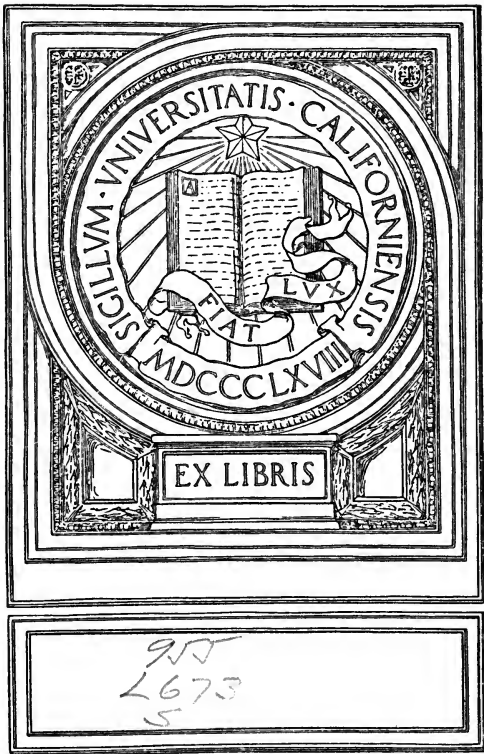


Sandburrs

by Alfred Henry Lewis





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Sandburrs





“SPOT AND PINCHER.”—Page 4.

Sandburrs

By

Alfred Henry Lewis

Author of "Wolfville,"¹¹ etc.

Illustrated by

Horace Taylor

and

George B. Luks

Second Edition



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TO
JAMES ROBERT KEENE

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PREFACE

A SANDBURR is a foolish, small vegetable, irritating and grievously useless. Therefore this volume of sketches is named SANDBURRS. Some folk there be who apologize for the birth of a book. There's scant propriety of it. A book is but a legless, dormant creature. The public has but to let it alone to be safe. And a book, withal! is its own punishment. Is it a bad book? the author loses. Is it very bad? the publisher loses. In any case the public is preserved. For all of which there will be no apology for SANDBURRS. Nor will I tell what I think of it. No; this volume may make its own running, without the handicap of my apology, or the hamstringing of my criticism. There should be more than one to do the latter with the least of luck. The Bowery dialect—if it be a dialect—employed in sundry of these sketches is not an exalted literature. The stories told are true, however; so much may they have defence,

A. H. L.

NEW YORK, Nov. 15, 1899.



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SANDBURRS

SPOT AND PINCHER.

MARTIN is the barkeeper of an East Side hotel—not a good hotel at all—and flourishes as a sporting person of much emphasis. Martin, in passing, is at the head of the dog-fighting brotherhood. I often talk with Martin and love him very much.

Last week I visited Martin's bar. There was "nothin' doin'," to quote from Martin. We talked of fighting men, a subject near to Martin, he having fought three prize-fights himself. Martin boasted himself as still being "an even break wit' any rough-and-tumble scrapper in d' bunch."

"Come here," said Martin, in course of converse; "come here; I'll show you a bute."

Martin opened a door to the room back of the bar. As we entered a pink-white bull terrier, with black spots about the eyes, raced across to fawn on Martin. The terrier's black toe-nails, bright and hard as agate, made a vast clatter on the ash floor.

"This is Spot," said Martin. "Weighs thirty-three pounds, and he's a hully terror! I'm goin' to fight him to-night for five hundred dollars."

I stooped to express with a pat on his smooth white head my approbation of Spot.

"Pick him up and heft him," said Martin. "He won't nip you," he continued, as I hesitated; "bulls is d' most manful dogs there bees. Bulls won't bite nobody."

Thereupon I picked up Spot "to heft him." Spot smiled widely, wagged his stumpy tail, tried to lick my face, and felt like a bundle of live steel.

"Spot's goin' to fight McDermott's Pincher," said Martin. "And," addressing this to Spot, "you want to watch out, old boy! Pincher is as hard as a hod of brick. And you want to look out for your Trilbys; Pincher'll fight for your feet and legs. He's d' limit, Spot, Pincher is! and you must tend to business when you're in d' pit wit' Pincher, or he'll do you. Then McDermott would win me money, an' you an' me, Spot, would look like a couple of suckers."

Spot listened with a pleased air, as if drinking in every word, and wagged his stump reassuringly. He would remember Pincher's genius for crunching feet and legs, and see to it fully in a general way that Pincher did not "do" him.

"Spot knows he's goin' to fight to-night as well as you and me," said Martin, as we returned to the bar. "Be d' way! don't you want to go?"

* * * * *

It was nine o'clock that evening. The pit, sixteen feet square, with board walls three feet high, was built in the centre of an empty loft on Bleecker street. Directly over the pit was a bunch of electric lights. All about, raised six inches one above the other, were a dozen rows of board seats like a circus. These were

crowded with perhaps two hundred sports. They sat close, and in the vague, smoky atmosphere, their faces, row on row, tier above tier, put me in mind of potatoes in a bin.

Pincher was a bull terrier, the counterpart of Spot, save for the markings about the face which gave Spot his name. Pincher seemed very sanguine and full of eager hope; and as he and Spot, held in the arms of their handlers, lolled at each other across the pit, it was plain they languished to begin. Neither, however, made yelp or cry or bark. Bull terriers of true worth on the battle-field were, I learned, a tacit, wordless brood, making no sound.

Martin "handled" Spot and McDermott did kindly office for Pincher in the same behalf. Martin and McDermott "tasted" Spot and Pincher respectively; smelled and mouthed them for snuffs and poisons. Spot and Pincher submitted to these examinations in a gentlemanly way, but were glad when they ended.

At the word of the referee, Spot and Pincher were loosed, each in his corner. They went straight at each other's throats. They met in the exact centre of the pit like two milk-white thunderbolts, and the battle began.

Spot and Pincher moiled and toiled bloodily for forty-five minutes without halt or pause or space to breathe. Their handlers, who were confined to their corners by quarter circles drawn in chalk so as to hem them in, leaned forward toward the fray and breathed encouragement.

What struck me as wonderful, withal, was a lack of angry ferocity on the parts of Spot and Pincher. There was naught of growl, naught of rage-born cry or

comment. They simply blazed with a zeal for blood; burned with a blind death-ardour.

When Spot and Pincher began, all was so flash-like in their motions, I could hardly tell what went on. They were in and out, down and up, over and under, writhing like two serpents. Now and then a pair of jaws clicked like castanets as they came together with a trap-like snap, missing their hold. Now and then one or the other would get a half-grip that would tear out. Then the blood flowed, painting both Spot and Pincher crimson.

As time went on my eyes began to follow better, and I noted some amazing matters. It was plain, for one thing, that both Spot and Pincher were as wise and expert as two boxers. They fought intelligently, and each had a system. As Martin had said, Pincher fought "under," in never-ending efforts to seize Spot's feet and legs. Spot was perfectly aware of this, and never failed to keep his fore legs well back and beneath him, out of Pincher's reach.

Spot, on his part, set his whole effort to the enterprise of getting Pincher by the throat. A dog without breath means a dead dog, and Spot knew this. Pincher appeared clear on the point, too; and would hold his chin close to his breast, and shrug his head and shoulders well together whenever Spot tried to work for a throat hold.

Now and then Spot and Pincher stood up to each other like wrestlers, and fenced with their muzzles for "holds" as might two Frenchmen with foils. In the wrestling Spot proved himself a perfect Whistler, and never failed to throw Pincher heavily. And, as I stated, from the beginning, the two warriors battled on

without cry. Silent, sedulous, indomitable; both were the sublimation of courage and fell purpose. They were fighting to the death; they knew it, joyed in it, and gave themselves to their destiny without reserve. Each was eager only to kill, willing only to die. It was a lesson to men. And, as I looked, I realised that both were two of the happiest of created things. In the very heat of the encounter, with throbbing hearts and heaving sides, and rending fangs and flowing blood, they found a great content.

All at once Spot and Pincher stood motionless. Their eyes were like coals, and their respective stump tails stood stiffly, as indicating no abatement of heart or courage. What was it that brought the halt? Spot had set his long fangs through the side of Pincher's head in such fashion that Pincher couldn't reach him nor retaliate with his teeth. Pincher, discovering this, ceased to try, and stood there unconquered, resting and awaiting developments. Spot, after the manner of his breed, kept his grip like Death. They stood silent, motionless, while the blood dripped from their gashes; a grim picture! They had fought, as I learned later, to what is known in the great sport of dog fighting as "a turn."

"It's a turn!" decided the referee.

At this Martin and McDermot seized each his dog and parted them scientifically. Spot and Pincher were carried to their corners and refreshed and sponged with cold water. At the end of one minute the referee called:

"Time!"

At this point I further added to my learning touching the kingly pastime of dog-fighting. When two

dogs have "fought to a turn," that is, locked themselves in a grip, not deadly to either if persisted in, and which still prevents further fighting,—as in the case of Spot and Pincher,—a responsibility rests with the call of "Time" on the dog that "turns." In this instance, Pincher. At the call of "Time" Spot would be held by his handler, standing in plain view of Pincher, but in his corner. It was incumbent on Pincher—as a proof of good faith—to cross the pit to get at him. If Pincher failed when released on call of "Time" to come straight across to Spot, and come at once; if he looked to right or left or hesitated even for the splinter of a second, he was a beaten dog. The battle was against him.

"Time!" called the referee.

Just prior to the call I heard Martin whisper huskily over his shoulder to a rough customer who sat just back of and above him, at Spot's corner of the pit:

"Stand by wit' that glim now!" Martin muttered without turning his head.

At the call "Time!" McDermot released Pincher across in his corner. Pincher's eyes were riveted on Spot, just over the way, and there's no doubt of Pincher's full purpose to close with him at once. There was no more of hesitation in his stout heart than in Spot's, who stood mouth open and fire-eyed, waiting.

But a strange interference occurred. At the word "Time!" the rough customer chronicled slipped the slide of a dark lantern and threw the small glare of it squarely in Pincher's eyes. It dazed Pincher; he lost sight of Spot; forgot for a moment his great purpose. There stood poor Pincher, irresolute, not knowing

where to find his enemy; thrall to the glare of the dark lantern.

“Spot win!” declared the referee.

At that moment the dark-lantern rough-customer closed the slide and disappeared.

Few saw the trick or its effects. Certainly the referee was guiltless. But McDermot, who had had the same view of the dark lantern Pincher had, and on whom for a moment it had similar effect, raised a great clamour. But it was too late; Martin had claimed the thousand dollars from the stake-holder, and with it in his pocket was already in a carriage driving away, with Spot wrapped up in a lap robe occupying the front seat.

“Let McDermot holler!” said Martin, with much heat, when I mentioned the subject the next day. “Am I goin’ to lose a fight and five hundred dollars, just because some bloke brings a dark lantern to d’ pit and takes to monkeyin’ wit’ it? Not on your life!”

MULBERRY MARY

(ANNALS OF THE BEND,

“CHUCKY D’ TURK” was the *nom de guerre* of my friend. Under this title he fought the battles of life. If he had another name he never made me his confidant concerning it. We had many talks, Chucky and I; generally in a dingy little bar on Baxter Street, where, when I wearied of uptown sights and smells, I was wont to meet with Chucky. Never did Chucky call on me nor seek me. From first to last he failed not to conduct himself towards me with an air of tolerant patronage. When together I did the buying and the listening, and Chucky did the drinking and the talking. It was on such occasion when Chucky told me the story of Mulberry Mary.

“Mary was born in Kelly’s Alley,” remarked Chucky, examining in a thoughtful way his mug of mixed ale; “Mary was born in Kelly’s Alley, an’ say! she wasn’t no squealer, I don’t t’ink.

“When Mary grows up an’ can chase about an’ chin, she toins out a dead good kid an’ goes to d’ Sisters’ School. At this time I don’t spot Mary in p’ticler; she’s nothin’ but a sawed-off kid, an’ I’m busy wit’ me graft.

“D’ foist I really knows of Mary is when she gets married. She hooks up wit’ Billy, d’ moll-buzzard; an’ say! he’s bad.

"He gets his lamps on Mary at Connorses spiel, Billy does; an' he's stuck on her in a hully secont. It's no wonder; Mary's a peach. She's d' belle of d' Bend, make no doubt.

"Billy's graft is hangin' round d' Bowery bars, layin' for suckers. An' he used to get in his hooks deep an' clever now an' then, an' most times Billy could, if it's a case of crowd, flash quite a bit of dough.

"So when Billy sees Mary at Connorses spiel, like I says, she's such a bute he loses his nut. You needn't give it d' laugh! Say! I sees d' map of a skirt—a goil, I means—on a drop curtain at a swell t'eatre onct, an' it says under it she's Cleopatra. D' mark nex' me says, when I taps for a tip, this Cleopatra's from Egypt, an' makes a hit in d' coochee coochee line, wit' d' high push of d' old times, see! An' says this gezeybo for a finish: 'This Cleopatra was a wonder for looks. She was d' high-roller tart of her time, an' d' beautifullest.'

"Now, all I got to say is," continued Chucky, regarding me with a challenging air of decision the while; "all I has to utter is, Mary could make this Cleopatra look like seven cents!

"Well," resumed Chucky, as I made no comment, "Billy chases up to Mary an' goes in to give her d' jolly of her life. An', say! she's pleased all right, all right; I can see it be her mug.

"An' Billy goes d' limit. He orders d' beers; an' when he pays, Billy springs his wad on Mary an' counts d' bills off slow, t'inkin' it'll razzle-dazzle her. Then Billy tells Mary he's out to be her steady.

"'I've got money to boin,' says Billy, 'an' what you wants you gets, see!' An' Billy pulls d' long green

ag'in to show Mary he's dead strong, an' d' money aint no dream.

“ But Mary says ‘ Nit! couple of times nit!’ She says she's on d' level, an' no steady goes wit' her. It's either march or marry wit' Mary. An' so she lays it down.

“ That's how it stands, when d' nex' news we hears Billy an' she don't do a t'ing but chase off to a w'ite-choker; followin' which dey grabs off a garret in d' Astorbilt tenement, an' goes to keepin' house.

“ But Mary breaks in on Billy's graft. She says he's got to go to woik; he'll get lagged if he don't; an' she won't stand for no husband who spends half d' time wit' her an' d' rest on d' Island. So he cuts loose from d' fly mob an' leaves d' suckers alone, an' hires out for a tinsmith, see!

“ An' here's d' luck Billy has. It's d' secont day an' he's fittin' in d' tin flashin' round a chimbley on a five-story roof; an' mebby it's because he aint used to woik, or mebby he gets funny in his cupolo, bein' up so high; anyhow he dives down to d' pavement, an' when he lands, you bet your life! Billy's d' deapest t'ing that ever happened.

“ Mary goes wild an' wrong after that. In half of no time Mary takes to chasin' up to Mott Street an' hittin' d' pipe. There's a Chink up there who can cook d' hop out o' sight, an' it aint long before Mary is hangin' 'round his joint for good. It's then dey quits callin' her Mulberry Mary, an' she goes be d' name of Mollie d' Dope.

“ Mary don't last in d' Chink swim more'n a year before there's bats in her belfry for fair; any old stiff wit' lamps could see it; an' so folks gets leary of Mary.



"MULBERRY MARY."—Page 10.

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"It runs on mebbly two years after Billy does that stunt from d' roof, see! when there's a fire an' all d' kids run an' screeched, an' all d' folks hollered, an' all d' engines comes an' lams loose to put it out. D' fire's in a tenement, an' d' folks who was in it has skipped, so it's just d' joint itself is boinin'.

"All at onct a kid looks out d' fort' story window wit' d' fire shinin' behint him. You can see be d' little mark's mug he's got an awful scare t'run into him, t'inkin' he's out to boin in d' buildin'.

"'It's McManuses' Chamsey!' says one old Tommy, lettin' her hair down her back an' givin' a yell, 'Somebody save McManuses' Chamsey!'

"'Let me save him!' says Mary, at d' same time laughin' wild. 'Let me save him; I want to save him! I'm only Mollie d' Dope—Mollie d' hop fiend—an' if I gets it in d' neck it don't count, see!'

"Mary goes up in d' smoke an' d' fire, no one knows how, wit' d' water pourin' from d' hose, an' d' boards an' glass a-fallin' an' a-crashin', an' she brings out McManuses' Chamsey. Saves him; on d' dead! she does; an' boins all d' hair off her cocoa doin' it.

"Well, of course d' fire push stan's in an' gives Mary all sorts of guff an' praise. Mary only laughs an' says, while d' amb'lance guy is doin' up her head, that folks ain't onto her racket; that she d' soonest frail that ever walks in d' Bend."

At this juncture Chucky desired another mixed ale. He got it, and after a long, damp pause he resumed his thread.

"Now what do youse t'ink of this for a finish? It's weeks ago d' fire is. Mary meets up wit' McManuses' Chamsey to-day—she's been followin' him a good deal

since she saves him—an' as Chamsey is only six years old, he don't know nothin', an' falls to Mary's lead. It's an easy case of bunk, an' Chamsey only six years old like that!

"Mary gives Chamsey d' gay face an' wins him right off. She buys him posies of one Dago an' sugar candy of another; an' then she passes Chamsey a strong tip, he's missin' d' sights be not goin' down to d' East River.

"Here's what Mary does—she takes Chamsey down be d' docks—a longshoreman loafin' hears what she says. Mary tells Chamsey to look at all d' chimbleys an' d' smoke comin' out!

"'An' in every one there's fire makin' d' smoke,' says Mary. 'T'ink of all d' fires there must be, Chamsey! I'll bet Hell ain't got any more fires in it than d' would! Do youse remember, Chamsey, how d' fire was goin' to boin you? Now, I'll tell you what we'll do, so d' fire never will boin us; we'll jump in,—you an' me!'

"An' wit' that, so d' longshoreman says, Mary nails Chamsey be d' neck wit' her left hook an' hops into d' drink. Yes, dey was drowned—d' brace of 'em. Dey's over to d' dead house now on a slab—Mary an' McManuses' Chamsey.

"What makes me so wet? I gets to d' dock a minute too late to save 'em, but I'm right in time to dive up d' stiffs. So I dives 'em up. It's easy money. That's what makes me cuffs look like ruffles an' me collar like a corset string." And here Chucky called for a third mixed ale, as a sign that his talk was done.

SINGLETREE JENNINGS

IT was evening in Jordan Hollow, and Singletree Jennings stood leaning on his street gate. Singletree Jennings was a coloured man, and, to win his bread, played many parts in life. He was a whitewasher; he sold fish; he made gardens; and during the social season he was frequently the "old family butler," in white cotton gloves, at the receptions of divers families.

"I'm a pore man, honey!" Singletree Jennings was wont to say; "but dar was a time when me an' my ole Delia was wuf \$1,800. Kase why? Kase we brought it at auction, when Marse Roundtree died—didn't we, Delia?"

This was one of Singletree Jennings's jokes.

"But pore man or no!" Singletree Jennings would conclude, "as de Lamb looks down an' sees me, I never wronged a man outen so much as a blue-laiged chicken in my life."

This evening Singletree Jennings was a prey to dejection. Nor could he account for his gloom. His son opened the gate and went whistling up the street.

"Clambake Jennings, whar yo' gwine?" asked Singletree Jennings.

"Gwine ter shoot craps."

"Have yo' got yer rabbit's foot?"

"Yassir."

“An’ de snake’s head outen de clock?”

“Yassir.”

Singletree Jennings relapsed into moody silence, and Clambake passed on and away.

The shouts and cries of some storm-rocked multitude was heard up the street. The Columbia College boys were taking home their new eight-oared boat. The shouts settled into something like the barking of a dog. It was the crew emitting the college cry.

“What’s dat?” demanded Delia Jennings, coming to the door.

“De Lawd save us ef I knows!” said Singletree Jennings; “onless it’s one of dem yar bond issues dey’s so ’fraid’ll happen.”

The tones of Singletree Jennings showed that he was ill at ease.

“What’s de matter, Daddy Singletree?” demanded the observant Delia.

“I’ve got a present’ment, I reckon!” said Singletree Jennings. “I’m pow’ful feard dar’ll somethin’ bust loose wrong about dat Andrew Jackson goat.”

Singletree Jennings was the owner and business manager of a goat named Andrew Jackson. In the winter Singletree Jennings never came home without an armful of straw for Andrew Jackson. In the summer there was no need of straw. Andrew Jackson then ate the shirts off the neighbour’s clothes-lines. Andrew Jackson had been known to eat the raiment off a screaming child, and then lower his frontlet at the rescue party. Andrew Jackson was a large, impressive goat; yet he never joked nor gave way to mirth. Ordinarily, Andrew Jackson was a calm, placid goat; aroused, he was an engine of destruction.

All of these peculiarities were explained by Singletree Jennings when Sam Hardtack and Backfence Randolph, a committee acting on behalf of the Othello Dramatic Club, desired the loan of Andrew Jackson. The church to which Singletree Jennings belonged was programming a social this very night, and divers and sundry tableaux, under the direction of the Othello Dramatic Club, were on the card. It was esteemed necessary by those in control to present as a tableau Abraham slaying Isaac. There was a paucity of sheep about, and Andrew Jackson, in this dearth of the real thing, was cast to play the character of the Ram in the Bush.

“An’ Andrew Jackson is boun’ to fetch loose,” reflected Singletree Jennings, with a shake of his head; “an’ when he does, he’ll jes’ go knockin’ ’round among de congregashun like a blind dog in a meat shop!”

* * * * *

Singletree Jennings’s worst fears were realised. It was nine o’clock now, and he and Delia had come down to the social. Andrew Jackson had been restrained of his liberty for the previous four hours and held captive in a drygoods’ box. He was now in a state of frenzy. When the curtain went up on Abraham and Isaac, Andrew Jackson burst his bonds at the rear of the stage and bore down on the Hebrew father and son like the breath of destiny. Andrew Jackson came, dragging his bush with him. The bush was, of course, a welcome addition. Abraham saw him coming, and fled into the lap of a fiddler. Isaac, however, wasn’t faced that way. Andrew Jackson smote Isaac upon the starboard quarter. It was a follow shot, rather than a carom, and Andrew Jackson and

his prey landed in the middle of the audience together. For two minutes Andrew Jackson mingled freely with the people present, and then retired by the back door.

"I knowed destrucshun was a-comin'!" murmured Singletree Jennings. "I ain't felt dat pestered, Delia, since de day I concealed my 'dentity in Marse Roundtree's smokehouse, an' dey cotched me at it."

"Singletree Jennings!" observed the Reverend Handout F. Johnson, in a tone of solemn anger, while his pistol pocket still throbbled from the visitation of Andrew Jackson, "Elder Shakedown Bixby is in pursuit of dat goat of your'n with a razor. He has orders to immolate when cotched. At de nex' conference dar'll be charges ag'in you for substitutin' a deboshed goat for de Ram of Holy Writ. I keers nothin' for my pussonel sufferin's, but de purity of de Word mus' be protected. De congregashun will now join in singin' de pestilential Psalms, after which de social will disperse."

JESS

IT was sunset at the Cross-K ranch. Four or five cowboys were gloomily about outside the adobe ranch house, awaiting supper. The Mexican cook had just begun his fragrant task, so a half hour would elapse before these Arabs were fed. Their ponies were "turned" into the wire pasture, their big Colorado saddles reposed astride the low pole fence which surrounded the house, and it was evident their riding was over for the day.

Why were they gloomy? Not a boy of them could tell. They had been partners and *campaneros*, and "worked" the Cross-K cattle together for months, and nothing had come in misunderstanding or cloud. The ranch house was their home, and theirs had been the unity of brothers.

The week before, a pretty girl—the daughter she was of a statesman of national repute—had come to the ranch from the East. Her name was Jess.

Jess, the pretty girl, was protected in this venture by an old and gnarled aunt, watchful as a ferret, sour as a lime. Not that Jess, the pretty girl, needed watching; she was, indeed! propriety's climax.

No soft nor dulcet reason wooed Jess, the pretty girl, to the West; she came on no love errand. The visitor was elegantly tired of the East, that was all; and longed for western air and western panorama.

Jess, the pretty girl, had been at the Cross-K ranch a week, and the boys had met her, everyone. The meeting or meetings were marked by awkwardness as to the boys, indifference as to Jess, the pretty girl. She encountered them as she did the ponies, cows, horned-toads and other animals, domestic and *feræ naturæ*, indigenous to eastern Arizona. While every cowboy was blushingly conscious of Jess, the pretty girl, she was serenely guiltless of giving him a thought.

Before Jess, the pretty girl, arrived, the cowboys were friends and the tenor of their calm relations was rippleless as a mirror. Jess was not there a day, before each drew himself insensibly from the others, while a vague hostility shone dimly in his eyes. It was the instinct of the fighting male animal aroused by the presence of Jess, the pretty girl. Jess, however, proceeded on her dainty way, sweetly ignorant of the sentiments she awakened.

Men are mere animals. Women are, too, for that matter. But the latter are different animals from men. The effort the race makes to be other, better or different than the mere animal fails under pressure. It always failed; it will always fail. Civilisation is the veriest veneer and famously thin. A year on the plains cracks this veneer—this shell—and the animal issues visibly forth. This shell-cracking comes by the expanding growth of all that is animalish in man—attributes of the physical being, fed and pampered by a plains' existence.

To recur to the boys of the Cross-K. The dark, vague, impalpable differences which cut off each of these creatures from his fellows, and inspired him with an unreasoning hate, had flourished with the brief week

of their existence. A philosopher would have looked for near trouble on the Cross-K.

"Whatever did you take my saddle for, Bill?" said Jack Cook to one Bill Watkins.

"Which I allows I'll ride it some," replied Watkins; "thought it might like to pack a sure-nough long-horn jest once for luck!"

"Well, don't maverick it no more," retorted Cook, moodily, and ignoring the gay insolence of the other. "Leastwise, don't come a-takin' of it, an' sayin' nothin'. You can *palaver Americano*, can't you? When you aims to ride my saddle ag'in, ask for it; if you can't talk, make signs, an' if you can't make signs, shake a bush; but don't go romancin' off in silence with no saddle of mine no more."

"Whatever do you reckon is liable to happen if I pulls it ag'in to-morry?" inquired Bill in high scorn.

Watkins was of a more vivacious temper than the gloomy Cook.

"Which if you takes it ag'in, I'll shorely come among you a whole lot. An' some prompt!" replied Cook, in a tone of obstinate injury.

These boys were brothers before Jess, the pretty girl, appeared. Either would have gone afoot all day for the other. Going afoot, too, is the last thing a cowboy will consent to.

"Don't you-all fail to come among me none," said Bill with cheerful ferocity, "on account of it's bein' me. I crosses the trail of a hold-up like you over in the Panhandle once, an' makes him dance, an' has a chuck-waggon full of fun with him."

"Stop your millin' now, right yere!" said Tom Rawlins, the Cross-K range boss, who was sitting close

at hand. "You-alls spring trouble 'round yere, an' you can gamble I'll be in it! Whatever's the matter with you-alls anyway? Looks like you've been as *locoed* as a passel of sore-head dogs for more'n a week now. Which you're shorely too many for me, an' I plumb gives you up!" And Rawlins shook his sage head foggily.

The boys started some grumbling reply, but the cook called them to supper just then, and, one animalism becoming overshadowed by another, they forgot their rancour in thoughts of supplying their hunger. Towards the last of the repast, Rawlins arose, and going to another room, began overlooking some entries in the ranch books.

Jess, the pretty girl, did not sit at the ranch table. She had small banquets in her own room. Just then she was heard singing some tender little song that seemed born of a sigh and a tear. The boys' resentment of each other began again to burn in their eyes. None of these savages was in the least degree in love with Jess, the pretty girl.

The singing went on in a cooing, soft way that did not bring you the words; only the music.

"What I says about my saddle a while back, goes as it lays!" said Jack Cook.

The song had ceased.

As Cook spoke he turned a dark look on Watkins.

"See yere!" replied Watkins in an exasperated tone—he was as vicious as Cook—"if you're p'intin' out for a war-jig with me, don't go stampin' 'round none for reasons. Let her roll! Come a-runnin' an' don't pester none with ceremony."

"Which a gent don't have to have no reason for

crawlin' you!" said Cook. "Anyone's licenced to chase you 'round jest for exercise!"

"You can gamble," said Watkins, confidently, "any party as chases me 'round much, will regyard it as a thrillin' pastime. Which it won't grow on him none as a habit."

"As you-all seem to feel that a-way," said the darkly wrathful Cook, "I'll sorter step out an' shoot with you right now!"

"An' I'll shorely go you!" said Watkins.

They arose and walked to the door. It was gathering dark, but it was light enough to shoot by. The other cowboys followed in a kind of savage silence. Not one word was said in comment or objection. They were grave, but passive like Indians. It is not good form to interfere with other people's affairs in Arizona.

Jess, the pretty girl, began singing again. The strains fell softly on the ears of the cowboys. Each, as he listened, whether onlooker or principal, felt a licking, pleased anticipation of the blood to be soon set flowing.

Nothing was said of distance. Cook and Watkins separated to twenty paces and turned to face each other. Each wore his six-shooter, the loose pistol belt letting it rest low on his hip. Each threw down his big hat and stood at apparent ease, with his thumbs caught in his belt.

"Shall you give the word, or me?" asked Cook.

"You says when!" retorted Watkins. "It'll be a funny passage in American history if you-all gets your gun to the front any sooner than I do."

"Be you ready?" asked Cook.

"Which I'm shorely ready!"

"Then, go!"

"Bang! Bang!! Bang!!!" went both pistols together.

The reports came with a rapidity not to be counted. Cook got a crease in the face—a mere wound of the flesh. Watkins blundered forward with a bullet in his side.

Rawlins ran out. His experience taught him all at a look. Hastily examining Cook, he discovered that his hurt was nothing serious. The others carried Watkins into the house.

"Take my pony saddled at the fence, Jack," said Rawlins, "an' pull your freight. This yere Watkins is goin' to die. You've planted him."

"Which I shorely hopes I has!" said Cook, with bitter cheerfulness. "I ain't got no use for cattle of his brand; none whatever!"

Cook took Rawlins's pony. When he paused, the pony hung his head while his flanks steamed and quivered. And no marvel! That pony was one hundred miles from the last corn, as he cooled his nervous muzzle in the Rio San Simon.

"Some deviltry about their saddles, Miss; that's all!" reported Rawlins to Jess, the pretty girl.

"Isn't it horrible!" shuddered Jess, the pretty girl.

The next morning Jess and the gnarled aunt paid the injured Watkins a visit. This civility affected the other three cowboys invidiously. They at once departed to a line of Cross-K camps in the Northwest. This on a pretence of working cattle over on the Cochise Mesa. They looked black enough as they galloped away.



"WATKINS BLUNDERED FORWARD."—Page 22.

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“Which it's shore a sin Jack Cook ain't no better pistol shot!” observed one, as the acrid picture of Jess, the pretty girl, sympathising above the wounded Watkins, arose before him.

“That's whatever!” assented the others.

Then, in moods of grim hatefulness, they bled their tired ponies with the spur by way of emphasis.

THE HUMMING BIRD

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

"NIT; I'm in a hurry to chase meself to-night," quoth Chucky, having first, however, taken his drink. "I'd like to stay an' chin wit' youse, but I can't. D' fact is I've got company over be me joint; he's a dead good fr'end of mine, see! Leastwise he has been; an' more'n onct, when I'm in d' hole, he's reached me his mit an' pulled me out. Now he's down on his luck I'm goin' to make good, an' for an even break on past favours, see if I can't straighten up *his* game."

"Who is your friend?" I asked. "Does he live here?"

"Naw," retorted Chucky; "he's a crook, an' don't live nowhere. His name's Mollie Matches, an' d' day was when Mollie's d' flyest fine-woiker on Byrnes's books. An' say! that ain't no fake neither."

"What did he do?" I inquired.

"Leathers, supers an' rocks," replied Chucky. "Of course, d' supers has to be yellow; d' w'ite kind don't pay; an' d' rocks has to be d' real t'ing. In d' old day, Mollie was d' king of d' dips, for fair! Of all d' crooks he was d' nob, an' many's d' time I've seen him come into d' Gran' Central wit' his t'ree stalls an' a Sheeny kid to carry d' swag, an' all as swell a mob as ever does time.

“But he’s fell be d’ wayside now, an’ don’t youse forget it! Not only is he broke for dough, but his healt’ is busted, too.”

“That’s one of the strange things to me, Chucky,” I said, for I was disposed to detain him if I could, and hear a bit more of his devious friend; “one of the very strange things! Here’s your friend Mollie, who has done nothing, so you say, but steal watches, diamonds and pocket-books all his life, and yet to-day he is without a dollar.”

“Oh! as for that,” returned Chucky wisely, “a crook don’t make so much. In d’ foist place, if he’s nippin’ leathers, nine out of ten of ’em’s bound to be readers—no long green in ’em at all; nothin’ but poipers, see! An’ if he’s pinchin’ tickers an’ sparks, a fence won’t pay more’n a fort’ what dey’s wort’—an’ there you be, see! Then ag’in, it costs a hundred plunks a day to keep a mob on d’ road; an’ what wit’ puttin’ up to d’ p’lice for protection, an’ what wit’ squarin’ a con or brakey if youse are graftin’ on a train, there ain’t, after his stalls has their bits, much left for Mollie. Takin’ it over all, Mollie’s dead lucky to get a hundred out of a t’ousand plunks; an’ yet he’s d’ mug who has to put his hooks on d’ stuff every time; do d’ woik an’ take d’ chances, see!

“But I’ll tip it off to youse,” continued Chucky, at the same time lowering his tone confidentially; “I’ll put you on to what knocks Mollie’s eye out just now. He’s only a week ago toined out of one of de western pens, an’ I reckon he was bad wit’ ’em at d’ finish—givin’ ’em a racket. Anyhow, dey confers on Mollie d’ Hummin’ Boid, an’ dey overplays. Mollie’s gettin’ old, and can’t stand for what he could onct; an’, as

I says, these prison marks gives him too much of d' Hummin' Boid and it breaks his noive.

"Sure! Mollie's now what youse call hyster'cal; got bats in his steeple half d' time. If it wasn't for d' hop I shoots into him wit' a dandy little hypodermic gun me Rag's got, he'd be in d' booby house. An' all for too much Hummin' Boid! Say! on d' level! there ought to be a law ag'inst it."

"What in heaven's name is the Humming Bird?" I queried.

"It's d' prison punishment," replied Chucky. "Youse see, every pen has its punishment. In some, it's d' paddles, an' some ag'in don't do a t'ing but hang a guy up be a pair of handcuffs to his cell door so his toes just scrapes d' floor. In others dey starves you; an' in others still, dey slams you in d' dark hole.

"Say! if youse are out to make some poor mark nutty for fair, just give him d' dark hole for a week. There he is wit' nothin' in d' cell but himself, see! an' all as black as ink. Mebby if d' guards is out to keep him movin', dey toins d' hose in an' wets down d' floor before dey leaves him. But honest to God! youse put a poor sucker in d' dark hole, an' be d' end of ten hours it's apples to ashes he ain't onto it whether he's been in a day or a week. Keep him there a week, an' away goes his cupolo—he ain't onto nothin'. On d' square! at d' end of a week in d' dark, a mut don't know he's livin'.

"D' cat-o-nine-tails, which dey has at Jeff City, ain't a marker to d' dark hole! D' cat'll crack d' skin all right, all right, but d' dark hole cracks a sucker's nut, see! His cocoa never is on straight ag'in, after he's done a stunt or two in d' dark hole."

“But the Humming Bird?” I persisted. “What is it like?”

“Why! as I relates,” retorted Chucky, “d’ Hummin’ Boid is what dey does to a guy in d’ pen where Mollie was to teach him not to be too gay. It’s like this: Here’s a gezebo doin’ time, see! Well, he gets funny. Mebby he soaks some other pris’ner; or mebby he toins loose and gives it to some guard in d’ neck; or mebby ag’in he kicks on d’ lock-step. I’ve seen a heap of mugs who does d’ last.

“Anyhow, whatever he does, it gets to be a case of Hummin’ Boid, an’ dey brings me gay scrapper or kicker, whichever he is, out for punishment. An’ this is what he gets ag’inst:

“Dey sets him in a high trough, same as dey waters a horse wit’, see! Foist dey shucks d’ mark—peels off his make-up down to d’ buff. An’ then dey sets him in d’ trough, like I says, wit’ mebby its eight inches of water in it.

“Then he’s strapped be d’ ankles, an’ d’ fins, and about his waist, so he can’t do nothin’ but stay where he is. A sawbones gets him be d’ pulse, an’ one of them ’lectrical stiffs t’rows a wire, which is one end of d’ battery, in d’ water. D’ wire, which is d’ other end, finishes in a wet sponge. An’ say! hully hell! when dey touches a poor mark wit’ d’ sponge end on d’ shoulder, or mebby d’ elbow, it completes d’ circuit, see! an’ it’ll fetch such a glory hallelujah yelp out of him as would bring a deaf an’ dumb asylum into d’ front yard to find out what d’ row’s about.

“It’s d’ same t’ing as d’ chair at Sing Sing, only not so warm. It’s enough, though, to make d’ toughest mug t’row a fit. No one stands for a secont trip; one

touch of d' Hummin' Boid! an' a duck'll welch on anyt'ing you says--do anyt'ing, be anyt'ing; only so youse let up and don't give him no more. D' mere name of Hummin' Boid's good enough to t'run a scare into d' hardest an' d'woist of 'em, onct dey's had a piece.

"As I says about Mollie: it seems them Indians gives him d' Hummin' Boid; an' dey gives him d' gaff too deep. But I've got to chase meself now, and pump some dope into him. I ought to land Mollie right side up in a week. An' then I'll bring him over to this boozin' ken of ours, an' cap youse a knock-down to him. Ta! ta!"

GASSY THOMPSON, VILLAIN

WESTERN humour is being severely spoken of by the close personal friends of Peter Dean. Less than a year ago, Peter Dean left the paternal roof on Madison Avenue and plunged into the glowing West. On the day of his departure he was twenty-three; not a ripe age. He had studied mining and engineering, and knew in those matters all that science could tell. His purpose in going West was to acquire the practical part of his chosen profession. Peter Dean believed in knowing it all; knowing it with the hands as well as with the head.

Thus it befell that young Peter Dean, on a day to be remembered, tossed a careless kiss to his companions and fled away into the heart of the continent. Then his hair was raven black. Months later, when he returned, it was silver white. Western humour had worked the change; therefore the criticism chronicled. Peter Dean tells the following story of the bleaching:

“At Creede I met a person named Thompson; ‘Gassy’ Thompson he was called by those about him, in testimony to his powers as a conversationist. A bar-keeper, who seemed the best-informed and most gentlemanly soul in town, told me that Gassy Thompson was a miner full of practical skill, and that he was then engaged in sinking a shaft. I might arrange with Gassy and learn the business. At the barkeeper’s hint, I proposed as much to Gassy Thompson.

