oar. Still he found that it was of some use.

But just as he was starting he discovered, almost covered with underbrush, the paddle which had probably been used by the parties who had constructed and used the raft. This worked tolerably well, and he was glad to have found it.

At last he was ready, and started on his journey. He found his progress slow, and his task toilsome. Still he was making progress, and that was encouraging.

How rapid this progress he could only conjecture. It might be two miles an hour; probably it was not more than that, and he was obliged to confess with a sinking of the heart, that it would take a very long time at this rate before he would get back

He had tugged away possibly three hours, when his strength began to give out. He began to feel faint and hungry, especially as his breakfast had not been very satisfying.

Then, for the first time, with a sinking heart, he realized that he had made a serious blunder. What few provisions were left after breakfast he had left behind him, and he was absolutely without a mouthful to eat.

(*To be continued.*)

WHAT THEY SAY.

The lady had given the small boy an apple and he had said nothing in recognition.

"What does a little boy say when he gets anything?" asked the lady insinuatingly.

He hesitated a moment.

"Some little boys," he said, "says 'thank you:' some says 'much obliged," and some just keeps thinkin' how much better an orange is than an apple."—Detroit Free Press.

TOMORROW.

I said "Tomorrow!" one bleak, winter day—
"Tomorrow I will live my life anew,"—
And still "Tomorrow!" while the winter grew
To spring, and yet I dallied by the way.
And sweet, dear Sins still held me in their sway;
"Tomorrow!" I said, while summer days wore through,
"Tomorrow!" while chill autumn round me drew;
And so my soul remained the sweet Sins' prey.
So pass the years, and still, perpetually,
I cry, "Tomorrow will I flee each wile—
Tomorrow, surely, shall my soul stand free,
Safe from the siren voices that beguile!"
But death waits by me, with a mocking smile,
And whispers—"Yea! Tomorrow, verily!"

—Philip Bourke Marston.

[*This Story began in No. 579.*]

Brought to Book.

BY ANNIE ASHMORE,

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

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW IT WAS MANAGED.

It was found that Simon Sleath had been struck with apoplexy, and he was hastily removed in an ambulance to the nearest hospital, where prompt action barely saved his life.

Under these circumstances it was thought by those he had injured out of the question to punish him as he deserved, and as he made a tolerably truthful confession when he was able to think of sublunary affairs, and restored the three thousand five hundred dollars which Mr. Latimer had sacrificed so much to send to Mrs. Tryder, he was finally allowed to go free.

He disappeared, a broken man, too old to begin again, and predestined to loneliness and poverty through his own grasping greed.

His story of the robbery of the fourteen thousand dollars strangely enough began as far back as his youth, when for a time he was employed in Grayley & Co's. As it chanced he was present when the small but massive safe was placed in the manager's room, and he noticed that a clumsy porter broke a hole through the paper and plaster beneath it. He had time to examine it and found that a cranny or pocket had been formed by the breaking of a couple of laths under the plaster, which had fallen down so as to make a bottom to the pocket. The safe covered the spot, but Sleath knew that one had only to slip the hand behind it to find the hole.

He never happened to mention the incident, and for half a lifetime had never remembered it, till the temptation came to divert Mrs. Tryder's money to his own use, since as Mrs. Tryder he considered that she owed him the reward of his faithfulness to old Tryder, which old Tryder had failed to give him.

As Walt Smythe had told Tom, his father and Uncle Sleath were not on amicable terms, but Uncle Sleath had always favored Walt, and promised to push his fortunes if his father would give him up to him. Occasional letters passed between uncle and nephew, and Sleath considered that he had a loyal accomplice ready to his hand in his nephew Walt, who was so very conveniently—he almost thought providentially—located in Grayley's.

Sleath made his proposals to Walt, promising him a fine position in Tryder's if he would help him to recover the money in question, which he averred belonged by right to him; and Walt was willing. Sleath had recollected the cranny behind the safe, and had set Walt to find out if it was still there, which he did very deftly; so Sleath's plot was built with reference to this hiding place, into which a moment's opportunity could let Walt thrust the packet which he was to seize just when it was ready for forwarding; there it was to lie while the first hue and cry and searching of clerks passed over, after which Walt was to slip into the office and recover it.

But Walt was venomous and drew suspicion on himself by his taunts to Tom. He was also clumsy, and attracted the notice of Arkwright, so that he was reduced to the apparently absurd attempt to break into the safe through the rear wall, though he might easily have gained his point and got at the cash in its hole but for the vigilance his own actions had roused.

So all the time that Mr. Latimer was bearing his heavy burden of disgrace and debt, the missing packet was lying within a foot of him—if he had only known it! But no one dreamed of moving the heavy safe, which seemed to lean close to the wall; indeed, it would have taken half a dozen strong men to do it, and who could have suspected one nimble thief of having thrust the cash behind it?

Luckless Walt Smythe sneaked off at an obscure station on the way to New York, but only to find Will Golden on his heels. However, he knew when he was beaten, and had had no idea of treachery, but only longed to hide his diminished head; so Will conveyed him home to the paternal roof, and left him on the stoop, wearing a sadly hangdog air, just about the hour when his excellent Uncle Sleath, the "man of probity," was exhibiting to an attentive group the long lost package of cash.

We may be sure that Mr. Latimer bought back his home just as soon as it could be aranged, and that Tom was able to go to college after all, while Jean took on the last exquisite polish of a charming young lady at a first class ladies' seminary.

The time is not far off when St. Paul society will admire the advent of a lovely young debutante, who will enjoy her first season under the wing of Tom's dear friend, Mrs. Tryder, Tom figuring as the son of the house and the future heir of his patroness, with Will Golden dodging in and out as a loyal chum should do.

And so, having brought our friends into halcyon days after the storm, and our rascals to book in spite of their craft, we bid our readers farewell.

THE END.

[*This Story began in No. 581.*]

Lloyd Abbott's Friend.

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JR.,

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

CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

FOR ANOTHER'S SAKE.

"You say you have started an investigation?" repeated Mrs. Marchman. "In what direction?"

"I called Jacques to me and asked him to recall all whom he had admitted to the house last night. He told me this:

"A man he did not know rang the bell about midnight. You remember we heard it and supposed that it was Gordon, who had forgotten his key."

"Yes, what did he want?" said Mrs. Marchman eagerly.

"He said that he was a doctor and that Gordon, who had been taken ill, had left word at his house for him to come as soon as he could. He seemed in a great hurry and brushed past and ran up stairs almost before Jacques realized what he was doing."

"How stupid of Jacques to let him do this. Of course he was the one that took the money."

"Wait, my dear. Jacques said he might have stopped him if there had not been something familiar about his face when he saw it in the light of the hall lamp."

"Something familiar about such a man!" exclaimed Mrs. Marchman. "Was he one of Gordon's own friends?"

"I did not dare press the question, for fear of causing Jacques to remember just when he had seen him before."

"For fear of this, Will? What do you mean?"

"Can't you guess, Antoinette? Remember the news we heard from New Jersey yesterday."

"About Alfred? Surely you don't think that——"

"Why not? He must need money.

"That is why I did not dare pursue my examination of Jacques. He has seen Alfred here, but I take it the poor fellow may have allowed his beard to grow, and this altered his appearance considerably."

"But that he should take it in this way! Oh, Will, it is terrible. The supense of yesterday was preferable to such certainty. It would kill Clara, if she knew."

"But what has become of him? Is he in the house now, do you suppose?"

"Presumably not, as the money is gone."

"Did you speak of the money being missing to Jacques?"

"Yes, that is the unfortunate part of it. Now if we can prove this Abbott——"

"Oh, Will, you surely could not be so unjust, even for Clara's sake."

"I do not mean to be unjust, but I do mean to investigate, and if there is ground for it, to expose. That is the point. Supposing Abbott were guilty, for Gordon's sake I would not expose him, were it not for the possibility of Jacques recalling Alfred and placing him in the pillory. Do you see now why an investigation is imperative?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Marchman's lips were pale and the one word she spoke was scarcely audible.

"We must go back to the dining room now," her husband went on. "They are waiting breakfast for us. Leave the matter to me."

"What a sorry Christmas Day, a sorry Christmas!" murmured Mrs. Marchman, as they rejoined their children.

CHAPTER XV.

PLAYING THE SPY.

Gordon and Lloyd did most of the talking at the breakfast table, or rather Gordon did. He seemed determined to show his guest that the loss of a few hundred dollars should not disturb the serenity of this Christmas Day, in so far as he was concerned at least.

Nothing more was said about the theft, and the meal over, the others started up stairs. Gordon was giving some orders to Jacques about his dog cart when his father came back to the door of the dining room and said;

"Gordon, I should like to speak with you for a minute."

"Excuse me a second, Lloyd," and Gordon, telling Jacques to be sure that Thomas brought the cart around at eleven, stepped out into the hallway.

"I say, dad," he began, "you seem to be terribly cut up about the loss of this money. You were as glum as an oyster at breakfast. So long as Alfred hasn't come here I——"

"Hush, my son. Just answer me one question. Were you and your friend Abbott in my office last night?"

"Why, no. I meant to show it to him, too. I wanted him to see that painting of Detaille's over your desk. But why do you ask?"

"Because I found this there."

Mr. Marchman drew the handkerchief from his pocket and passed it to his son, his thumb pressed just at the bottom of the letter A.

"Father," exclaimed Gordon, in a husky whisper, "surely you don't think Lloyd had anything to do with taking that money?"

"I have made no charges, Gordon," said his father quietly.

They had reached the front drawing room and were standing almost where Mr. Marchman had stood with his wife a little while before.

"But you imply them by this," returned Gordon, crushing the handkerchief between his fingers.