“‘All right!’ said Gassy; ‘come out to the shaft to-morrow.’

“The next day I was at the place appointed. The shaft was already fifty feet deep. Besides myself and this person, Gassy, who was to tutor me, there was a creature named Jim. This made three of us.

“At the suggestion of Gassy, he and I descended into the shaft; Jim was left on the surface. We went down by means of a bucket, Jim unwinding us from a rickety old windlass.

“Once down, Gassy and I, with sledge and drill, perpetrated a hole in the bottom of the shaft. I held the drill, Gassy wielding the sledge. When the hole met the worshipful taste of my tutor, he put in a dynamite cartridge, connected a long, five-minute fuse therewith, and carefully thumbed it about and packed it in with wet clay.

“At Gassy’s word, I was then hauled up from the shaft by Jim. I added my strength to the windlass, Gassy climbed into the bucket, lighted the fuse, and was then swiftly wound to the surface by Jim and myself. We then dragged the windlass aside, covered the mouth of the shaft, and quickly scampered to a distance, to be out of harm’s reach.

“At the end of five minutes from the time that Gassy lighted the fuse, and perhaps three minutes after we had cleared away, the shot exploded with a deafening report. Tons of rock were shot up from the mouth of the shaft, full fifty feet in the air. It was all very impressive, and gave me a lesson in the tremendous power of dynamite. I was much pleased, and felt as if I were learning.

“Following the explosion Gassy and I again re-

paired to the bottom of the shaft. After clearing away the débris and sending it up and out by the bucket, we resumed the sledge and drill. We completed another hole and were ready for a second shot. This was about noon.

“It was at this point that the miscreant, Gassy, began to put into action a plot he had formed against me, and to carry out which the murderer, Jim, lent ready aid. You must remember that I had perfect confidence in these two villains.

“‘I never seed no tenderfoot go along like you do at this business,’ said Gassy Thompson to me.

“This was flattery. The miscreant was fattening me for the sacrifice.

“‘Looks like you was born to be a miner,’ he went on. ‘Now, I’m goin’ to let you fire the next shot. Usual, I wouldn’t feel jestified in allowin’ a tenderfoot to fire a shot for plumb three months. But you has a genius for minin’; it comes as easy to you as robbin’ a bird’s nest. I’d be doin’ wrong to hold you back.’

“Of course, I naturally felt pleased. To be allowed to fire a dynamite shot on my first day in the shaft I felt and knew to be an honour. I determined to write home to my friends of this triumph.

“Gassy said he’d put in the shot, and he selected one of giant size. I saw the herculean explosive placed in the hole; then he attached the fuse and thumbed the clay about it as before. He gave me a few last words.

“‘After I gets up,’ he said, ‘an’ me an’ Jim’s all ready, you climb into the bucket an’ light the fuse. Then raise the long yell to me an’ Jim, an’ we’ll yank ye out. But be shore an’ light the fuse. There’s

nothin' more discouragin' than for to wait half an' hour outside an' no cartridge goin' off. Especial when it goes off after you comes back to see what's the matter with her. So be shore an' light the fuse, an' then Jim an' me'll run you up the second follerin'. This oughter be a great day for you, young man! firin' a shot this away, the first six hours you're a miner!

"Jim and Gassy were at the windlass and yelled:

"'All ready below?'

"I was in the bucket and at the word scratched a match and lit the fuse. It sputtered with alarming ardour, and threw off a shower of sparks.

"'Hoist away!' I called.

"The villains ran me up about twenty-five feet, and came to a dead halt. At this they seemed to get into an altercation. They both abandoned the windlass, and I could hear them cursing, threatening, and shooting; presumably at each other.

"'I'll blow your heart out!' I heard Gassy say.

"My alarm was without a limit. I'd seen one dynamite cartridge go off. Here I was, swinging some twenty-five feet over a still heavier charge, and about to be blown into eternity! Meanwhile the caitiffs, on whom my life depended, were sacrificing me to settle some accursed feud of their own.

"I cannot tell you of my agony. The fuse was spitting fire like forty fiends; the narrow shaft was choked with smoke. I swung helpless, awaiting death, while the two monsters, Gassy and Jim, were trying to murder each other above. Either from the smoke or the excitement, I fainted.

"When I came to myself I was outside the shaft, **safe** and sound, while Gassy and his disreputable

assistant were laughing at their joke. There had been no shot placed in the drill-hole; the heartless Gassy had palmed it and carried it with him to the surface.

“At my very natural inquiry, made in a weak voice—for I was still sick and broken—as to what it all meant, they said it was merely a Colorado jest, and intended for the initiation of a tenderfoot.

“‘It gives ‘em nerve!’ said Gassy; ‘it puts heart into ‘em an’ does ‘em good!’

“As soon as I could walk I severed my relations with Gassy Thompson and his outlaw adherent, Jim. The next morning my hair had turned the milky sort you see. The Creede people with whom I discussed the crime, laughed and said the drinks were on me. That was all the sympathy, all the redress, I got.

“After that I came East without delay. When I leave the city of New York again it will not be for Creede. Nor will my next mining connection be formed with such abandoned barbarians as Gassy Thompson and Jim.”

ONE MOUNTAIN LION

“ PARD! would you like to shoot at that lion?”

Bob usually gave me no title at all. But when in any stress of our companionship he was driven to it, I was hailed as “ pard!” Once or twice on some lighter occasion he had addressed me by the Spanish “ *Amigo.*” In business hours, however, my rank was “ pard!”

* * * * *

Sundown in the hills. The scene was a southeast spur of the Rockies; call the region the Upper Red River or the Vermejo, whichever you will for a name. Forty miles due west from the Spanish Peaks would stand one on the very spot.

I had been out all day, ransacking the canyons, taking a Winter's look at the cattle to note how they were meeting the rigours of a season not yet half over. I had witnessed nothing alarming; my horned folk of the hills still made a smooth display as to ribs, and wore the air of cattle who had prudently stored up tallow enough the autumn before to carry them into the April grass.

“ Many a day have I dwelt in a wet saddle, only to crawl into a wetter blanket at night; and all for cows!”

It was Bob Ellis who fathered this rather irrelevant observation. I had cut his trail an hour before, and we were making company for each other back to camp. I put forth no retort. Bob and I abode in the

same small log hut, and I saw much of him, and didn't feel obliged to reply to those random utterances which fluttered from him like birds from a bush.

It had been snowing for three days. This afternoon, however, had shaken off the storm. It is worth while to see the snow come down in the hills; flakes soft and clinging and silently cold; big as a baby's hand. Out in the flat valleys free of the trees the snow was deep enough to jade and distress our ponies. Therefore Bob and I were creeping home among the thick sown pines which bristled on the Divide like spines on a pig's back. There was very little snow under the trees. What would have made an easy depth of two feet had it been evenly spread on the ground over which our broncos picked their tired way, was above our heads in the pines. That was the reason why the trees were so still and silent. Your pine is a most garrulous vegetable in a sighing fashion, and its complaining notes sing for ever in your ears; sometimes like a roar, sometimes like a wail. But the three-days' snow in their green mouths gagged them; and never a tree of them all drew so much as a breath as we pushed on through their ranks.

"Like the Winchester you're packin?" asked Bob.

I confessed a weakness for the gun.

"Had one of them magazine guns once myse'f," Bob remarked. "Model of '78. Never liked it, though; always shootin' over. As you pump the loads outen 'em and empty the magazine, the weight shifts till toward the last the muzzle's as light as a feather. Thar you be! shootin' over and still over, every pull."

Having no interest in magazine guns beyond the act of firing them, I paid no heed to Bob's assault on their merits.

"Now a single-shot gun," continued Bob, as he rode an oak shrub underfoot to come abreast of me, "is the weepson for me. Never mind about thar bein' jest one shot in her! Show me somethin' to shoot, an' I'll sling the cartridges into her frequent enough for the most impatient gent on earth. This rifle I'm packin' is all right—all except the hind sight. That's too coarse; you could drag a dog through it."

Bob's dissertation on rifles was entertaining enough. My mood was indifferent, and his wisdom ran through my wits like water through a funnel, keeping them employed without filling them up. Bob had just begun again—all about a day far away when muzzle loaders were many in the hills—when my pony made sudden shy at something in the bushes. The muzzle of my gun instantly pointed to it, as if by an instinct of its own. Even as it did I became aware of the harmless cause of my pony's devout breathings—one of those million tragedies of nature which makes the wilderness a daily slaughter pen. It was the carcass of a blacktail deer. Its torn throat and shoulders, as well as the tracks of the giant cat in the snow, told how it died. The panther had leaped from the big bough of that yellow pine.

"Mountain lion!" observed Bob, sagely, as he contemplated the torn deer. "The deer come sa'nterin' down the slope yere, an' the lion jest naturally jumps his game from that tree. This deer was a bigger fool than most. You wouldn't ketch many of 'em as could come walkin' down the wind where the brush and

bushes is rank, and gives the cats a chance to lay for 'em and bushwhack 'em!"

It was becoming shadowy in among the pines by this time, and, having enough of Bob's defence of the dead buck and apology for its errors, I pushed on through the bushes for the camp. As we crossed a burnt strip where the fires had made a meal of the trees, the sun was reluctantly blinking his last before going to bed in the Sangre de Christo Range, which rolled upward like some tremendous billow in an ocean of milk full five scores of miles to the west.

Bob and I were smoking our pipes in our log home that evening. Perhaps it was nine o'clock. A pitch-pine fire—billets set up endwise in the fireplace—roared in one corner. Our chimney was a vast success. Out back of our log habitat the surveyors had peeled the base of a pine and made a red-paint statement to the effect that even in the bottom of our little valley we were over 8,000 feet above the sea. This rather derogated from the pride of our chimney's performance; because, as Bob with justice urged, "a chimney not to 'draw' at an altitude of 8,000 feet would have to be flat on the ground."

I was sprawled on a blanket, softly taking in the smoke of a meerschaum. My eyes, fascinated by the glaring, pitch-pine blaze, were boring away at the fire as if it guarded a treasure. But neither the tobacco smoke nor the flames were in my thoughts; the latter were idly going back to the torn deer.

As if in deference to a fashion of telepathy, Bob would have been thinking of the deer, also. It's possible, however, he had the cat in his meditations.

Suddenly he broke into my quiet with the remark which opens this yarn. Then he proceeded.

"Because," Bob continued, as I turned an eye on him through my tobacco smoke, "you might get it easy. He's shorely due to go back to-night an' eat up some of that black-tail, unless he's got an engagement. It's even money he's right thar now."

I stepped to the door and looked out. The roundest of moons in the clearest of skies shone down. Then there was the snow; altogether, one might have read agate print by the light. I picked up my rifle and sent my eye through the sights.

"But how about it when we push in among the pines; it'll be darker in there?"

"Thar'll be plenty of light," declared Bob. "You don't have to make a tack-head shot. It ain't goin' to be like splittin' a bullet on a bowie. This mountain lion will be as big as you or me. Thar'll be light enough to hit a mark the size of him."

Our ponies were heartily scandalised at being resaddled so soon; but they were powerless to enforce their views, and away we went, Indian file, with souls bent to slay the lion.

"Which I shorely undertakes the view that we'll get him," observed Bob as we rode along.

"Did you ever hear the Eastern proverb which says, 'The man who sold the lion's hide while yet upon the beast was killed in hunting him'?" I asked banteringly.

"Who says so?" demanded Bob, defiantly.

"It is an Eastern proverb."

"Well, it may do for the East," responded Bob, "but you can gamble it ain't had no run west of the Mississippi. Why! I wouldn't be afraid to bet that one of

these panthers never killed a human in the world. They do it in stories, but never in the hills. Why, shore! if you went right up an' got one by his two y'ears an' wrestled him, he'd have to fight. You could get a row out of a house cat, an' play that system. But you can write alongside of the Eastern proverb, that 'Bob Ellis says that the lion them parties complain of as killin' their friend, must have been plumb *locoed*, an' it oughtn't to count.'"

At the edge of the trees we left the ponies standing. They pointed their ears forward as if wondering what all this mysterious night's work meant. It was entirely beside their experience. We left them to unravel the puzzle and passed as quietly among the trees as needles into cloth.

Both Bob and I had served our apprenticeship at being noiseless, and brought the noble trade of silence to a science. It wasn't distant now to the field of the deer's death. Soon Bob pointed out the yellow pine. Bob was a better woodsman than I. Even in the daylight I would have owned trouble in picking out the tree at that distance among such a piney throng.

What little wind we had was breathing in our faces. Bob hadn't made the black-tail's blunder of giving the lion the better of the breeze. Bob took the lead after he pointed out the yellow pine. Perhaps it was 150 yards away when he identified it. We didn't cover five yards in a minute. Bob was resolutely deliberate. Still, I had no thought of complaint. I would have managed the case the same way had I been in the lead.

Every ten feet Bob would pause and listen. There was now and then the sound of a clot of snow falling in the tops of the pines, as some bough surrendered its

burden to the influence of the slight breeze. That was all my ears could detect of voices in the woods.

We were within forty yards of the yellow pine, when Bob, after lingering a moment, turned his face toward me and made a motion of caution. I bent my ear to a profound effort. At last I heard it; the unctuous sound of feeding jaws!

The oak bushes grew thick in among the pine trees. It did not seem possible to make out our game on account of this shrub-screen. At this point, instead of going any nearer the yellow pine, Bob bore off to the left. This flank movement not only held our title to the wind, but brought the moon behind us. After each fresh step Bob turned for a further survey of that region at the base of the yellow pine, where our lion, or some one of his relatives, was busy at his new repast.

Then the climax of search arrived. To give myself due credit, I saw the panther as soon as did Bob. A fallen pine tree opened a lane in the bushes. Along this aisle I could dimly make out the body of the beast. His head and shoulders were protected by the trunk of the yellow pine, from the limb of which he had ambuscaded the black-tail. A cat's mouth serves vilely as a knife; the teeth are not arranged to cut well. His inability to sever a morsel left nothing for our lion to do, but gnaw at the carcass much as a dog might at a bone. This managed to keep his head out of harm's way behind the tree.

Nothing better was likely to offer, and I concluded to try what a bullet would bring, on that part of the panther we could see. I found as I raised my Winchester that there was to be a strong element of faith

In the shot. It was dim and shadowy in the woods, conditions which appeared to increase the moment you tried to point a gun. The aid my aim received from the gun-sights was of the vaguest. Indeed, for that one occasion they might as well have been left off the rifle. But as I was as familiar with the weapon as with the words I write, and could tell to the breadth of a hair where to lay it against my face to make it point directly at an object, there was nothing to gain by any elaboration of aim. As if to speed my impulse in the matter, a far-off crashing occurred in the bushes to the rear. A word suffices to read the riddle of the interruption. Our ponies, tired of being left to themselves, were coming sapiently forward to join us.

With the first blundering rush of the ponies I unhooked my Winchester. The panther had no chance to take stock of the ponies' careless approach. If they had started five minutes earlier he might have owed them something.

With the crack of the Winchester, the panther gave such a scream as, added to the jar of the gun—I was burning 120 grains of powder—served to make my ears sing. There were fear, amazement and pain all braided together in that yell. The flash of the discharge and the night shadows so blinded me that I did not make a second shot. I pumped in the cartridge with the instinct of precedent, but it was of no use. On the heels of it, our ponies, as if taking the shot to be an urgent invitation to make haste, came up on a canter, tearing through the bushes in a way to lose a stirrup if persisted in.

Bob had run forward. There was blood on the snow to a praiseworthy extent. As we gazed along

the wounded animal's line of flight there was more of it.

"He's too hard hit to go far," said Bob. "We'll find him in the next canyon, or that blood's a joke."

Bob walked along, looking at the blood-stained snow as if it were a lesson. Suddenly he halted, where the moonlight fell across it through the trees.

"You uncoupled him," he said. "Broke his back plumb in two. See where he dragged his hind legs!"

"He can't run far on those terms," I suggested.

"I don't know," said Bob, doubtfully. "A mountain lion don't die easy. Mountain lions is what an insurance sharp would call a good resk. But I'll tell you how to carry on this campaign: I'll take the horses and scout over to the left until I get into the canyon yonder. Then I'll bear off up the canyon. If he crosses it—an' goin' on two legs that away, I don't look for it—I'll signal with a yell. If he don't, I'll circle him till I find the trail. Meanwhile you go straight ahead on his track afoot. Take it slow an' easy, for he's likely to be layin' somewhere."

The trail carried me a quarter of a mile. As nearly as I might infer from the story the panther's passage had written in the snow, his speed held out. This last didn't look much like weakness. Still, the course was a splash of blood in red contradiction. The direction he took was slightly uphill.

The trail ended sharp at the edge of a wide canyon. There was a shelf of scaly rock about twelve feet down the side. This had been protected from the storm by the overhanging brink of the canyon, and there was no snow on the shelf. That and the twelve feet of canyon side above it were the yellow colour of the earth.

Below the shelf the snow again was deep, as the sides took an easier slope toward the bottom of the canyon. The panther had evidently scrambled down to the shelf. It took me less than a second to follow his wounded example. Once down I looked over the edge at the snow a few feet below to catch the trail again. The unmarred snow voiced no report of the game I hunted. I stepped to the left a few paces, still looking over for signs in the snow. There were none. As the shelf came to an end in this direction, I returned along the ledge, still keeping a hawk's eye on the snow below for the trail. I heard Bob riding in the canyon.

"Have you struck his trail?" I shouted.

"Thar's been nothin' down yere!" shouted Bob in reply. "The snow's as unbroken as the cream-cap on a pan of milk."

Where was my panther? I had begun to regard him as a chattel. As my eye journeyed along the ledge the mystery cleared up. There lay my yellow friend close in against the wall. I had walked within a yard of him, looking the other way while earnestly reading the snow.

The panther was sprawled flat like a rug, staring at me with green eyes. I had broken his back, as Bob said. As I brought the Winchester to my face, his gaze gave way. He turned his head as if to hide it between his shoulder and the wall. I was too near to talk of missing, even in the dim light, and the next instant he was hicoughing with a bullet in his brain. Six and one-half feet from nose to tip was the measurement; whereof the tail, which these creatures grow foolishly long, furnished almost one-half.

MOLLIE MATCHES

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

IT was clear and cold and dry--excellent weather, indeed, for a snowless Christmas. Everywhere one witnessed evidences of the season. One met more gay clothes than usual, with less of anxiety and an increase of smiling peace in the faces. Each window had its wreath of glistening green, whereof the red ribbon bow, that set off the garland, seemed than common a deeper and more ardent red. Or was the elevation in the faces, and the greenness of the wreaths, and the vivid sort of the ribbon, due to impressions, impalpable yet positive, of Christmas everywhere?

All about was Christmas. Even our Baxter Street doggery had attempted something in the nature of a bowl of dark, suspicious drink, to which the barkeeper—he was a careless man of his nomenclature, this barkeeper—gave the name of “apple toddy.” Apple toddy it might have been.

When Chucky came in, an uncertain shuffle which was company to his rather solid tread showed he was not alone. I looked up. Our acquaintance, Mollie Matches, expert pickpocket,—now helpless and broken, all his one time jauntiness of successful crime gone,—was with him.

“It was lonesome over be me joint,” vouchsafed Chucky, “wit’ me Bundle chased over to do her reg’lar

anyooal confession to d' priest, see! an' so I t'ought youse wouldn't mind an' I bring Mollie along. Me old pal is still a bit shaky as to his hooks," remarked Chucky, as he surveyed his tremulous companion, "an' a sip of d' booze wouldn't do him no harm. It ain't age; Mollie's only come sixty spaces; it's that Hum-min' Boid about which I tells youse, that's knocked his noive."

Drinks were ordered; whiskey strong and straight for Matches. No; I've no apology for buying these folk drink. "Drink," observed Johnson to the worthy Boswell, "drink, for one thing, makes a man pleased with himself, which is no small matter." Heaven knows! my shady companions, for the reason announced by the sagacious doctor, needed something of the sort. Besides, I never molest my fellows in their drinking. I've slight personal use for breweries, distilleries, or wine presses; and gin mills in any form or phase woo me not; yet I would have nothing of interference with the cups of other men. In such behalf, I feel not unlike that fat, well-living bishop of Westminster who refused to sign a memorial to Parliament craving strict laws in behalf of total abstinence. "No," said that sound priest, stoutly, "I will sign no such petition to Parliament. I want no such law. I would rather see Englishmen free than sober."

It took five deep draughts of liquor, ardently raw, to put Matches in half control of his hands. What with the chill of the day, and what with the torn condition of his nerves, they shook like the oft-named aspen.

"Them don't remind a guy," said Matches, as he held up his quivering fingers, "of a day, twenty-five years ago, when I was d' pick of d' swell mob, an' d'

steadiest grafter that ever ringed a watch or weeded a leather! It would be safe for d' Chief to take me mug out of d' gallery now, an' rub d' name of Mollie Matches off d' books. Me day is done, an' I'll graft no more."

There was plaintiveness in the man's tones as if he were mourning some virtue, departed with his age and weakness. Clearly Matches, off his guard and normal, found no peculiar fault with his past.

"How came you to be a thief?" I asked Matches bluntly. I had counted the sixth drink down his throat, which meant that he wouldn't be sensitive.

"It's too far off to say," retorted Matches. "I can't t'row back to d' time when I wasn't a crook. Do youse want to know d' foist trick I loined? Well, it wasn't t'ree blocks from here, over be d' Bowery. I couldn't be more'n five. There was a fakir, sellin' soap. There was spec'ments of d' long green all over his stand, wit' cakes of soap on 'em, to draw d' suckers. Standin' be me side was a kid; Danny d' Face dey called him. He was bigger than me, an' so I falls to his tips, see!"

"When you see him toin round," said Danny d' Face, 'swipe a bill, an' chase yourself up d' alley wit' it.'

"Danny goes behint, an' does a sneak on d' fakir's leg wit' a pin. Of course, he toins an' cuts loose a bluff at Danny, who's ducked out of reach. As he toins, up goes me small mit, an' d' nex' secont I'm sprintin' up d' alley wit' d' swag.

"Nit; d' mug wit' d' soap don't chase. He never even makes a holler; I don't t'ink he caught on. But Danny cuts in after me, an' d' minute he sees we ain't

bein' followed, or piped, he gives me d' foot, t'rows me in a heap, an' grabs off d' bill. I don't get a smell of it. An' d' toad skin's a fiver at that!

"D' foist real graft I recalls," continued Matches, as he took a meditative sip of the grog, "I'm goin' along wit' an old fat skirt, called Mother Worden, to Barnum's Museum down be Ann Street an' Broadway. Mebbe I'm seven or eight then. Mother Worden used to make up for d' respectable, see! an' our togs was out of sight. There was no flies on us when me an' Mother Worden went fort' to graft. What was d' racket? Pickin' women's pockets. Mother Worden would go to d' museum, or wherever there was a crush, an' lead me about be me mit. She'd steer me up to some loidy, an' let on she's lookin' at whatever d' other party has her lamps on. Meanwhile, I'm shoved in between d' brace of 'em, an' that's me cue to dip in wit' me free hook an' toin out d' loidy's pocket, see! An' say! it was a peach of a play; an' a winner. We used to take in funerals, an' theaytres, an' wherever there was a gang. Me an' Mother Worden was d' whole t'ing; there was nobody's bit to split out; just us. We was d' complete woiks.

"Now an' then there was a squeal. Once in a while I'd bungle me stunt, an' d' loidy I was friskin' would tumble an' raise d' yell. But Mother Worden always 'pologised, an' acted like she's shocked, an' cuffed me an' t'umped me, see! an' so she 'd woik us free. I stood for d' t'umpin', an' never knocked. Mother Worden always told me that if we was lagged, d' p'lice guys would croak me. An' as d' wallopins she gives me was d' real t'ing,—bein' she was hot under d' collar for me fallin' down wit' me graft,—d' folks used to believe

her, an' look on me fin in their pocket, that way, as d' caper of a kid. Oh, d' old woman Worden was dead flossy in her day, an' stood d' acid all right, all right, every time.

"But like it always toins out, she finds her finish. One day she makes a side-play on her own account, somethin' in d' shopliftin' line, I t'ink; an' she's pinched, an' takes six mont's on d' Island. I never sees her ag'in; at which I don't break no record for weeps. She's a boid, was Mother Worden; an' dead tough at that. She don't give me none d' best of it when I'm wit' her, an' I'm glad, in a kid fashion, when she gets put away.

"That's d' start I gets. Some other time I'll unfold to youse how I takes me name of Mollie Matches. Youse can hock your socks! I've seen d' hot end of many an alley! I never chases be Trinity buryin' ground, but I t'inks of a day when I pitched coppers on one of d' tombstones, heads or tails, for a saw-buck, wit' a party grown, before I was old enough an' fly enough to count d' dough we was tossin' for. But we'll pass all that up to-night. It's gettin' late an' I'll just put me frame outside another hooker an' then I'll hunt me bunk. I can't set up, an' booze an' gab like I onct could; I ain't neither d' owl nor d' tank I was."

THE ST. CYRS

CHAPTER I

FRANÇOIS ST. CYR is a Frenchman. He is absent two years from La Belle France. He and his little wife, Bebe, live not far from Washington Square. They love each other like birds. Yet François St. Cyr is gay, and little Bebe is jealous. Once a year the Ball of France is held at the Garden. Bebe turns up a nose and will not so belittle herself. So François St. Cyr attends the Ball of France alone. However, he does not repine. François St. Cyr is permitted to be more *de gage*; the ladies more *abandon*. At least that is the way François St. Cyr explains it.

It is the night of the Ball of France. François St. Cyr is there. The Garden lights shine on fair women and brave men. It is a masque. The costumes are fancy, some of them feverishly so. A railroad person present says there isn't enough costume on some of the participants to flag a hand-car. No one has any purpose, however, to flag a hand-car; the deficiency passes unnoticed. Had the railroader spoken of flagging a beer waggon—*mon Dieu!* that would have been another thing!

A prize, a casket of jewels, is to be given to the best dressed lady. A bacchante in white satin trimmed with swans' down and diamonds the size and lustre of salt-cellars is appointed the beneficiary by popular

acclaim. François St. Cyr, as one of the directors of the ball, presents the jewels in a fiery speech. The music crashes, the mad whirl proceeds. A supple young woman, whose trousseau would have looked lonely in a collar-box, kicks off the hat of François St. Cyr. *Sapriste!* how she charms him! He drinks wine from her little shoe!

CHAPTER II

THE morning papers told of the beauty in swans' down; the casket of jewels, and the presentation rhetoric of François St. Cyr, flowing like a river of oral fire. Bebe read it with the first light of dawn. *Peste!* Later, when François St. Cyr came home, Bebe hurled the clock at him from an upper window. Bebe followed it with other implements of light house-keeping. François St. Cyr fled wildly. Then he wept and drank beer and talked of his honour.

CHAPTER III

THE supple person who kicked the hat of François St. Cyr was a chorus girl. The troop in whose outrages she assisted was billed to infuriate Newark that evening. François St. Cyr would seek surcease in Newark. He would bind a new love on the heart bruised and broken by the jealous Bebe. *Mon Dieu!* yes!

The curtain went up. François St. Cyr inhabited a box. He was very still; no mouse was more so. No one noticed François St. Cyr. At last the chorus folk appeared.

“Brava! mam’selle, brava!” shouted François St. Cyr, springing to his feet, and performing with his hands as with cymbals.

What merited this outburst? The chorus folk had done nothing; hadn’t slain a note, nor murdered a melody. The audience stared at the shouting François St. Cyr. What ailed the man? At last the audience admonished François St. Cyr.

“Sit down! Shut up!”

Those were the directions the public gave François St. Cyr.

“I weel not sit down! I weel not close up!” shouted François St. Cyr, bending over the box-rail and gesticulating like a monkey whose reason was suffering a strain. Then again to the chorus girl:

“Brava! mam’selle, brava!”

The other chorus girls looked disdainfully at the chorus girl whom François St. Cyr honoured, so as to identify her to the contempt of the public.

CHAPTER IV

FRANCOIS ST. CYR suddenly discharged a bouquet at the stage. It was the size of a butter tub. It mowed a swath through the chorus like a chain shot.

“Put him out!” commanded the public.

“Poot heem out!” repeated François St. Cyr with a shriek of sneering contempt. “*Canaille!* I def-fy you! I am a Frenchman; I do not fee-ar to die!”

Wafted to his duty on the breath of general opinion, a *gend’arme* of Newark acquired François St. Cyr, and bore him vociferating from the scene of his triumph.

As he was carried through the foyer, he raised his voice heroically :

“ *Vive le Boulanger !* ”

CHAPTER V

THE next public appearance of François St. Cyr was in the Newark Police Court. He was pale and limp, and had thoughts of suicide. He was still clothed in his dress suit, which clung to him as if it, too, felt “ *des-pond.* ”

François St. Cyr was fined \$20.

Bebe, the jealous, the faithful little Bebe, was there to pay the money. *Mon Dieu !* how he loved her ! He would be her bird and sing to her all her life ! Never would he leave his Bebe more ! As for the false one of the chorus : François St. Cyr “ *des-spised* ” her.

Also Bebe had brought the week-day suit of François St. Cyr. Could an angel have had more forethought ? François St. Cyr changed his clothes in a jury room, and Bebe and he came home cooing like turtle doves.

CHAPTER VI

BY virtue of the every-day suit, the St. Cyrs were home by 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Otherwise, under the rules, being habited in a dress suit, François St. Cyr could not have returned until 6.

And they were happy !

McBRIDE'S DANDY

ALBERT EDWARD MURPHY is a high officer in one of the departments of the city. He holds his position with credit to the administration, and to his own celebration and renown. He has a wife and a family of children; and sets up his Lares and Penates in a home of his own in Greenwich Village.

Among other possessions of a household sort, Albert Edward Murphy, until lately, numbered one pug dog. It was a dog of vast spirit and but little wit. Yet the children loved it, and its puggish imbecility only seemed to draw it closer to their baby hearts.

The pug's main delusion went to the effect that he could fight. Good judges say that there wasn't a dog on earth the pug could whip. But he didn't know this and held other views. As a result, he assailed every dog he met, and got thrashed. The pug had taken a whirl at all the canines in the neighbourhood, and been wickedly trounced in every instance. This only made him dearer, and the children loved him for the enemies he made.

* * * * *

The pug's name was John.

One day, John, the pug, fell heir to a frightful beating at the paws and jaws of the dog next door. All

that saved the life of John, the pug, on this awful occasion, was the lucky fact that he could get between the pickets of the line fence, and the neighbour's dog could not. The neighbour's dog was many times the size and weight of John, the pug; but, as has been suggested, what John didn't know about other dogs would fill a book; and he had gone upon the neighbour's premises and pulled off a fight.

Now these divers sporting events in which John, the pug, took disastrous part worried Albert Edward Murphy. They worried him because the children took them to heart, and wept over the wounds of John, the pug, as they bound them with tar and other medicaments. At last Albert Edward Murphy resolved upon a campaign in favour of John, the pug. His future should have a protector; his past should be avenged.

* * * * *

There was a forty-pound bulldog resident of Philadelphia. He whipped every dog to whom he was introduced. His name was Alexander McBride. He was referred to as "McBride's Dandy" in his set, whenever his identification became a conversational necessity. Of the many dogs he had met and conquered, Alexander McBride had killed twenty-three.

Albert Edward Murphy resolved to import Alexander McBride. He knew the latter's owner. A letter adjusted the details. The proprietor of Alexander McBride was willing his pet should come to the metropolis on a visit. Alexander McBride had fought Philadelphia to a standstill, and his owner's idea was that, if Alexander McBride were to go on a visit and remain away for a few months, Philadelphia would forget him,

and on his return he might ring Alexander in on the town as a stranger, and kill another dog with him.

* * * * *

Alexander McBride got off the cars in a chicken crate. The expressmen were afraid of him. Albert Edward Murphy was notified. He hired a coloured person, who looked on life as a failure, to convey Alexander McBride to his new home. They tied him to a bureau when they got him there.

Alexander McBride was a gruesome-looking dog, with a wide, vacant head, when his mouth was open, like unto an empty coal scuttle. Albert Edward Murphy looked at Alexander McBride, and after saying that he "would do," went to dinner. During the prandial meal he explained to his family the properties and attributes of Alexander McBride; and then he and the children went over the long list of neighbour dogs who had oppressed John, the pug, and settled which dog Alexander McBride should chew up first. Alexander McBride should begin on the morrow to rend and destroy the adjacent dogs, and assume toward John, the pug, the rôle of guide, philosopher and friend. Albert Edward Murphy and his children were very happy.

After dinner they went back to take another look at Alexander McBride. As they stood about that hero in an awed but admiring circle, John, the pug, rushed wildly into the ring, and tackled Alexander McBride. The coal-scuttle head opened and closed on John, the pug.

There was a moment of frozen horror, and then Albert Edward Murphy and his household fell upon Alexander McBride in a body.

It was too late. It took thirteen minutes and the family poker to open the jaws of Alexander McBride. Then John, the pug, fell to the floor, dead and limp as a wet bath towel.

* * * * *

Alexander McBride had slain his twenty-fourth dog, and John, the pug, is only a memory now.

RED MIKE

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“SAY!” remarked Chucky as he squared himself before the greasy doggery table, “I’m goin’ to make it whiskey to-day, ’cause I ain’t feelin’ a t’ing but good, see!”

I asked the cause of Chucky’s exaltation. Chucky’s reason as given for his high spirits was unusual.

“Red Mike gets ten spaces in Sing Sing,” he said; “an’ he does a dead short stretch at that. He oughter get d’ chair—that bloke had.

“Red Mike croaks his kid,” vouchsafed Chucky in further elucidation. “Say! it makes me tired to t’ink! She was as good a kid, this little Emmer which Mike does up, as ever comes down d’ Bend. An’ only ’leven!”

“Tell me the story,” I urged.

“This Red Mike’s a hod carrier,” continued Chucky, thus moved, “but ain’t out to hoit himself be hard woik at it; he don’t woik overtime. Nit! Not on your life insurance!

“What Red Mike sooner do is bum Mulberry Street for drinks, an’ hang ’round s’loons an’ sling guff about d’ wrongs of d’ woikin’man. Then he’d chase home, an’ bein’ loaded, he’d wallop his family.

“On d’ level! I ain’t got no use for d’ sort of a philanthrofist who goes chinnin’ all night about d’ wrongs

of d' labour element an' d' oppressions of d' rich an' then goes home an' slugs his wife. Say! I t'ink a bloke who'd soak a skirt, no matter what she does—no matter if she is his wife! on d' square! I t'ink he's rotten." And Chucky imbibed deeply, looking virtuous.

"Well, at last," said Chucky, resuming his narrative, "Mike puts a crimp too many in his Norah—that's his wife—an' d' city 'torities plants her in Potters' Field."

"Did Mike kill her?" I queried, a bit horrified at this murderous development of Chucky's tale.

"Sure!" assented Chucky, "Mike kills her."

"Shoot her?" I suggested.

"Nit!" retorted Chucky disgustedly. "Shoot her! Mike ain't got no gun. If he had, he'd hocked it long before he got to croak anybody wit' it. Naw, Mike does Norah be his constant abuse, see! Beats d' life out of her be degrees.

"When Norah's gone," resumed Chucky, "Emmer, who's d' oldest of d' t'ree kids, does d' mudder act for d' others. She's 'leven, like I says. An' little!—she ain't bigger'n a drink of whiskey, Emmer ain't.

"But youse should oughter see her hustle to line up an' take care of them two young-ones. Only eight an' five dey be. Emmer washes d' duds for 'em, and does all sorts of stunts to get grub, an' tries like an old woman, night an' day, to bring 'em up.

"D' neighbours helps, of course, like neighbours do when it's a case of dead hard luck; an' I meself has t'run a quarter or two in Emmer's lap when I'm a bit lushy. Say! I'm d' easiest mark when I've been hitin' d' bottle!—I'd give d' nose off me face!

"If d' neighbours don't chip in, Emmer an' them kids

would lots of times have had a hard graft; for mostly there ain't enough dough about d' joint from one week's end to another to flag a bread waggon.

"Finally Red Mike gets wise. After Norah goes flutterin' that time, Mike's been goin' along as usual, talkin' about d' woikin'man, an' doin' up Emmer an' d' kids for a finish before he rolls in to pound his ear.

"At foist it ain't so bad. He simply fetches one of d' young ones a back-handed swipe across d' map wit' his mit to see it swap ends wit' itself; or mebbe he soaks Emmer in d' lamp an' blacks it, 'cause she's older. But never no wise. At least, not for long.

"But as I says, finally Red Mike gets bad for fair. He lams loose oftener, an' he licks Emmer an' d' kids more to d' Queen's taste—more like dey's grown-up folks an' can stan' for it.

"Emmer, day after day chases 'round quiet as a rabbit, washin' d' kids an' feedin' 'em when there's anyt'ing, an' she don't make no holler about Mike's jumpin' on 'em for fear if she squeals d' cops'll pinch Mike an' give him d' Island.

"Yes, Emmer was a dead game all right. Not only she don't raise d' roar on Mike about his soakin' 'em, but more'n onct she cuts in an' takes d' smash Mike means for one of d' others.

"But, of course, you can see poor Emmer's finish. She's little, an' weak, an' t'in, not gettin' enough to chew—for she saws d' food off on d' others as long as dey makes d' hungry front—an' d' night Mike puts d' boots to her an' breaks t'ree of her slats, that lets her out! She croaks in four hours, be d' watch.

"W'at does Red Mike do it for? Well, he never needs much of a hunch to pitch into Emmer an' d'

rest. But I hears from me Rag who lives on d' same floor that it's all 'cause Mike gets d' tip that Emmer's got two bits, an' he wants it for booze. Mike comes in wit' a t'irst an' he ain't got d' price, an' he puts it to Emmer she's got stuff. Mike wants her to spring her plant an' chase d' duck.

"But Emmer welched an' won't have it. She's dead stubborn an' says d' kids must eat d' nex' day; and so Mike can't have d' money. Mike says he'll kick d' heart out of her if he don't get it. Emmer stan's pat, an' so Mike starts in.

"It's 'most an hour before I gets there. D' poor baby—for that's all Emmer is, even if she was dealin' d' game for d' joint—looks awful, all battered to bits. One of d' city's jackleg sawbones is there, mendin' Emmer wit' bandages. But he says himself he's on a dead card, an' that Emmer's going to die. Mike is settin' on a stool keepin' mum an' lookin' w'ite an' dopey, an' a cop is wit' him. Oh, yes! he gets d' collar long before I shows up.