He spoke with strong feeling, and took two or three short turns up and down the room.

"What would you think in my place, my boy?" Mr. Marchman's voice was still low; there was no trace of resentment in it. "Here is money that has mysteriously disappeared."

"It would be easy enough for any of the servants to take it," broke in Gordon.

"Easy perhaps, yes, but highly improbable. You know that all our servants have been with us so long that we can thoroughly trust them. Besides, they know that most of this money was intended for them. And then there is the matter of the handkerchief."

"But Lloyd can explain that, I am sure. I'll go ask him now. Perhaps the handkerchief isn't his, after all. And oh, dad, there's something I ought to tell you. I think—I am almost sure I saw Alfred last night."

"You did! Where? Tell me all about it, son. Did you speak to him? Why didn't you tell me of this before?"

Mr. Marchman's manner now had all the excitement which had been apparent in Gordon's a moment before.

"I had no opportunity till now," the latter replied. "It was last night, when Lloyd and I got back from the theater. I was so afraid Abbott would find out about him that I had to pretend I had lost my scarf pin and sent Lloyd back to look for it."

"But Alfred? Where was he?"

"Pacing up and down in front of the house."

"You did not speak to him?"

"No; I knew what might be the result of his seeing any of us."

"But why did you not get a policeman and have him taken back?"

"And be obliged to tell the whole story? I had hard enough work to keep it from Lloyd. He must think me mighty queer as it is. If you were not what you are, dad, it would be different. But the least breath the press will seize upon and blow into a volume."

"I know, my son; I fully realize this. I know, too, something you do not know, and which I must not tell you. But do you find out from this Abbott what you can about this handkerchief business. And—and do you suppose you could see whether he has any of the missing notes."

"Father!"

"I say you do not know all the circumstances, Gordon."

"But how could I tell whether he had this money or not? The bills were not marked, were they?"

"No, but they were all from the Gotham Bank, in five, ten and twenty dollar denominations."

"How can I find out though whether Lloyd has any of them without demanding to search him? Father, I can't bring myself to believe that he would take that money, but grant that he did, would you send him to jail for it?"

"No, certainly I should not. There is only one thing I would do—expose him before the servants. And now, Gordon, I wish you would find out as speedily as possible about these bills. You are surely inventive enough to devise a way of doing it without awakening Abbott's suspicions."

"But to be a spy upon my friend! It is awful."

"Not as awful as the alternative *might* be for us all," said his father solemnly.

"What do you mean, dad? Why, *that* sounds absurd to me. How can the loss of four hundred dollars be such a serious matter to you?"

"You don't understand, Gordon, and I cannot explain now. But be sure you are able to tell me when you get back from your drive whether or no Abbott has any of those Gotham Bank bills in his possession. And mind, not a word of this loss to any one."

Mr. Marchman went up stairs and Gordon returned to Lloyd in the dining room.

"I say, Lloyd," he began at once, "is this your handkerchief?"

"Why yes, it is. I hadn't missed it. Thanks."

Lloyd put it in his pocket and then went on with:

"I say, Gordon, won't you tell me the name of that picture between the windows? It's on the very tip of my tongue, but I can't quite recall it."

"'Breaking Home Ties,'" replied Gordon, his heart sinking.

Lloyd had admitted the handkerchief to be his and had at once turned the conversation.

But suddenly there came to Gordon a consoling reflection. Lloyd had not been told where the handkerchief was found and could not therefore suspect anything.

Gordon drew a long breath and determined to make another test.

"There's a picture up stairs though, I want you particularly to see," he said. "It's in father's den, we call the office; you haven't been in there yet, have you?"

Gordon kept his eyes on the eyes of his friend as he concluded with this question.

"No. I'd like to see it. What picture is it?"

Gordon did not answer. Was it possible that Lloyd would deny having been in that room when his handkerchief had been found there?

But perhaps he did not know the room by that name. Gordon resolved to give him another chance.

"Are you sure you haven't been in the office?" he said. "It's the little room with the roll top desk in it at the head of the stairs on the next floor."

"Why no. I haven't been in any room on that floor."

Gordon hesitated an instant, and then replied:

"Well, that's queer enough, for your handkerchief was found there."

"It was. How funny. I must have done some sleep walking last night."

Lloyd laughed, then grew sober, as he recollected his impression of some one having been in the room with him.

He was about to tell Marchman of this when the latter, who had gone over to stand by the window, exclaimed:

"Here's the cart, Lloyd. We must be off."

It was a very stylish trap, with a high stepping horse and two tigers in top boots behind.

"This will be a Christmas Day I shall remember for a long time," Lloyd told himself, as he put on his overcoat.

He little recked then of the real reason he was to have for remembering it to the last day of his life.

They mounted the cart, Gordon gathered up the reins, and off they bowled, striking into the Park at the Seventy Second Street entrance. Gordon did not say much, but Lloyd was enjoying the drive in and of itself, and did not miss the conversation that might be supposed to accompany it.

Presently they came out on the Riverside Drive, and on arriving at Claremont, Gordon drew up in front of the hotel and proposed that they each warm up on a glass of hot lemonade.

He gave the order to the waiter who came out to the cart, and when the man had gone, turned to Lloyd with:

"By the way, Abbott, I've stupidly come off without my purse. Lend me yours, there's a good fellow."

"Only too happy to oblige."

Lloyd put his hand in the breast pocket of his coat, and taking out his wallet, handed it with a little bow and smile, to his companion.

Gordon's hand almost shook as he received it.

"Hold the lines a minute, will you, Lloyd?" he said.

He opened the wallet and drew out a roll of bills. His face turned pale. But he set his lips firmly so that no cry escaped him.

"By the way, Abbott," he said after an instant, handing the wallet back, "I believe I won't trouble you after all. I've enough silver in my change pocket."

CHAPTER XVI.

MATTERS ARE BROUGHT TO A HEAD.

Lloyd was puzzled by this incident of the loan of the pocketbook. He could not fail to note, either, Gordon's altered demeanor.

"I guess you don't care particularly about seeing Washington Bridge, do you?" he said, when he had gathered up the reins after the empty lemonade glasses had been sent back.

"Oh, I enjoy driving anywhere," returned Lloyd.

And right on top of this Marchman turned the horse's head homewards.

If he had been taciturn on the way up, he was dumb as an oyster now.

"Talk about your moody fellows," mused Lloyd, "Gordon here will take the prize. And yet I never noticed he was that way until last night. But I wish he wouldn't look like such a thunder cloud. It makes me feel as if I'd offended him. I wonder if I have, in any way?"

Carefully Lloyd went over in his mind all that he had said and done that morning.

Suddenly he recalled the handkerchief episode.

"Gordon acted a little queerly about that," he reflected. "And it was queer, too, come to think, the thing being found in a room where I have not been yet. The robbery!"

The recollection of this came to him with startling conviction.

Gordon's questions about his having been in Mr. Marchman's den, and his recent borrowing of his pocketbook, which was returned after only a glance at its contents! These were portentous signs.

Lloyd felt the blood chilling in his veins as he realized all this. He was about to demand of Gordon a full explanation, when he remembered the two "tigers" behind.

"I must wait till we get to the house," he told himself, and after that sat as silent as his host.

"And this is the Christmas Day that is to stand out in my memory!" he reflected, as through the window of a mansion they were passing he caught a glimpse of a lighted tree, with happy child faces crowding about it.

At length the drive came to an end. Lloyd felt as though he were going to execution as he walked up the broad flight of steps.

"What must Gordon think of me?" he kept saying to himself.

"But did he find anything incriminating in my pocketbook?" was the thought that now suddenly occurred to him.

"I am going to my room for a moment, Gordon," he said, as the front door closed behind them.

"All right," replied the other, in a weary, indifferent tone. "Dinner will be at two."

Lloyd mounted the stairs, two steps at a time. He was nervously eager to examine the contents of his wallet.

He reached his room and closing the door, took out the pocketbook.

"Two five dollar bills that do not belong here!"

Lloyd sank down, a limp heap, on the bed, gazing at the two new notes from the Gotham Bank as if there was contagion in them.

The cold perspiration broke out on his forehead. His position was indeed a terrible one.

What should he do? How could he explain the presence of this money that he knew himself did not belong to him?

That apparition during the night! The finding of his door unlocked this morning, when he was certain that he had fastened it before going to bed!

The real thief must have come into his room while he slept and endeavored to incriminate him.

He must see Gordon at once and tell him of this. The presence of his handkerchief in Mr. Marchman's office could be accounted for in the same way.

He hurried across the hall to Gordon's room, and tapped on the door.

"Come in," called Gordon. He was standing in front of his dressing bureau, putting away his driving gloves.

Lloyd walked rapidly up to him, the two Gotham Bank bills extended in his hand.

"Gordon," he began, "I know now why you wanted to borrow my pocketbook at Claremont. These two notes are some of the money missing from your father's desk. You think I stole them."

Marchman raised his hand as if to protest. Then he dropped it quickly to his side and said in a voice so low that Lloyd could scarcely catch the words:

"The handkerchief and these Gotham Bank new, crisp bills."

"Do you really think I would rob this house, Gordon Marchman? I know the case looks black for me, and perhaps you are justified in a way in thinking the worst of me. But deep down in your heart do you believe I could do such a thing?"

With a sudden movement, Gordon stretched forth both hands and put one on either shoulder of his friend.

"I can't believe it of you, Lloyd," he said. "It seems preposterous and yet——" He broke off suddenly, and then resumed with:

"I might think the two Gotham bills were merely a coincidence, but there is the handkerchief. You deny having been in father's office. How can you explain. Sit down there and convince me that I am dreaming, raving—anything but that I must think the worst of you."