"Say! d' scene ain't solemn, oh, no! nit! Emmer lays back on d' bed—she twigs she's goin' to die; d' doctor puts her on. Emmer lays back an' as good as she can, for her valves don't woik easy an' she breathes hard, she tells 'em what to do. She says there's d' washboiler she borry's from d' Meyers's family, an' to send it back.

"'An' I owes Mrs. Lynch,' says Emmer—she's talkin' dead faint—'a dime for sewin' me skirt, an' I ain't got d' dough. But when dey takes dad to d' coop, tell her to run her lamps over d' plunder, an' she has her pick, 'see! An' when I'm gone,' goes on Emmer, 'ast d' Gerries to take d' kids. Dey tries to

get their hooks on 'em before, but I wanted to keep 'em. Now I can't, an' d' Gerries is d' best I can do. D' Gerries ain't so warm, but dey can lose nothin' in a walk. An' wit' dad pinched an' me dead, poor Danny an' Jennie is up ag'inst it for fair.'

"Nit; Emmer never sheds a weep. But say! you should a seen me Rag! She was d' terror for tears! She does d' sob act for two, an' don't you forget it.

"Emmer just lays there when she's quit chinnin' an' gives Mike d' icy eye. If ever a bloke goes unforgiven, it's Red Mike.

"'Don't youse want d' priest, or mebby a preacher?' asts me Rag of Emmer between sobs. Emmer's voice is most played when she comes back at her.

"'W'at's d' use?' says Emmer.

"Then she toins to d' two kids who's be d' bed cryin', an' tries to kiss 'em, but it's a move too many for her. She twists back wit' d' pain, an' bridges herself like you see a wrestler, an' when she sinks straight wit' d' bed ag'in, d' red blood is comin' out of her face. Emmer's light is out.

"I tumbles to it d' foist. As I leads me Rag back to our room—for I can see she's out to t'row a fit—d' cop takes Red Mike down be d' stairs."

HAMILTON FINNERTY'S HEART

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

CHAPTER I

FAR up in Harlem, on a dead swell street, the chance pedestrian as he chases himself by the Ville Finnerty, may see a pale, wrung face pressing itself against the pane. It is the map of Hamilton Finnerty.

"W'at's d' matter wit' d' bloke?" whispered Kid Dugan, the gasman's son, to his young companion, as they stood furtively piping off the Ville Finnerty. "Is it 'D' Pris'ner of Zenda' down to date?"

"Stash!" said his chum in a low tone. "Don't say a woid. That guy was goin' to be hitched to a sou-brette. At d' las' minute d' skirt goes back on him—won't stan' for it; see! Now d' sucker's nutty. Dey's thrunning dice for him at Bloomin'dale right now!"

It was a sad, sad story of how two loving hearts were made to break away; of how in their ignorance the police declared themselves in on a play of which they wotted nit, and queered it.

CHAPTER II

WHEN the betrothal of Isabelle Imogene McSween to Hamilton Finnerty was tipped off to their set, the

elite of Harlem fairly quivered with the glow and glory of it. The Four Hundred were agog.

"It's d' swiftest deal of d' season!" said De Pygstyster.

"Hammy won't do a t'ing to McSween's millions, I don't t'ink!" said Von Pretselbok.

"Hammy'll boin a wet dog. An' don't youse forget it, I'll be in on d' incineration!" said Goosevelt.

CHAPTER III

HAMILTON FINNERTY embarked for England. The beautiful Isabelle Imogene McSween had been plunging on raiment in Paree. The wedding was to be pulled off in two weeks at St. Paul's, London. It was to be a corker; for the McSweens were hot potatoes and rolled high. Nor were the Finnerties listed under the head of Has-beens. It is but justice to both families to say, they were in it with both feet.

When Hamilton Finnerty went ashore at Liverpool he communed with himself.

"It's five days ere dey spring d' weddin' march in me young affairs," soliloquised Hamilton Finnerty, "an' I might as well toin in an' do d' village of Liverpool while I waits. A good toot will be d' t'ing to allay me natural uneasiness."

Thus it was that Hamilton Finnerty went forth to tank, and spread red paint, and plough a furrow through the hamlet of Liverpool. But Hamilton was a dead wise fowl. He had been on bats before, and was aware that they didn't do a thing to money.

"For fear I'll blow me dough," said Hamilton, still

communing with himself, "I'll buy meself an' chip d' retain tickets, see! It's a lead-pipe cinch then, we goes back."

And the forethoughtful Hamilton sprung his roll and went against the agent, for return tickets. They were to be good on the very steamer he chased over in. They were for him and the winsome Isabelle Imogene McSween, soon to be Mrs. Finnerty. The paste-boards called for the steamer's trip three weeks away.

"There!" quoth Hamilton Finnerty, as he concealed the tickets in his trousseau, "I've sewed buttons on the future. We don't walk back, see! I can now relax an' toin meself to Gin, Dog's Head and a general whizz. I won't have no picnic,—oh, no! not on your eyes!"

CHAPTER IV

IT was early darkness on the second day. One after another the windows were showing a glim. Liverpool was lighting up for the evening. A limp figure stood holding to a lamp-post. The figure was loaded to the guards. It was Hamilton Finnerty, and his light was out. He had just been fired from that hostelry known as The Swan with the Four Legs.

"I 'opes th' duffer won't croak on me doorstep," said the blooming barmaid, as she cast her lamps on Hamilton Finnerty from the safe vantage of a window of The Swan with the Four Legs.

There was no danger of Hamilton Finnerty dying, not in a thousand years. But he was woozy and tumbled not to events about him. He knew neither his



"THEY WERE GOOD POLICE PEOPLE, IGNORANT BUT INNOCENT."—Page 65.

name, nor his nativity. Nor could he speak, for his tongue was on a spree with the Gin and the Dog's Head.

CHAPTER V

AS Hamilton Finnerty stood holding the lamp-post, and deeming it his "only own," two of the Queen's constabulary approached.

"'Ere's a bloomin' gow, Jem!" said the one born in London. "Now 'oo d'ye tyke the gent to be?"

They were good police people, ignorant but innocent; and disinclined to give Hamilton Finnerty the collar.

"Frisk 'un, Bill," advised the one from Yorkshire; "it's loike th' n'aine bees in 'uns pawkets."

The two went through the make-up of Hamilton Finnerty. Jagged as he was, he heeded them not. They struck the steamer tickets and noted the steamer's name, but not the day of sailing.

As if anxious to aid in the overthrow of Hamilton Finnerty, the steamer was still at her dock, with preparations all but complete for the return slide to New York.

"Now 'ere's a luvly mess!" said London Bill, looking at the tickets. "The bloody bowt gows in twenty minutes, an' 'ere's this gent a-gettin' 'eeself left! An' th' tickets for 'ees missus, too! It's punds t' peanuts, th' loidy's aboard th' bowt tearin' 'er blessed heyes out for 'im. Hy, say there, kebbly! bear a 'and! This gent's got to catch a bowt!"

Hamilton Finnerty, dumb with Gin and Dog's Head, was tumbled into the cab, and the vehicle, taking its

hunch from the excited officers, made the run of its life to the docks. They were in time.

"It tak's th' droonken 'uns t'av th' loock!" remarked Yorkshire Jem cheerfully to London Bill, as they stood wiping their honest faces on the dock, while the majestic steamer, with Hamilton Finnerty aboard, worked slowly out.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN Hamilton Finnerty came to his senses he was one hundred miles on his way to New York. For an hour he was off his trolley. It was six days before he landed, and during that period he did naught but chew the rag.

Hamilton Finnerty chased straight for Harlem and sought refuge in the Ville Finnerty. He must think; he must reorganise his play! He would compile a fake calculated to make a hit as an excuse with Isabelle Imogene McSween, and cable it. All might yet be well.

But alas! As Hamilton Finnerty opened the door of the Ville Finnerty the butler sawed off a cablegram upon him. It was from Isabelle Imogene McSween to Hamilton Finnerty's cable address of "Hamfinny."

As Hamilton Finnerty read the fatal words, he fell all over himself with a dull, sickening thud. And well he might! The message threw the boots into the last hope of Hamilton Finnerty. It read as follows:

HAMFINNY:—Miscreant! Villain! A friend put me onto your skip from Liverpool. It was a hobo trick. But I broke even with you. I was dead aware that you might do a sneak at the last minute, and was organised with a French Count up me sleeve; see! Me wedding came

off just the same. Me hubby's a bute! I call him Papa, and he's easy money. Hoping to see you on me return, nit, and renew our acquaintance, nit, I am yours, nit.

ISABELLE IMOGENE MCSWEEN-MARAT DE ROCHETWISTER.

Outside the Ville Finnerty swept the moaning winds, dismal with November's prophecy of snow. At intervals the election idiot blew his proud horn in the neighbouring thoroughfare. It was nearly morning when the doctor said, that, while Hamilton Finnerty's life would be spared, he would be mentally dopey the balance of his blighted days.

SHORT CREEK DAVE

(WOLFVILLE)

SHORT CREEK DAVE was one of Wolfville's leading citizens. In fact his friends would not have scrupled at the claim that Short Creek Dave was a leading citizen of Arizona. Therefore when the news came over from Tucson that Short Creek Dave, who had been paying that metropolis a breezy visit, had, in an advertant moment, strolled within the radius of a gospel meeting then and there prevailing, and suffered conversion, Wolfville became spoil and prey to some excitement.

"I tells him," said Tutt, who brought the tidings, "not to go tamperin' 'round this yere meetin'. But he would have it. He simply keeps pervadin' about the 'go-in' place, an' it looks like I can't herd him away. Says I: 'Dave, you don't onderstand this yere game they're turnin' inside. Which you keep out a whole lot, you'll be safer!' But warnin's ain't no good; Short Creek don't regard 'em a little bit."

"This yere Short Creek is always speshul obstinate that a-way," said Dan Boggs, "an' he gets moods frequent when he jest won't stay where he is nor go anywhere else. I don't marvel none you don't do nothin' with him."

"Let it go as it lays!" observed Cherokee Hall, "I

reckons Short Creek knows his business, an' can protect himse'f in any game they opens on him. I ain't myse'f none astonished by these yere news. I knows him to do some mighty *locoed* things, sech as breakin' a pair to draw to a three-flush; an' it seems like he's merely a pursoooin' of his usual system in this relig'ous lunge. However, he'll be in Wolfville to-morry, an' then we'll know a mighty sight more about it; pendin' of which let's irrigate. Barkeep, please inquire out the beverages for the band!"

Those of Wolfville there present knew no cause to pursue the discussion so pleasantly ended, and drew near the bar. The debate took place in the Red Light, so, as one observed on the issuance of Cherokee's invitation: "They weren't far from centres."

Cherokee himself was a suave suitor of fortune who presided behind his own faro game. Reputed to possess a "straight" deal box, he held high place in the Wolfville breast.

Next day; and Wolfville began to suffer an increased exaltation. Feeling grew nervous as the time for the coming of the Tucson stage approached. An outsider might not have detected this fever. It found its evidence in the unusual activity of monte, high ball, stud and kindred relaxations. Faro, too, displayed some madness of spirit.

At last out of the grey and heat-shimmer of the plains a cloud of dust announced the coming of the stage. Chips were cashed and games cleaned up, and presently the population of Wolfville stood in the street to catch as early a glimpse as might be of the converted one.

"I don't reckon now he's goin' to look sech a whole

lot different neither!" observed Faro Nell. She stood near Cherokee Hall, awaiting the coming stage.

"I wonder would it 'go' to ask Dave for to drink?" said Tutt, in a tone of general inquiry.

"Shore!" argued Dan Boggs; "an' why not?"

"Oh, nothin' why not!" replied Tutt, as he watched the stage come up; "only Dave's nacherally a peevish person that a-way, an' I don't reckon now his enterin' the fold has redooced the restlessness of that six-shooter of his'n, none whatever."

"All the same," said Cherokee Hall, "p'litenes 'mong gents should be observed. I asks this yere Short Creek to drink so soon as ever he arrives; an' I ain't lookin' to see him take it none invidious, neither."

With a rattle of chains and a creaking of straps the stage and its six high-headed horses pulled up at the postoffice door. The mail bags were kicked off, the express boxes tumbled into the street, and in the general rattle and crash the eagerly expected Short Creek Dave stepped upon the sidewalk.

There was possibly a more eager scanning of his person in the thought that the great inward change might have its outward evidences; a more vigorous shaking of his hand, perhaps; but beyond these, curious interest did not go. Not a word nor a look touching Short Creek's religious exploits betrayed the question tugging at the Wolfville heart. Wolfville was too polite. And, again, Wolfville was too cautious. Next to horse-stealing, curiosity is the greatest crime. It's worse than crime, it's a blunder. Wolfville merely expressed its polite satisfaction in Short Creek Dave's return, and took it out in handshaking. The only incident worth record was when Cherokee Hall ob-

served in a spirit of bland but experimental friendship:

"I don't reckon, Dave, you-all is objectin' to whiskey none after your ride?"

"Which I ain't done so usual," observed Dave cheerfully, "but this yere time, Cherokee, I'll have to pass. Confidin' the trooth to you-all, I'm some off on nose-paint now. I'm allowin' to tell you the win-an'-lose tharof later on. Now, if you-alls will excuse me, I'll go wanderin' over to the O. K. House an' feed myse'f a whole lot."

"I shore reckons he's converted!" said Tutt, and he shook his head gloomily. "I wouldn't care none, only it's me as prevails on Dave to go over to Tucson that time; an' so I feels responsible."

"Whatever of it?" responded Dan Boggs, with a burst of energy, "I don't see no reecriminations comin', nor why this yere's to be regarded. If Dave wants to be relig'ous an' sing them hymns a heap, you bet! that's his American right! I'll gamble a hundred dollars, Dave splits even with every deal, or beats it. I'm with Dave; his system does for me, every time!"

The next day the excitement began to subside. Late in the afternoon a notice posted on the postoffice door caused it to rise again. The notice announced that Short Creek Dave would preach that evening in the warehouse of the New York Store.

"I reckons we-alls better go!" said Cherokee Hall. "I'm goin' to turn up my box an' close the game at first drink time this evenin', an' Hamilton says he's out to shut up the dance hall, seein' as how several of the ladies is due to sing a lot in the choir. We-alls might as well turn loose an' give Short Creek the best whirl

in the wheel—might as well make the play to win, an' start him straight along the new trail."

"That's whatever!" agreed Dan Boggs. He had recovered from his first amazement, and now entered into the affair with spirit.

That evening the New York Store's warehouse was as brilliantly a-light as a mad abundance of candles could make it. All Wolfville was there. As a result of conferences held in private with Short Creek Dave, and by that convert's request, Old Man Enright took a seat by the drygoods box which was to serve as a pulpit. Doc Peets, also, was asked to assume a place at the Evangelist's left. The congregation disposed itself about on the improvised benches which the ardour of Boggs had provided.

At 8 o'clock Short Creek Dave walked up the space in the centre reserved as an aisle, carrying a giant Bible. This latter he placed on the drygoods box. Old Man Enright, at a nod from Short Creek Dave, called gently for attention, and addressed the meeting briefly.

"This yere is a prayer meetin' of the camp," said Enright, "an' I'm asked by Dave to preside, which I accordin' do. No one need make any mistake about the character of this gatherin', or its brand. This yere is a relig'ous meetin'. I am not myse'f given that a-way, but I'm allers glad to meet up with folks who be, an' see that they have a chance in for their ante, an' their game is preserved. I'm one, too, who believes a little religion wouldn't hurt this yere camp much. Next to a lynchin', I don't know of a more excellent infloocene in a western camp than these meetin's. I ain't expectin' to cut in on this play none myse'f, an'

only set yere, as does Peets, in the name of order, an' for the purposes of a squar' deal. Which I now introduce to you a gent who is liable to be as good a preacher as ever thumps a Bible—your old pard, Short Creek Dave."

"Mr. Pres'dent!" said Short Creek Dave, turning to Enright.

"Short Creek Dave!" replied Enright sententiously, bowing gravely in recognition.

"An' ladies an' gents of Wolfville!" continued Dave, "I opens this racket with a prayer."

The prayer proceeded. It was fervent and earnest; replete with unique expression and personal allusion. In the last, the congregation took a warm interest.

Towards the close, Dave bent his energies in supplication for the regeneration of Texas Thompson, whom he represented in his orisons as by nature good, but living a misguided and vicious life. The audience was listening with approving attention, when there came an interruption. It was from Texas Thompson.

"Mr. Pres'dent," said Texas Thompson, "I rises to ask a question an' put for'ard a protest."

"The gent will state his p'int," responded Enright, rapping on the drygoods box.

"Which the same is this," resumed Texas Thompson, drawing a long breath. "I objects to Dave a-tacklin' the Redeemer for me. I protests ag'in him makin' statements that I'm ornery enough to pillage a stage. This yere talk is liable to queer me on High. I objects to it!"

"Prayer is a device without rools or limit," responded Enright. "Dave makes his runnin' with the

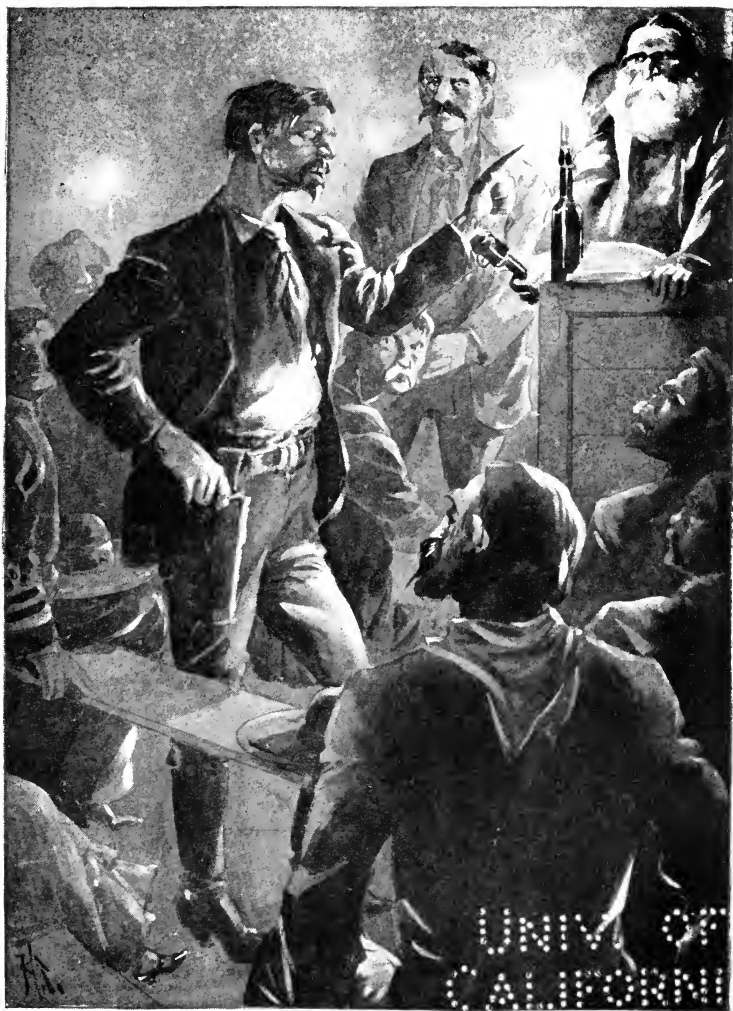
bridle off; an' the chair, tharfore, decides ag'in the p'int of order."

"An' the same bein' the case," rejoined Texas Thompson with heat, "a-waivin' of the usual appeal to the house, all I've got to say is, I'm a peaceful gent; I has allers been the friend of Short Creek Dave. Which I even assists an' abets Boggs in packin' in these yere benches, an' aids to promote this meetin'. But I gives notice now, if Short Creek Dave persists in malignin' of me to the Great White Throne, as yere-tofore, I'll shore call on him to make them statements good with his gun as soon as ever the contreebution box is passed."

"The chair informs the gent," said Enright with cold dignity, "that Dave, bein' now a Evangelist, can't make no gun plays, nor go canterin' out to shoot as of a former day. However, the chair recognises the rights of the gent, an', standin' as the chair does in the position of lookout to this game, the chair nom'nates Dan'l Boggs, who's officiatin' as deacon hereof, to back these yere orisons with his six-shooter as soon as ever church is out, in person."

"It goes!" responded Boggs. "I proudly assoomes Dave's place."

"Mr. Pres'dent," interrupted Short Creek Dave, "jest let me get my views in yere. It's my turn all right, as I makes clear, easy. I've looked up things some, an' I finds that the Apostle Peter, who was a great range boss of them days, scrooped not to fight. Which I trails out after Peter in this. I might add, too, that while it gives me pain to be obleeged to shoot up brother Texas Thompson in the first half of the first meetin' we holds in Wolfville, still the path of



"I THARFORE MOVES WE ADJOURN TEN MINUTES."—Page 75.

dooty is plain, an' I shall shorely walk tharin, fearin' nothin'. I tharfore moves we adjourn ten minutes, an' as thar is plenty of moon outside, if the chair will lend me its gun—I'm not packin' of sech frivolities no more, regyardin' of 'em in the light of sinful bluffs—I trusts to Providence to convince brother Texas Thompson that he's followed off the wrong waggon track. You-alls can gamble! I knows my business. I ain't 4-flushin' none when I lines out to pray!"

"Onless objection is heard, this meetin' will stand adjourned for ten minutes," said Enright, at the same time passing Short Creek Dave his pistol.

Fifteen paces were stepped off, and the opponents faced up in the moonlit street. Enright, Peets, Hall, Boggs, Tutt, Moore and the rest of the congregation made a line of admiration on the sidewalk.

"I counts one! two! three! an' then I drops the contreebution box," said Enright, "whereupon you-alls fires an' advances at will. Be you ready?"

The shooting began on the word. When the smoke blew away, Texas Thompson staggered to the sidewalk and sat down. There was a bullet in his hip, and the wound, for the moment, brought a feeling of sickness.

"The congregation will now take its seats in the sanctooary," remarked Enright, "an' play will be re-soomed. Tutt, two of you-alls carry Texas over to the hotel, an' fix him up all right. Yereafter, I'll visit him an' p'int out his errors. This shows conclooisive that Short Creek Dave is licensed from Above to pray any gait for whoever he deems meet, an' I'm mighty pleased it occurs. It's shore goin' to promote confidence in Dave's ministrations."

The concourse was duly in its seats when Short Creek Dave again reached the pulpit.

"I will now resooome my intercessions for our onfortunate brother, Texas Thompson," said Short Creek Dave.

"I know'd he would," commented Dan Boggs, as twenty dollars came over addressed by the wounded Thompson to the contribution box. "Texas Thompson is one of the reasonablest sports in Wolfville. Also you can bet! relig'ous trooths allers assert themse'ves."

CRIME THAT FAILED

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“SAY! Matches,” said Chucky, removing his nose from his glass, “youse remember d’ Jersey Bank? I means d’ time youse has to go to cover an’ d’ whole mob is pinched in d’ hole. Tell us d’ story; it’s dead int’restin’.”

This last was to me in a husky whisper.

“That play was a case of fail,” remarked Mollie Matches thoughtfully. Then turning to me as chief auditor, he continued. “It’s over twenty years ago; just on d’ heels of d’ Centenyul at Phil’delfy. D’ graft was fairly flossy durin’ d’ Centenyul, an’ I had quite a pot of dough.

“One day a guy comes to me; he’s a bank woiker, what d’ fly people calls ‘a gopher man’; he’s a mug who’s onto all d’ points about safes an’ such. Well, as I says, this soon guy comes chasin’ to me.

“‘Matches,’ he says, ‘don’t say a woid; I’ll put youse onto an easy trick. Come wit’ me to Jersey, an’ I’ll show you a bin what’s all organised to be cracked. Any old hobo could toin off d’ play; it’s a walk-over.’

“Wit’ that, for I had confidence in this mark, see! we skins over to Jersey, an’ he steers me out to a nearby town an’ points me out a bank. What makes it a good t’ing is a vacant joint, wit’ a ‘To Rent’ sign in d’ window, built clost ag’inst d’ side of d’ bank.

“‘Are youse on?’ says d’ goph, pointin’ his main hook at d’ empty house, an’ then at d’ bank.

“Bein’ I’m no farmer meself, I takes no time to tumble. We screws our nuts, me an’ d’ goph, to d’ duck who owns d’ house, an’ d’ nex’ news is we rents it. D’ duck who does d’ rentin’ says he can see we’re on d’ level d’ moment we floats in; but all d’ same, if we can bring him a tip or two on d’ point of our bein’ square people from one or two high rollers whose names goes, he’ll take it kindly. We says, suttently; we fills him to d’ chin wit’ all d’ refrunces he needs.

“‘We won’t do a t’ing but send our pastor to youse,’ puts in d’ goph.

“Good man, me pal was, as ever draws slide on a dark lantern, but always out to be funny.

“We rents d’ joint, as I states, an’ no more is said about refrunces. Now, when it comes to d’ real woik, I ain’t goin’ to do none, see! I ain’t down to dig an’ pick; it spoils me hooks for dippin’. What I does is furnish d’ tools an’ d’ dough.

“I goes back an’ gets a whole kit of bank tools—drills, centre-bits, cold-chisels, jointed-jimmies, wedges, pullers, spreaders, fuse, powder, mauls an’ mufflers—I gets d’ whole t’ing, see! Me pal knows a brace of pards who’ll stand in on d’ play. He calls ’em in, an’ one night d’ entire squeeze, wit’ d’ tools, goes over an’ plants themselves in d’ empty house. Yes; dey takes grub an’ blankets an’ all dey needs.

“Before this I goes ag’in’st d’ bank janitor; an’ while he’s a fairly downy party, I wins him. D’ janitor of d’ bank gets a hundred bones, an’ I gets a map of d’ bank, which shows where d’ money is planted an’ all about it.

“What’s d’ idee? Our racket is to tunnel from d’ cellar of d’ joint we rents, under d’ side wall of d’ bank, an’ keep on until we reaches d’ stuff, see! We’re out to do all d’ woik we can wit’out lettin’ d’ bank-crush twig d’ graft. Then we waits till Saturday noon. D’ bank shuts up on Saturday noon, understan’! An’ then we has till Monday at 9 o’clock to finish d’ woik. An’ say! it’s time plenty! It gives us time to boin!

“As I states, I don’t do any of d’ woik. D’ gopher an’ his two pals is all d’ job calls for. So I lays dead in d’ town, ready to split out me piece of d’ plunder, an’ waits results.

“To hurry me yarn, everyt’ing woiks like it’s greased to fit d’ play. D’ mob gets d’ tunnel as far as it’ll go. Saturday noon comes an’ d’ last sucker who belongs to d’ bank skips out. It’s then me gopher an’ his two pals t’rows themselves.

“All t’rough Saturday afternoon an’ all d’ night till daylight Sunday mornin’, them gezebos woiks away like dogs. An’ say! don’t youse ever doubt it! dey was winnin’ in a walk.

“But all this time d’ pins was set up to do ’em. It was d’ same old story. There’s always some little no-good bet a crook is sure to overlook, an’ it goes d’ wrong way an’ downs him. Here’s what happens:

“In d’ foist place, we forgets to take d’ ‘To Rent’ sign out of d’ window, see! That’s d’ beginnin’. Nex, me goph an’ his side-partners digs so much dirt out of d’ tunnel it fills d’ cellar. Honest! it won’t hold no more.

“At this last, dey takes to shovelin’ d’ dirt into a bushel basket. Then dey carries it up d’ back stairs and dumps it on d’ floor of a summer kitchen. Be 7

o'clock Sunday, mebbly dey dumps as many as six basketfuls; dumps it, as I tells youse, in this lean-to, which is built on d' rear.

"Now, right at this time there's an old Irish Moll who keeps a boardin' house not far away who is flyin' along to early Mass, bein' dead religious an' leary about her soul, see! This old goil, as she comes sprintin' along, gets her bleary old lamps on d' 'To Rent' card. All at onct d' idee fetches her a t'ump in d' cocoa that d' house would be out of sight for a boardin' joint. Wit' that she steers herself in to take a squint an' size up d' crib.

"D' door is locked, so d' old goil can't come in. Wit' that she leads d' nex' best card an' goes galumpin' round, pipin' off d' place t'rough d' windows. An' say! she gets stuck on it. She t'inks if she can rent it, she can run d' dandy boardin' house of d' ward in it.

"As d' old frail goes round d' place, among all d' rest, she looks t'rough d' windows into d' summer kitchen. She gets onto d' dirt that's dumped, as I states, in one corner. But she don't see none of d' gang, bein' dey's down in d' hole at d' time, so she don't fasten to nothin'.

"At last she's seen enough an' sherries her nibs to d' cat'edral.

"That's all right if it's only d' end; but it ain't. When it gets to about 2 o'clock, this old skate in petticoats goes toinin' nutty ag'in about d' empty house. Over she spins to grab another glimpse, see! When she strikes d' summer kitchen she comes near to throwin' a faint. D' pile of rubbidge is twenty times as big!

"That settles it! d' joint is ha'nted! an' wit' that

notion all tangled up in her frizzes d' old mut makes a straight wake for d' priest.

“ ‘ D' empty house nex' to d' bank is full of ghosts ! ’ she shouts, an' then she flings her apron over her nut an' comes a fit.

“ Now, this priest is about as sudden a party as ever comes over d' ocean. Youse can't give him no stiff about spooks, see ! Bein' nex' to d' bank is a hot tip, an' he takes it.

“ Nit ! he don't go surgin' round for his prayer-books an d' hully water. It would have been a dead good t'ing if he had. Nixie weedin' ! D' long-coat sucker don't even come over to d' house.

“ What does he do ? He sprints for d' nearest p'lice station at a 40 clip, an' fills up d' captain in charge wit' d' story till youse can't rest. After that, it takes d' p'lice captain about ten seconts to line up his push ; an' be coppin' a sneak, he pinches me gopher an' his two pals right in d' hole. Dey was gettin' along beautiful at d' time, an' in ten hours more dey would have had that bank on d' hog for fair.

Dey was dead games at that. While dey gets d' collar, not one of 'em coughs on me, an' me name ain't never in it from start to finish. Dey was game, true pals from bell to bell, an' stayed d' distance.

“ It was d' bumpest finish, all d' same, for what looked like d' biggest trick, an' d' surest big money, that I ever goes near. Youse may well peel your peeps ! If it wasn't for that old Irish keener an' her ghost stories, in less than ten hours more we wouldn't have got a t'ing but complete action on more'n a million plunks ! There was a hay-mow full of money in that bin !

“ That’s d’ last round an’ wind-up, as d’ pugs puts it. Me gopher an’ his pals is handed out ten spaces each, an’ I lose me kit of tools. Take it over all, I’m out some four t’ousand dollars on d’ deal. A tidy lump of dough to be done out of be a priest, a p’liceman an’ an old Irish boardin’ boss! D’ old loidy lands wit’ bot’ her trilbys, though; d’ bank chucks her a bundle of fly-paper big enough to stan’ for all her needs until she croaks, for cuttin’ in on our play, see!”

THE BETRAYAL

THE boys had resolved on revenge, and nothing could turn them from their purpose. The trouble was this : Some one not otherwise engaged had fed the furnace an overshoe which it did not need. As incident to its consumption the overshoe had filled the building with an odour of which nothing favourable could be said. The professor afterwards, in denouncing the author of the outrage, had referred to it as "effluvia." It had as a perfume much force of character, and was stronger and more devastating than the odour which goes with an egg in its old age, when it has begun to hate the world and the future holds nothing but gloom.

As stated, the schoolhouse reeked and reeled with this sublimated overshoe. It all pleased the boys excessively. They made as much as possible of the odour ; they coughed, and sneezed, and worried the professor by holding up their hands one after the other with the remark :

"Teacher, may I go out ?"

The professor, after several destructive whiffs of the overshoe, made a fiery speech. He said that could he once locate the boy who lavished this overshoe on mankind in a gaseous form, that boy's person would experience a rear-end collision. He would be so badly telescoped that weeks would elapse before the boy could regard himself as being in old-time form. The

professor said the boy who founded the overshoe odour was a "miscreant" and a "vandal." He demanded his name of the boys collectively; and failing to get it, the professor said they were all miscreants and vandals, and that it would be as balm to his spirits were he to wade in and larrup the entire outfit.

After school the boys held a meeting.

Frank Payne, aged fourteen, the boy who could lick any boy in school, denounced the professor. He referred to the fact that his father was a school trustee; and that under the rules the professor had no right to bestow upon them the epithets of miscreants and vandals. Frank Payne advised that they whip the professor; who must, he said, while a large, muscular man, yield to mob violence.

The proposition to whip the professor was carried unanimously under a suspension of the rules.

In the ardour of this crusade for their rights the boys did not feel as if they could await the slow approach of trouble in the natural way. It was decided by them to bring matters to a focus. It was planned to have Tony Sanford stick a pin in John Dayton. That would be a splendid start! John Dayton, thus stuck, would yell; and when the professor asked the cause of his lamentations, John Dayton would point to Tony Sanford as his assassin. When the professor laid corrective hands on Tony all of the conspirators were to rush upon the professor and give him such a rough-and-tumble experience that succeeding ages would date time from the emeute. The boys were filled with glee; they regarded the business, so they said, as "a pushover."

The hour for action had arrived.

Tony Sanford had no pin. But Tony was a fertile boy ; if there was a picket off Tony's mental fence at all, it was his foresight. Lacking a pin, the ingenious Tony stuck the small blade of his knife into John Dayton. The victim howled like a dog at night.

" Please, sir, Tony Sanford's stabbed me," was John Dayton's explanation of his shrieks.

Tony Sanford was paraded for punishment. The cold-blooded enormity of the crime seemed to strike the professor dumb. He did not know how to take hold of the situation. But Tony pursued a course which not only invited but suggested action. As Tony approached, he dealt the professor an uppercut in the bread-basket, and with the cry, " Come on, boys !" closed doughtily with the foe.

The boys beheld the deeds of the intrepid Tony ; they heard his cry and knew it for their cue. Nevertheless, notwithstanding, not a boy moved. They sat in their seats and gazed fixedly at Tony and the professor. With the call of Tony to his fellow-conspirators the professor saw it all.

" Tony Sanford," quoth the professor, " we will adjourn to the library. When I get through, you will be of no further use to science."

The door closed on Tony Sanford, and a professor weighing 211 pounds. The sounds which came welling from the library showed that some strong, emotional work was being done within. Tony and the professor sounded at times like a curlew at night, and anon like unto a man falling downstairs with a stove. Tony Sanford said afterward that he would never again attach himself to a plot which did not show two green lights on the rear platform of its caboose.

FOILED

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

CHAPTER I

“DARLING, I fear that man! The cruel guy can from his place as umpire do you up.”

It was Gwendolin O'Toole who spoke. She was a beautiful blonde angel, and as she clung to her lover, Marty O'Malley, they were a picture from which a painter would have drawn an inspiration.

“Take courage, love!” said Marty O'Malley tenderly; “I'm too swift for the duck.”

“I know, dearest,” murmured the fair Gwendolin, “but think what's up on the game! Me brother, you know him well! the rooter prince, the bleachers' uncrowned king! he is the guardian of me vast estates. If I do not marry as he directs, me lands and houses go to found an asylum for decrepit ball tossers. And to-day me brother Godfrey swore by the Banshee of the O'Tooles that me hand should belong to the man who made the best average in to-morrow's game. Can you win me, love?”

“I will win you or break the bat!” said Marty O'Malley, as he folded his dear one in his arms.

CHAPTER II

“WHEN that villain, O'Malley, goes to bat to-morrow, pitch the ball ten feet over his head. No matter where it goes I'll call a 'strike.'”

It was Dennis Mulcahey who spoke; the man most feared by Gwendolin O'Toole. He was to be the next day's umpire, and as he considered how securely his rival was in his grasp, he laughed the laugh of a fiend.

Dennis Mulcahey, too, loved the fair Gwendolin, but the dear girl scorned his addresses. His heart was bitter; he would be revenged on his rival.

"You've got it in for the mug!" replied Terry Devine, to whom Dennis Mulcahey had spoken. Devine was the pitcher of the opposition, and like many of his class, a low, murdering scoundrel. "But, say! Denny, if you wants to do the sucker, why don't youse give him a poke in d' face? See!"

"Such suggestions are veriest guff," retorted Dennis Mulcahey. "Do as I bid you, caitiff, an' presume not to give d' hunch to such as I! A wild pitch is what I want whenever Marty O'Malley steps to the plate. I'll do the rest."

"I'll t'row d' pigskin over d' grand stand," said Terry Devine as he and his fellow-plotter walked away.

As the conspirators drifted into the darkness a dim form arose from behind a shrub. It was Marty O'Malley.

"Ah! I'll fool you yet!" he hissed between his clinched teeth, and turning in the opposite direction he was soon swallowed by the darkness.

CHAPTER III

"YOU'LL not fail me, Jack!" said Marty O'Malley to Jack, the barkeeper of the Fielders' Rest.

"Not on your sweater!" said Jack. "Leave it to

me. If that snoozer pitches this afternoon I hopes d' boss'll put in a cash-register!"

Marty O'Malley hastened to the side of his love. Jack, the faithful barkeeper, went on cleaning his glasses.

"That hobo, Devine, will be here in a minute," said Jack at last, "an' I must organise for him."

Jack took a shell glass and dipped it in the tank behind the bar. Taking his cigar from between his finely chiselled lips, he blew the smoke into the moistened interior of the glass. This he did several times.

"I'll smoke a glass on d' stiff," said Jack softly. "It's better than a knockout drop."

It was a moment later when Terry Devine came in. With a gleam of almost human intelligence in his eye Jack, the barkeeper, set up the smoked glass. Terry Devine tossed off the fiery potation, staggered to a chair, and sat there glaring. A moment later his head fell on the table, while a stertorous snore proclaimed him unconscious.

"That fetched d' sucker," murmured Jack, the barkeeper, and he went on cleaning his glasses. "His light's gone out for fourteen hours, an' he don't make no wild pitches at Marty O'Malley to-day, see!"

CHAPTER IV

TEN thousand people gathered to witness the last great contest between the Shamrocks and the Shantytowns.

Gwendolin O'Toole, pale but resolute, occupied her accustomed seat in the grand stand. Far away, and high above the tumult of the bleachers she heard the

hoarse shouts of her brother, Godfrey O'Toole, the bleachers' king.

"Remember, Gwendolin!" he had said, as they parted just before the game, "the mug who makes the best average to-day wins your hand. I've sworn it, and the word of an O'Toole is never broken."

"Make it the best fielding average, oh, me brother!" pleaded Gwendolin, while the tears welled to her glorious eyes.