"If I had only given the alarm when the thing first impressed itself upon me!" murmured Lloyd. "I saw the robber in my room last night."

"What?" almost screamed Gordon.

"But I must have been half asleep, for I couldn't be certain whether it wasn't part of a dream. You've had that experience, haven't you, Gordon?"

"Yes, yes, but go on, go on."

"Then you know when you came to the door this morning? I started to unlock it, but it was already unlocked, and I am sure I turned the key last night.

"This convinces me that the thief, whoever it was, concealed himself in my room before I went to bed, then took my handkerchief from my coat hanging over the chair back, and later put two of those bills in my wallet."

"But why under the sun didn't you give the alarm, if, as you say, you actually saw the man in your room?"

"I tell you I wasn't positive it wasn't a dream, and I didn't want to make a laughing stock of myself. But I know now who it was."

Lloyd sprang from his seat with the words.

"You know who it was?" repeated Gordon. "Surely if you weren't sure whether you were awake or dreaming, you couldn't have recognized——"

"Oh, it wasn't when the fellow was in the room that I recognized him. I am reasoning on another basis entirely."

"What on earth are you talking about, Abbott?"

"About the man that was walking up and down in front of your stoop when we got back from the theater last night. Didn't you see him?"

"And you mean to insinuate," said Gordon, with an odd look in his eyes, "that because a man happens to walk up and down in front of a house, he is going to commit a robbery there?"

"Isn't that just as probable as that I should take the money?"

Gordon did not answer this question. He drew in a deep breath, and then broke out with:

"But how could the fellow have got into the house? Besides, he was in your room, you say, all the time. If so, he must have been concealed there for an hour or more before we got back."

"He had time to get in the house while you led me off on that queer chase over to Park Avenue," Lloyd interposed here.

"But how could he get in, I want to know?" repeated Gordon. "No locks were found forced this morning."

Lloyd was silent for an instant. The joyous toot of a Christmas horn floated up from the street, but there was no sign of the season's merriment on either of the faces in this luxuriously furnished room in the millionaire's palace.

Lloyd rose and took a step or two nearer the fellow whom he was now no longer sure that he could regard as his friend.

"You seem not to want to believe that it could be anybody else, Marchman," he said quietly.

Gordon bit his lip, while his fingers worked in and out of each other convulsively. He was plainly suffering in mind as much as Lloyd was.

"Oh, it is wretched business, whichever way you look at it!" he finally exclaimed, flinging himself on the divan in front of the mantelpiece.

"You probably wish you had never seen me. But here, I must give you back that money before I go."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FINAL DECISION.

"Before you go?"

Gordon repeated Lloyd's words mechanically, and as if he did not take in their full meaning, but yet was conscious that they were supposed to make an impression on him.

"Yes," answered Lloyd. "You don't suppose I shall stay after all that has happened," and he placed the two five dollar bills on the sofa beside Marchman as he spoke.

"But you mustn't go off this way. You will think that I believe you took that money."

"Well, don't you?"

"No, I don't see how you could do such a thing.It is all a fearful mistake. Wait here till I go down and see father."

Gordon started for the door, but Lloyd called him back.

"You have forgotten the money," he said. "You had better take it to your father. It is not mine. I had only four dollars with me. It must be his."

"But how can I explain you did not take it if I tell him where I found it?" Gordon wanted to know.

"You can give him my denial and—and say that I will remain if he desires to make an investigation."

"You must remain in any event, Lloyd," exclaimed Gordon impulsively. "I can't stand it to think of your going off in this mood—on Christmas Day, too. I'll be back in a few minutes."

When Gordon had gone, Lloyd

walked over to one of the windows. He leaned his burning forehead against the cool pane and looked down into the street.

How dull and cheerless the world seemed to him on this 25th of December even though the sun shone bright and Christmas greens were on every hand to remind him of the gladsome season.

If he had been asked to imagine something evil befalling him, he could never have conjured up any misfortune so black in hue as that which had in fact overtaken him.

In spite of the half cheering words Gordon had spoken when he went out, Lloyd was convinced that he was supected of knowing at least something incriminating about the robbery.

A thief! Lloyd Abbott, branded with that name!

How could he ever go back home with this suspicion hanging over him?

But perhaps he would not be permitted to go home. Might not Mr. Marchman demand that he be sent to prison?

Gordon, meantime, was having his interview with his father in the office.

"Well, my son," began the millionaire, when he had bidden Gordon close the door, "what did you find out? I have been waiting impatiently for you to make a report."

"Are these two of the missing bills?" was all Gordon's answer, as he placed the two bank bills on the desk.

Mr. Marchman eagerly caught them up.

"Yes," he exclaimed, in suppressed excitement. "Where did you find them?"

"They were in Lloyd Abbott's pocketbook, but, oh, father, I don't see how he could have stolen them. If he had, think how foolish he would be to carry such incriminating evidence around with him."