"Never!" retorted Godfrey O'Toole, with a scowl; "I'm on to your curves! You want to give Marty O'Malley a better show. But if the butter-fingered muffer wants you, he must not only win you with his fielding, but with the stick."

CHAPTER V

TERRY DEVINE wasn't in the box for the Shantytowns. With his head on the seven-up table, he snored on, watched over by the faithful barboy Jack. He still yielded to smoked glass and gave no sign of life.

"Curse him!" growled Umpire Mulcahey hoarsely beneath his breath "has he t'run me down? If I thought so, the world is not wide enough to save him from me vengeance."

And the change pitcher took the box for the Shantytowns.

Marty O'Malley, the great catcher of the Shamrocks, stepped to the plate. Dennis Mulcahey girded up his false heart, and registered a black, hellish oath to call everything a strike.

"Never! never shall he win Gwendolin O'Toole

while I am umpire!" he whispered, and his face was dark as a cloud.

It was the last word that issued from the clam-shell of Dennis Mulcahey for many a long and bitter hour; the last crack he made. Just as he offered his bluff, the first ball was pitched. It was as wild and high as a bird, as most first balls are. But Marty O'Malley was ready. He, too, had been plotting; he would fight Satan with fire!

As the ball sped by, far above his head, Marty O'Malley leaped twenty feet in the air. As he did this he swung his unerring timber. Just as he had planned, the flying, whizzing sphere struck the under side of his bat, and glancing downward with fearful force, went crashing into the dark, malignant visage of Dennis Mulcahey, upturned to mark its flight. The fragile mask was broken; the features were crushed into complete confusion with the awful inveteracy of the ball.

Dennis Mulcahey fell as one dead. As he was borne away another umpire was sent to his post. Marty O'Malley bent a glance of intelligence on the change pitcher of the Shantytowns, who had taken the place of the miscreant Dennis, and whispered loud enough to reach from plate to box:

"Now, gimme a fair ball!"

CHAPTER VI

AND so the day was won; the Shamrocks basted the Shantytowns by the score of 15 to 2. As for Marty O'Malley, his score stood:

	Ab.	R.	H.	Po.	A.	E.
O'Malley, c.....	4	4	4	10	14	0

No such record had ever been made on the grounds. With four times at bat, Marty O'Malley did so well, withal, that he scored a base hit, two three-baggers and a home-run.

That night Marty O'Malley wedded the rich and beautiful Gwendolin O'Toole. Jack, the faithful bar-boy of the Fielders' Rest, officiated as groomsman. Godfrey O'Toole, haughty and proud, was yet a square sport, and gave the bride away.

The rich notes of the wedding bells, welling and swelling, drifted into the open windows of the Charity Hospital, and smote on the ears of Dennis Mulcahey, where he lay with his face.

"Curse 'em!" he moaned.

Then came a horrible rattle in his throat, and the guilty spirit of Dennis Mulcahey passed away.

Death caught him off his base.

POLITICS

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“NIXIE! I ain’t did nothin’, but all de same I’m feelin’ like a mut, see!”

Chucky was displeased with some chapter in his recent past. I could tell as much by the shifty, deprecatory way in which he twiddled and fiddled with his beer-stein.

“This is d’ way it all happens,” exclaimed Chucky. “Over be Washin’ton Square there’s an old soak, an’ he’s out to go into pol’tics—wants to hold office; Congress, I t’inks, is what this gezeybo is after. Anyhow he’s nutty to hold office.

“Of course, I figgers that a guy who wants to hold office is a sucker; for meself, I’d sooner hold a baby. Still, when some such duck comes chasin’ into pol’tics, I’m out for his dough like all d’ rest of d’ gang.

“So I goes an’ gets nex’ to this mucker an’ jollies his game. I tells him all he’s got to do is to fix his lamps on d’ perch that pleases him, blow in his stuff an’ me push’ll toin loose, an’ we’ll win out d’ whole box of tricks in a walk, see!

“That’s all right; d’ Washin’ton Square duck is of d’ same views. An’ some of it ain’t no foolish talk at that. I’m dead strong wit’ d’ Dagoes, an’ d’ push about d’ Bend, an’ me old chum—if he starts—is goin’ to get a run for his money.

“It ain’t this, however, what wilts me d’ way you

sees to-night. It's that I'm 'shamed, see! In d' foist place, I'm bashful. That's straight stuff; I'm so bashful that if I'm in some other geezer's joint--partic'ler if he's a high roller an' t'rowin' on social lugs, like this Washin'ton Square party—I feels like creep-in' under d' door mat.

“D' other night this can'date for office says, says he, ‘Chucky, I'm goin to begin my money-boinin' be givin' a dinner over be me house, an' youse are in it, see! in it wit' bot' feet.’

“‘Be I comin' to chew at your joint?’ I asts; ‘is that d' bright idee?’

“‘That's d' stuff,’ he says; ‘youse are comin' to eat wit' me an' me friends. An' you can gamble your socks me friends is a flossy bunch at that.’

“I says I'll assemble wit' 'em.

“Nit, I ain't stuck on d' play. I'd sooner eat 'be meself. But if I'm goin' to catch up wit' his Whiskers an' sep'rate him from some of d' long green, I've got to stay clost to his game, see!

“It's at d' table me troubles begins. I does d' social double-shuffle in d' hall all right. D' crush parts to let me t'rough, an' I woiks me way up to me can'date—who, of course, is d' main hobo, bein' he's d' architect of d' blowout—an' gives him d' joyful mit; what you calls d' glad hand.

“‘Glad to see youse, Chucky,’ says d' old mark. ‘Tummas, steer Chucky to his stool be d' table.’

“It's at d' table I'm rattled, wit' all d' glasses an' dishes an' d' lights overhead. But I'm cooney all d' same. I ain't onto d' graft meself, but I puts it up on d' quiet I'll pick out some student who knows d' ropes an' string me bets wit' his.

"As I sets there, I flashes me lamps along d' line, an' sort o' stacks up d' blokes, for to pick out d' fly guys from d' lobsters, see!

"Over 'cross 'd table I lights on an old stiff who looks like he could teach d' game. T'inks I to meself, 'There's a mut who's been t'rough d' mill many a time an' oft. All I got to do now is to pipe his play an' never let him out o' me sight. If I follows his smoke, I'll finish in d' front somewheres, an' none of these mugs'll tumble to me ignorance.'

"Say! on d' level! there was no flies on that for a scheme, was there? An' it would have been all right, me system would; only this old galoot I goes nex' to don't have no more sense than me. Why! he was d' ass of d' evening! d' prize pig of d' play, he was! Let me tell youse.

"D' foist move, he spreads a little table clot' across his legs. I ain't missin' no tricks, so I gets me hooks on me own little table clot' and spreads it over me legs also.

"'This is good enough for a dog, I t'inks, an' easy money! Be keepin' me eye on Mr. Goodplayer over there I can do this stunt all right.'

"An' so I does. I never lets him lose me onct.

"'How be youse makin' it, Chucky?' shouts me can'date from up be d' end of d' room.

"'Out o' sight!' I says. 'I'm winner from d' jump; I'm on velvet.'

"'Play ball!' me can'date shouts back to encourage me, I suppose because he's dead on I ain't no Foxy Quiller at d' racket we're at; 'play ball, Chucky, an' don't let 'em fan youse out. When you can't bat d' ball, bunt it,' says me can'date.

“Of course gettin’ d’ gay face that way from d’ boss gives me confidence, an’ as a result it ain’t two seconds before I’m all but caught off me base. It’s in d’ soup innin’s an’ d’ flunk slams down d’ consomme in a tea cup. It’s a new one on me for fair! I don’t at d’ time have me lamps on d’ mark ’cross d’ way, who I’m understudyin’, bein’ busy, as I says, slingin’ d’ bit of guff I tells of wit’ me can’date. An’ bein’ off me guard, I takes d’ soup for tea or some such dope, an’ is layin’ out to sugar it.

“‘Stan’ your hand!’ says a dub who’s organised be me right elbow, an’ who’s feedin’ his face wit’ both mits; ‘set a brake!’ he says. ‘That’s soup. Did youse t’ink it was booze?’

“After that I fastens to d’ old skate across d’ table to note where he’s at wit’ his game. He’s doin’ his toin on d’ consomme wit’ a spoon, so I gets a spoon in me hooks, goes to mixin’ it up wit’ d’ soup as fast as ever, an’ follows him out.

“An’ say! I’m feelin’ dead grateful to this snoozer, see! He was d’ ugliest mug I ever meets, at that. Say! he was d’ limit for looks, an’ don’t youse doubt it. As I sizes him up I was t’inking to meself, what a wonder he is! Honest! if I was a lion an’ that old party comes into me cage, do youse know what I’d do? Nit; you don’t. Well, I’ll tip it to youse straight. If any such lookin’ monster showed up in me cage, if d’ door was open, I’d get out. That’s on d’ square, I’d simply give him d’ cage an’ go an’ board in d’ woods. An’ if d’ door was locked an’ I couldn’t get out, I’d t’row a fit from d’ scare. Oh! he was a dream! He’s one of them t’ings a mark sees after he’s been hittin’ it up wit’ d’ lush for a mont’.

“ ‘But simply because he looks like a murderer,’ I reflects, ‘that’s no reason why he ain’t wise. He knows his way t’rough this dinner like a p’liceman does his beat, an’ I’ll go wit’ him.’

“ It’s a go! When he plays a fork, I plays a fork; when he boards a shave, I’m only a neck behind him. When he shifts his brush an’ tucks his little table clot’ over his t’ree-sheet, I’m wit’ him. I plays nex’ to him from soda to hock.

“ An’ every secont I’m gettin’ more confidence in this gezebo, an’ more an’ more stuck on meself. On d’ dead! I was farmer enough to t’ink I’d t’ank him for bein’ me guide before I shook d’ push an’ quit. Say! he’d be a nice old dub for me to be t’ankin’ d’ way it toins out. I was a good t’ing to follow him, I don’t t’ink.

“ If I was onto it early that me old friend across d’ table had w’eels an’ was wrong in his cocoa, I wouldn’t have felt so bad, see! But I’d been playin’ him to win, an’ followin’ his lead for two hours. An’ I was so sure I was trottin’ in front, that all d’ time I was jollyin’ meself, an’ pattin’ meself on d’ back, an’ tellin’ meself I was a corker to be gettin’ an even run wit’ d’ 400 d’ way I was, d’ foist time I enter s’ciety. An’ of course, lettin’ me nut swell that way makes it all d’ harder when I gets d’ jolt.

“ It’s at d’ finish. I’d gone down d’ line wit’ this sucker, when one of them waiter touts, who’s cappin’ d’ play for d’ kitchen, shoves a bowl of water in front of him. Now, what do youse t’ink he does? Drink it? Nit; that’s what he ought to have done. I’m Dutch if he don’t up an’ sink his hooks in it. An’ then he swabs off his mits wit’ d’ little table clot’.

Say! an' to t'ink I'd been takin' his steer t'rough d' whole racket! It makes me tired to tell it!

“ ‘W'at th' 'ell!’ I says to meself; ‘I've been on a dead one from d' start. This stiff is a bigger mut than I be.’

“ It let me out. Me heart was broke, an' I ain't had d' gall to hunt up me can'date since. Nit; I don't stay to say no ‘good-byes.’ I'm too bashful, as I tells you at d' beginnin'. As it is, I cops a sneak on d' door, side-steps d' outfit, an' screws me nut. The can'date sees me oozin' out, however, an' sends a chaser after me in d' shape of one of his flunks. He wants me to come back. He says me can'date wants to present me to his friends. I couldn't stan' for it d' way I felt, an' as d' flunk shows fight an' is goin' to take me back be force, I soaks him one an' comes away. On d' dead! I feels as 'shamed of d' entire racket as if some sucker had pushed in me face.”

ESSLEIN GAMES

FOR generations the Essleins have been fanciers of game chickens. The name "Esslein" for a century and a half has had honourable place among Virginians. In his day, they, the Essleins, were as well known as Thomas Jefferson. As this is written they have equal Old Dominion fame with either the Conways, the Fairfaxes, the McCarthys or the Lees. And all because of the purity and staunch worth of the "Esslein Games."

It was the broad Esslein boast that no man had chickens of such feather or strain. And this was accepted popularly as truth. The Essleins never loaned, sold, nor gave away egg or chicken. No one could produce the counterpart of the Esslein chickens for looks or warlike heart; no one ever won a main from the Essleins. So at last it was agreed generally, that no one save the Essleins did have the "Esslein Games;" and this belief went unchallenged while years added themselves to years.

But there came a day when a certain one named Smith, who dwelt in the region round about the Essleins, and who also had note for his fighting cocks, whispered to a neighbour that he, as well as the Essleins, had the "Esslein Games." The whisper spread into talk, and the talk into general clamour; everywhere one heard that the long monopoly was broken, and that Smith had the "Esslein Games."

This startling story had half confirmation by visitors to the Smith walks. Undoubtedly Smith had chickens, feather for feather, twins of the famous Essleins. That much at least was true. The rest of the question might have evidence pro or con some day, should Smith and the Essleins make a main.

But this great day seemed slow, uncertain of approach. Smith would not divulge the genesis of his fowls, nor tell how he came to be possessed of the Esslein chickens. Smith confined himself to the bluff claim :

“ I've got 'em, and there they be.”

Beyond this Smith wouldn't go. On their parts, the Essleins, at first maintained themselves in silent dignity. They said nothing ; treating the Smith claim as beneath contempt.

As man after man, however, went over to the Smith side, the Essleins so far unbent from their pose of tongue-tied hauteur as to call Smith “ a liar !”

Still this failed of full effect ; the talk went on, the subject was in mighty dispute, and the Essleins at last, to settle discussion, defied Smith to a main.

But Smith refused to fight his chickens against the Essleins. Smith said it was conscience, but failed to go into details. This was damaging. Meanwhile, however, as Smith challenged the world of fighting cocks, and, moreover, won every match he ever made, and barred only the Essleins in his campaigning, there arose, in spite of his steady objection to fighting the Essleins, many who believed Smith and stood forth for it that Smith *did* have the far-famed “ Esslein Games.”

It is to the credit of the Essleins that they did all that was in their power to bring Smith and his chick-

ens to the battlefield. They offered him every inducement known in chicken war, and tendered him a duel for his cocks to be fought for anything from love to money.

Firm to the last, Smith wouldn't have it; and so, discouraged, the Essleins, failing action, nailed as it were their gauntlet to Smith's hen-coop door, and thus the business stood for months.

It came about one day that a stranger from Baltimore accepted Smith's standing challenge to fight anybody save the Essleins. The stranger proposed and made a match with Smith to fight him nine battles, \$500 on each couple and \$2,500 on the general main. And then the news went 'round.

There was high excitement in chicken circles. The day came and the sides of the pit were crowded. Smith was in his corner with his handler, getting the first of his champions ready for the struggle. As Smith was holding the chicken for the handler to fasten on the gaffs—drop-socket, they were, and keen as little scimitars—he chanced to glance across the pit.

There stood John, chief of the Essleins.

Smith saw it in a moment; he had been trapped. But it was too late. The match was made and the money was up; there was no chance to retrace, even if Smith had wanted. As a fact to his glory, however, he had no desire so to do.

"We're up against the Essleins, Bill," Smith said to his trainer; "and it's all right. I didn't want to make a match with them, because I got their chickens queer. And if I'd fought them and won, I'd felt like I'd got their money queer; and that I couldn't stand. But this is different. We'll fight the Essleins now

they're here, and if they can win over me, they're welcome."

Then the main began. The first battle was short, sharp, deadly; and glorious for Smith. The Esslein chicken got a stab in the heart the first buckle. Smith smiled as his handler pulled his chicken's gaff out of its dead victim, and set it free.

The Smith entries won the second and third battle. Triumph rode on the glance of Smith, while the Esslein brows were bleak and dark.

"Smith's got the 'Esslein Games,' sure!" was whispered about the pit.

In the fourth and fifth battles the tide ran the other way, the Esslein chickens killing their rivals. Each battle, for that matter, had so far been to the death.

The sixth battle went to Smith and the seventh to the Essleins. Thus it stood four for Smith to three for the Essleins, just before the eighth battle. It didn't look as if Smith could lose.

It was at this juncture so hopeful for the coops of Smith, that Smith did a foolish thing. Yielding to the appeals of his trainer, Smith let that worthy man put up a chicken of his own to face the Esslein entry for the eighth duel. It was a gorgeous shawl-neck that Smith's trainer produced; eye bright as a diamond, and beak like some arrow-head of jet. His legs looked as strong as a hod-carrier's. It was a horse to a hen, so everybody said, that the Esslein chicken,—which was but a small, indifferent bird,—would lose its life, the battle, and the main at one and the same time.

Popular conjecture was wrong, as popular conjecture often is. The Esslein chicken locked both gaffs through the shawl-neck's brain in the second buckle.

“That teaches me a lesson,” said Smith. “Hereafter should an angel come down from heaven and beg me to let him fight a chicken in a main of mine, I’ll turn him down!”

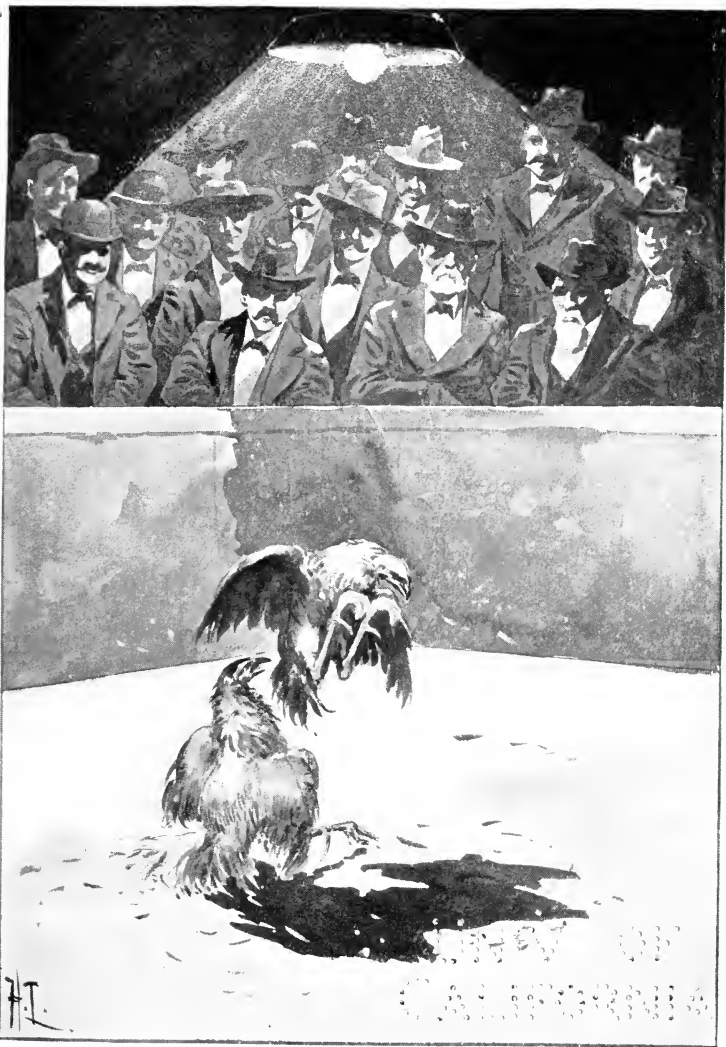
It was the ninth battle and the score stood four for Smith and four for the Essleins. As the slim gaffs, grey and cruelly sharp, were being placed on the feathered gladiators for the last deadly joust, Smith called across the pit to John Esslein:

“Esslein,” he said, “no matter how this last battle may fall, I reckon I’ve convinced you and everybody looking on, that, just as I said, I’ve got the ‘Esslein Games.’ To show you that I know I have, and give you a chance for revenge as well, I’ll make this last fight for \$10,000 a cock. The main so far has been an even break, and neither of us has won or lost. The last battle decides the tie and wins or loses me \$3,000. To make it interesting, I’ll raise the risk both ways, if you’re willing, just \$7,000, and call the bundle ten. And,” concluded Smith, as he glanced around the pit, “there isn’t a sport here but will believe in his heart, when I, a poor man, offer to make this last battle one for \$20,000, that I know that, even if I’m against, I’m at least behind an ‘Esslein Game.’”

“Make it for \$10,000 a cock, then!” said John Esslein bitterly. “Whether I win or lose main and money too, I’ve already lost much more than both to-day.”

Then the fight began. The chickens were big and strong and quick and as dauntlessly savage as ospreys. And feather and size, eye, and beak and leg, they were the absolute counterparts of each other.

For ten minutes the battle raged. Either the



"THE CHICKENS WERE BIG AND STRONG AND QUICK."—Page 102.

spurred fencers had more of luck or more of caution than the others. Buckle after buckle occurred, and after ten minutes' fighting the two enemies still faced each other with angry, bead-like eyes, and without so much as a drop of blood spilled.

They fronted each other balefully while one might count seven. Their beaks travelled up and down as evenly as if moved by the same impulse. Then they clashed together.

This time, as they drew apart, Smith's chicken fell upon its side, its right leg cut and broken well up toward the hip, with the bone pushing upward and outward through the slash of the gaff.

"Get your chicken and wring its neck, Smith," said someone. "It's all over!"

"Let them fight!" responded Smith. "It's not 'all over!' That chicken of Esslein's has a long row to hoe to kill that bird of mine."

Hardly were the words uttered when a strange chance befell. Smith's prostrate cripple reached up as its foe approached, seized it with its beak, and struggled to its one good foot. In the buckle that followed, the one gaff by some sleight of the cripple slashed the Esslein chicken over the eyes and blinded it. The muscles closed down and covered the eyes. Otherwise the Esslein cock was unhurt.

Then began a long, fierce, yet feeble fight. One chicken couldn't stand and the other couldn't see. The Smith chicken would lie on its side and watch its rival with eyes blazing hate, while the Esslein chicken, blind as a bat, would grope for him. When he came within reach of Smith's chicken, that indomitable bird would seize him with his bill; there would be some weak,

aimless clashing, and again they'd be separated, the blind one to grope, the cripple to lie and wait.

The war limped on in this fashion for almost two hours. But the end came. As the Esslein chicken strayed blindly within reach, its enemy got a strong, sudden grip, and in the collision that was the sequel, the Esslein chicken had its head half slashed from its body. It staggered a step with blood spurting, tottered and fell dead.

Smith said never a word, but from first to last his face had been cold and grimly indifferent. His heart was fire, but no one could see it in his face. Evidently the man was as clean-strain as his chickens.

That's all there is to the story. What became of the victor with the broken leg? Smith looked him over, decided it was "no use," and wrung his dauntless neck. The great main was over. Smith had won, everybody knew, as Smith went home that night, that he was \$10,000 better off, and that fast and sure, beyond denial or doubt, Smith had the "Esslein Games."

THE PAINFUL ERROR

THIS is a tale of school life. Fred Avery, Charles Roy and Benjamin Clayton are scholars in the same school. The name of this seminary is withheld by particular request. Suffice it that all three of these youths come and go and have their bright young beings within the neighbourhood of Newark. The age of each is thirteen years. Thirteen is a sinister number. They are all jocund, merry-hearted boys, and put in many hours each day thinking up a good time.

One day during the noon hour the school building was all but deserted. Charles Roy, Fred Avery and Benjamin Clayton, however, were there. They had formed plans for their entertainment which demanded the desertion of the school building as chronicled. The coast being fairly clear, the conspiring three proceeded to one of the upper recitation rooms of the building. This room did not appertain to the particular school favoured by the attendance of Fred Avery, Charles Roy and Benjamin Clayton as scholars. This, however, only added zest to the adventure.

The room to which our heroes repaired was the recitation stamping ground of a high school class in physiology. The better to know anatomy, the class was furnished with the skeleton of some dead gentleman, all nicely hung and arranged with wires so as to look as much like former days as possible. During class hours the framework of the dead person stood in

a corner of the room, and the students learned things from it that were useful to know. When off duty it reposed in a box.

Fred Avery, Charles Roy and Benjamin Clayton had heard of deceased. Their purpose this noon was to call on him. They gained entrance to the room by the burglarious method of picking the lock. Once within they took the skeleton from its box home and stood it in the window where the public might revel in the spectacle. To take off any grimness of effect they fixed a cob pipe in its bony jaws and clothed the skull in a bad hat, pulled much over the left eye, the whole conferring upon the remains a highly gala, joyous air indeed.

Then Charles Roy, Fred Avery and Benjamin Clayton withdrew from the scene.

The skeleton in the window was very popular. Countless folk had assembled to gaze upon it at the end of the first ten minutes, and armies were on their way.

The principal of the school as he came from lunch saw it and was much vexed. He put the skeleton back in its box, and the hydra-headed public slowly dispersed.

Fred Avery, Charles Roy and Benjamin Clayton secretly gloated over the transaction in detail and entirety. But the principal began to make inquiries; the avenger was on the track of the criminal three. Some big girls had witnessed the felonious entrance of the guilty ones into the den of the skeleton. The big girls imparted their knowledge to the principal, hunting these felons of the school. But the big girls slipped a cog on one important point. They did not

know the recreant Benjamin Clayton. After arguing it all over they decided that "the third boy" was a very innocent young person named Albert Weed, and so gave in the names of the guerillas as :

"Charles Roy, Fred Avery and Albert Weed!"

That afternoon the indignant principal demanded that Fred Avery, Charles Roy and Albert Weed attend him to the study. They were there charged with the atrocity of the skeleton in the window. Charles Roy and Fred Avery confessed and asked for mercy. Albert Weed denied having art, part or lot in the outrage. The principal was much shocked at his prompt depravity in trying to lie himself clear. The principal, in order to be exactly just, and evenly fair, craved to know of Charles Roy and Fred Avery :

"Was Albert Weed with you?"

"Please, sir, we would rather be excused from answering," they said, hanging down their heads.

Then the principal knew that Albert Weed was guilty. Fred Avery and Charles Roy were forgiven, and were complimented on their straightforward, manly course in refusing to tell a lie to shield themselves.

"As for you, Albert," observed the principal, as he seized Albert Weed by the top of his head, "as for you, Albert, I do not punish you for being roguish with the skeleton, but for telling me a lie."

* * * * *

The principal thereupon lambasted the daylights out of Albert Weed.

THE RAT

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“BE d’ cops at d’ Central office fly?” Chucky buried his face in his tankard in a polite effort to hide his contempt for the question. “Be dey fly! Say! make no mistake! d’ Central Office mugs is as soon a set of geezers as ever looked over d’ hill. Dey’re d’ swiftest ever. On d’ level! I t’ink t’ree out of every four of them gezebos could loin to play d’ pianny in one lesson.

“Just to put youse onto how quick dey be, an’ to give you some idee of their curves, let me tell you what dey does to Billy d’ Rat.

“Youse never chases up on d’ Rat? Nit! Well, Cully, you don’t miss much. Yes, d’ Rat’s a crook all right. He’s a nipper, but a dead queer one, see! He always woiks alone, an’ his lay is diamonds.

“‘I don’t want no pals or stalls in mine,’ says d’ Rat. ‘I can toin all needful tricks be me lonesome. Stalls is a give-away, see! Let some sucker holler, an’ let one of your mob get pinched, an’ what then? Why, about d’ time he’s stood up an’ given d’ secont degree be McClusky, he coughs. That’s it! he squeals, an’ d’ nex’ dash out o’ d’ box youse don’t get a t’ing but d’ collar. Nine out o’ ten of d’ good people doin’ time to-day, was t’rown into soak be some pal knockin’. I passes all that up! I goes it alone! If I nips a rock it’s

mine; I don't split out no bits for no snoozer, see! I'm d' entire woiks, an' if I stumbles an' falls be d' wayside, it's me's to blame. Which last makes it easier to stan' for.'

"That's d' way d' Rat lays out d' ground for me one day," continued Chucky, "an' he ain't slingin' no guff at that. It's d' way he always woiked.

"But to skin back to d' Central Office cops an' how fly dey be: One of d' Rat's favourite stunts is dampin' a diamond. What's that? Youse 'll catch on as me tale unfolds, as d' nov'lists puts it.

"Here's how d' Rat would graft. Foist he'd rub up his two lamps wit' pepper till dey looks red an' out of line. When he'd got t'rough doin' d' pepper act to 'em, d' Rat's peeps, for fair! would do to understudy two fried eggs.

"Then d' Rat would pull on a w'ite wig, like he's some old stuff; an' wit' that an' some black goggles over his peeps, his own Rag wouldn't have known him. To t'row 'em down for sure, d' Rat would wear a cork-sole shoe,—one of these 6-inch soles,—like he's got a game trilby. Then when he's all made up in black togs, d' Rat is ready.

"Bein' organised, d' Rat hobbles into a cab an' drives to a diamond shop. D' racket is this: Of course it takes a bit of dough, but that's no drawback, for d' Rat is always on velvet an' dead strong. As I say, d' play is this: D' Rat being well dressed an' fitted up wit' his cork-soles, his goggles an' his wig, comes hobblin' into d' diamond joint an' gives d' impression he's some rich old mark who ain't got a t'ing but money, an' that he's out to boin a small bundle be way of matchin' a spark which he has wit' him in his

mit. D' Rat fills d' diamond man up wit' a yarn, how he's goin' to saw a brace of ear-rings off on his daughter an' needs d' secont rock, see! Of course it's a dead case of string. D' Rat ain't got no kid, an' would be d' last bloke to go festoonin' her wit' diamonds if he had.

"Naturally, d' mut who owns d' store is out an' eager to do business. D' Rat won't let d' diamond man do d' matchin'; not on your life! he's goin' to mate them sparks himself. So he gives d' stiff wit' d' store d' tip to spread a handful of stones, say about d' size of d' one he's holdin' in his hooks—which mebbly is a 2-carat—on some black velvet for him to pick from. D' diamond party ain't lookin' for no t'row down from an old sore-eyed, cork-sole hobo like d' Rat, so he lays out a sprinklin' of stones. D' Rat, who all this time is starring his bum lamps, an' tellin' how bad an' weak dey be, an' how he can hardly see, gets his map down clost to d' lay-out of sparks, so as he can get onto em an' make d' match.

"It's now d' touch comes in. When d' Rat's got his smeller right among d' diamonds, he sticks out his tongue, quick like a toad for a honey-bee, an' nails a gem. That's what dey calls 'dampin' a diamond.' Yes, mebbly if there's so many of 'em laid out, he t'inks d' mark behint d' show case will stan' for it wit'out missin' 'em, d' Rat gets two. Then d' Rat goes on jollyin' an' chinnin' wit' d' sparks in his face; an' mebbly for a finish an' to put a cover on d' play, he buys one an' screws his nut.

"Wit' his cab, as I says, d' Rat is miles away, an' has time to shed his wig an' goggles an' cork-sole before d' guy wit' d' diamonds tumbles to it he's been done. That's how d' Rat gets in his woik. Now I'll

tell youse how d' Central Office people t'run d' harpoon into him.

“ One day d' Rat makes a play an' gets two butes. He tucks 'em away in back of his teet', an' is just raisin' his nut to say somethin', when d' store duck grabs him an' raises a roar. Two or t'ree cloiks an' a cop off d' street comes sprintin' up, an' away goes d' Rat to d' coop.

“ Wit' d' foist yell of d' sucker who makes d' front for d' store—naw, he ain't d' owner, he's one of d' cloiks—d' Rat goes clean outside of d' sparks at a gulp; swallows 'em; that's what he does. There bein' no diamond toined up, an' no one at headquarters bein' onto him—for he's always laid low an' kept out of sight of d' p'lice—d' Rat makes sure dey'll have to t'run him loose.

“ But d' boss cop is pretty cooney. He figgers it all out, how d' Rat's a crook, an' how he's eat d' diamonds, just as I says. So he cons d' Rat an' t'rows a dream into him. He tells him there'll be no trouble, but he'll have to keep him for an hour or two until his 'sooperior off'cer,' as he calls him, gets there. He's d' main squeeze, this p'lice dub dey're waitin' for, an' as soon as he shows up an' goes over d' play, d' Rat can screw out.

“ That's d' sort of song an' dance d' high cop gives d' Rat; an' say! I'm a lobster if d' Rat don't fall to it, at that. On d' dead! this p'lice duck is so smooth an' flossy d' Rat believes him.

“ Just for appearances d' Rat registers a big kick; an' then—for dey don't lock him up at all—he plants himself in a easy chair to do a toin of wait. D' Rat couldn't have broke an' run for it, even if he'd took d'

scare, for d' cops is all over d' place. But he ain't lookin' for d' woist of it nohow. He t'inks it's all as d' boss cop has told him; he'll wait there an hour or two for d' main guy an' then dey'll cut him free.

"After a half hour d' boss cop says: 'It's no use you bein' hungry, me frien', an' as I'm goin' to chew, come wit' me an' feed your face. D' treat's on me, anyhow, bein' obliged to detain a respect'ble old mucker like you. So come along.'

"Wit' that d' Rat goes along wit' d' boss cop, an' all d' time he's t'inkin' what a Stoughton bottle d' cop is.

"It's nex' door, d' chop-house is. D' cop an' d' Rat sets down an' breasts up to d' table. Dey gives d' orders all right, all right. But say! d' grub never gets to 'em. D' nex' move after d' orders, d' Rat, who's got a t'irst on from d' worry of bein' lagged, takes a drink out of a glass.

"'I'm poisoned!' yells d' Rat as he slams down d' tumbler; 'somebody's doped me!' an' wit' that d' Rat toins in, t'rows a fit, an' is seasick to d' limit.

"That's what that boss cop does. He sends over an' doctors a glass while d' Rat is settin' in his office waitin', an' then gives him a bluff about chewin' an' steers d' Rat ag'inst it. Say! it was a dandy play. D' dope or whatever it was, toins me poor friend d' Rat inside out, like an old woman's pocket.

"An' them sparks is recovered.

"Yes, d' Rat does a stretch. As d' judge sentences him, d' Rat gives d' cop who downs him his mit. 'You're a wonder,' says d' Rat to d' cop; 'there's no flies baskin' in d' sun on you. When I reflects on d' way you sneaks d' chaser after them sparks, an' lands 'em, I'm bound to say d' Central Office mugs are onto their job.'"

CHEYENNE BILL

(WOLFVILLE)

CHEYENNE BILL is out of luck. Ordinarily his vagaries are not regarded in Wolfville. His occasional appearance in its single street in a voluntary of nice feats of horsemanship, coupled with an exhibition of pistol shooting, in which old tomato cans and passé beer bottles perform as targets, has hitherto excited no more baleful sentiment in the Wolfville bosom than disgust.

"Shootin' up the town a whole lot!" is the name for this engaging pastime, as given by Cheyenne Bill, and up to date the exercise has passed unchallenged.

But to-day it is different. Camps like individuals have moods, now light, now dark; and so it is with Wolfville. At this time Wolfville is experiencing a wave of virtue. This may have come spontaneously from those seeds of order which, after all, dwell sturdily in the Wolfville breast. It may have been excited by the presence of a pale party of Eastern tourists, just now abiding at the O. K. Hotel; persons whom the rather sanguine sentiment of Wolfville credits with meditating an investment of treasure in her rocks and rills. But whatever the reason, Wolfville virtue is aroused; a condition of the public mind which makes it a bad day for Cheyenne Bill.

The angry sun smites hotly in the deserted causeway

of Wolfville. The public is within doors. The Red Light Saloon is thriving mightily. Those games which generally engross public thought are drowsy enough; but the counter whereat the citizen of Wolfville gathers with his peers in absorption of the incautious compounds of the place, is fairly sloppy from excess of trade. Notwithstanding the torrid heat this need not sound strangely; Wolfville leaning is strongly homœopathic. "*Similia similibus curantur*," says Wolfville; and when it is blazing hot, drinks whiskey.

But to-day there is further reason for this consumption. Wolfville is excited, and this provokes a thirst. Cheyenne Bill, rendering himself prisoner to Jack Moore, rescue or no rescue, has by order of that sagacious body been conveyed by his captor before the vigilance committee, and is about to be tried for his life.

What was Cheyenne Bill's immediate crime? Certainly not a grave one. Ten days before it would have hardly earned a comment. But now in its spasm of virtue, and sensitive in its memories of the erratic courses of Cheyenne Bill aforesaid, Wolfville has grimly taken possession of that volatile gentleman for punishment. He has killed a Chinaman. Here is the story:

"Yere comes that prairie dog, Cheyenne Bill, all spraddled out," says Dave Tutt.

Dave Tutt is peering from the window of the Red Light, to which lattice he has been carried by the noise of hoofs. There is a sense of injury disclosed in Dave Tutt's tone, born of the awakened virtue of Wolfville.

"It looks like this camp never can assoome no airs," remarks Cherokee Hall in a distempered way, "but



"EXPRESSING GLADSOME AND ECSTATIC WHOOPS."—Page 115.

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this yere miser'ble Cheyenne comes chargin' up to queer it."

As he speaks, that offending personage, unconscious of the great change in Wolfville morals, sweeps up the street, expressing gladsome and ecstatic whoops, and whirling his pistol on his forefinger like a thing of light. One of the tourists stands in the door of the hotel smoking a pipe in short, brief puffs of astonishment, and reviews the amazing performance. Cheyenne Bill at once and abruptly halts. Gazing for a disgruntled moment on the man from the East, he takes the pipe from its owner's amazed mouth and places it in his own.

"Smokin' of pipes," he vouchsafes in condemnatory explanation, "is onelegant an' degradin'; an' don't you do it no more in my presence. I'm mighty sensitive that a-way about pipes, an' I don't aim to tolerate 'em none whatever."

This solution of his motives seems satisfactory to Cheyenne Bill. He sits puffing and gazing at the tourist, while the latter stands dumbly staring, with a morsel of the ravished meerschaum still between his lips.

What further might have followed in the way of oratory or overt acts cannot be stated, for the thoughts of the guileless Cheyenne suddenly receive a new direction. A Chinaman, voluminously robed, emerges from the New York store, whither he has been drawn by dint of soap.

"Whatever is this Mongol doin' in camp, I'd like for to know?" inquires Cheyenne Bill disdainfully. "I shore leaves orders when I'm yere last, for the immejit removal of all sech. I wouldn't mind it, but with strangers visitin' Wolfville this a-way, it plumb mortifies me to death."

"Oh well!" he continues in tones of weary, bitter reflection, "I'm the only public-sperited gent in this yere outfit, so all reforms falls nacheral to me. Still, I plays my hand! I'm simply a pore, lonely white, but jest the same, I makes an example of this speciment of a sudsmonger to let 'em know whatever a white man is, anyhow."

Then comes the short, emphatic utterance of a six-shooter. A puff of smoke lifts and vanishes in the hot air, and the next census will be short one Asiatic.