"Did you ask him to show you the pocketbook?" Mr. Marchman inquired, ignoring Gordon's plea. "Or how did you manage it?"

"Asked him to loan me his pocketbook on the plea of having forgotten mine."

"And what did he say when you accused him of having—having taken these bills from my desk?"

"I didn't accuse him of it. As soon as I saw those bills in the pocketbook I gave it back to him and said nothing. After we got home he came to me with the money and said it was not his—that I must have thought he had stolen it."

"And did he attempt no defense?"

"Certainly. I can't think he took the money, dad. He said there was a man in his room last night, and what's more, he hinted at its being Alfred."

"Surely, Gordon, he doesn't know—"

Mr. Marchman's tone was intensely anxious.

"No, he doesn't know who Alfred is, but it seems he saw him in front of the house last night."

"He is trying to throw dust in your eyes, Gordon. If he saw a man in the house last night, why didn't he give the alarm?"

"He says he wasn't sure he wasn't dreaming."

"Stuff and nonsense. The fellow's a rogue; no doubt of it. You've known him only a few weeks and picked him up in the most harum scarum fashion. But what the mischief has the fellow done with the rest of the money?"

"But I tell you, father, he hasn't the rest, because he didn't take any of it. If he had done so, don't you suppose he would have got out the first thing this morning?"

"Certainly not. That would have established his guilt sure."

"But his coming to me of his own accord?"

"Merely a bluff, to make you think just as you have thought. He knew you had found his handkerchief in here, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then of course your asking him for his pocketbook was suspicious. So he simply devised the plan of making you believe there was a man in his room who would try to divert blame from himself by putting those bills in his pocketbook and carrying that handkerchief in here."

Gordon stood by his father's side, listening to this arraignment of his friend. He was left now without a word to say.

It was true, he had known Lloyd Abbott but a short time, and if it came to a choice of whom he would prefer to suspect of the theft, Lloyd or Alfred, there could be but one answer.

"What do you think I ought to do, dad?" he said finally.

"Well, of course we can't be expected to go on entertaining a thief, so the quicker he is out of the house the better. By all means do not let him stay to dinner."

"He has offered to go already. He said, though, he would wait and see if you did not want to make an investigation."

"An investigation? I ought to have him and his traps searched. But in deference to your feelings, Gordon, I will not go through so unpleasant a process."

"I can't believe it yet, dad."

Gordon shook his head slowly from side to side.

"But the rest of the money?" he went on presently. "Where is it? What are you going to do about it?"

"I shall simply tell the servants that owing to the theft they must wait for their Christmas boxes until tomorrow."

"But why tell the servants about the theft at all, dad? They will at once connect Abbott's sudden disappearance with it."

"Tell them, my son? They already know—and more than you think," the millionaire added significantly.

"This is a most unfortunate Christmas Day," he went on after an instant, as Gordon still lingered. "Here is Alfred abroad, we know not where, and now this disgraceful robbery."

"But if it is unpleasant for us, dad, think what it must be for Abbott."

"He ought to have thought of that before he took the money."

"I can't feel yet that he did take it. I lost him one position you know, and I've promised to get him another. Now of course I can't do that."

"Let this be a lesson to you, my son, in exercising caution about making new acquaintances. According to your own showing you knew absolutely nothing about this Abbott before you met him, were not even introduced."

"But both mother and Agnes were very much pleased with him."

"Oh, of course he would look out to make a good impression while he was warming himself in. And now it is almost dinner time. You had better get your man out of the house as soon as possible."

"But what if we find proof afterward that Abbott didn't take the money after all?"

"In that case, Gordon, you can trust your father, I think."

But Mr. Marchman did not look at his son as he said this. His fingers fumbled about nervously among the papers on his desk.

Gordon started back to his room again. He walked slowly, his heart heavy within him.

Lloyd was still standing by the window.

"Father doesn't want to see you, Abbott?" he said.

Lloyd turned with a radiant face. "Then he doesn't think——"

But one look into Gordon's eyes showed him that the hope that had flamed up in his breast was born only to be quenched.

"I don't believe it, Lloyd. I can't," Gordon cried. "But——"

"I shall go at once. I was only waiting till you came back. But you had better come with me while I am packing my satchel."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ADRIFT ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

There were probably not two such wretched lads in all the great city of New York on this fair Christmas Day as the two in the superbly fitted guest chamber in millionaire Marchman's home.

"I'm not coming with you, Lloyd," Gordon had said, as they crossed the hall together, "because I want to watch you, but because I want to be with you as long as I can; to try and make you feel that I have not lost confidence in you."

To this Lloyd made no reply. Ever since he knew that Mr. Marchman desired him to leave, he had been coldly calm.

"Perhaps you had better send for your father to look through my valise," he said presently, as he threw the satchel open on the bed.

"Don't talk that way, Lloyd," Gordon implored him.

"Oh yes, and there's one thing I must not forget. Here."