In a moment arrives a brief order from Enright, the chief of the vigilance committee, to Jack Moore. The last-named official proffers a Winchester and a request to surrender simultaneously, and Cheyenne Bill, realizing fate, at once accedes.

"Of course, gents," says Enright, apologetically, as he convenes the committee in the Red Light bar; "I don't say this Cheyenne is held for beefin' the Chinaman sole an' alone. The fact is, he's been havin' a mighty sight too gay a time of late, an' so I thinks it's a good, safe play, bein' as it's a hot day an' we has the time, to sorter call the committee together an' ask its views, whether we better hang this yere Cheyenne yet or not?"

"Mr. Pres'dent," responds Dave Tutt, "if I'm in order, an' to get the feelin' of the meetin' to flowin' smooth, I moves we takes this Cheyenne an' proceeds with his immolation. I ain't basin' it on nothin' in partic'lar, but lettin' her slide as fulfillin' a long-felt want."

"Do I note any remarks?" asks Enright. "If not, I takes Mr. Tutt's very excellent motion as the census of this meetin', an' it's hang she is."

“Not intendin’ of no interruption,” remarks Texas Thompson, “I wants to say this: I’m a quiet gent myse’f, an’ nacheral aims to keep Wolfville a quiet place likewise. For which-all I shorely favours a-hangin’ of Cheyenne. He’s given us a heap of trouble. Like Tutt I don’t make no p’int on the Chinaman; we spares the Chink too easy. But this Cheyenne is allers a-ridin’, an’ a-yellin’, an’ a-shootin’ up this camp till I’m plumb tired out. So I says let’s hang him, an’ su’gests as a eligible, as well as usual nook tharfore, the windmill back of the dance hall.”

“Yes,” says Enright, “the windmill is, as exper’ence has showed, amply upholstered for sech plays; an’ as delays is aggravatin’, the committee might as well go wanderin’ over now, an’ get this yere ceremony off its mind.”

“See yere, Mr. Pres’dent!” interrupts Cheyenne Bill in tones of one ill-used, “what for a deal is this I rises to ask?”

“You can gamble this is a squar’ game,” replies Enright confidently. “You’re entitled to your say when the committee is done. Jest figure out what kyards you needs, an’ we deals to you in a minute.”

“I solely wants to know if my voice is to be regarded in this yere play, that’s all,” retorts Cheyenne Bill.

“Gents,” says Doc Peets, who has been silently listening. “I’m with you on this hangin’. These Eastern sharps is here in our midst. It’ll impress ’em that Wolfville means business, an’ it’s a good, safe, quiet place. They’ll carry reports East as will do us credit, an’ thar you be. As to the propriety of stringin’ Cheyenne, little need be said. If the Chinaman ain’t enough, if assaultin’ of an innocent tenderfoot ain’t enough,

you can bet he's done plenty besides as merits a lariat. He wouldn't deny it himse'f if you asks him."

There is a silence succeeding the rather spirited address of Doc Peets, on whose judgment Wolfville has been taught to lean. At last Enright breaks it by inquiring of Cheyenne Bill if he has anything to offer.

"I reckons it's your play now, Cheyenne," he says, "so come a-runnin.'"

"Why!" urges Cheyenne Bill, disgustedly, "these proceedin's is ornery an' makes me sick. I shore objects to this hangin';, an' all for a measly Chinaman too! This yere Wolfville outfit is gettin' a mighty sight too stylish for me. It's growin' that per-dad-binged-'tic'lar it can't take its reg'lar drinks, an'——"

"Stop right thar!" says Enright, with dignity, rapping a shoe-box with his six-shooter; "don't you cuss the chair none, 'cause the chair won't have it. It's parliamentary law, if any gent cusses the chair he's out of order, same as it's law that all chips on the floor goes to the house. When a gent's out of order once, that settles it. He can't talk no more that meetin'. Seein' we're aimin' to eliminate you, we won't claim nothin' on you this time. But be careful how you come trackin' 'round ag'in, an' don't fret us! *Sabe?* Don't you-all go an' fret us none!"

"I ain't allowin' to fret you," retorts Cheyenne Bill. "I don't have to fret you. What I says is this: I s'pose, I sees fifty gents stretched by one passel of Stranglers or another between yere an' The Dalls, an' I never does know a party who's roped yet on account of no Chinaman. An' I offers a side bet of a blue stack, it ain't law to hang people on account of downin' no Chinaman. But you-all seems sot on this, an' so I

tells you what I'll do. I'm a plain gent an' thar's no filigree work on me. If it's all congenial to the boys yere assembled—not puttin' it on the grounds of no miser'ble hop slave, but jest to meet public sentiment half way—I'll gamble my life, hang or no hang, on the first ace turned from the box, Cherokee deal. Does it go?"

Wolfville tastes are bizarre. A proposition original and new finds in its very novelty an argument for Wolfville favour. It befalls, therefore, that the unusual offer of Cheyenne Bill to stake his neck on a turn at faro is approvingly criticised. The general disposition agrees to it; even the resolute Enright sees no reason to object.

"Cheyenne," says Enright, "we don't have to take this chance, an' it's a-makin' of a bad preceedent which the same may tangle us yereafter; but Wolfville goes you this time, an' may Heaven have mercy on your soul. Cherokee, turn the kyards for the ace."

"Turn squar', Cherokee!" remarks Cheyenne Bill with an air of interest. "You wouldn't go to sand no deck, nor deal two kyards at a clatter, ag'in perishin' flesh an' blood?"

"I should say, no!" replies Cherokee. "I wouldn't turn queer for money, an' you can gamble! I don't do it none when the epeesode comes more onder the head of relaxation."

"Which the same bein' satisfact'ry," says Cheyenne Bill, "roll your game. I'm eager for action; also, I plays it open."

"I dunno!" observes Dan Boggs, meditatively caressing his chin; "I'm thinkin' I'd a-coppered;—that's whatever!"

The deal proceeds in silence, and as may happen in that interesting sport called faro, a split falls out. Two aces appear in succession.

"Ace lose, ace win!" says Cherokee, pausing. "Whatever be we goin' to do now, I'd like to know?"

There is a pause.

"Gents," announces Enright, with dignity, "a split like this yere creates a doubt; an' all doubts goes to the pris'ner, same as a maverick goes to the first rider as ties it down, an' runs his brand onto it. This camp of Wolfville abides by law, an' blow though it be, this yere Cheyenne Bill, temp'rarily at least, goes free. However, he should remember this yere graze an' restrain his methods yereafter. Some of them ways of his is onhealthful, an' if he's wise he'll shorely alter his system from now on."

"Which the camp really lose! an' this person Bill goes free!" says Jack Moore, dejectedly. "I allers was ag'in faro as a game. Where we-all misses it egreegious, is we don't play him freeze-out."

"Do you know, Cherokee," whispers Faro Nell, as her eyes turn softly to that personage of the deal box, "I don't like killin's none! I'd sooner Cheyenne goes loose, than two bonnets from Tucson!"

At this Cherokee Hall pinches the cheek of Faro Nell with a delicate accuracy born of his profession, and smiles approval.

BLIGHTED

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

“ IS it hauteur, or is it a maiden’s coyness which causes you to turn away your head, love?”

George D’Orsey stood with his arm about the willow form of Imogene O’Sullivan. The scene was the ancestral halls of the O’Sullivans in the fashionable north-west quarter of Harlem. George D’Orsey had asked Imogene O’Sullivan to be his bride. That was prior to the remark which opened our story. And the dear girl softly promised. The lovers stood there in the gloaming, drinking that sweet intoxication which never comes but once.

“ It isn’t hauteur, George,” replied Imogene O’Sullivan, in tones like far-off church bells. “ But, George! —don’t spurn me—I have eaten of the common onion of commerce, and my breath, it is so freighted with that trenchant vegetable, it would take the nap from your collar like a lawn mower. It is to spare the man she loves, George, which causes your Imogene to hold her head aloof.”

“ Look up, darling!” and George D’Orsey’s tones held a glad note of sympathy, “ I, too, have batted upon onions.”

The lovers clung to each other like bats in a steeple.

“ But we’ll have to put toe-weights on pa, George; he’ll step high and lively when he hears of this!”

The lovers were seated on the sofa, now ; the prudent Imogene was taking a look ahead.

“Doesn't your father love me, pet?”

“I don't think he does,” replied the fair girl tenderly. “I begged him to ask you to dinner, once, George ; that was on your last trip. He said he would sooner dine with a wet dog, George, and refused. From that I infer his opposition to our union.”

“We'll make a monkey of him yet!” and George D'Orsey hissed the words through his set teeth.

“And my brother?”

“As for him,” said George D'Orsey (and at this he began pacing the room like a lion), “as for your brother! If he so much as looks slant-eyed at our happiness, he goes into the soup! From your father I would bear much ; but when the balance of the family gets in on the game, they will pay for their chips in advance.”

“Can we not leave them, George ; leave them, and fly together?”

“Your father is rich, Imogene ; that is a sufficient answer.” There was a touch of sternness in George D'Orsey's tones, and the subject of flying was dropped.

George D'Orsey lived in the far-off hamlet of Hoboken. He returned to his home. In three months he was to wed Imogene O'Sullivan. Benton O'Sullivan had a fit when it was first mentioned to him. At last he gave his sullen consent.

“I had planned a title for you, Imogene.” That was all he said.

Three months have elapsed. It was dark when the ferryboat came to a panting pause in its slip. George D'Orsey picked his way through the crowd with quick,

nervous steps. It was to be his wedding-night. He wondered if Imogene would meet him at the ferry. At that moment he beheld her dear form walking just ahead.

"To-night, dearest, you are mine forever!" whispered George D'Orsey tenderly, seizing the sweet young creature by her arm.

The shrieks which emanated from the young woman could have defied the best efforts of a steam siren. It was not Imogene O'Sullivan!

The police bore away George D'Orsey. They turned a deaf ear to his explanations.

"You make me weary!" remarked the brutal turn-key, to whom George D'Orsey told his tale.

The cell door slammed; the lock clanked; the cruel key grated as it turned. George D'Orsey was a prisoner. The charge the blotter bore against him was: "Insulting women on the street."

When George D'Orsey was once more alone, he cursed his fate as if his heart would break. At last he was calm.

" Oh, woman, in our hour of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please;
But, seen too oft, familiar with her face;
We first endure, then pity, then embrace! "

The Chateau O'Sullivan was a flare and a glare of lights. The rooms were jungles of palms and tropical plants. Flowers were everywhere, while the air tottered and fainted under the burden of their perfume. Imogene O'Sullivan never looked more beautiful.

But George D'Orsey did not come.

Hour followed hour into the past. The guests moved uneasily from room to room. The preacher notified Benton O'Sullivan that he was ready.

And still George D'Orsey came not.

"The villain has laid down on us, me child!" whispered Benton O'Sullivan to the weeping Imogene; "but may me hopes of heaven die of heart failure if I have not me revenge! No man shall insult the proud house of O'Sullivan and get away with it; not without blood!"

The guests cheerfully dispersed, talking the most scandalous things in whispers.

Imogene O'Sullivan's dream was over.

It was the next night. George D'Orsey stood on the O'Sullivan porch, ringing the bell. His eye and his pocket and his stomach were alike wildly vacant.

"Sic him, Bull! Sic him!" said Benton O'Sullivan, bitterly.

Bull tore several specimens from the quivering frame of George D'Orsey, who vanished in the darkness with a hoarse cry.

Years afterward George D'Orsey and Imogene O'Sullivan met, but they gave each other a cold, meaningless stare.

THE SURETHING

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

JOHN SPARROWHAWK was a sporting man of the tribe of "Surethings." He was fond of what has Cherry Hill description as a "cinch." He never let any lame, slow trick get away. John Sparrowhawk's specialty was racing; and he always referred to this diversion with horses as his "long suit." He kept several rather abrupt animals himself, and whenever he found a man whose horse wasn't as sudden as some horse he owned, John Sparrowhawk would lay plots for that man, and ultimately race equines with him, and become master of such sums as the man would bet. John Sparrowhawk wandered through life in his "surething" way and amassed wealth. He was rich, and was wont to boast to very intimate friends:

"I never spent a dollar which I honestly earned."

This gave John Sparrowhawk a vast deal of vogue, and he was looked up to and revered by a circle which is always impressed by the genius of one who can rob his fellow-worms, and do it according to law.

It befell one day that the Brooklyn Jockey Club offered a purse for a running race, but demanded five entries. In no time at all, three horses were entered. Their names and capacities were well known to the sagacious John Sparrowhawk. He had a horse that could beat them all.

"He would run by them like they was tied to a post!" remarked John Sparrowhawk, in a chant of ungrammatical exultation.

It burst upon him that the time was ripe to pillage somebody. His latest larceny was ten days old, and John Sparrowhawk oft quoted the Bowery poet where he said:

"Count that day lost whose low, descending sun
Sees at thy hands no worthy sucker done."

And John Sparrowhawk did business that way. If he might only get another horse entered, and then complete the quintet with his own, John Sparrowhawk would possess "a snap." Which last may be defined as a condition of affairs much famed for its excellence.

At this juncture John Sparrowhawk had the idea of his career. The idea made "a great hit" with him. He had a friend who had a horse, which, while not so swiftly elusive as "Tenbroeck" and "Spokane" in their palmy days, could defeat such things as district messenger boys, Fifth avenue stages, and many other enterprises which do not attain meteoric speed. John Sparrowhawk's horse could beat it, he was sure. He would explain the situation to his friend, and cause his snail of a horse to be entered. This would fill the race, and then John Sparrowhawk's horse would win "hands down," and thereby empty everybody's pockets in favour of John Sparrowhawk's, which was a very glutton of a pocket, and never got enough.

John Sparrowhawk's friend was lying ill at the Hoffman. John Sparrowhawk went into that hostelry and climbed the stairs, softly humming that optimistic ballad, which begins: "There's a farmer born every second!"

The sick friend took little interest in the deadfall proposed by John Sparrowhawk. He was suffering from a mass-meeting on the part of divers boils, which had selected a trysting place on his person, where their influence would be felt.

Locked, as it were, in conflict with his afflictions, John Sparrowhawk's friend was indifferent to his horse. He cared not what traps were set with him.

John Sparrowhawk entered the friend's horse and paid the entrance money—\$150. Then he lavished \$15 on a "jock" to ride him. The field was full, the conditions of the purse complied with, and the race a "go." Of course, John Sparrowhawk's horse would win; and, acting on it as the chance of his life, John Sparrowhawk went craftily about wagering his dollars, even unto his bottom coin; and all to the end that he deplete the "jays" about him and become exceeding rich.

"I'm out for the stuff!" observed John Sparrowhawk, and acted accordingly.

When the race started John Sparrowhawk had everything up but his eyes, his ears, and other bric-à-brac of a personal sort, which would mean inconvenience to be without a moment.

There could be no purpose other than a cruel one, so far as John Sparrowhawk is concerned, to dwell on the details of this race. Suffice it that they started and they finished, and the horse of the sick friend made a fool of the horse of John Sparrowhawk. He beat him like rocking a baby, so said the sports, and thereby dumped the unscrupulous yet sapient John Sparrowhawk for every splinter he possessed. It shook every particle of dust out of John Sparrowhawk. He called

to relate his woe to his sick friend. That suffering person's malady had temporarily taken a recess from its labours, and for the nonce he was resting easy.

"I know'd it, and had four thousand placed that way, John," observed the invalid. "I win almost thirteen thousand on the trick. My horse could do that skate of yours on three legs. I tumbled to it the moment you came in the other day."

"Why didn't you put me on?" remonstrated John Sparrowhawk, almost in tears, as he thought of the dray-load of money he had lost.

"Put you on!" repeated the Job of the Hoffman, scornfully; "not none! I wanted to see how it would seem to let a 'surething' sharp like you open a game on a harmless sufferer and 'go broke' on it. No, John; it will do you good. You won't have so much money as the result of this, but you will be a heap more erudite."

GLADSTONE BURR

GLADSTONE BURR is a small, industrious, married man. His little nest of a home is in Brooklyn. Perhaps the most emphasised feature of the Burr family home is Mrs. B. She is a large woman, direct as Bismarck in her diplomacy, and when Gladstone Burr does wrong, she tells him of it firmly and fully for his good. There is but one bad habit which can with slightest show of truth be charged to Gladstone Burr. The barriers of his nature, yielding to social pressure, at intervals give way. At such times the soul of Gladstone Burr issues forth on a sea of strong drink.

But, as he says himself, "these bats never last longer than ten days."

Notwithstanding this meagre limit, Mrs. B. does not approve of Gladstone Burr when thus socially relaxed. And from time to time she has left nothing unsaid on that point. Indeed, Mrs. B. has so fully defined her position on the subject, that Gladstone Burr, while he in no sense fears her, does not care to go home unless he is either very drunk or very sober. There is no middle ground in tippling where Gladstone Burr and Mrs. B. can meet with his consent. He is not superstitious, but he avers that whenever he has been drinking and meets Mrs. B. he has had bad luck. His only safety lies in either being sober and avoiding it, or in taking refuge in a jag too thick for wifely admonitions to pierce.

There arose last week in the life of Gladstone Burr some event that it was absolutely necessary to celebrate. For two days he gave himself up to his destiny in that behalf, and being very busy with his festival Gladstone Burr did not go home.

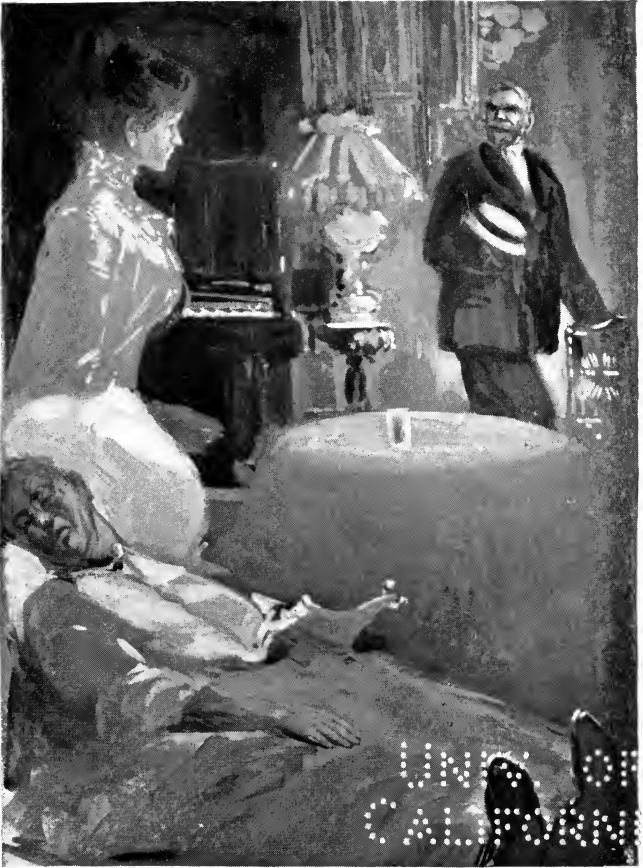
Toward the close of the third day he was considering with himself how best to approach his domicile so as to avoid the full force of the storm. He was not so deep in his cups at that moment, but Mrs. B.'s opinions gave him concern. Still, he felt the need of going home. He was tired and he was sick. Gladstone Burr knew he would be a great deal sicker in the morning, but he felt of a four-bit piece in his pocket, and remarking something about the hair of a dog, took courage, and was confident he carried the means of restoring himself.

But how to get home!

It was at this crisis in the affairs of Gladstone Burr that his friend, Frederick Upham Adams, came up. An inspiration seized Gladstone Burr. Adams should take him home in a carriage. Mrs. B. didn't know Adams, being careful of her acquaintances. They would say that he, Gladstone Burr, had been ill, almost dead from apoplexy, or sunstroke, during the recent hot spell, and that "Dr. Adams" was bringing him home.

It was a most happy thought.

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Burr," said Adams, as an hour later he supported the drooping Gladstone Burr through the hall and stowed him away on a sofa. "I am Dr. Adams, of Williamsburg. Mr. Burr has suffered a great shock, but he is out of danger now. All he needs is rest—perfect rest!"



"GIVE HIM MILK, MRS. BURR, MILK!"—Page 131.

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Gladstone Burr gasped piteously from the sofa. Mrs. B. was deceived perfectly. The ruse worked like a charm.

"How long must he be kept quiet, Doctor?" asked Mrs. B., as she wrung her hands over Gladstone Burr's danger. She was bending above the invalid at the time, and he was unable to signal his friend to be careful how he prescribed.

"Oh! ahem!" observed "Dr. Adams," looking at the ceiling, professionally, "about three days! That is right! Perfect rest for three days, and Mr. Burr will be a well man again."

"Are there directions as to what medicines to give him?" asked Mrs. B., passing her hand gently over Gladstone Burr's heated dome of thought; "any directions about the food, Doctor?"

"He needs no medicine," observed the wretched Adams, closing his eyes sagaciously, and sucking his cane. "As for food, we must be careful. I should advise nothing but milk. Give him milk, Mrs. Burr, milk."

After this Frederick Upham Adams drove away. And at the end of three days Gladstone Burr was almost dead.

THE GARROTE

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“TELL youse somethin’ about d’ worser side of d’ Bend!” retorted Chucky. His manner was resentful. I had put my question in a fashion half apologetic and as one who might be surprised at anything bad in the Bend. It was this lamblike method of being curious that Chucky didn’t applaud. Evidently he gloried a bit in the criminal vigour of certain phases of a Bend existence.

“Mebby you t’inks there is no worser side to d’ Bend! Mebby you takes d’ Bend for a hotbed of innocence! Don’t string no stuff on d’ milky character of d’ Bend. Youse would lose it one, two, t’ree, keno! see! There’s dead loads of t’ings about d’ Bend what’s so tough it ’ud make youse sore on yourself to get onto ’em.

“Be d’ way! while youse is chinnin’ concernin’ d’ hard lines of d’ Bend, I’m put in mind about Danny d’ Face, who shows up from Sing Sing to-day. Say! d’ Face wasn’t doin’ a t’ing but put up a roar all d’ mornin’, till a cop shows up an’ lays it out cold if d’ Face don’t cork, he’ll pinch him.

“What was d’ squeal about? Why! it’s like this,” continued Chucky, settling himself where the barkeeper might know when his glass was empty. “It’s all about d’ Face’s Bundle. When d’ victim takes his little ten

spaces, his Bundle mourns 'round for a brace of mont's, see! An' then she marries another guy.

"What else could youse look for? That's what I say; what could d' Face expect? Ten spaces ain't like a stretch, it's 'life,' see! D' mug who chases in an' takes a trip for ten, he's a lifer. An' you knows as well as me, even if youse ain't done time, that when a duck gets life, it's d' same as a divorce. That's dead straight! his Bundle is free to get married ag'in.

"An' that's just what d' Face's Rag does; she hooks up wit' another skate, after d' Face has had his stripes for a couple of mont's. She's no tree-toad to live on air an' scenery, so she gets hitched. I was right there, pipin' off d' play meself, when d' w'ite choker ties 'em. It was a good weddin', wit' a dandy lot of lush; d' can was passin' all d' time, an' so d' mem'ry of it is wit' me still.

"As I says, d' Face comes weavin' in this mornin', an' tries to break up what d' poipers call 'existin' conditions.' It don't go, though; d' cop cuts in on d' play an' makes it a cinch case of nit, see!

"What'll d' Face do? What can he do but screw his nut an' stan' for it? He ain't got no licence to interfere. It's a case of 'nothin' doin',' as far as d' Face's end goes. Let him charge 'round an' grab off another skirt. There's plenty of 'em; d' Face can find another wife if he goes d' right way down d' line. But he don't make no hit be hollerin', he can take a tumble to that.

"What is it railroads d' Face? He does a stunt garrotin', see! I'll tell youse d' story. Of course, d' Face is a crook.

"Now, understan' me! I ain't no crook. I'm a

fakir, an' a grafter; an' I've been fly in me time an' I ain't no dub to-day, but I never was no crook, see! But, of course, born as I was in Kelly's Alley, an' always free of d' Bowery push, I hears a lot about crooks, an' has more'n one of d' swell mob on me visitin' list.

"Naw; d' Face was never in d' foist circles, nothin' fine to him. He never was d' real t'ing as a dip, an' d' best he could do was to shove an' stall. Now an' then he toins a trick as a porch climber; but even at that I never gets a tip of any big second-story woik d' Face does.

"D' Face's best trick is d' garrote, an' it's on d' garrote lay dey downs d' Face when dey puts him away.

"Now-days there's a lot of sandbaggin'. Some mug comes wanderin' along, loaded to d' guards wit' booze. an' some soon duck lends him a t'ump back of d' nut wit' a sandbag, or mebby it's a lead pipe or a bar of rubber. Over goes d' slewed mug, on his map, an' d' rest is easy money, see! That's d' way it's done now.

"But in d' old times, when I'm a kid, it ain't d' sandbag; it's d' garrote. An' d' patient can be cold sober, still d' garrote goes all right. It takes two to woik it; but even at that it beats d' sandbag hands down. It's smoother, cleaner, and more like a woik-man, see! d' garrote is.

"Besides, there's more apt to be stuff on a sober party than on some stiff who's tanked. I know d' poipers is always talkin' about people gettin' a load, wit' money all over 'em; but youse can gamble! such talk is a song an' dance. I'm more'n seven years old, an' me exper'ence is, that it's a four-to-one shot a drunk is every time broke.

“ But to go to d’ story of how d’ Face gets pinched. As I states, it’s way back ; not quite ten spaces (for d’ Face shortens his stay at d’ pen wit’ good conduct time see !), an’ d’ Face an’ a pal, Spot Casey, who’s croaked now, is out on d’ garrote lay.

“ D’ Face is followin’, an’ Spot is sluggin’. Here’s how dey lays out d’ game. It’s on Fift’ Avenoo, down be Nint’. Spot’s playin’ round d’ corner on Nint’; d’ Face is woikin’ about a block away on Fift’ Avenoo, on d’ lookout for a sucker, see! Along he comes walkin’ fast, this sucker. As he passes, d’ Face gives him d’ size-up. He’s got a spark, an’ a yellow chain, an’ looks like he’s good for a hundred in d’ long green. That does for d’ Face. He lets this guy get good an’ by, an’ then toins an’ shadows him.

“ D’ Face walks faster than d’ sucker. It’s his play to be nex’, be d’ time dey hits Nint’, where Spot is layin’ dead.

“ As dey chases up, d’ Face an’ d’ snoozer he’s out to do is bot’ walkin’ fast, wit’ d’ Face five foot behint.

“ Just before dey makes d’ corner, d’ Face gives d’ office to Spot be stampin’ onct wit’ his trilby on d’ sidewalk. Then he moves right up sharp, claps his right arm about d’ geezer’s t’roat, at d’ same time grabbin’ his right hook wit’ his left an’ yankin’ his arm in tight. It shuts off d’ duck’s wind.

“ As d’ Face clenches his party, as I says, he gives him d’ knee behint, an’ sort o’ lifts him up. At d’ same instant, Spot comes chasin’ round d’ corner in front an’ smashes his right duke into what d’ prize fighters calls ‘d’ mark.’ Yes, it’s d’ same t’ump that does for Corbett that day wit’ Fitz.

“ “ That’s d’ stuff, Spot ! ’ says d’ Face, as d’ party is

slugged, an' then he sets him down be d' fence all limp an' quiet, an' goes t'rough him.

"Dey gets a super, a pin, an' quite a healt'y roll besides. He's so done up dey even gets a di'mond off one of his hooks.

"Sure! d' garrote almost puts a mark's light out. Youse can bet! after youse has been t'rough d' mill onct, youse won't t'ink, travel, nor raise d' yell for half an hour. A mark's lucky to be alive who's been t'rough d' garrote. It ain't so bad as d' sandbag at that, neither.

"How was it d' Face is took? Nit; d' cop don't get in on d' play; dey win easy. It's two weeks later when he's collared. D' Face's pal, Spot, gets too gabby wit' a skirt, who's stoolin' for d' p'lice on d' sly, an' she goes an' knocks to d' Chief!"

O'TOOLE'S CHIVALRY

A woman, a spaniel, and a walnut tree ;
The more you beat them, the better they be.

Irish Proverb.

THUS sadly sang P. Sarsfield O'Toole to himself, as he readjusted the bandage to his wronged eye. He believed it, too ; at least in the case of Madame Bridget Burke, the wife of one John Burke.

The Burkes were the neighbours of P. Sarsfield O'Toole ; they lived next door. The intimacy, however, went no further ; O'Toole and the Burkes were not friends.

This is the story of the damaged eye. It offers the reason why P. Sarsfield O'Toole comforted himself with the vigorous Irish proverb.

It was the evening before. P. Sarsfield O'Toole was sitting on his back porch, cooling himself after a day's work at his profession of bricklayer, by reading the history of Ireland. The Burkes were holding audible converse just over the division fence.

P. Sarsfield O'Toole closed the history of his native land to listen. This last was neither an arduous nor a painful task, for the Burkes, with the splendid frankness of a household willing to stand or fall by its record, could be heard a block.

“Me family was noble!” P. Sarsfield O’Toole overheard John Burke remark. “The Burkes wanst lived in their own cashtle.”

“They did not,” observed Madame Burke. “They lived woild in the bog of Allen, and there was mud on their shanks from wan ind of the year to the other. Divvil a cashtle did a Burke ever see; barrin’ a jail.”

“Woman! av yez arouse me,” said John Burke, threateningly, “I’ll break the bones of ye, an’ fling yez in the corner to mend. Don’t exashperate me, woman.”

“I exashperate yez!” retorted Madame Burke, scornfully. “For phwat wud I exashperate yez! Wasn’t your own uncle transhpoorted? Answer me that, John Burke?”

“Me uncle suffered to free Ireland, woman!” responded the husband.

“May the divvil hould him!” said Madame Burke. “He was transhpoorted as a felon, for b’atin’ the head off Humpy Pete, the cripple, at the Fair. He was an illygant speciment of a Burke! always b’atin’ cripples an’ women!”

The last would seem to have been an unfortunate remark, in so far as it contained a suggestion. The next heard by the listening P. Sarsfield O’Toole was the loud lament of Madame Bridget Burke as her husband, John Burke, submitted her to that correction which he afterwards described to the police justice as, “givin’ her a tashte av the sthrap.”

The cries of Madame Bridget Burke were at their highest when P. Sarsfield O’Toole looked over the fence.

"Shtop b'atin' the leddy, John Burke!" commanded P. Sarsfield O'Toole.

"Phwat's it to yez! ye Far-down!" demanded John Burke, looking up from his labours. "Av yez hang your chin on that line fince ag'in, I'll welt the life out av yez! D'ye moind it now!"

"Is it to me yez apploies the word 'Far-down!'" shouted P. Sarsfield O'Toole, wrathfully. "Phwat are yez yerself but a rascal of a Stonethrower? Don't timpt me with your names, John Burke, an' shtop b'atin' the leddy. If I iver come over wanst to yez, I'll return a criminal!"

"Shtop b'atin' me own lawful Bridget," retorted John Burke, in tones of scorn, "when she's been teasin' for the sthrap a month beyant! Well, I loike that! I'll settle with yez, O'Toole, when I tache me woife to respect the name of Burke." Here the representative of that honourable title smote Madame Bridget lustily. "Av I foind yez in me yarud, O'Toole, ye'll lay no bricks to-morry."

P. Sarsfield O'Toole cleared the fence at a bound. He was chivalrous, and would rescue Madame Burke. He was proud and would resent the opprobrious epithet of "Far-down." He was sensitive, and would teach John Burke never to threaten him with disability as a bricklayer.

P. Sarsfield O'Toole, as stated, cleared the fence at a bound, and closed with John Burke as if he were a bargain.

What might have been the finale of this last collision will never be known. As P. Sarsfield O'Toole and John Burke danced about, locked in a deadly embrace, the emancipated Madame Burke suddenly selected a

piece of scantling from the general armory of the Burke backyard and brought it down, not on the head of her oppressor, but on that of the gallant P. Sarsfield O'Toole, who had come to her rescue.

"Oh, ye murtherin' villyun!" shouted Madame Burke. "W'ud yez kill a husband before the eyes of his lawful widded woife! An' due yez think I'd wear his ring and see yez do it!"

At this point in the conversation Madame Bridget Burke cut a long, satisfactory gash in P. Sarsfield O'Toole, just over the eye.

The police came.

John Burke was fined twenty dollars.

Madame Bridget Burke, present lovingly in court, paid it with a composite air, breathing insolence for the judge and affection for John Burke.

"The ijee av that shpalpeen, O'Toole," said Madame Burke that evening to John Burke, and her words floated over the fence to P. Sarsfield O'Toole, as he nursed his wounds on his porch; "the ijee av that shpalpeen, O'Toole, comin' bechuxt man and woife! D'yez moind th' cheek av 'im! Didn't the priest say, 'Phwat hivin has j'ined together, let no man put asoonder?"

"He did, Bridget, he did," replied John Burke. "An' yez have the particulars av a foine woman about yez, yerself, Bridget!"

"Troth! an' I have," said Madame Burke, giving full consent to this view of her merits. "But, John, phwat a rapsallion yer uncle they transhpoorted must av been, to bate the loife out o' poor Humpy Pete, the cripple-fiddler, that toime at the Fair!"

For the second time the strap fell, and the shrieks

of Madame Burke filled the neighbourhood. P. Sarsfield O'Toole, still on his porch, sat unmoved, and bestowed no interest on the doings of the Burkes. As the strap was plied and the yells of the victim uplifted, P. Sarsfield O'Toole repeated the proverb which stands at the head of this story.

WAGON MOUND SAL

(WOLFVILLE)

IT was Wagon Mound Sal--she got the prefix later and was plain "Sal" at the time—who took up laundry labours when Benson Annie became a wife. And this tells of the wooing and wedding of Riley Bent with Sallie of Wagon Mound.

Wagon Mound Sal prevailed, as stated, the mistress of a laundry. And it was there Riley Bent first beheld her, as she was putting a tubful of the blue woollen shirts affected by the males of her region through a second suds. On this occasion Riley's appearance was due to a misunderstanding. He was foggy with drink, and looked in on a theory that the place was a store which made a specialty of the sale of shirts.

"What for a j'int is this?" asked Riley as he entered.

"It's a laundry," replied Sal; and then observing that Riley Bent was in his cups, she continued with delicate firmness; "an' if you-all ain't mighty keerful how you line out, you'll shorely get a smoothin' iron direct."

Nothing daunted by the lady's candour, Riley Bent sat down on a furloughed tub which reposed bottom up in one corner. In the course of a conversation, whereof he furnished the questions, and Sal the short,

inhospitable replies, it occurred that she and Riley Bent became mutually, albeit dimly, known to one another.

During the three months following, Riley Bent was much and persistently in the laundry of Wagon Mound Sal. Wolfville, eagle-eyed in the softer and more dulcet phenomena of life, looked confidently for a wedding. So in truth did Sal, emulous of Benson Annie. Also Sal was a clear-minded, resolute young lady; and having one day concluded to take Riley Bent for better or for worse, she lost no time in bringing matters to a focus.

"You're a maverick?" she one day asked, suddenly looking up from her ironing. Sal's tones were steady and cool, but it was noticed that she burnt a hole in the bosom of Doc Peets's shirt while waiting a reply. "You-all ain't married none?"

"Thar ain't no squaw' has ever been able to rope, throw an' run her brand on me!" said Riley Bent. "Which I'm shorely a maverick!"

"Whatever then is the matter of you an' me dealin'?" asked Sal, coming around to Riley Bent's side of the ironing table.

That personage surveyed her in a thoughtful maze.

"You're a long horn, an' for that much so be I," he said at last, as one who meditates. "Neither of us would grade for corn-fed in anybody's yards!"

Then came another long pause, during which, with his eyes fixedly gazing into Wagon Mound Sal's, Riley Bent gave himself to the unwonted employment of thinking. At last he shook his head until the little gold bells on his bullion hatband tinkled in a dubious, uncertain way, as taking their tone from the wearer.

"Which the idee bucks me plumb off!" he remarked, with a final deep breath; and then with no further word Riley repaired to the Red Light Saloon and became dejectedly yet deeply drunk.

For a month Wolfville saw naught of Riley Bent. He was supposed to be two-score miles away on the range with his cattle. Wagon Mound Sal, with a trace of grimness about the mouth, conducted her laundry, and, in the absence of competition, waxed opulent. She looked confidently for the return of Riley Bent; as what woman, knowing her spells and powers, would have not.

At last he came. Sal, as well as Wolfville, learned of his presence by a mellow whoop at the far end of the single street. Sal was subsequently gratified by a view of him as he and a comrade, one Rice Hoskins, slid from their saddles and entered the Red Light Saloon.

Wagon Mound Sal was offended at this; he should have come straight to her. But beyond slamming her irons unreasonably as she replaced them on the range, she made no sign.

To give Riley Bent justice, he had done little during the month of his absence save think of Wagon Mound Sal. Whether he pursued the evanescent steer, or organised the baking powder biscuit of his day and kind, Wagon Mound Sal ran ever in his thoughts like a torrent. But he couldn't bring himself to the notion of a wife; not even if that favoured woman were Wagon Mound Sal.

"Seems like bein' married that a-way," he explained to Rice Hoskins, as they discussed the business about their camp-fire, "is so onnacheral."

"That's whatever!" assented Rice Hoskins.

"But," said Riley Bent after a pause; "I reckon I'd better ride in an' tell her she don't get me none, an' end the game."

"That's whatever!"

It was deference to this view which gained Wolfville the pleasure of the presence of Riley Bent and Rice Hoskins on the occasion named. It had been Riley Bent's plan—having first acquired what stimulant he might crave—to leave Rice Hoskins to the companionship of the barkeeper, while he repaired briefly to Wagon Mound Sal, and expressed a determination never to wed. But after the first drink he so far modified the programme as to decide, instead, to write a letter.

"You see!" he said, "writin' a letter shows a heap more respect. An' then ag'in, if I goes personal, she might get all wrought up an' lay for me permiscus a whole lot."

The flaw in this letter plan became apparent. Neither Riley Bent nor Rice Hoskins could write. They made application to Black Jack, the barkeeper, to act as amanuensis. But he saw objection, and hesitated.

"I reckon I'll pass the deal, gents," said Black Jack, "if you-alls don't mind. The grand jury is goin' to begin their round-up over in Tucson next week, an' they'd jest about call it forgery."

At last as a solution, Rice Hoskins drew a rude picture in ink of a woman going one way, and a man with a big hat and disreputable spurs, going the other; what he called an "Injun letter." This work of art he regarded with looks of sagacity and satisfaction.

“ If she was an Injun,” said the artist, “ she’d *sabe* that picture mighty quick. That means: ‘ You-all take your trail an’ I’ll take mine.’ ”

“ Which it does seem plain as old John Chisholm’s ‘ Fence-rail Brand,’ ” remarked Riley Bent. “ Now jest make a tub by her, an’ mark me with a 4-bar-J, the same bein’ my brand ; then she’ll shorely tumble. Thar’s nothin’ like ropin’ with a big loop ; then if you miss the horns, you’re mighty likely to fasten by the feet.”

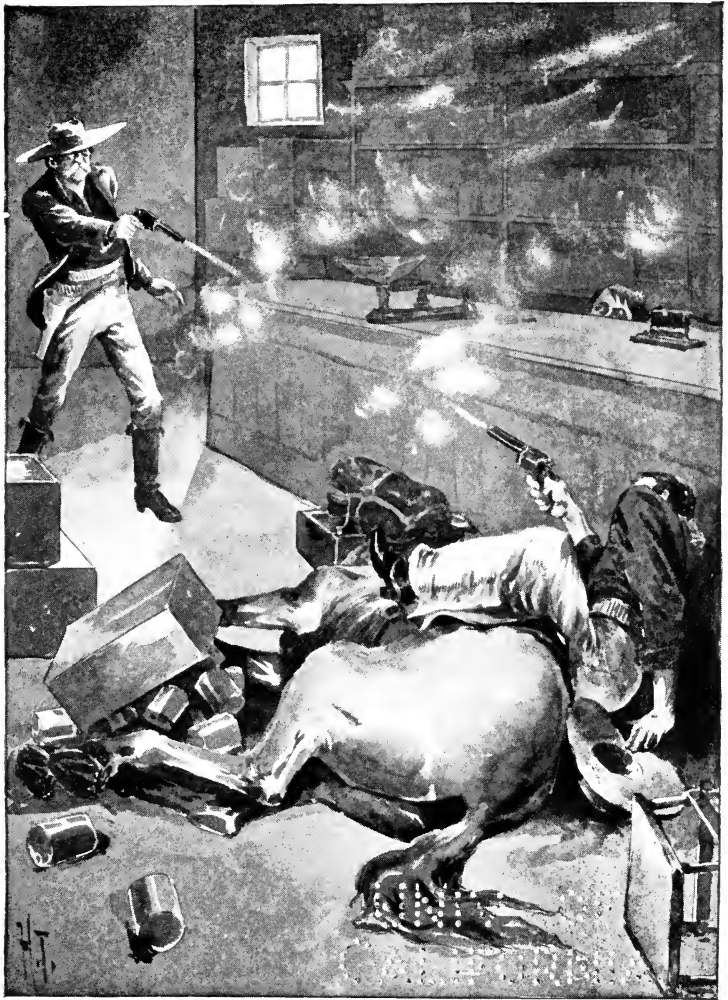
The missive was despatched to Wagon Mound Sal by hand of a Mexican. Then Riley Bent and Rice Hoskins restored their flagged spirits with liquor.

Riley Bent and Rice Hoskins drank a vast deal. And it came to pass, by virtue of this indiscretion, that Rice Hoskins later, while Riley Bent was still thoughtfully over his cups at the Red Light, rode his broncho into the New York Store. In the plain line of objection to this, Jack Moore, the Marshal, shot Rice Hoskins’ pony. As the animal fell it pinned Rice Hoskins to the floor by his leg ; in this disadvantageous position he emptied his pistol at Jack Moore, and of course missed.

Moore was in no sort an idle target. He was a painstaking Marshal, and showed his sense of duty at this time by putting four bullets through the reckless bosom of Rice Hoskins ; the staccate voices of their Colt’s six-shooters melted into each other until they sounded as one.

“ I never could shoot none with a pony on my laig,” observed Rice Hoskins.

Then a splash of blood stained his sun-coloured moustache ; his empty pistol rattled on the board floor ;



“MOORE WAS IN NO SORT AN IDLE TARGET.”—Page 146.

his head dropped on his arm, and Rice Hoskins was dead.

It was at this crisis that Riley Bent, startled by the artillery as he sat in the Red Light, came whirling to the scene on his pony. The duel was over before he set foot in stirrup. He saw at a glance that Rice Hoskins was only a memory. Had he been romantic, or a sentimentalist, Riley Bent would have shot out the hour with Jack Moore, the Marshal. And had there been one spark of life in the heart of Rice Hoskins to have fought over, Riley Bent would have stood in the smoke of his own six-shooter all day and taken what Fate might send. As it was, however, he curbed his broncho in mid-speed so bluntly, the Spanish bit filled its mouth with blood. It spun on its hind hoofs like a top. Then, as the long spurs dug to its ribs, it whizzed off in the opposite direction; out of camp like an arrow. The last bullet in Jack Moore's pistol splashed on a silver dollar in Riley Bent's pocket as he turned his pony.

"Whenever I reloads my pistol," said Jack Moore to Old Man Enright, who had come up, "I likes to reload her all around; so I don't regyard that last cartridge as no loss."

Wagon Mound Sal was deep in a study of Rice Hoskins' "Injun letter" when the shooting took place. The missive's meaning was not so easy to make out as its hopeful authors had believed. When the deeds of Jack Moore were related to her, however, the brow of Wagon Mound Sal took on an angry flush. She sent a message to Jack Moore asking him to call at once.

"Whatever do you mean?" she demanded of Jack Moore, as he entered the laundry, "a-stampedin' of

Riley Bent out of camp that a-way? Don't you know I was intendin' to marry him? Yere he's been gone a month, an' yet the minute he shows up you have to take to cuttin' the dust 'round his moccasins with your six-shooter, an' away he goes ag'in. He jest nacherally seizes on your gun-play for a good excuse. It's shore enough to drive one plumb loco!"

Jack Moore looked decidedly bothered.

"Of course, Sal," he said at last in a deprecatory way, "you-all onderstands that when I takes to shakin' the loads outen my six-shooter at Riley Bent, I does it offishul. An' I'm free to say, that I was that wropped and preoccupied like with my docties as Marshal at the time, I never thinks once of them nuptials you med'tates with Riley Bent. If I had I would have downed his pony with that last shot an' turned him over to you. But perhaps it ain't too late."

It was the next afternoon. Riley Bent was reclining in his camp in the *Tres Hermanas*. Grey, keen eyes watched him from behind a point of rocks. Suddenly a mouthful of white smoke puffed from the point of rocks, and something hard and positive broke Riley Bent's leg just above the knee. The blow of the bullet shocked him for a moment, but the next, with a curse in his mouth, and a six-shooter in each hand, he tumbled in behind a boulder to do battle with his assailant. With the crack of the Winchester which accompanied the phenomena of smoke-puff and broken leg, came the voice of Jack Moore, Marshal.

"Hold up your hands, thar!" said Moore. "Up with 'em; I shan't say it twice!"

Riley Bent could not obey; he had taken ten seconds off to faint.

When he revived Jack Moore had claimed his pistols and was calmly setting the bones of the broken leg ; devoting the woollen shirts in the war-bags on his saddle to be bandages, and making splints of cedar bark. These folk of the plains and mountains, far from the surgeon, often set each other's, or, for that matter, their own bones, when a fall from a pony, or some similar catastrophe, furnishes the call.

"If you-all needed me," observed Riley Bent peevishly, when a little later Jack Moore was engaged over bacon and flap-jacks for the sundown meal, "whatever was the matter of sayin' so? This yere idee of shootin' up a gent without notice or pow-wow is plumb onlegal. An' I'll gamble on it, ten to one!"

"Well!" said Jack Moore, as he deftly tossed a flap-jack in the air and caught it in the frying-pan again, "I didn't aim to take no chances of chagrinin' one who loves you, by lettin' you get away. Then, ag'in, my own notion is that it might sorter hasten the bridal some. Thar's nothin' like a bullet in a party's frame for makin' him feel romantic an' sentimental. It softens his nature a heap, an' sets him to yearnin' for female care.

"Which you've been shootin me up to be married!" responded Riley Bent in tones of disgust.

"That's straight!" retorted Jack Moore, as he slid the last flap-jack into the invalid's tin plate. "You've been pesterin' 'round Wagon Mound Sal ontill that lady has become wropped in you. She confides to me cold that she's anxious to make a weddin' of it, which is all the preliminary necessary in Arizona. You are goin' back to Wolfville with me tomorry on a buck-board,—which will be sent on yere from the stage station,

—an' after Doc Peets goes over your laig ag'in, you an' Wagon Mound Sal are goin' to become man an' wife like a landslide. You have bred hopes in that lady's bosom, an' you've got to make 'em good. That's all thar is to this play; an' you don't get your guns ag'in ontill you're a married man."

Jack Moore, firm, direct and decided, had a great effect in fixing the wandering fancies of Riley Bent. He thoughtfully masticated his flap-jack a moment, and then asked :

"S'pose I arches my back an' takes to buckin' at these yere abrupt methods in my destinies; s'pose I quits the deal cold?"

"In which eevent," responded Jack Moore, with an air of iron confidence, "we merely convenes the Stranglers an' hangs you for luck."

But Riley Bent was softened and his mind made fully up. Whether it was the sentimental influence of Jack Moore's bullet, which Doc Peets subsequently dug out; or whether Riley was touched by the fact that Wagon Mound Sal, herself, brought over the buckboard to convey him to Wolfville, may never be known. What was certain, however, was that Riley Bent came finally to the conclusion to wed. He told Wagon Mound Sal so while on the buckboard going back.

"Which it's shorely doubtful," said Wagon Mound Sal, "if any man is worth the trouble. An' this yere is my busiest day, too!"

There was great rejoicing in the wareroom of the New York Store. A whole box of candles blazed gloriously from the walls. Old Man Enright gave the bride away, Benson Annie appeared to look on, while

Faro Nell supported Sal as bridesmaid. As usual, in any hour of sacred need, a preacher was obtained from Tucson.

“An’ you can bet that pastor knows his business!” said Old Monte, the stage driver, who had been commissioned to bring one over. “He’s a deep-water brand, an’ he’s all right! I takes my steer when I seelects him from the barkeep of the Golden Rod saloon, an’ he’d no more give me the wrong p’inter, that a-way, than he’d give me the wrong bottle.”

Doc Peets’s offering to the bride was a bullet. It was formerly the property of Jack Moore. It was the one he conferred on Riley Bent that evening in the foothills of the *Tres Hermanas*.

“Keep it!” said Doc Peets to the bride. “It’s what sobers him, an’ takes the frivolity outen him, an’ makes him know his own heart.”

“An’ I shorely reckons you’re right that a-way, Doc,” said Jack Moore, some hours after the wedding as the two turned from the laundry whither Moore had repaired to return Riley Bent his pistols; “I shore reckons you’re right a whole lot. I knows a gent in the states, an’ he tells me himse’f how he goes projectin’ ’round, keepin’ company with a lady for a year, an’ ain’t thinkin’ none speshul of marryin’ her. One day somebody gets plumb tired of the play an’ shoots him some, after which he simply goes about pantin’ to lead that lady to the altar; that’s straight!”

JOE DUBUQUE'S LUCK

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

"YOUSE can soak your super," said Chucky, "some dubs has luck! I've seen marks who could fall into d' sewer, see! an' come out wit' a bunch of lilacs in each mit.

"Nit; it wasn't all luck wit' Joe Dubuque. His breakin' out of hock that time is some luck, but mostly 'cause Joe himself is a dead wise guy an' onto his job. Tell youse about it? In a secont—in a hully second! Just say 'gin fizz!' to d' barkeep an' I'll begin.

"Never mind d' preeliminaries, as d' story writers says, but Joe's in jail, see! Joe win out ten spaces for touchin' a farmer for his bundle. Was it a wad? D' roll Joe gets is big enough to choke a cow—'leven t'ousand plunks, if it's a splinter.

"Wherefore, as I relates, Joe gets ten years, an' is layin' in jail while d' gezebo, who's his lawyer, sees can he woik d' high court to give Joe a new trial.

"Joe don't feel no sort chirpy; he's onto it d' high court's dead sure to t'run him down. Then he goes to d' pen to do them ten spaces. An' onct there, wit' all that time ahead, he sees his finish all right, all right. He might as well be a lifer.

"So Joe puts it up he'll break himself out. Joe's goil comes every day to see him. Say! she's a bute, Joe's Rag is; d' crooks calls her 'Wild Willie,' 'cause

now an' then she toins dopey an' acts like she's got doves in her eaves. But anyhow she's on d' square wit' Joe, an' sticks to him like a postage stamp.

"Joe sends out d' woid be his Rag about what he's goin' to do, to d' push outside; an' tells 'em how to help. Yes; d' job is put up as fine as silk. Every mark knows what he's to do.

"Now, here's d' trick dey toins; here's how Joe beats d' jail for good.

"It comes round to d' night. Joe's cell—it's a big cell, a reg'lar corker, wit' gas into it—is on d' fort' corridor. D' guard comes round at 9 o'clock orderin' out d' lights. Joe's gas is boinin' away to beat d' band, an' Joe is layin' on his bunk.

"'Dowse d' glim, Joe!' says d' guard.

"'What th' 'ell!' says Joe. 'Dowse d' glim, yourself, you Sheeny hobo!'

"D' guard makes a bluff about what he'll do, an' cusses Joe out. All d' same he unlocks d' door an' comes chasin' in to put out Joe's gas.

"Now, what does Joe do? As d' guard toins to d' gas to dowse it, Joe sets up on his bunk, an' all at onct he soaks this gezebo of a guard wit' a rubber billy his Moll sneaks in to him d' day before. Does he land d' sucker? Say! he almost cracks his nut, an' that's for fair!

"D' guard drops an' in a minute Joe winds him all up tight in a bedtick rope he's made. Then he stoppers his jaw an' t'rows d' mucker on d' bunk, takes his keys, locks him in d' cell an' goes galumpin' off to let himself t'rough d' doors, so he can try a sprint for it. Yes, Joe makes some row when he t'umps this party, but d' captiffs in d' nex' cells hears d' racket an' half

tumbles to it ; an' so dey starts singin' ' Rock of Ages,' an' makes a noise so as to cover Joe's play, see! Oh! dey was some fly guys locked up in that old coop.

"As Joe lines out for d' doors, he's t'inkin' to himself, how on eart' is he goin' to make it? Nit; it wouldn't be no trouble to get outside d' doors of what youse might call d' jail proper. But after that, Joe's got to go t'rough four offices wit' a mob of dep'ties into 'em. An' he's on it's goin' to be a squeak if some of 'em don't recognize him. Joe's mug was well known.

"You know how dey woiks d' doors to a jail? Youse don't? It's this way. Joe, when he comes up, has d' key to d' inside door, which he nips off d' guard as I says when he slugs him wit' d' billy. Joe lets himself into d' cage wit' that.

"Now, d' key to d' outside door ain't in d' coop at all. There's an old stiff of a dep'ty sheriff planted outside wit' that. As Joe opens d' inside door, he raps on d' bars of d' cage wit' his key, an' it's d' tip for this outside snoozer to unlock his door. Of course he plays Joe for d' guard comin' out from his rounds.

"It's at this door-slammin' pinch where Joe's luck comes in, an' relieves him of d' chanct of d' gang of dep'ties in d' office tumblin' to him. Just as Joe raps to d' sucker on d' outside door, an' then lets himself into d' cage, a gun goes off inside d' jail. It's Joe's guard. Joe forgets to pinch d' pop, see! an' this gezebo gets his hooks onto it, all tied like he is, an' bangs away wit' it in his pockets so as to warn d' gang Joe's loose.

"'That does me for fair!' t'inks Joe when he hears d' gun; 'dey gets me dead to rights!'

"Say! it was d' one trick that saves him! At d'

bang of d' gun every dep'ty leaps to his trilbys an' comes chasin'. D' outside mark has just unslewed his door. He flings it wide open an' scoots inside d' cage. Joe t'rows d' inside door open—for Joe's dead swift to take a hunch that way—an' d' outside guard an' d' entire bunch of dep'ties goes sprintin' into d' jail. Then Joe locks 'em all in an' loafs t'rough d' offices into d' street.

“Yes; Joe knows where he's goin'. He toins into d' foist stairway an' climbs one story to a law office, which d' crooks outside has fixed to be open, waitin' for him. Nixie; d' law guy ain't in on d' play. A dip named Jim Butts comes an' touts this law sharp away, an' cons him into goin' out six miles to d' country to draw d' last will an' test'ment of a galoot he says is on d' croak, an' can't wait for mornin'. Yes, Butts has one of his mob faked up for sick, an' dey detains d' law guy four hours makin' d' will. This stall of Butts, who's doin' d' sick act, sets up between gasps an' gives away more'n twenty million dollars wort' of wealt'. This crook who's fakin' sick is on his uppers at d' time, an' don't really have d' price of beer; but to hear him make his will that night, you'd say he was d' richest ever; d' Astors was monkeys to him.

“As I states, Joe skips into this lawyer's office, d' same bein' open for d' poipose, an' one of d' 'fambly' holdin' it down. While Joe's in there he hears d' chase runnin' up an' down in d' street below d' window.

“Not for long, though. Fifteen minutes after Joe is outside d' jug, one of d' crooks calls up d' Central Office be telephone.

“‘Who's talkin'?’ asts d' captain at d' Central Office.

“ ‘It’s Doyle, lieutenant o’ police, Fourt’ Precinct,’ says d’ crook who’s on d’ wire. Me man on d’ station house beat just reports Joe Dubuque drivin’ west on Detroit street wit’ a horse an’ buggy. He was on d’ dead run, lamin’ loose to beat four of a kind. Send all d’ men youse can spare.’

“An’ that’s what d’ captain at d’ Central Office does. In ten minutes every cop an’ fly cop is on d’ chase, a mile away from Joe, an’ gettin’ funder every secont, see!

“After a while it settles down all quiet an’ dead about d’ jail, an’ d’ little old law office where Joe lies buried. He, an’ d’ crook who’s waitin’ for him, is chinnin’ each other in whispers. All d’ time Joe’s got his lamps to d’ window pipin’ off d’ other side of d’ street. At last a cab drives up opposite d’ law office an’ stops. A w’ite han’kerchief shows flutterin’ be d’ window. It’s Wild Willie who’s inside.

“Joe’s pal gets up an’ goes down to d’ street. All’s clear an’ he w’istles up to Joe. When he gets d’ office Joe sort of loafa down an’ saunters over to d’ cab. D’ door opens an’ in one move Joe’s inside, an’ d’ nex’ his arm is ’round his Moll. She’s all right, this Wild Willie is, an’ Joe does d’ correct t’ing to give her d’ fervent squeeze.

“That’s d’ end. Joe Dubuque runs clear away, goes under cover, an’ d’ sheriff never gets his hooks on him ag’in. As Joe drives be d’ jail he can still hear them captiffs singin’ ‘Rock of Ages.’

“‘Say!’ says Joe to Wild Willie as he toins her mug to his an’ smacks her onct for luck, ‘I won’t do a t’ing but make it a t’ousand dollars in d’ kecks of them ducks who’s doin’ that song. I’ll woik d’ dough to ’em be some of d’ boys, see!’”

BINKS AND MRS. B.

BINKS was an excellent man, hard-working and sober. He made good money and took it home to his wife for her judgment to settle its fate ; every dollar of it. Mrs. Binks was a woman among a thousand. When taken separate and apart from his wife and questioned, Binks said she was a "corker." Binks declined all attempts at definition, and beyond insisting that Mrs. Binks was and would remain a "corker," said nothing.

From what was told of Mrs. Binks by herself, it would seem that she was a true, loving wife to Binks, and that, aside from the duty every woman owed to her sex and the establishment of its rights in all avenues of life, she held that with the wedding ring came a list of duties due from a good woman to her husband, which could not be avoided nor gone about.

"Some women," quoth Mrs. B., "worry their husbands with a detail of small matters. A woman who is to be a helpmeet to her husband, such as I am to Binks, will be self-reliant and decide things for herself. In the little cares of life which fall to her share, let her go forward in her own strength. What is the use of adding her troubles to his? If she has plans, let her execute them. If problems confront her, let her solve them. If she tells her husband aught of the thousand little enterprises of her daily home life, then let it be the result. When success has come to her,

she may call her husband to witness the victory. Aside from that she should face her responsibilities alone."

Of course Mrs. B. did not mean by all this that she would not be open and frank with Binks, and confide in him if a burglar were in the house, or if the roof took fire in the night that she would not arouse Binks and mention it. What she did mean was that when it came to such things as dismissing the servant girl, the wife should gird up her loins and "fire" the maiden single-handed, and not ring her husband in on a play, manifestly disagreeable, and likely to subject him to great remorse.

It chanced recently that an opportunity opened like a gate for Mrs. B. to illustrate her doctrine that wives should proceed in a plain duty alone, without imposing needless anxiety on the head of the family.

Mrs. Binks had decided to visit her sister in Hoboken. She was to go Thursday, and Binks, who was paid his sweat-bought stipend on Monday, was to furnish the money Monday evening wherewith to make the trip.

It chanced, unfortunately, that pay-day this particular week was deferred. The head partner was sick, or out of town; checks could not be drawn, or something like that.

"But your money will come on Saturday, boys," said the other partner.

Binks was obliged to wait.

The money was all right; it would be accurately on tap Saturday, so Binks took no fret on that point.

But what was he to do about Mrs. B.? That good woman was to go Thursday, and in order to organise for the descent upon her relative would need the money—\$40—on Tuesday. What was Binks to do?

Clearly he must do something. He could not ask Mrs. B. to put off her trip a week ; indeed, his reluctance to take such course came almost to the point of superstition.

In his troubles Binks suddenly bethought him of a gold watch, once his father's, with a rich chain and guard attached. These precious heirlooms had been given to Binks by the elder Binks' executor, and were cherished accordingly.

Rather than disappoint Mrs. B. the worthy Binks decided, that just for once in his life he would seek a pawnbroker and do business with that common relative of all.

Binks felt timid and ashamed, but the case was urgent. There was no risk, for his money would float in all right on the tides of Saturday. Binks would then redeem these pledges from disgraceful hock ; all would be well. Mrs. B. would be in Hoboken on redemption day, and it would not be necessary to tell her anything about the matter. It would save her pain, and Binks bravely determined to keep the whole transaction dark.

Again, if he told her he had not been paid at the store, the brave woman would indubitably wend to his employer's house and demand the reason why. This would be useless and embarrassing. Therefore, Binks would say nothing. He would pawn the ancestral super, and get it again when his money came in, and his wife was away.

The watch and its appertainments were snug in the far corner of a bureau drawer ; away over and behind Mrs. B.'s lingerie. Binks had a watch of his own, a Waterbury, with a mainspring as endless as a chain

pump. Mrs. B. saw, therefore, no reason why he should carry the gold watch of his progenitor. Binks might lose it. Mrs. Binks strongly advised that it be kept in the bureau where it would be safe, and naturally, in an affair of that sort Binks took his wife's advice.

Binks reflected that he must secure the watch and pawn it that night. To do this he must plot to get Mrs. B. out of the house. Binks thought deeply. At last he had it.

Binks sent a message home in the afternoon and asked Mrs. B. to meet him in a store down town at six o'clock. Then he had himself released at 5:30, and went hotfoot homeward.

The coast was clear; Mrs. B. was down town in deference to his stratagem, no doubt believing that Binks meditated soda water, or some other delicacy, as the cause of his sudden summons of the afternoon. She little wotted that she was the victim of deccit. If she had, there would have been woe.

Binks rushed at once to the bureau and secured the treasure. He did not wait a moment, but plunged off to a store where the three balls over the door bore testimony to the commerce within. Binks would explain to Mrs. B. on his return, how he had missed her and so failed to keep his date with her down town.

The merchant of loans and pledges looked over Binks' timepiece, and then, as Binks requested, gave him a ticket for it and \$40. It was to be redeemed in thirty days or sooner. And Binks was to pay \$44 to get it again. Binks was very willing. Anything was wiser and better than to permit Mrs. B.'s visit to her sister to be interrupted.

When Binks got home Mrs. B. had already returned.

There was a bad light in her eye. She accepted Binks' excuses and explanations as to "how he missed her down town" with an evil grace. She as good as told Binks that he deceived her; that if the phenomenon were treed she would find another woman in the case.

However, Binks had the presence of mind to turn over the \$40 he reaped on the watch; and as he expressed it later:

"That sort of hushed her up."

The next day Binks returned to his labours, while Mrs. B. repaired to the marts to plunge moderately on what truck she stood in want of for her trip.

When Mrs. B. got back to the house it chanced that the first thing she needed was in the fatal drawer. She opened it.

Horrors! The watch was gone!

There was naught of hesitation; Mrs. B. knew it had been stolen. Anybody could see that from the way every garment had been carefully laid back to hide the loss.

What should she do? The police must at once be notified. Mrs. B. pulled on her shaker and scooted for the police station. She told her story out of breath. She left her house at three o'clock and was back at four o'clock, and in that short hour her home had been entered and looted of its treasures. Made to be specific, Mrs. B. said the treasures were a watch and chain, and described them.

"What were they worth?" asked the sergeant of the detectives.

Mrs. B. considered a bit, and then said they would be dog cheap at \$1,000. She reflected that the sum, if published in the papers, would be a source of pride.

The sergeant of detectives told Mrs. B. his men would look about for her property, and should they hear of it or find it they would at once notify her.

"You bet your gum boots! ma'am," said the sleuth confidently, "whatever crook's got your ticker, he's due to soak it or plant it some'ers in a week. Mebby he'll turn it over to his Moll. But the minute we springs it, ma'am, or turns it up, we'll be dead sure to put you on in a jiff."

"Thank you," said Mrs. B.

Then Mrs. Binks went home and, true to her determination to save Binks from unnecessary worry, she told him nothing of the loss nor of her arrangements for the watch's recovery.

"What's the use of bothering Binks?" she asked herself. "All he could do would be to notify the police, and I've done that."

Thursday came and Mrs. B. set forth for Hoboken. No notice had come from the police. Binks was glad to see her go. He had lived in fear lest she come across the departure of the watch. He breathed easier when she was gone. As for Mrs. B., as she had not heard from the police, there was nothing to tell Binks; wherefore, like a self-reliant woman who did not believe in making her husband unhappy to no purpose, she left without word or sign as to her knowledge of the watch's disappearance.

It was Friday; ever an unlucky day. Binks was walking swiftly homeward. Binks was thinking some idle thing when a hand came down on his shoulder, heavy as a ham.

"Hold on, me covey; I want you!"

Binks looked around, scared and startled. He had

been halted by a stocky, bluff man in citizen's clothes.

"What is it?" gasped Binks.

"Suttenly, sech a fly guy as you don't know!" said the bluff man, with a glare. "Well! never mind why I wants you; I'm a detective, and you comes with me."

And Binks went with him.

Not only that, Binks went in a noisy patrol wagon which the detective rang for; and it kept gonging its way along and attracting everybody's attention.

The word went about among his friends that Binks was drunk and had been fighting.

"And to think a man would act like that," said one lady, who knew Binks by sight, "just because his wife is away on a visit! If I were his wife I'd never come back to him!"

At the station Binks was solemnly looked over by the chief.

"He's the duck!" said the chief at last. "Exactly old Goldberg's description of the party who spouts the ticker. Where did you collar him, Bill?"

"I sees him paddin' along on Broadway," replied the bluff man, "and I tumbles to the sucker like a hod of brick. I knowed he was a sneak the first look I gives; and the second I says to meself, 'he's wanted for a watch!' Then I nails him."

"Do you know who he is?" asked the chief.

"My name," said Binks, who was recovering from the awful daze that had seized him, "my name is B——"

"Shet up!" roared the bluff man. "Don't give us any guff! It'll be the worse for you!"

"I know the mark," said an officer looking on.

“His name is ‘Windy Joe, the Magsman.’ His mug’s in the gallery all right enough; number 38, I think.”

“That’s correct!” said the chief. “I knowed he was familiar to me, and I never forgets a face. Frisk him, Bill, and lock him up!”

“But my name’s Binks!” protested our hero. “I’m an innocent man!”

“That’s what they all says,” replied the chief. “Go through him, Bill, and lock him up; I want to go to me grub.”

Binks was cast into a dungeon. Next door to him abode a lunatic, who reviled him all night. On the blotter the ingenuity of the chief detective inscribed:

“Windy Joe, the Magsman, alias Binks. House-breaking in daytime.”

* * * * *

There is scant need of spinning out the agony. Binks got free of the scrape some twelve hours later. But it was all very unfortunate. He came near dismissal at the store, and the neighbours don’t understand it yet. They shake their heads and say:

“It’s very strange if he’s so innocent, why he was locked up. When the police take a man, he’s generally done something.”

“I’m not sorry a bit!” said Mrs. B., when she was brought back from Hoboken on Saturday by a wire the police allowed Binks to send her. “And when I saw him with the officers, I was as good a mind to tell them to keep him as ever I had to eat. To think how he deceived me about that watch, allowing me to break my heart with thoughts of it being stolen! I guess the next time Binks sneaks off to pawn his dead father’s watch, he’ll let me know.”

ARABELLA WELD

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

IT was a chill Harlem evening. The Undertaker sat in his easy chair smoking his pipe of clay. About him were ranged the tools and trappings of his gruesome art. On trestles, over in the corner's gliding shadows, lay the remains he had just been monkeying with.

At last, as one who reviews his work, the Undertaker arose, and scanned the wan map of the Departed.

"He makes a great front," mused the Undertaker. "He looks out of sight, and it ought to fetch her."

Back to his chair roamed the Undertaker. As he seated himself he touched a bell. The Poet of the establishment glided dreamily in. The Undertaker, not only straightened the kinks out of corpses to the Queen's taste, but he furnished epitaphs, and as well, verses for those grief-bitten. These latter were to run in the papers with the funeral notice.

"Have youse torn off that epitaph for his jiblets?" asked the Undertaker, nodding towards Deceased.

"What was it you listed for?" asked the Poet.

"D' epitaph for William Henry Weld," replied the Undertaker. The Poet passed over the desired epitaph.

WILLIAM HENRY WELD.

(Aged 26 years.)

His race he win with pain and sin,

At Satan he did mock;

St. Peter said as he let him in:

“It’s Willie, in a walk!”

“You’re a wonder!” cried the Undertaker, when he had finished the perusal, and he gave the Poet the glad hand. “Here’s d’ price. Go and fill your tank.”

“That should win her,” reflected the Undertaker, when the poet had wended his way; “that ought to leave her on both sides of d’ road. What I’ve done for Deceased, and that epitaph should knock her silly. She shall be mine!”

II

PUBLIC interest having been aroused in the corpse, it may be well to tell how it became that way.

Deceased was William Henry Weld. Five days before the opening of our story, William donned his skates and lined out on one of his periodicals. For four days he debauched to beat four kings and an ace.

And William had adventures. He paid a fine; he fell down a coal hole; he invaded a laundry and administered the hot wallops to the presiding Chinaman. On the fourth day he declared himself in on a ball not far from Sixth Avenue.

“Ah, there!” quoth William, archly, to a beautiful being to whom he had not been introduced. “Ah, there! Tricksey; I choose youse for d’ next waltz.”

“Nit; not on your life!” murmured the beautiful one.

As William Henry Weld was about to make fitting response, a coarse, vulgar person approached.

"What for be youse jimmin' 'round me pick?" asked this person.

"That's d' stuff, Barney!" said the beautiful one. "Don't do a t'ing to him!"

The next instant William Henry Weld was cast into outer darkness.

"It's all right, Old Man!" said the friend who rescued William Henry Weld, "I'm goin' to take youse home. Your wife ain't on to me, an' I'll fake it I'm a off'cer, see! I'll give her d' razzle dazzle of her existence, an' square youse wit' her."

"It's Willie!" said the friend to Arabella Weld, as he supported her husband into the sitting-room. "It's Willie, an' he's feelin' O. K. but weedy. Me name, madam, is Jackson—Jackson, of d' secret p'lice. Willie puts himse'f in me hands as a sacred trust to bring him home."

"Is he sick?" moaned Arabella Weld, as she began to let her hair down, preparatory to a yell.

"Never touched him!" assured the friend. "Naw; Willie's off his feed a bit. You sees, madam, Willie hired out to a hypnotist purely in d' interest of science, an' he's been in a trance four days, see! That's why he ain't home. Bein' in a trance, he couldn't send woid. Now all he needs is a rest for, say, a week. Oughtn't to let him get out of his crib for a week."

At 4 o'clock the next morning William Henry Weld began to see blue-winged goats. Arabella Weld "sprung" a glass of water on him.

"Give it a chase!" shrieked William Henry Weld, wildly waving the false beverage aside.

In his ratty condition he didn't tumble to the pure element's identity, but thought it was one of those Things.

At 5 o'clock A. M. William Henry Weld didn't do a thing but perish. When the glorious sun again poured down its golden mellow beams, the Undertaker had his hooks on him and Arabella Weld was a widow.

III

BUT to return to the Undertaker, the real hero of our tale. We left him in his studio poring over the epitaph of William Henry Weld, while Departed rehearsed his dumb and silent turn for eternity in the corner's lurking shadow. At last the Undertaker roused himself from his reveries.

"I must to bed!" he said; "it waxeth late, and tomorrow I propose for her in wedlock."

Next morning the Undertaker arose refreshed. He had smote his ear for full eight hours. He felt fit to propose for his life, let alone the delicate duke of Arabella Weld.

The Undertaker's adored one was to come at noon. She wanted to size up Departed prior to the obsequies.

Although it was but 9 o'clock, the Undertaker had to get a curve on himself to keep his date with Arabella Weld at midday. He had an invalid to measure for a coffin—it was a riveted cinch the party would die—and then there was a corpse to shave in the next block. These duties were giving him the crowd.

But our hero made it; played every inning without an error, and was organised for Arabella Weld when she arrived.

As they stood together—Arabella and the man who, all unknown to her, loved her so madly—looking down at Deceased, she could not repress her admiration.

“On d’ dead! I never saw Willie look so well,” she said. “He’s very much improved. You must have taken a woild of pains wit’ Willie.”

The Undertaker was silent.

Struck by this, Arabella Weld turned her full lustrous lamps on the Undertaker and saw it all. It was for her, the loving heart beside her had toiled over Deceased like an artist over a picture.

Swift is Love, and the Undertaker, quivering with his great passion, twigged in an instant that Arabella was onto him. A vast joy swept his heart like a torrent.

“I wanted him to make a hit for your sake,” he whispered, stealing his arm about her.

Arabella softly put his arm away.

“Not now,” she sighed. “It would be too soon a play. We must wait until we’ve got Willie off our hands—we must wait a year.”

“Wait a year!” and the pain of it bent the Undertaker like a willow. “Wait a year, dearest! Now, what’s d’ fun of that? You must take me for a farmer!” and his tones showed that the Undertaker was hurt.

“But in Herkimer County they wait a year,” faltered Arabella, wistfully.

“Sure! in Herkimer!” consented the Undertaker; “but that’s Up-the-state. A week in Harlem is equal to a year in Herkimer. Let it be a week, love!”

“This isn’t a game for Willie’s life insurance?” and great crystals of pain and doubt swam in Arabella’s glorious eyes.

“Oh, me love!” cried the Undertaker, fondly, yet desperately, “plant d’ policy wit’ Willie! Send it back to d’ company if youse doubts me, an’ tell ’em to call d’ whole bluff a draw.”

The bit of paper, containing the epitaph, fluttered to the floor from her nerveless mits, her beautiful head sank on the broad shoulder of the Undertaker, and her tears flowed unrestrained.

IV

ONE week had passed since William Henry Weld was solemnly pigeon-holed for eternal reference.

The preacher received the couple in his study.

“Shall I marry you with the prayer-book, or would youse prefer the short cut?” he asked.

“Marry us on a deck of cards, if you choose!” faltered Arabella. Her eyes sought the floor, while the tell-tale blushes painted her lovely prospectus. “Only cinch the play, an’ do it quick!”

THE WEDDING

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“NAW; I'm on I'm late all right, all right; but I couldn't help it, see!”

Chucky was thirty minutes behind our hour. I'd been sitting in the little bar in sickening controversy with one of the vile cigars of the place waiting for Chucky. For which cause I was moved to mention his dereliction sharply.

“Sorry to keep an old pal playin' sol'taire, wit' nothin' better to amuse him than d' len'th of rope youse is puffin',” continued Chucky in furtive excuse, “but I was to a weddin' an' couldn't break away. That's w'y I've got on me dress soote.

“Say! on d' dead! of course I ain't in on many nuptials; but all d' same I likes to go. I always comes away feelin' so wise an' flossy an' cooney. Why, I don't know, unless it's 'cause d' guys gettin' hitched looks so much like a couple of come-ons—so dead sure life is such a cinch, see! D' sight of confidence like one sees at a weddin', be d' parts of d' two suckers who's bein' starred, never omits to make me feel too cunnin' to live for d' whole week after.

“Sure! this weddin' was a good t'ing; what youse might call d' real t'ing; an' it's a spark to a rhinestone it toins out all hunk for d' folks involved. Who's d'

two gezebos who gets nex' to each other? D' groom is d' boss gunner of one of our war boats, an' d' skirt is d' cash goil in d' anti-Chink laundry on Great Jones street.

"An' say! that little skirt's a wonder, an' don't youse forget it! She's good any day for any old t'ing I've got; an' all she's got to do is just rap, an' she takes it, see! It was me Rag sees d' goil foist one time when she's down be d' laundry puttin' in me t'ree-sheets for their weekly dose of suds.

"Is me Rag an' me married? Say! I likes that, I don't t'ink! Youse is gettin' fanciful in your cupolo. 'Be me little Bundle an' me married?' says you. Well, I should kiss a pig! Youse can take me tip for it, if we ain't man an' wife be d' longest system d' Cat'lic Choich could play—for me Rag told d' father who 'fficiates that we're out for d' limit—then all I got to stutter is there ain't a mug who's married in d' entire city of Noo York.

"Cert! we're married!" Chucky went on after cheering himself with the tankard which the barkeeper placed before him. "If youse had let your lamps repose on this horseshoe scar over d' bridge of me smeller, youse would have tumbled to d' fac wit'out astin'.

"How do I win it? I'm comin' up d' stairs like a sucker, just followin' a difference of opinion between me an' me loidy (I soaked her a little one, an' that's for fair! to show her she's off her trolley about d' subject in dispoote), when she cuts loose d' coal bucket at me. Say! she spoiled me map for a mont'.

"But to get back to d' little laundry goil. Me Rag, as I says, was in this tub-joint where d' goil woiks wit'

me linen one day ; an' just as she chases in, a fresh stiff who's standin' there t'run some raw bluff at d' little laundry goil she couldn't stand for, see! an' she puts up a damp eye an' does d' weep act.