He took from his vest the watch and chain Gordon had given him that morning, and held them out to the millionaire's son.

But Gordon stepped back and shook his head.

"No, no," he said. "You must keep the watch, Lloyd. I want you to do so. It may be the last request I shall ever make of you."

"I cannot keep it, Mr. Marchman," and Lloyd placed the watch on the bureau.

The packing went on in silence for a few minutes, then, as Lloyd closed his valise with a snap, he said:

"Does your father expect me to restore the rest of the money which he thinks I took?"

This was an awkward question for Gordon to answer. Of course, supposing Lloyd had taken the money, he ought to restore it.

But Gordon hated to suggest this, for it seemed to imply that he thought Lloyd guilty.

And yet Lloyd had put the inquiry in such a way that to answer it at all seemed like an affront.

But there was Lloyd looking at him, waiting for his reply.

"If you took the money," Gordon said finally, "which I don't believe, of course it would be only the right thing to give it back."

"Then he is not going to have me searched?"

"Certainly not."

"And I suppose I should consider this a mark of distinguished consideration," said Lloyd, with biting irony. "I think though that I ought, in justice to myself, to demand that I be searched. But as I want to get out of here as soon as I can, I won't."

Lloyd picked up his valise as he spoke and started for the door.

"Are you going without bidding me good by?" Gordon inquired.

"I was going to ask you to come down to the door with me and make sure that I didn't take anybody else's overcoat along with my own. I wish you would do that now."

Lloyd's tones were like ice, and they cut into Gordon's soul as very sharp points of that substance might do.

"I suppose you wish you had never seen me," he remarked, as he followed the other down the stairs.

"Well, I can't say that our acquaintance has been a brilliant success."

Sarcasm was a strong point with Lloyd, but the poor fellow had never thought to employ it in such serious case.

"Here, let me help you," said Gordon eagerly, as his departing guest set down his bag in the lower hall and proceeded to put on his overcoat.

"Please don't trouble yourself."

Lloyd shrank away as if the touch of the other's hand was pollution. Indeed, one would think that he was the accuser and Gordon the accused.

"And you are going away like this?"

Gordon gave this exclamation as Lloyd opened the door without another word.

Young Abbott paused, standing in the vestibule formed by the glass storm doors. His eyes flashed as he turned them on the rich man's son.

"How would you go away if you were in my place?"

Then, without waiting for an answer, he closed the door behind him.

As he went down the steps he recalled his feelings when he first ascended them that Thursday night. How little he had recked then that the acquaintance so oddly formed would be of such short duration and end so tragically.

Yes, in his present state of mind, it seemed to Lloyd that death could not be more tragic than the disgrace that had fallen on him.

He was innocent, to be sure. He knew that, looked at philosophically, this ought to be a great consolation to him.

But now, as he mechanically turned down Fifth Avenue, knowing not whither to go, nor in fact, caring much, this was a consolation that did not appear to be of much practical use to him.

His brain was still all awhirl. It seemed almost impossible for him to realize the fact that he, Lloyd Abbott, son of Charles Farnmore Abbott, and grandson of Robert Garrett Lloyd, had been turned out of a house where he was a guest, on suspicion of having stolen money.

That he felt himself in some measure to blame for this outcome did not make the consequences any easier to bear.

"If I had only given the alarm last night when I thought there was a man in my room," he told himself, "the real culprit might have been caught."

He walked on down the Avenue till he reached the Plaza at the Fifty Ninth Street entrance to the Park.

Everybody he met wore a happy expression, befitting the day. Children passed him, some trailing new toys behind them, others hugging dolls or stuffed lambs.

It almost seemed as if Christmas were written in letters of green in the very air.

On the round patch of grass plot and path opposite Sixtieth Street, Lloyd came to a stand.

"Where shall I go now?" he asked himself. "Not home. I can't go back to mother and Myra now."

He was not sure that he could bring himself to go that day. He must have time to think over the situation calmly, to try and reason it out how the Marchmans had come to even dare suspect him.

(*To be continued.*)

REAL DOGS OF WAR.

"Let loose the dogs of war" has long been an expression with a figurative meaning only. It has remained for the present decade to give the phrase a literal significance. Says the Chicago "Inter Ocean:"

The German army now has trained war dogs. On the march each dog is led by his master and is required to carry a heavy pack on his back. Dogs of a dark color are preferred because they are less visible to the enemy. The training is pursued on the general principle that the dog would be treated very cruelly by an enemy, so that the creature is taught to creep round the foe unnoticed and to give distinct warning of a hostile approach without attracting attention to itself.

For instance, in the German training process some of the soldiers put on French and Russian uniforms to represent the enemy. This arrangement, by the by, suggests the idea that the Germans have quite made up their mind whom they are going to fight when the great war does come.

HEN ANIMALS WERE TRIED FOR THEIR CRIMES.

neighbor's chickens get into your gar- and scratch up your flower beds, you chase the chickens out, but you hold neighbor responsible for any damage may have inflicted. But it has not ys been so. There are many instances ecord in which dumb beasts have been ght into court and formally tried for lemeanors which they have committed. Philadelphia "Times" furnishes a col- on of very interesting cases of this dis- tion.

sporting himself behind the bars of a in the Aquarium at Berlin some few s ago was a Gibraltar monkey that had tried by the British Crown, with all the n and ceremony of law, and had been d guilty of murder in the first degree and enced to death.

is female companion in the crime had n legally tried and executed for the same nse, but her husband succeeded in avoid- a similar fate in a manner that reflected t credit on his simian shrewdness, and he same time left the Crown's lawyers in rious quandary.

he two monkeys, it seems, had found the nt child of an English officer sleeping ts cradle alone in an isolated house near rock of Gibraltar. They had promptly ceeded to devour it, and though caught handed in the act, could not be killed at e because of an old statute, since re- led, which expressly forbade it.

hey belonged to the famous tribe of Gib- ar monkeys, the only wild monkeys in ope, which infested the rocks and woods ut the renowned fortress. By the statute question they were protected from all lestation, because of their supposed use- ness to the garrison.

hese monkeys were of so suspicious and tchful a nature that upon the approach of one, or upon hearing the least unusual nd, they would immediately raise such a eeching and howling that the garrison hin the fortress were alarmed and put on their guard, and thus it was believed y could assist in preventing a military prise.

s the two murderers, therefore, could not dispatched without legal warrant it be- ne necessary that they should be con- mned according to due process of law and a jury of their peers. An indictment was wn, and after the usual preliminaries and ays they were arranged in open court and ury sworn.

ounsel was appointed to defend them, tnesses pro and con were examined, and lawyers on both sides made arguments. e jury without leaving the box returned a rdict of guilty as charged in the indict- nt, and the judge pronounced sentence of ath.

As hanging was obiously inappropriate the urt decided that the sentence should be rried out by giving the condemned strych- a in figs.

The female with the impulsiveness of her x ate eagerly and died. Her lord and aster suspected something was up. He re the figs about, detected a foreign sub- ance, scratched it out as well as he could, erely tasted the food and declined to eat y more.

His counsel at once claimed that according legal principles no new sentence could be ronounced without violating the principle at no one shall be twice put in jeopardy of fe or limb for the same offense, and the urt held the point well taken. The con- ct was eventually removed to a foreign risdiction, and in time became the pride nd delight of the German Aquarium.

In 1510 the inhabitants of the diocese of ntun, in France, indicted the rats that were ting up the town supply of barley. A sum- ons was issued to the rats to appear in urt, but apparently was returned non est, r they failed to appear.

Trial proceeded without them, and Chas- eneuz, a local attorney, was appointed to efend them. He raised the point that as he rats were scattered throughout the pro- ince, one summons was not sufficient to each them, and that under such circum- tances a verdict could not stand.

Ths court postponed the case and granted second summons to be read from all the ulpits in the diocese. Chasseneuz defended is clients with great earnestness and upon heir second failure to appear argued that he length and difficulty of the journey, and he fact that his clients all had to come on oot, and that many were aged and infirm, ught to excuse their non appearance and ot prejudice the court. He also based his lefense on considerations of humanity and ublic policy.

"What could be more unjust," said he, "than such general proscriptions which overwhelm whole families in a common ruin; which visit the crimes of parents on their innocent offspring, and which destroy indiscriminately the good and the bad, the strong and the weak, and those whom tender years or infirmity have rendered incapable of offending."

What the effect of this eloquent plea was our historian sayeth not, but it must have been successful, for Chasseneuz was so pleased with its effect that he afterwards wrote a big book, in which he treated this subject from every possible and impossible standpoint, except, of course, the standpoint of ordinary horse sense.

His book was not the only one either, for the custom of giving animals a court trial, mprobable as it may seem, had attained such proportions in those times that at Lyons in 1668 Gaspard Bailly, advocate of the Senate of Savoy, published a book giving the legal forms and proper procedure for the prosecution of animals.

In Savoy, in 1587, certain weevil or vine grubs had become very destructive in the vineyard of an influential citizen and he called upon the courts to protect him. A prosecution was begun against the insects and counsel for them appointed by the court.

The argument for the defense took up many hours and was pressed with such ardor that the public prosecutor became exhausted and offered to enter a nolle pros in the case if counsel for the insects would guarantee the State that they would remove to a locality fixed by the court.

The insects were given two days to consider this offer, and at the end of that time their counsel declined to accept that proposition because the locality was a desert. The prosecutor denied this, and the court appointed a jury of experts to determine the point, with what results the records do not say.

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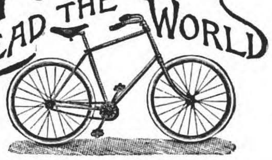

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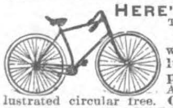

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