"This little laundry goil is one of them meek, harmless people—rabbits is bull-terriers to 'em—an' so when me onliest own beholds d' tears come chasin down her nose at d' remarks of this fly guy, she chucks me shirts in d' corner an' mounts him in a hully second.

"An' say ! me Rag can scrap, an' that's no dream ! I don't want none of it. When she an' me has carried d' conversation to d' point where she takes out her hairpins, an' gives her mane to d' breeze, that's me cue to cork. Youse can't get another rise out of me after that : I knows her.

"Well ! me Rag lights into this hobo who's got gay wit' d' little goil, an' when she takes her hooks out of his make-up, an' he goes surgin' into d' street, honest ! he looks like he's been fightin' a dog. Some lovers of true sport who's there an' payin' attention to d' mill, says this galoot wasn't in it wit' me Rag. She has him on d' blink from d' jump ; she win in a loiter.

"Takin' her part that way makes d' little laundry goil confidenshul wit' me Rag. It's about two weeks later when she sprints over an' tells Missus Chuck (she makes her promise to lay dead about it, too, but still she passes d' woid to me)—she tells me Rag, as I'm sayin', that she's in trouble. Her steady, she says, is one of d' top notch gunners of one of our big boats ; he's d' main squeeze in his turrent, see ! an' way up in d' paint. His boat's been layin' at d' Navy Yard, an' now he's ordered to sail for Cuba in a week an' help

straighten up d' Dagoes we're havin' d' recent run in wit'. Meanwhiles, she says, dey won't let her beloved have shore leave; an' neither dey won't stand for her to come aboard an' see him. There youse be! a case of dead sep'ration between two lovin' hearts.

"D' little laundry goil gives it out cold, she'll croak if she don't get to see her Billy before he skates off for d' wars. She says she knows he's out to be killed anyhow. D' question wit' her is—what's she goin' to do? Dey won't let her aboard d' boat, an'dey won't let him aboard d' land; now, what's d' soon move for her to make?"

"Well, me Rag—who's got a nut on her for [^]cert—says for her to skip down to Washin'ton an' go ag'inst d' Sec'tary himself.

"'Make him a strong talk,' says me Rag; 'give him a reg'lar razzle-dazzle, an' he'll write youse a poiper to them blokes aboard d' boat to let youse see your Billy.'

"'Do youse t'ink for sure he will?' says d' little laundry goil.

"'Why, it's a walkover!' says me Rag. 'If he toins out a hard game, give him d' tearful eye, see! an' cough a sob or two, an' he'll weaken! You can't miss it,' says me ownliest; 'it's easy money.'

"But d' little goil was awful leary of d' play.

"'Washin'ton is so far away,' she says.

"'It's like goin' to Harlem,' says me Rag. 'All youse has to do to go, is to take some sandwidges an' apples to sort o' jolly d' trip, an' then climb onto d' cars an' go. When d' Con. comes t'rough, pass him your pasteboard, see! an' if any of them smooth marks try to make a mash, t'run 'em down an' t'run 'em hard. I'll go over an' do your stunt at d' laundry, so that

needn't give youse a scare. An' be d' way! if that lobster I win from d' other day shows up, I'll make a monkey of him ag'in. I didn't spend enough time wit' him on d' occasion of our mix-up, anyway.'

"At last d' little laundry goil makes d' brace of her life. She's so bashful an' timid she can't live; but she's dead stuck on seein' her Billy before he sails away, an' it gives her nerve. As I says, she takes me Rag's steer an' skins out for d' Cap'tal.

"An' what do youse t'ink? D' old mut who's Sec'tary won't chin wit' her. Toins her down cold, he does; gives her d' grand rinky-dink wit'out so much as findin' out what's her racket at all.

"At d' finish, however, d' little goil lands one of d' push—he's a cloik in d' office, I figgers—an' he hears her yarn between weeps, an' ups an' makes a pass or two, an' she gets d' writin'. It says to toin Billy loose every afternoon till d' boat pulls out.

"Say! him an' d' little goil, when she gets back, was as happy as a couple of kids; dey has more fun than a box of monkeys. On d' level! I was proud of me Rag for floor managin' d' play. She wasn't solid wit' Billy an' d' little goil! Oh, no!

"That's how me an' me loidy was in on this weddin' to-day wit' bot' trilbys. Me Rag's 'It' wit' d' little goil; youse can gamble on that!

"Of course d' war's over now, an' two weeks ago d' little goil's Billy comes home. An' what wit' pay, an' what wit' prize money, he hits d' Bend wit' a bundle of d' long green big enough to make youse t'row a fit, an' he ain't done a t'ing but boin money ever since.

"Nit; it ain't much of a story, but d' whole racket pleases me out o' sight, see! Considerin' d' hand me

Rag plays, when I'm at that weddin' to-day I feels like a daddy to Billy an' d' little goil. On d' level! I feels that chesty about it, that when d' priest is goin' to bat an' says, 'Is there any duck here to give d' bride away?' I cuts in on d' game wit' d' remark, 'I donates d' bride meself.' I s'pose I was struck dopey, or nutty, or somethin'.

"But me Rag fetches me to all c'rrect. She clinches her mit an' whispers :

"Let me catch youse makin' another funny break like that an' I'll cop a sneak on your neck.' An' then she stands there chewin' d' quiet rag an' pipin' me off wit' an eye of fire. 'Such an old bum as youse,' she says, 'is a disgrace to d' Bend.'"

POINSETTE'S CAPTIVITY

THIS is a tale of last August. Poinsette was to be left alone for four weeks. Mrs. Poinsette had settled on Cape May as a good thing for the hot spell. She would hie her thither and leave Poinsette to do his worst without her.

Poinsette did not care. He bravely told Mrs. P. she needed an outing. The ozone and the salty, ocean breeze would do her good. So he encouraged Cape May, and bid Mrs. P. go there by all means.

It was decided by the Poinsettes discussing Cape May to have Poinsette room up town while Mrs. P. was thus Cape Maying. The Poinsette house in the suburbs might better be locked up during Mrs. P.'s absence from the city. It would be more economical; indeed, it was not esteemed safe to leave the Poinsette lares and penates to the unwatched ministrations of the Congo who performed in the Poinsette kitchen. It would be wiser to dismiss the servant, bolt and bar the house, obtain Poinsette apartments, and let him browse for food among the bounteous restaurants of the city.

Poinsette found a room to suit in a house on West 87th Street. It was one of a long row of houses. Poinsette reported his victory in room-hunting to Mrs. P. Poinsette was now all right, and ready for what might come. Mrs. P. might bend her course to Cape May without further hesitation.

Mrs. P. was glad to learn of Poinsette's apartment

success. She went out and looked at his find to make sure that Poinsette would be comfortable. Incidentally, Mrs. P. kept her eye about her, to note whether the boarding-house books carried any pretty girls. Mrs. P. did not care to have Poinsette too comfortable.

There were no pretty girls. Mrs. P. approved the selection. The very next day she kissed Poinsette good-bye and rumbled and ferried to the station, from which arena of smoke and noise a train leaped forth like a greyhound and bore her away to Cape May.

Poinsette did not accompany his spouse to the station. Ten years before he would have done this, but experience had taught him that Mrs. P. could care for herself. Therefore he remained behind to fasten up the house. Soberly he went about locking doors, and fastening windows, and thinking rather sadly,—as all husbands so deserted do,—of the long, lonely months before him. At last all was secure, and Poinsette turned the key in the big front door and came away.

Poinsette did not feel like work that afternoon, or the trifling fragment of it that was left after Mrs. P. had wended and he had locked up the house. He bought a few good books and several of the more solid periodicals. They would serve during the weary nights while Mrs. P. was away at the Cape. These Poinsette sent to his rooms, and, as it was growing six o'clock now, he turned into Sherry's for his dinner.

Just where Poinsette went that evening following Sherry's, and what he saw and did, and who assisted at such enterprises as he embarked in, would be nothing to the present point and may be skipped. They are the private affairs of Poinsette, and not properly the subjects of a morbid curiosity. However, lest Mrs. P.

see this and argue aught herefrom to feed distrust, it should be said that Poinsette saw nobody, did nothing, went no place unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

It was four o'clock in the morning when Poinsette, the sole passenger aboard a foaming night-liner, toiled through the Park and bore away for his new abode. Poinsette stopped the faithful night-liner two blocks from the door and went forward on foot. Poinsette did not care to clatter ostentatiously to his rooms at four in the morning the first day he inhabited them.

Poinsette found the house without trouble, and stepped lightly to the door. He put the pass-key his landlady had bestowed upon him in the lock, but it would not turn. The bolt would not yield to his wooing. Do all he might, and work he never so wisely, there had sprung up a misunderstanding between key and lock which would not be reconciled. Poinsette could not get "action;" the sullen door still barred him from his bed.

At last Poinsette gave up in despair. He might ring the bell and arouse the house; but he hesitated. It was his first day; the hour needed apology. Poinsette thought it would be better to walk gently to a hotel and abide for the remainder of the night. He would solve this incompatibility of key and lock the next afternoon.

Poinsette turned away and started softly for the street. As he did so a policeman stepped from behind a tree and stopped him. The policeman had been watching Poinsette for five minutes.

"Wot was you a-doin' at the door?" he asked.

Poinsette, in a low, hurried voice, explained. He didn't care to awaken his landlady by a tumult of

talk, and have that excellent woman discover him in the hands of the law.

"If your key don't work," said the policeman, "why don't you ring the bell?"

Poinsette cleared up that mystery. The officer was not satisfied.

"To be free with you, my man," he said, seizing Poinsette's collar, "I think you're a burglar. If that's your boarding-house you're goin' in. If it isn't, you're goin' to the station."

Then the policeman, with one hand wound about in Poinsette's neckwear, made trial of the key with the other hand. The effort was futile. The lock was obdurate; the key was stranger to it. Then the blue guardian of the city's slumbers stepped back a pace and took a mighty pull at the door-bell. It was a yank which brought forth a wealth of jingle and ring.

Poinsette was glad of it. He had grown desperate and wanted the thing to end. Bad as it was, it would be better to face his landlady than be locked up in a burglar's cell. Poinsette was resigned, therefore, when a second-story window lifted and a night-capped head was made to overhang the sill and blot its silhouette against the star-lit sky.

"Be you the landlady?" asked the policeman.

"Yes, I am!" quoth the night-cap in a snappy, snarly way. "What do you want?" This with added sourness.

"This party says his name is Poinsette and that he rooms here," replied the officer.

"No such thing!" retorted the night-cap. "No such man rooms here. Don't even know the name!"

Then the window came down with a grievous bang. It was as if it descended on Poinsette's heart.

"You're a crook!" said the policeman, "and now you come with me."

Poinsette essayed to explain that the night-cap was not his landlady; that he had made a mistake in the house. The policeman laughed in hoarse scorn at this.

"D'ye think I'm goin' all along the row, yankin' door-bells out by the roots on such a stiff as you're givin' me?"

That was the reply of the policeman to Poinsette's pleadings to try next door.

Poinsette was led sadly off, with the grip of the law on his collar. At the station he was searched and booked and bolted in. On the hard plank, which made the sole furnishings of his narrow cell, Poinsette threw himself down; not to sleep, but to give himself to bitter consideration of his fate.

As Poinsette sat there waiting for the sun to rise and friends to come to his rescue, the station clock struck five. It rang dismally in the cell of Poinsette.

At Cape May, clocks of correct habits were also telling the hour of five. Mrs. P. was not yet asleep. The vigorous aroma of the ocean swept the room. The half-morning was beautiful; Mrs. P., loosely garbed, sat in an easy-chair at the window and enjoyed it.

"I wonder what Poinsette's been doing," said Mrs. P. to herself; and there was a colour of jealousy in the tone. Then Mrs. P. snorted as in contempt. "I'll warrant he's been having a good time," she continued. "This idea that married men when their wives are away for the summer have a dull time, never imposed on me."

TIP FROM THE TOMB

CHAPTER I

T. JEFFERSON BENDER was a doctor; that is, he was not a real, legal doctor as yet, but he was a hard student, and looked hopefully toward a day when, in accordance with the statutes in such cases made and provided, he would be cantered through the examination chute, and entitled to write "M. D." following his name, with all that it implied.

Each morning T. Jefferson Bender arose with the lark, and, seizing his dissecting knife, plunged into whatever subject was spread before him. In the afternoon he attended lectures, bending a hungry ear and watching with eager eye, while the lecturer, in illustration of his remarks, tortured poor people, free of charge. At night, when the day's carvings, and listenings, and lookings were over, T. Jefferson Bender sat in his easy chair and peered down the long aisle of coming time.

The world was bright to the glance of T. Jefferson Bender; the future full of promise. In his musings he saw himself striding towards surgical fame and riches over a pathway strewn with the amputational harvest of his skill. He filled the hereafter with himself routing disease; cutting down deadly maladies as a farmer might the mullein-stalk; driving before him bacteria and bacilli in herds, droves, schools and shoals. T. Jefferson

Bender was a happy man, and his forehead was already, in his imaginings, kissed by the rays of a dawning professional prosperity.

CHAPTER II

T. JEFFERSON BENDER allowed himself but one relaxation. He was from Lexington, and had a true Kentuckian's love for horseflesh. Thus it was that he patronised the races, and was often seen at Morris Park, where he prevailed from a seat in the grand-stand. Here, casting off professional dignity as he might a garment, T. Jefferson Bender whooped and howled and hurled his hat on high, as race following race swept in.

At intervals T. Jefferson Bender was carried to such heights of madness as "playing the horses." And then it was he suffered those vicissitudes which are chronicled colloquially under the phrase of "getting it in the neck."

CHAPTER III

IT was the day of the great race. The Morris Park grand-stand was reeling full. The quarter stretch was crowded with Democrats and Republicans and Mugwumps, who, laying aside political hatreds for a day, had come to see the races. The horses were backing and plunging in the grasp of rubbers and stable minions, while the gay jockeys, with their mites of saddles on their left arms, were being weighed in.

Suddenly, a cry of terror rent the air. Otero, a head-strong beauty, had leaped upon the neck of Paddy the Pig, a horse rubber, and borne him to the earth. Paddy

the Pig's neck was severely wrenched, so the crowd said. As the accident occurred, the victim fainted.

"Is there a doctor present?" shouted one of the race judges, appealing to the grand-stand.

T. Jefferson Bender arose from where he sat, walked over seventeen men and women, and leaped upon the stretch.

"I am here," observed T. Jefferson Bender, while his eye lighted and his nostrils expanded with the ardour of a great resolve.

T. Jefferson Bender bent above Paddy the Pig and felt his pulse.

"He lives!" muttered T. Jefferson Bender.

Then he called for whiskey.

At the magical words, Paddy the Pig languidly opened his eyes, while a flush dimly painted his cheek.

"Doc, you have saved my life!" said Paddy the Pig.

"I have," said T. Jefferson Bender, willing to be impressive. "I have saved your life."

"Doc," said Paddy the Pig in a weak, fluttering voice, "I am only a horse rubber, but I will make you rich. Play Skylight to win, Doc; Skylight! It's a tip from the tomb!"

"It's a tip from the tomb!" said T. Jefferson Bender reverently, "what are the odds?"

"It's a 20-to-1 shot, Doc. Play it. You will thus be paid for what you've done for me."

CHAPTER IV

THAT night T. Jefferson Bender stood in a pawnshop. The flickering gaslight shone on mandolins, pistols,



"T. JEFFERSON BENDER HAD PLAYED SKYLIGHT."—Page 185.

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watches, and clothing, which had suffered the ordeal of the spout. T. Jefferson Bender was dusty and footsore. He had walked from Morris Park, and was now about to pawn his watch for food.

CHAPTER V

T. JEFFERSON BENDER had played Skylight.

BRIDGY McGUIRE

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“WHY, yes,” responded Chucky readily enough, “there’s choiches of all sorts, same as there’s folks, see! Some does good an’ then ag’in there’s others that ain’t so warm.”

It was rude, cold weather. Because of the bluster and the freezing air without, Chucky had abandoned his customary ale for hot Scotches. These and the bar-room’s pleasant heat, in contrast with the chill and gusts of the street, served to unfold Chucky’s conversational powers. He even waxed philosophical.

“For that matter,” continued Chucky, critically, “there’s lots of good lyin’ ’round loose. Sometimes it’s dead hard to find, but it’s there all d’ same, if youse is fly enough to pipe it off. An’ it ain’t all in d’ choiches neither. As I states, I’m d’ last mug to go knockin’ d’ choiches, but dey ain’t got no corner on d’ good of this woild. There is others. D’ choices ain’t d’ only apple on d’ tree. Nor yet d’ onliest gas jet on’d chandelier.

“Say!” Chucky went on, after a further taste of the hot Scotch, “on d’ level! I’m onto a choich what’s got nex’ to a bakery, an’ what do youse t’ink? Each night d’ bakery don’t do a t’ing but give every poor hobo who fronts up to d’ window a loaf of bread. That’s for fair! an’ d’ gezebo who runs d’ bakery is a Dutch Sheeny at

that. Would youse get bread if you was to go chasin' nex' door to d' choich? Nit; t'ree times nit! If you was to go slammin' 'round d' choich makin' a talk for a hand-out, all youse would get would be d' collar, see!

"Onct a week that sanchewary would fill youse to d' chin on chimes; oh, yes! but no buns; not on your life! Chimes is d' limit wit' that choich. An' say! it's got money to boin! Bread at d' bakery! chimes at d' choich! that's how dey line t'ings up at that corner. An' I'm here to say as between d' brace of 'em, when it gets down to d' cold proposition, 'W'ich does d' most good?' d' bakery can lose that temple of worship in a walk. I strings me money on d' bakery. An' don't youse forget it!"

Chucky was quite exhausted after this outburst. He revived, however, with the hot Scotch, which restored him mightily.

"Onct," resumed Chucky, "about ten years ago, this is, I was where a w'ite choker was takin' up a c'llection. An' what do youse figure he wants it for? I'm a black Republican if he didn't break it off on us that he was out to make up a wad so his congregation could cel'brate d' fortieth birt'-day of gold in Californy. Don't that knock youse silly? D' w'ite choker says as how he comes from Californy an' him an' his push is goin' to toin themselves loose, see! an whoop it up because dey found gold forty spaces back. It made me tired, honest!

"'Why!' I says to this pulpit t'umper, just like that, 'Why! don't youse preach that gold is d' roots of evil? An' now youse is framin' up a blow-out over findin' it! It looks like a dead gauzy bluff to me.'

“What does d’ w’ite choker mark do? Just gives me d’ dead face an’ ignores me.

“Youse permits yourself to be amazed at me pickin’ this guy up about gold bein’ d’ seeds of evil,” observed Chucky, with a touch of severity. This was in response to some syllable of admiration I’d let fall. “Youse needn’t mind. I’ll give youse a tip that in me yout’ I was d’ star pople of d’ Sunday school dey opens long ago at d’ Five Points. That’s straight goods, see! I was d’ soonest kid at me lessons that ever comes down d’ pike, an’ d’ swiftest ever. I has all d’ other kids on d’ blink. I win a test’ment onct from d’ outstretched mits of d’ entire push, bar d’ Bible class, for loinin’ more verses be heart than anybody. I downs every kid in d’ bunch. I made ’em look like a lot of suckers!” and Chucky paused in approving meditation over the victories of boyhood days.

“Still d’ choiches does dead lots o’ good,” asserted Chucky, coming back to the subject. “There’s d’ case of Bridgy McGuire. She makes two or t’ree trips to d’ Cat’lic joint over on Mott Street, an’ all she loins, so it sticks in her frizzes, is: ‘Honour dy father an’ dy mother,’ see! An’ Bridgy says herself it’s that what brings her back after she’s been run away from home for six years. Bridgy shows up just in time to straighten out d’ game for d’ McGuires at that. D’ fam’ly was on d’ hog for fair when Bridgy gets there.

“Nixie, d’ yarn ain’t so long, nor yet so scarce; for that matter, there’s lots more like ’em. In d’ foist place, this mark, McGuire, Bridgy’s dad, ain’t so bad. Mac’s a bricklayer; but d’ loose screw wit’ him was that he ain’t woikin’ in d’ winter; an’ as durin’ d’ summer he gen’rally luses more whiskey than he lays bricks, an’

is more apt to hit d' bottle than a job, d' McGuire household's more or less on d' bum, see!

"I remembers Bridgy when she's so little a yard makes a frock for her. She was a long, slim, bony kid, wit' legs on her like she's built to pick hops; an' if Bridgy shows anyt'ing in her breed when young, it's a strong streak of step-ladder.

"In her kid days I wasn't noticin' Bridgy much; d' fact was, then as now, I'm havin' troubles of me own. Her mommer, who was pretty near an even break wit' Mac himself when it comes to hittin' up d' booze, every now an' then t'run back to d' religious days of her own yout', an' it's durin' one of these Bible fits of d' old woman that she saws Bridgy off on d' choich, where I speaks of her gettin' d' hunch from d' priest, or somebody, that it's d' fly caper if youse is out to finish wit' d' heavenly squeeze, to honour your father an' mother.

"As I relates, I ain't dead clear about Bridgy when she's young an' little, except it does come chasin' back to me that she's dead gone on dancin' an' knock-about woik. Onct when me an' d' McGuires is livin' on d' same floor, I hears a racket in d' hall like some sucker is tryin' to come downstairs wit' a tool chest. Naturally, I shoves me nut outside me door to tell him to go chase himself. But it's only Bridgy—mebby she's twelve at d' time—practyesing. I keeps me lamps onto her awhile, an' she never tumbles I'm there; for I don't say nothin', but lays dead. Bridgy is doin' han'-stan's, cartwheels, backbends, fallin'splits an' all sorts of funny stunts.

"'Is this an accident, or does you mean it?' I asts at last, as Bridgy winds up a cartwheel wit' a split that

looks like it's goin' to leave her on bot' sides of d' passage way.

" 'I'm doin' a spread,' says Bridgy, 'same as d' Boneless Wonder at Miner's, see!' An' here she lays her little cocoa down on her knee to show she's comfortable, an' dead easy in her mind.

" Wit'out keepin' exact tabs on Bridgy, I'm able to state that as soon as she's big enough she goes to woik; an' at one time an' another she sells poipers, does a toin in a vest factory, or some other sweat shop; an' at last, when she's about seventeen, she's model in a cloak joint. She gets along all right, all right for a space or so, when one day d' old grey guy who owns d' woiks takes it into his nut he'll float into Bridgy's 'fections.

" 'Love youse!' says Bridgy, to this aged stiff; 'old gent, you're dopey! If youse give way to a few more dreams like that, your folks'll put you in d' booby house. Yous'll be in Bloomin'dale cuttin' poiper dolls d' foist news you know.'

" At this d' wicked old geezer makes a strong talk—makes d' speech of his life. But Bridgy won't stand for him, nor his game.

" 'Come off your perch!' she says at last. 'Either you corks up or I quits. You don't make no hit wit' me at all.'

" But d' old mucker don't let up none, an' keeps on givin' Bridgy a song an' dance about his love for her; so at last she makes her bluff good an' walks out of d' joint an' goes home.

" McGuire was hot in d' collar at Bridgy t'runnin' down her job; but d' old woman, she says Bridgy does dead right; an' for a finish Mac an' d' old woman goes

on a drunk an' has a fight over it; after which d' subject's dropped, see! an' that's d' end of it.

"I only sees Bridgy onct after that, before she screws her cocoa. That's at d' Tugman's Ball; where she's d' Queen spieler of d' bunch, an' shows on d' floor as light an' graceful as so much cigar smoke. It's right on d' heels of this that Bridgy fades from d' Bend for fair, an' no one has d' least line on her or knows where she's at.

"It runs on for t'ree or four spaces, an' d' McGuires keeps gettin' drunker an' harder up. More'n onct d' neighbors has to bring in d' grub, or dey wouldn't have done a t'ing but starve. Dey's jumpin' sideways for food to chew, I'll tell youse that right now, as much as half d' time. Durin' all this no one hears a woid about Bridgy.

"Of course, no one's makin' much of a roar. There's a good deal doin' about d' Bend, see! An' d' comin' or d' goin' of a skirt more or less don't cut much ice.

"It's in d' winter, an' d' McGuires has been carryin' on bad. No woik, no money, no grub! On d' dead! it's a forty-to-one shot dey bot' finishes at d' morgue, or d' Island before d' spring comes 'round. For d' winter is bad in d' Bend, an' while everybody is on, that d' McGuires is strikin' it hard, d' most of us is havin' all we can do runnin' down t'ree feeds a day, so d' McGuires ain't what d' poipers calls 'much in d' public eye,' after all. One evenin', however, Mac comes sprintin' to me, an' he's fair sober for him.

"'Nit!' he says, when I asts him, 'nit; none of d' ellegunt for me!'

"Then I tumbles there's a cochin on. McGuire's t'runnin' off on a drink was a new one on d' Bend.

"'Come wit' me,' he says, 'to Koster & Bial's.'

“ ‘Come wit’ youse to Koster’s!’ I retort. ‘That’s a dandy idee; youse ought to sew buttons on it! Come to Koster & Bial’s! Who’s got d’ price?’

“ ‘Here’s d’ pasteboards,’ says Mac.

“ ‘An’ I’m a liar if he ain’t got ’em. So we goes, see!

“ ‘D’ fift’ toin on d’ programme is a ‘Mamselle Fleury from Paris.’ She’s down on d’ bills as a singer, dancer an’ high kicker. I’m leanin’ back in me seat feelin’ sore on meself for not makin’ Mac hock d’ tickets for beer, when all at onct Mac gives me a jolt in d’ slats wit’ his elbow, an’ pointin’ one of his main hooks at this French tart, where she’s singin’ on d’ stoige—an’ say! she’s a boid an’ a Kokobola—an’ says:

“ ‘Be youse on?’

“ I focuses me peeps on this Fleury, all pink tights an’ silks an’ feathers, where she’s doin’ her toin. I’m a lobster if she ain’t Bridgy McGuire!

“ ‘What th’ ’ell! what th’ bloomin’ ’ell!’ is all I can say; an’ on d’ square! Mac has to drag me out an’ lay an oyster on me before I’m meself ag’in. It comes mighty near stoppin’ me in d’ foist round.

“ ‘You sees d’ finish. Bridgy’s took to d’ stoige. She’s been over in London an’ Paris; an’ say! she’s got d’ game down fine as silk. She’d come back an’ was beatin’ d’ box for t’ree hundred plunks a week.

“ ‘Sure! Bridgy had been up to find her folks. Foist she said she t’ought she’d pass ’em up. Dey had given her d’ woist of it when she’s a kid; why should she bother! But she tells us herself, talkin’ it over, how when she struck d’ old town ag’in, an’ old sights begins to toin up old mem’ries, it starts to run in her wig about d’ Bend an’ d’ old days. An’ what stan’s out clearest

is d' little old Cat'lic choich, an' d' guff dey gives her d' onct or twict she shows up there, about honourin' her father an' mother. I s'pose what youse would call Bridgy's conscience gets a run for its money. Anyhow, somet'ing inside of her took to chewin' d' rag, an' showin' Bridgy's she's wrong, an' at d' last, she can't stand for it no longer, an' so she sends a tracer out for her mother an' dad, an' lands 'em.

"D' McGuires live in Harlem now. Dey drinks better whiskey then dey did in d' Bend, an' less of it. Bridgy is a wonder an' a winner; in it wit' bot' feet an' has dough to back every needful racket. Yes, d' choich does it, give it d' credit; an' youse can gamble your last chip d' McGuires crosses themselves every time dey sees one. An' dey's dead flossy so to do."

TOO CHEAP

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

CHAPTER I.

THE scene was Washington.

"Get the galoot to urge the Bill, gal; and I'll make over half them phosphate beds to you. The Senate has already passed it."

"I'll do my best, Uncle Silver Tip," said Agnes Huntington. "Slippery Elm Benton loves me, and he cannot refuse his affianced wife his vote."

"They'd hang him in Colorado if he did," observed Uncle Silver Tip; "but see to it at once, gal; the fourth of March draws on apace. All must then be over, or all is lost."

CHAPTER II

AGNES HUNTINGTON pressed her expectant nose against the pane. Outside the snowstorm was profound. The flakes crowded the air as they fell. The drifts were four feet deep on Connecticut avenue. A man wrapped in furs pushed his way toward the Chateau d'Huntington. It was Arctic cold, but love beckoned him. He stamped the snow from his feet in the entry. The next moment Agnes Huntington had curled about his neck in a festoon of affection.

It was Representative Slippery Elm Benton.

Agnes Huntington was a beautiful creature—tall, slender, spirituelle, with eyes as dark and deep as the heavens at night. Agnes Huntington had but one fault: she would sell the honour of the man she loved.

Agnes Huntington was out for the stuff bigger than a wolf.

CHAPTER III

“SOMETIMES I doubt the longevity of our bliss,” he said. “Despair rides on the crupper of my hopes at times. The Witch of Waco told how in a trance she saw my future spread before me like a faro layout. ‘And,’ said the Witch of Waco, ‘I saw the pale hand of Fate put a copper on the queen. You may be lynched, but you will never wed.’ Such was her bleak bode.”

And Slippery Elm Benton trembled like a child.

“Heed her not, dearest,” murmured Agnes Huntington. “Surrender yourself, as I do, to the solemn currents of our love. And, darling, promise me again, you will do what is needful for the Phosphate Bill. It would brighten the last days of dear old Uncle Silver Tip.”

“Where is your aged relative?” asked Slippery Elm Benton, moodily.

“We’d better not call him, dearest,” she said. “Uncle is lushing to-night, and he is unpleasant when he has been tanking up. What you do for the Phosphate Bill, you do for me.”

CHAPTER IV

IT was “suspension day,” and the Phosphate Bill

went through the House like the grace of Heaven through a camp-meeting.

CHAPTER V

"HALF of that phosphate bed is yours, gal," said Uncle Silver Tip, when Agnes Huntington told him the Bill was already at the White House for the President's signature. "It's wuth a million; an' you've 'arned it, gal! It was to turn sech tricks as this your old uncle sent you from the wild and woolly West to an Eastern seminary, and had them knock your horns off. It cost a bunch of cattle, but it's paid."

CHAPTER VI

"THERE'S something I must tell you, love," said Agnes Huntington; "you would know all in time, and it is better that you learn it now from the lips of your Agnes."

"What is it, beautiful one?" said Slippery Elm Benton, languidly.

The Congressional day, with its labours, had wearied our hero, and, although with the woman he loved, he still felt fatigued.

"Read this," said Agnes, as she pushed a paper into her lover's hand, and shrank back as if frightened.

The paper made over one-half of the phosphate bed to Agnes Huntington.

"And it was for this you sold my vote in the House!" and Slippery Elm Benton laughed mockingly.

"Oh, say not so, love!" said Agnes Huntington,

piteously. "Rather would I hear you curse than laugh like that!"

"And so the vote and influence of Slippery Elm Benton are basely bargained by the woman he loved for a one-half interest in a phosphate bed!"

Slippery Elm Benton strode up and down the apartment, tossing his arms like a Dutch windmill.

Agnes Huntington cowered before the wrath of her lover.

"What would you have?" she cried.

"What would I have!" repeated Slippery Elm Benton, with a sneer, which all but withered the weeping girl; "what would I have! I would have all—all! My vote and influence were worth the entire phosphate bed, and you basely accepted a paltry moiety! Go from my side, false woman; you who would put so low an estimate upon me! The Witch of Waco was right. I leave you. I leave you as one unfit to be the wife of a Congressman!"

And Slippery Elm Benton, while Agnes Huntington swooned on the rug, rushed into the night and the snow.

HENRY SPENY'S BENEVOLENCE

SUMMER was here and the day was warm. Henry Speny had been walking, and now stood at the corner of Tenth Avenue and Twenty-eighth street, mopping his brow. Henry Speny was a Conservative; and, although Mrs. Speny had that morning gone almost to the frontiers of a fist fight to make him change his underwear for the lighter and more gauzy apparel proper to jocund August, Henry Speny refused. He was now paying the piper, and thinking how much more Mrs. Speny knew than he did, when the Tramp came up.

"Podner!" said the Tramp in a low, guttural whine, intended to escape the ear of the police and touch Henry Speny's heart at one and the same time; "podner! couldn't you assist a pore man a little?"

"Assist a poor man to what?" asked Henry Speny, returning his handkerchief to his pocket and looking scornfully at the Tramp.

He was a fat, healthy Tramp, in good condition. Henry Speny hardened his heart.

"Dime!" replied the Tramp; "dime to get some-thin' to eat."

"No," said Henry Speny shortly; "I'm a half dozen meals behind the game myself."

This last was only Henry Speny's humour. Mrs. Speny fed him twice a day. But Henry Speny knew that the Tramp wanted the dime for whiskey.

"Well! if you don't think I want it to chew on," said the Tramp, "jest' take me to a bakery and buy me a loaf of bread. I'll get away with it right before you."

"Say!" remarked Henry Speny, in a spirit of sarcastic irritation, "what's the use of your talking to me? There's the Charity Woodyard in this town, where, if you were really hungry, you would go and saw wood for something to eat. You can get two meals and a bed for sawing one-sixteenth of a cord of wood."

"You can't saw wood with no such fin as this, podner!" said the Tramp; and pulling up his coat sleeve he displayed to Henry Speny an arm as withered as a dead tree. "The other's all right," he continued, restoring his coat sleeve; "but wot's one arm in a catch-as-catch-can racket with a bucksaw?"

Henry Speny was conscience-stricken, but he would defeat the Tramp in his efforts to buy whiskey.

"I'll go down to the woodyard and saw your wood myself," said Henry Speny.

He told Mrs. Speny afterward that he could not account for the making of this offer, unless it was his anxiety to keep the Tramp sober. All the Tramp wanted was ten cents, and for Henry Speny to propose to saw one-sixteenth of a cord of hard wood on a hot day, when a dime would have made all things even, was a conundrum too deep for Henry Speny, as he looked back over the transaction. But he did make the proposal; and the Tramp accepted with a grin of gratitude.

There were twenty sticks in that one-sixteenth of a cord—hard, knotty sticks, too. And each one had to

be sawed three times ; sixty cuts in all. It was a poor bucksaw. Before he had finished the third stick, Henry Speny declared that it was the most beastly bucksaw he ever handled in his life. The buck itself was a wretched buck, and wouldn't stand still while Henry Speny sawed. It had a habit of tipping over ; and when Henry Speny put his knee on the stick to steady the refractory buck, the knots tore his trousers and made his legs black and blue. Then the perspiration got in his eyes and made them smart. When he wiped it away he saw two of his friends looking at him in a shocked, sober way from across the street. They passed on, and told everybody that Henry Speny was down at the Charity Woodyard sawing wood for his food. They said, too, that they had reason to believe he did this every day ; that business had gone to pieces with him, and an assignment couldn't be staved off much longer.

Henry Speny would have thrown up the job with the second stick, but the Tramp was already half through his meal ; Henry Speny could see him bolting his food like a glutton through the window, from where he stood.

It took Henry Speny two hours to saw those twenty sticks sixty times. His hands were a fretwork of blisters ; his back and shoulders ached like a galley-slave's. Henry Speny hired a carriage to take him home ; he couldn't stand the slam and jolt of a street car. He was laid up three days with the blisters on his hands, while Mrs. Speny rubbed his back and shoulders with Pond's Extract.

On the fourth day, as Henry Speny was limping painfully toward his office, he heard a voice he knew.

“Podner! can't you assist a pore m— Oh! beg pardon; you looked so different I didn't know you!”

It was the fat Tramp with the withered arm. Without a word Henry Speny gave him ten cents and hobbled on.

JANE DOUGHERTY

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

"WHAT'S d' flossiest good t'ing I'm ever guilty of?" said Chucky. There was a pause. Chucky let his eye—somewhat softened for him—rove a bit abstractedly about the sordid bar. At last it came back to repose on the beer mug before him, as the most satisfying sight at easy hand.

"Now," retorted Chucky, as he wet his lip, "that question is a corker. 'What's d' star good deed you does?' is d' way you slings it.

"Will I name it? In a secont—in a hully secont! It's d' story of a little goil I steals, an' sticks in for ever since. This kid's two years comin' t'ree, when I pinched it, so to speak; an' youse can bet your boots! she was reg'larly up ag'inst it. A fly old sport like Chucky would never have mingled wit' her destinies otherwise; not on your life! Between youse, an' me, an' d' bar-keep over there, I ain't got no more natural use for kids than I have for a wet dog. But never mind! we'll pass up that kink in me make-up an' get down to this abduction I prides meself on.

"It's nine spaces ago, an' d' kid in dispoote is now goin' on twelve. I've been, as I states, stickin' in for her ever since, an' intends to play me string to a finish. But to go on wit' me romance.

"As I relates, d' play I boasts of is nine spaces in d'

rear, see! In that day I has a dandy graft. I've got me hooks on as big a bundle as a hundred plunks, many an' many is d' week. I'd be woikin' it now only I luses too free.

"Here's how in that day I sep'rated suckers from their stuff. It was simply fakin', of d' smoot' an' woidy sort, see! I'd make up like a Zulu, wit' burnt cork, an' feathers, an' queer duds; an' then I'd climb into an open carriage, drive to a good corner, do a bit of chin music, pull a crowd an' sell 'em brass jewellery.

"Me patter would run something like this: D' waggon would stop an' I'd stand up. Raisin' me lamps to d' heavens above, I'd cut loose d' remark at d' top of me valves:

"'It looks like rain! It don't look like a t'ing but rain!'

"Wit' me foist yell d' pop'lace would flock 'round, an' in two minutes there would be a hundred people there. In ten, there'd be a t'ousand, if d' cops didn't get in their woik. I'll give youse a tip d' great American public is d' star gezebos to come to a dead halt, an' look an' listen to t'ings. More'n onct I've seen some stiff who's sprintin' for a doctor, make a runnin' switch at d' sound of me voice an' side-track himself for t'irty minutes to hear me. Dey's a dead curious lot, d' public is; buy a French pool on that!

"W'en d' crowd is jammed all about me carriage w'eels, I'd cut loose some more. I'd quit d' rain question cold, an' holdin' up an armful of jimcrow jewellery, I'd t'row meself like this:

"'Loidies an' gents,' I'd say, 'I'm d' only orig'nal Coal Oil Johnny. An' I'm a soon mug at that, see! I don't get d' woist of it; not on your neckties. I

gives away two hundred an' I takes in four hundred toadskins (dollars) an' I don't let no mob of hayseeds do me, so youse farmers needn't try.

“Look at me! Cast your lamps over me! I'm one of Cetewayo's Zulu body-guard, an' I'm here from Africa on a furlough to saw off on suckers a lot of bum jewellery, an' down youse for your dough, see! I'm goin' to offer for sale four t'ings: I'm goin' to sell youse foist ten rings, then ten brooches, then ten chains, and then ten watches. An' when I gets down to d' watches, watch me clost; because, when I gets nex' to d' tickers I've reached d' point where I'm goin' to t'run youse down. I'm here to skin youse out of your money, an' leave youse lookin' like d' last run of shad.

“But there's this pecoōliarity about me sellin' d' rings. Each ring is a dollar apiece, an' when I've shoved ten of 'em onto youse, every galoot who's paid me a dollar for one, gets his dollar back an' a dollar wit' it for luck.

“Now here's d' rings, good folks an' all!—here I'd flash d' rings; gilt, an' wort' t'ree dollars a ton!—‘here's d' little crinklets! Who's goin' to take one at a dollar, an' at d' finish, when d' ten is sold, get two dollars back? Who'll be d' foist? Now don't rush me! don't crush me! but come one at a time. D' rings ain't wort' a dollar a ton: I only makes d' play for fun, an' because d' doctors who looks after me healt' sáys I'll croak if I don't travel. Who'll be d' early boid to nip a ring?

“There you be!’ I goes on, as some rustic gets to d' front an' hands up d' bill. ‘Sold ag'in an' got d' tin, another farmer just sucked in!’

“So I goes, on,” continued Chucky, after reviving

his voice—which his exertions had made a trifle raucous—with a swig at the tankard; “so I’d go on until d’ ten rings would be sold. Then I’d go over d’ outfit ag’in, take back d’ rings, an’ give ’em each a two-dollar willyum.

“ ‘ Now push back into d’ mob, you lucky guys,’ I’d say, ‘ an’ give your maddened competitors to d’ rear of youse a chanct to woik d’ racket. I’m goin’ to sell ten brooches now for two dollars each, an’ give back four dollars wit’ every brooch. Then I’m goin’ to dazzle youse wit’ ten chains, at five cases per chain. An’ then I’ll get down to d’ watches, at which crisis, me guileless come-ons, youse must be sure to watch me, for it’s then I’ll make a monkey of youse.’

“ An’ so I chins on, offerin’ d’ brooches at two dollars a t’row, an’ at d’ wind-up, when d’ ten is gone, I gives back to each mucker who’s got in, d’ sum of four plunks, see!

“ Be that time it’s a knock-down an’ drag-out around me cabrioley, to see who’s goin’ to transact business wit’ me, an’, wit’out as much cacklin’ as a hen makes over an egg, I goes to d’ chains an’ floats ten of ’em at five a chain. As I sells d’ last, I toins sharp on some duck who’s clost be me w’eel an’ says:

“ ‘ What’s that? I’m a crook, am I! an’ this ain’t on d’ level! Loidies an’ gents, just for d’ disparagin’ remark of this hobo, who is no doubt funny in his top-knot from drink, I’ll go on an’ sell ten more chains. After which I’ll come down to d’ watches, which is d’ great commercial point where youse had better watch me, for it’s there I’m goin’ to lose you in a lope! An’ that’s for fair, see!’

“ Ten more chains, at five a trip, goes off like circus

lem'nade, an' I stows d' long an' beauteous green away in me keck. As d' last one of d' secont ten fades into d' hooks of d' last sucker, I stows d' five he's coughed up for it in me raiment, an' says :

“ ‘An' now, loidies an' gents, we gets down to d' watches !’

“ Wit' which bluff I lugs me ticker out an' takes a squint at it.

“ ‘What th' 'ell !’ I shouts. ‘Here it's half-past t'ree, an' I was to be married at t'ree-fifteen ! Hully gee ! Excuse me, people, but I must fly to d' side of me beloved, or I'll get d' dead face ; also d' frozen mit. I'll see youse dubs next year, if woikin' overtime wit' youse to-day ain't ruined me career.’

“ As I'm singin' out d' last, I'm givin' me driver d' office to beat his dogs an' chase, see ! An', bein' as he's on, an' is paid extra as his part of d' graft, he soaks d' horses wit' d' whip an' in twenty seconts d' crowd is left behint, an' is busy givin' each other d' laugh. No, there never was no row ; no mug was ever mobbed for guyin'. Nit ! I always comes away all right, an' youse can figure it, I'm sixty good bones in on d' racket.

“ Naturally, youse would like to hear where d' kid breaks into d' play an' how I wins it. I'd ought to have told youse sooner, but, on d' level ! when me old patter begins to flow off me tongue, I can't shut down until I've spieled it all.

“ But about d' kid. One afternoon I'm goin' on--it's in Joisey City--wit' me Zulu war-paint an' me open carriage, givin' d' usual mob d' usual jolly. T'ings is runnin' off d' reel like a fish new hooked, an' I'm down to me fift' chain. Just then I hears a woman say :

“ ‘Fly’s d’ woid, Sallie! Here’s your old man, an’ he’s got his load! He won’t do a t’ing to youse! Screw out, Sal! screw out!’ ”

“ But Sallie, who’s a tattered lookin’ soubrette, wit’ a kid in her arms, an’ who’s been standin’ clost be one of me hind w’eels, don’t get no chanct to skin out, see! There’s a drunken hobo—as big an’ as strong as a horse—who’s right up to her when d’ foist skirt puts her on. As she toins, he cops her one in d’ neck wit’-out a woid. Down she goes like ninepins! As she lands, d’ back of her cocoa don’t do a t’ing but t’ump a stone horse-block wit’ a whack! As d’ blood flies, I’m lookin’ down at her. I sees her map fade to a grey w’ite under d’ dirt; she bats her lamps onct or twict; an’ d’ nex’ moment I’m on wit’out tellin’ that her light is out for good.

“ As Sallie does d’ fall, d’ kid which’ she’s holdin’ rolls in d’ gutter under d’ carriage.

“ ‘T’run d’ kid in here!’ I says to d’ mark who picks it up.

“ Me only idee at d’ time is to keep d’ youngone from gettin’ d’ boots from d’ mob that’s surgin’ round, an’ tryin’ to mix it up wit’ d’ drunken bum who’s soaked Sal. D’ guy who gets d’ kid fires it up to me like it’s a football. I’m handy wit’ me hooks, so I cops it off in midair, an’ stows it away on d’ seat.

“ Be that time d’ p’lice has collared d’ fightin’ bum all right, an’ some folks is draggin’ Sal, who’s limp an’ dead enough, into a drug shop.

“ It’s all up wit’ me graft for that day, so after lookin’ at d’ youngone a secont, I goes curvin’ off to d’ hotel where I hangs out. While I’m takin’ me Zulu make-up off, d’ chambermaid stands good for d’ kid.

When I sees it ag'in, it's all washed up an' got some decent duds on. Say! on d' dead! it was a wonder!

"Well, to cut it short," said Chucky, giving the order for another mug of ale, "I loins that night that d' mother is dead, an' d' drunken hobo's in d' hold-over. As it's a cinch he'll do time for life, even if he misses bein' stretched, I looks d' game all over, an' for a wind-up I freezes to d' kid. Naw; I couldn't tell why, at that, see! only d' youngone acts like it's stuck on me.

"Nixie; I never keeps it wit' me. I've got it up to d' Sisters' school. Say! them nuns is gone on it. I makes a front to 'em as d' kid's uncle; an' while I've been shy meself on grub more'n onct since I asted d' Sisters to keep it, I makes good d' money for d' kid right along, an' I always will. What name does I give it? Jane—Jane Dougherty; it's me mudder's name. Nit; I don't know what I'll do wit' Jane for a finish. I was talkin' to me Rag only d' other day about it, an' she told me, in a week or so, she'd go an' take a fall out of a fortune-teller, who, me Rag says, is d' swiftest of d' whole fortune-tellin' push. Mebby we'll get a steer from her."

MISTRESS KILLIFER

(WOLFVILLE)

THIS is of a day prior to Dave Tutt's taking a wife, and a year before the nuptials of Benson Annie, as planned and executed by Old Man Enright, with one, French.

Wolfville is dissatisfied; what one might call peevish. A man has been picked up shot to death, no one can tell by whom; no one has hung for it. Any one familiar with the Western spirit and the Western way would note the discontent by merely walking through the single, sun-burned street. When two citizens of the place make casual meeting in store or causeway, they confine their salutations to gruff "how'd!" and pass on. Men are even seen to drink alone in a sullen, morbid way.

Clearly something is wrong with Wolfville. The popular discontent is so sufficiently pronounced as to merit the notice of leading citizens. Therefore it is no marvel that when Old Man Enright, who, by right of years—and with a brain as clear and as bright as a day in June—is the head man of the hamlet, meets Doc Peets at the bar of the Red Light, the discussion falls on affairs of public concern.

"Whatever do you reckon is the matter with this camp, Enright?" asks Doc Peets, as they tip their liquor into their throats without missing a drop.

Doc Peets is the medical practitioner of Wolfville, but his grammar, like that of many another man, has lost ground before his environment.

"Can't tell!" replied Enright, with a mien dubious yet thoughtful. "Looks like the whole outfit is somehow on a dead kyard. Mebby it's that Denver party gettin' downed last week an' no one lynched. Some folks says the Stranglers oughter have swung that Greaser."

"Well!" retorts Doc Peets, "you as chief of the Stranglers, an' I as a member in full standin', knows thar's no more evidence ag'in that Mexican than ag'in my *pinto* hoss."

"Of course, I knows that too!" replies Enright, "but still I sorter thinks general sentiment lotted on a hangin'. You know, Doc, it ain't so important from a public stand that you stretches the right gent, as that you stretches somebody when it's looked for. Nacherally it would have been mighty mortifyin' to the Mexican who's swung off at the loop-end of the lariat for a killin' he ain't in on; but still I holds the belief it would have calmed the sperit of the camp. However, I may be 'way off to one side on that; it's jest my view. Set up the nosepaint ag'in, barkeep!"

While Doc Peets is slowly freighting his glass with a fair allowance, he is deep in meditation.

"I've an idee, Enright," says Doc Peets at last. "The thing for us to do is to give the public some new direction of thought that'll hold 'em quiet. The games is all dead at this hour, an' the boys ain't doin' nothin'; s'pose we makes a round-up to consider my scheme. The mere exercise will soothe 'em."

"Shall we have Jack Moore post a notice?" asks

Enright. "He's Kettle Tender to the Stranglers, an' I reckons what he does that a-way makes it legal."

"No," says Peets, "let's rustle 'em in an' hold the meetin' right now an' yere in the Red Light. Some of the boys is feelin' that petulant they're likely to get to chewin' each other's manes any minute. I'm tellin' you, Enright, onless somethin' is done mighty *poco tiempo* to cheer 'em, an' convince 'em that Wolfville is lookin' up an' gettin' ahead on the correct trail, this outfit's liable to have a killin' any time at all. The recent decease of that Denver person won't be a marker!"

"All right!" says Enright, "if thar ain't no time for Moore an' a notice, a good, handy, quick way to focus public interest would be to step to the back door, an' shake the loads outen my six-shooter. That'll excite cur'osity, an' over they'll come all spraddled out."

Thus it comes to pass that the afternoon peace of Wolfville is suddenly disparaged and broken down by six pistol shots. They follow each other like the rapid striking of a Yankee clock.

"Any one creased?" asks Jack Moore, by general consent a fashion of marshal and executive officer for the place, and who, followed by the population of Wolfville, rushes up the moment following the shooting.

"None whatever!" replies Doc Peets, cheerfully. "The shootin' you-alls hears is purely bloodless; an' Enright an' me indulges tharin onder what they calls the 'public welfare clause of the constitootion.' The intent which urges us to shake up the serenity of the hour is to convene the camp, which said rite bein' now accomplished, the barkeep asks your beverages, an' the business proceeds in reg'lar order."

Enright, who has finished replenishing the pistol from which he evicted the loads, draws a chair to a monte table and drums gently with his fingers.

"The meetin' will please bed itse'f down!" says Enright, with a sage dignity which has generous reflection in the faces around him. "Doc Peets, gents, who is a sport whom we all knows an' respects, will now state the object of this round-up. The barkeep meanwhile will please continue his rounds, the same not bein' deemed disturbin'; none whatever."

"Gents, an' fellow townsmen!" says Doc Peets, rising at the call of Enright and stepping forward, "I avoids all harassin' mention of a yeretofore sort. Comin' down to the turn at once, I ventures the remark that thar's somethin' wrong with Wolfville. I would see no virtue in pursuin' this subject, which might well excite the resentment of all true citizens of the town, was it not that I feels a crowdin' necessity for a change of a radical sort. Somethin' must be proposed, an' somethin' must be did. I am well aware thar's gents yere to-day as holds a conviction that a bet is overlooked in not stringin' the Mexican last week on account of the party from Denver. That may or may not be true; but in any event, that hand's been played, an' that pot's been lost an' won. Whether on that occasion we diskyards an' draws for the best interests of the public, may well pass by onasked. At any rate we don't fill, an' the Greaser wins out with his neck. Lettin' the past, tharfore, drift for a moment, I would like to hear from any gent present somethin' in the line of a proposal for future action; one calc'lated to do Wolfville proud. As affairs stand our pride is goin' our brotherly love is goin', our public sperit is goin',

an' the way we're p'intin' out, onless we comes squar' about on the trail, we won't be no improvement on an outfit of Digger Injuns in a month. Gents, I pauses at this p'int for su'gestions."

As Doc Peets sits down a whispered buzz runs through the room. It is plain that what he has said finds sympathy in his audience.

"You've heard Peets," observes Enright, beating softly. "Any party with views should not withhold 'em. I takes it we-all is anxious for the good of Wolfville. We should proceed with wisdom. Red Dog, our tin-horn rival, is a-watchin' of this camp, ready to detect an' take advantages of any weakenin' of sperit on the Wolfville part. So far Red Dog has been out-lucked, out-played, an' out-held. Wolfville has downed her on the deal, an' on the draw. But, to continue in the future as in the past, requires to-day that we acts promptly, an' in yoonison, an' give the sitoation, mentally speakin', the best turn in the box."

"What for a play would it be?" asks Dan Boggs, doubtfully, as he rises and bows stiffly to Enright, who bows stiffly in return; "whatever for a play would it be to rope up one of these yere lecture sharps, which the same I goes ag'inst the other night in Tucson? He could stampede over an' put us up a talk in the warehouse of the New York Store; an' I'm right yere to say a lecture would look mighty meetropolitan, that a-way, an' lay over Red Dog like four kings an' an ace."

"Whatever was this yere ghost dancer you adverts to lecturin' about?" asks Jack Moore.

"I never do hear the first of it," replies Boggs. "Me an' Old Monte, the stage driver, is projectin'

about Tucson at the time we strikes this lecture game, an' it's about half dealt out when he gets in on it. But as far as we keeps tabs, he's talkin' about Roosia an' Siberia, an' how they were pesterin' an' playin' it low on the Jews. He has a lay-out of maps an' sech, an' packs the whole racket with him from deal box to check-rack. Folks as *sabes* lectures allows he turns as strong a game, with as high a limit, as any sport that ever charged four bits for a back seat. The lecture sharp's all right; the question is do you-alls deem highly of the scheme? If it's the sense of this yere town, it don't take two days to cut this short-horn out of the Tucson herd an' drive him over yere.

"Onder other, an' what one might call a more concrete condition of public feelin'," says Doc Peets, cutting rapidly and diplomatically into the talk, "the hint of our esteemed townsman would be accepted on the instant. But to my mind this yere camp ain't in no proper frame of mind for lectures on Roosia. It'll be full of trouble,—sech a talk. I *sabes* Roosia as well as I does an ace. Thar's an old silver tip they calls the Czar, which is their language for a sort o' national chief of scouts, an' he's always trackin' 'round for trouble. Thar's bound to be no end of what you might call turmoil in a lecture on Roosia, and the sensibilities of Wolfville, already harrowed, ain't in no shape to bear it. Now, while friend Boggs has been talkin', my idees has followed off a different waggon track. What we-all needs, is not so much a lecture, which is for a day, but somethin' lastin', sech as the example of a refined an' elevated home life abidin' in our very midst. What Wolfville pines for is the molifyin' infloence of woman. Shorely we has Faro

Nell! who is pleasantly present with us, a-settin' back thar alongside Cherokee Hall; an' that gent never makes a moccasin track in Wolfville who don't prize an' value Nell. Thar ain't a six-shooter in camp but what would bark itse'f hoarse in her behalf. But Nell's young; merely a yearlin' as it were. What we wants is the picture of a happy household where the feminine part tharof, in the triple capacity of woman, wife an' mother, while cherishin' an' carin' for her husband, sheds likewise a radiant infloence for us."

"Whoopee! for Doc Peets!" shouts Faro Nell, flourishing her broad sombrero over her young curls.

"Pausin' only to thank our fair young townswoman," says Doc Peets, bowing gallantly to Faro Nell, who waves her hand in return, "for her endorsements, which the same is as flatterin' as it is priceless, I stapedes on to say that I learns from first sources, indeed from the gent himse'f, that one of the worthiest citizens of Wolfville, Mr. Killifer, who is on the map as blacksmith at the stage station, has a wife in the states. I would recommend that Mr. Killifer be requested to bring on this esteemable lady to keep camp for him. The O. K. Restaurant will lose a customer, the same bein' the joint where Kif gets his daily *concarne*; but Rucker, the landlord, will not repine for that. What will be Rucker's loss will be general gain, an' for the welfare of Wolfville, Rucker makes a sacrifice. Mr. Chairman, my su'gestion takes the form of a motion."

"Which said motion," responds Enright, with such vigorous application of his fist to the purpose of a gavel that nervous spirits might well fear for the results, "which said motion, onless I hears a protest,

goes as it lays. Thar bein' no objection the chair declares it to be the commands of Wolfville that Syd Killifer bring on his wife. What heaven has j'ined together, let no gent——"

"See yere, Mr. Chairman!" interposes Killifer, with a mixture of decision and diffidence, "I merely interferences to ask whether, as the he'pless victim of this onlooked for uprisin', do my feelin's count? Which if I ain't in this—if it's regarded as the correct caper to lay waste the future of a gent, who in his lowly way is doin' his best to make good his hand, why! I ain't got nothin' to say. I'm impugnin' no gent's motives, but I'm free to remark, these yere proceedin's strikes me as the froote of reckless caprice."

"I will say to our fellow gent," says Enright with much dignity, "that thar's no disp'sition to force a play to which he seems averse. If from any knowledge we s'posed we entertained of the possession of a sperit on his part, which might rise to the aid of a general need—I shorely hopes I makes my meanin' plain—we over-deals the kyards, all we can do is to throw our hands in the diskyard an' shuffle an' deal ag'in."

"Not at all, an' no offence given, took or meant!" hastily retorts Killifer, as he balances himself uneasily upon his feet, and surveys first, Enright and then Peets. "I has the highest regard for the chair, personal, an' takes frequent occasion to remark that I looks on Doc Peets as the best eddicated scientist I ever sees in my life. But this yere surge into my domestic arrangements needs to be considered. Youalls don't know the lady in question, which, bein' as it's my wife, I ain't assoomin' no airs when I says I does."

"Does she look like me, Kif?" asks Faro Nell from her perch near Cherokee Hall.

"None whatever, Nell!" responds Killifer. "To be shore! I ain't basked none in her society for several years, an' my mem'ry is no doubt blurred by stampedes, an' prairie fires, an' cyclones, an' lynchin's, an' other features of a frontier career; but she puts me in mind, as I recalls the lady, of an Injun uprisin' more'n anythin' else. Still, she's as good a woman as ever founds a flap-jack. But she's haughty; that's what she is, she's haughty.

"I might add," goes on Killifer, in a deprecatory way, "that inasmuch as I ain't jest lookin' for the camp yere to turn to me in its hour of need, this proposal to transplant the person onder discussion to Wolfville, is an honour as onexpected as a rattlesnake in a roll of blankets. But you-alls knows me!"—And here Killifer braces himself desperately.—"What the camp says, goes! I'm a *vox populi* sort of sport, an' the last citizen to lay down on a duty. Still!"—here Killifer's courage begins to ebb a little—"I advises we go about this yere enterprise mighty conserv'tive. My wife has her notions, an' now I thinks of it she ain't likely to esteem none high neither of our Wolfville ways. All I can say, gents, is that if she takes a notion ag'in us, she's as liable to break even as any lady I knows."

"Thar ain't a gent here but what honours Kif," says the sanguine Peets, as he looks encouragingly at Killifer, who has resumed his seat and is gloomily shaking his head, "for bein' frank an' free in this."

"Which I don't want you-alls to spread your blankets on no ant-hill, an' then blame me!" interrupts Killifer dejectedly.

"I believe, Mr. Chairman," continues Doc Peets, "we fully onderstands the feelin's of our townsman in this matter. But I'm convinced of the correctness of my first view. Thar can shorely be nothin' in the daily life of Wolfville at which the lady could aim a criticism, an' we needs the beneficent example of a home. I would tharfore insist on my plan with perhaps a modification."

"I rises to ask the Preesidin' Officer a question!" interrupts Dave Tutt.

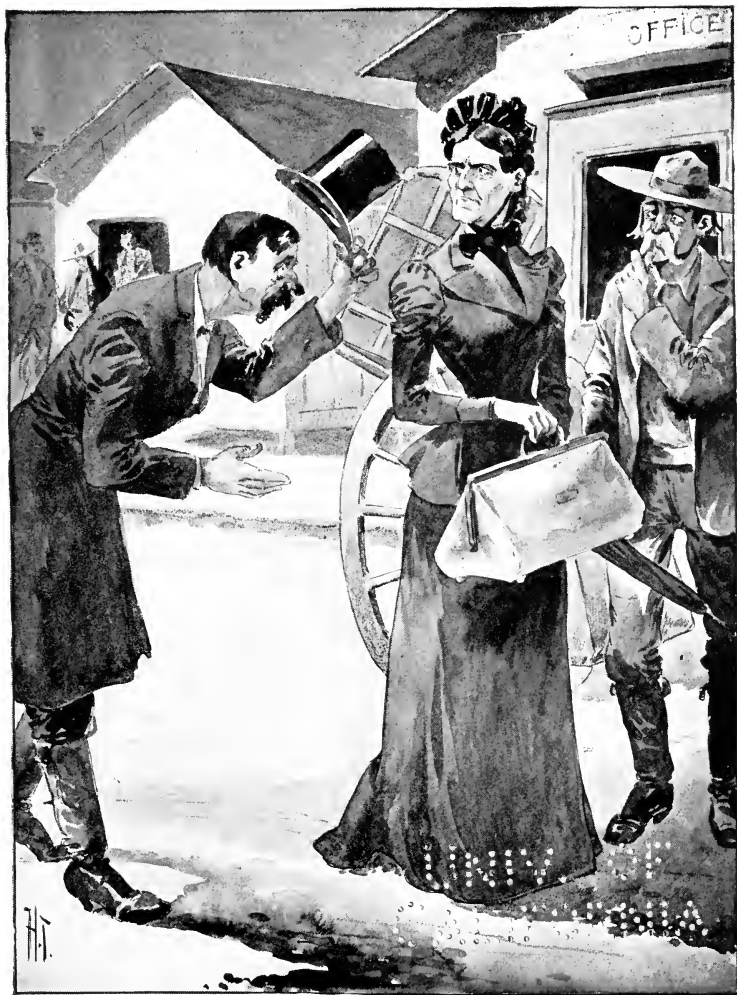
"Let her roll!" retorts Enright.

"How would it be to invite Kif's wife to come yere on a visit?" queries Tutt. "Sorter take her on probation! That's the way an oncle of mine back in Missouri j'ines the Meth'dist Church. An' it's lucky the congregation takes them precautions; which they saves the trouble of cuttin' the old felon out of the herd later, when he falls from grace. Which last he shorely does!"

"Not waitin' for the chair to answer," replies Doc Peets, "I holds the limitation of Tutt to be good. I tharfore pinches down my original resoolotion to the effect that Kif bring his wife yere for a month. Let her stack up ag'inst our daily game, an' triumph through a deal or so, an' she'll never quit Wolfville nor Wolfville her. I shorely holds the present occasion the openin' of a new era."

It is a month later, perhaps, when everybody assembles at the post-office to receive the lady on whom the local public has built so many hopes. Killifer has gone over to Tucson to act as her escort into Wolfville, and, as he said, "to sorter break the effect."

She is an iron-visaged heroine. As Killifer hands



“THE PROPRIETOR OF THE ONLY STIFF HAT IN TOWN.”—Page 219.

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her from the stage—a ceremony upon which he bestows that delicate care wherewith he would have aided the unloading of so much dynamite—Doc Peets steps gallantly forward, raising his hat. Doc Peets is the proprietor of the only stiff hat in town, and presumes on it.

“Who is that insultin’ drunkard, Mr. Killifer?” demands the lady, as she bends her eyes on the suave Peets, with such point-blank wrath that it silences the salutation on Peets’ lips; “no friend of your’n I hope?”

“Which I says it in confidence,” remarks Old Monte, as an hour later he refreshes himself at the bar of the Red Light, “for I holds it onprofessional to go blowin’ the private affairs of my passengers, but I shorely thinks the old grizzly gives Kif a clawin’ on the way over. I hears him yell like a wolf back in Long’s canyon. To be shore! he’s inside an’ I can’t see, but I’m offerin’ two to one up to \$100 she was lickin’ him; if I don’t I’m a Siwash!”

It turns out as Killifer predicted. He read the lady aright. There is nothing in Wolfville to which she yields approval. It would be as impossible as it would be terrific, to repeat in print the conduct of this remarkable woman. She utterly abashes Enright; while such hare-hearts as Jack Moore, Cherokee Hall, Dave Tutt, Texas Thompson, Short Creek Dave and Dan Boggs, fly from her like quicksilver. Even Doc Peets acknowledges himself defeated and put to naught. The least of her feats is the invasion of a peaceful poker game to which Killifer is party, and the sweeping confiscation of every dollar in the bank on claim that it is money ravished from Killifer by venal prac-

tices. The mildest of her plans is one to assail the Red Light with an axe, should she ever detect the odour of whiskey about Killifer again.

“An’ do you know, Doc!” observes Enright, a fortnight later, as they meet for their midday drink, “the boys sorter lays it on you. You know me, Doc! I’ll stand up ag’in the iron for you; but as a squar’ man, with a fairly balanced mind, I’m bound to admit the boys is right. Now I don’t say they feels resentful; it’s more like they was mournful over what used to be, an’ a day of peace gone by. But you knows what people be whose burdens is more’n they can bear; an’ if I was you, this yere lady or I would leave the camp. I’m the last gent to go dictatin’ about the details of another gent’s game; but you an’ me, Doc, has been old friends, an’ as a warnin’ from a source which means you well, I gives it to you cold the camp is gettin’ hostile.”

It is always a spectacle to inspire, to witness a great soul rise to an occasion. Doc Peets never so proves the power of his nature as now, when the tremendous shadow of “Kif’s wife” has fallen across Wolfville like a blight. Peets, following Enright’s forebodings, holds a long and secret conference with the unhappy Killifer. That night Peets rides to Tucson. The next day Old Monte, with his six horses a-foam, comes crashing into Wolfville two hours ahead of schedule. Before even a mail bag is thrown off, Old Monte unpouches a telegram received at the Tucson office for Mistress Killifer. Its earmark is Illinois; its contents moving. No matter what it tells, its news is cogent enough to decide the lady’s mind.

The next morning this dread woman departs, leav-

ing, as she came, with a withering look at all around. That night Killifer gets drunk. Wolfville not only pardons Killifer in his weakness; it joins him.

“But you suppresses the facts, Kif, when you says she’s haughty,” observes Dan Boggs. “Haughty, as a deescription, ain’t a six-spot!”

“It’s with no purpose, Kif,” says Doc Peets, as he fills his glass, “to discourage you—whom I sympathises with as an onfortunate, an’ respects as a dead game gent—that I yereby invites the pop’lation to join me in a drink of congratulation on Wolfville’s escape from your wife. An’ all informal though this assemblage be, I offers a resoolotion that this, the 23d of August, the date when the lady in question pulls her freight, be an’ remain forevermore a day of yearly thanksgivin’ to Wolfville.”

“Which I libates to that myse’f!” says Killifer as he drains his cup to the last lingering drop. “Also I trusts this camp will proceed with caution the next time it turns in to play my domestic hand.”

BEARS

BEARS are peaceful folk. They are a mild and lowly citizenry of the woods—I'm talking of the black sort—and shuffle modestly away the moment they hear you coming. We get many of our impressions of the ferocity of animals and the deadly poisons of reptiles from an unworthy sort of hearsay evidence. Much of it comes from Mexicans and Indians rather than from real experience. Now I wouldn't traduce either the Mexicans or the Indians, for their lot is one of hard, sodden ignorance; but it must be conceded that they're by no means careful historians, and run readily to tales of the marvellous and the tragic. I am going back to a bear story I have in mind before I get through; but I want to interject here, while I think of it, that though the centipede, the rattlesnake, the tarantula and the Gila monster, have bitter repute as able to deal death with their poisonous feet or fangs, I was never, in my years on the plains and in the mountains, able to secure proof of even the shallowest sort that a death, whether of man or animal, had ever resulted from the sting of any one of these. On the other hand, I have been with men who were bitten by rattlesnakes, or stung by tarantulas; or who while asleep had suffered as the inadvertent promenader of a centipede, with its hundred hooked, poison-exuding feet; but none of them died. They were sick in an out-of-

sort, headache fashion for a day or two; the bitten place inflamed and was sore for a week or a month; that was all. I suppose I've known of fully one hundred horses, cows and sheep which were bitten by rattlesnakes; none died. They were invariably fanged in the nose, too, as they grazed towards my lord of the rattlers. On more than one occasion I kept the animal so bitten in sight to note results. Its head would swell and puff; it would lounge about with a sick listlessness for several days; then the poison would wear away in force, and back to its grass it would go with the wire-edge appetite of a sailor home from sea.

But about bears. I was remarking that my black, shaggy cousins of the woods were a peaceful folk. So much is this true, and so little do their neighbours apprehend violence at their clumsy hands, that they who live in regions which abound in bears evince not the least alarm about the safety of their children. The babies, some as young as five or six years, roam the same mountains with the bears; and, while the latter will swoop upon a pig and run dangers with wide-open eyes in doing it, never did I hear of one who disturbed a ringlet on a child's head. They had daily opportunities enough, for many are the households to live in the wide, pine-sown Rockies.

Our bears, too, are creatures of vast physical power. Often, as I rode the mountain for cattle, have I come across a dead and fallen pine tree, which would have defeated the best efforts of a horse to move, completely torn from its bed in the earth and leaves, and either overturned or thrown one side by the mighty arms of a bear. He was in search of a dinner of grubs—those white, helpless worms which make their dull homes

under rotten logs—and Sir Bear made no more ado of lifting and laying aside a pine tree in his grub-hunt than would you or I of a billet of firewood.

While in the mountains I marvelled over the fact that the bears and the mountain lions never assailed the young calves. The hills were rife with cattle, and every spring found the canyons and oak-bushed slopes a perfect nursery of calves. And yet neither the panthers nor the bears disturbed them. It was due, I think, more to the bellicose character of the old cow and her relatives, than any uprightness of character on the part of the bears, and the panthers. Let a calf raise but one yell of distress in those mountains—and I assure you he can make their walls and valleys ring with his youthful music when so disposed—and, out of canyons and off mesas, over logs and crashing through the oak bushes, will come plunging all the cattle within hearing. Not thirty seconds will elapse before as many cattle will be by the side of the threatened calf, lusting for battle. They make such a phalanx of sharp, threatening horns, coupled with their rolling, wrath-red eyes and ferocious breathings, that, I warrant you, they have so shocked the nerves of past bears and panthers, it has become instinct with these latter to give the whole horned, truculent brood a wide berth.

The Indians are very fond of the bear for his wisdom, and he divides their respect with the beaver as a personage of sagacity. The curiosity of my shaggy friend would shame any boy or girl of ten. You may be sure, were a bear to visit you for a week at your home, he would open every door, ransack every bureau, take every garment off every hook in every closet—and I

had almost said "try it on"—before he had been with you an hour. Not a box nor a barrel, not a nook nor cranny, from cellar to ridge pole, would escape his investigation. His black nose would sniff at every crack, his black hand explore every crevice. Nor, beyond what he bestowed in his remorseless stomach, would he destroy anything. I have the black coat of a bear at my house, who might be wearing it himself to-day, were it not for his curiosity.

There was a salt spring near my camp on the upper Red River; perhaps two miles away, which is "near" in the mountains. This salt spring was popular with the deer. They repaired thither to lick the salt earth about the waters. I had, among the lumber at my camp, a big, two-spring trap of steel; I suppose it must have weighed sixty pounds. It occurred to me that a lazy way to kill a deer would be to set this wide-jawed engine near the spring and let one walk into it. I'm not proud of this plan as a method in deer-killing, and wouldn't do it now. On this occasion, however I was not particular. I "set" the trap at my camp—for I had to use a hand-spike to crush down the springs, and it all gave me a deal of work and trouble—and then, with its jaws wide open, but held so that it wouldn't nip me in case it did snap, I crept carefully aboard my pony and rode over to the spring. The next morning early I had to go again to remove the trap, as during the day the cattle would take the places of the deer at this delectable salt spring, and I didn't care to break the legs of a thirty-dollar steer with my trapping. I went over while it was yet dark, and found no deer in the trap. I took it and hid it, face downward—the jaws still spread and "set"—by the

of a big yellow pine log, which stretched its decayed length along the slope of the canyon. There I left it, intending to return and rearrange it for deer at dusk.

It snowed that day, and as I grew lazy towards night, I left my trap where I'd hidden it by the yellow pine log. The deer would have one night of safety. What was safety for the deer proved otherwise for the bear.

The following day I rode over just as the canyons were getting dark and the cattle climbing out of them to pass the night on the hills. Behold! my trap was gone!

There was a great flourish of tracks in the snow; long plantigrade impressions like the bare footprints of some giant! I knew that a bear had somehow acquired my trap, or the trap, him; at that time I couldn't tell which. To make it short, however, it came to this: The bear, scouting in a loaferish way down the hill, and pausing no doubt to make an estimate of the probable grubs he would find beneath this particular yellow pine next summer, had chanced upon the trap. Here was a great find. Thoughts of grubs and common edible things at once deserted him. The mysterious novelty he had found took possession of his addle-pate like a new toy. A wolf or a fox would have smelled the odour of my handling, even off the cold steel of the trap, and been over the hills and far away in a twinkling. Your wolf is the canniest of timber folk; a grey Scotchman of the mountains. But my bear was reared on a different bottle. He sat down at once and actually took the new plaything in his lap. Then it would seem as if he deliberately thrust his paw into it and sprung its savage jaws on his forearm.

In his first wrathful surprise, my bear tore up the snow and bushes for twenty feet about ; but at last he set off with the trap on his foot.

It was late. For half an hour I followed the broad track where his bearship had dragged the trap in the snow at a gallop. It was dark when at last I turned off for camp. Bright and betimes, I took the trail next day. It carried me over some ten miles of rough, close country. About midday I stood on the bluff edge of the Canyon Caliente, picking a pathway with my eyes along its steep, perilous side for my pony to get down. The bear had crossed here ; but he was in the roughest of moods, and seemingly made no more of hurling himself over twenty-foot precipices—himself and my trap—or sublimely sliding down dangerous descents of hundreds of feet where foothold was impossible, than you would of eating buttered buns. So I had to pick out paths for myself ; I couldn't trust to so reckless and uncivil an engineer as my bear.

As I sat in the saddle running a quick eye over the slope for a trail, I, of an instant, heard a most surprising noise. It was indeed a noble racket, and might have passed for a blacksmith shop. But I knew the hills too well. It was of a verity my bear ; and from the riot he was making, it was plain I would have to get there soon if I wanted to save the trap.

This formidable uproar came from across the Caliente, perhaps half a mile. I slid from the saddle and went forward afoot. It didn't take long to cover the distance. I fell and tumbled down the first third, much as the bear had done a bit earlier.

Once on the other side, I came upon my rough gentleman cautiously, and found him sitting by the

side of a round, boulder-like rock, something the size and contour of a load of hay. And he was smiting the enduring granite with my trap in a way which told more of his feelings than would have been possible with mere words. He would raise his arm clumsily, 60-pound trap and all, and then bring it against the rock with all the fervour of rage and giant strength.

He was so wrapt in the enterprise, he never heard me until a shot from my Winchester met him just under the ear. One shot did it; and I had trap and bear. He had ruined the trap; one spring was broken and the whole disparaged beyond my power to repair. Wherefore I stripped him of his black overcoat to pay for the damage he had done; and that and the grease I took from him covered all costs and damages.

THE BIG TOUCH

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

"ME fren', Mollie Matches," observed Chucky.

That was our introduction. A moment later Chucky whispered in a hoarse aside :

"Matches is d' dip I chins youse about, who gets d' Hummin' Boid t'run into him."

"Matches," as Chucky called him, was a sad, grey, broken man. Years and a life of flight and anxious furtivity had told on him. His eye was dancing and birdlike ; resting on nothing, roving always ; the sure mark of one sort of criminal. Matches drank for an hour before he felt at ease. That time arrived, however, and I took advantage of it to feed my curiosity. It was no easy matter, but at last I won him by a deft blending of flattery and drink to talk of his crimes. And indeed I fear—for I suppose the expert thief does plume himself a bit on his art—that Matches took some sort of wretched pride in his illicit pocket searchings.

"D' biggest touch I ever makes," said Matches, in response to a query, "was \$36,000 ; quite a bunch of dough. Gettin' it was easy ; gettin' away wit' it was d' squeak.

"We toins d' trick on d' train from Albany. D' tip comes straight to me in New York that a bloke is goin'

to draw \$36,000 from d' Albany bank on such a day. I makes up a mob; t'ree stalls an' meself;—all pretty fly we was—an' lands in Albany.

“ We gets onto d' party who's to be woiked early in d' mornin', an' shadows him so clost he's never out of reach. Our play is to follow him to d' bank an' do him wit' d' drop game. If that misses, we're to stay wit' him till d' bundle's ours be one racket or another.

“ This sucker is pretty soon himself, see! He ain't such a mut as we figgers. His train starts at 1 o'clock, an' he takes in d' bank on his way to d' station.

“ Of course we was wit' him; but he's dead leary an' never t'rows himself open to be woiked. D' stuff is in t'ousand-dollar willyums, an' as he just sinks it in his keck d' minute his hooks is onto it, an' never stops to count or run his lamps over it, we don't get no chanct to do d' drop. D' instant d' money's in his mits he plants it—all stretched out long in a big leather, it is—in his inside pocket, an' screws his nut for d' door. D' hack slams an' he's on his way to d' train.

“ Yes; we starts for d' station be another street. D' bloke ain't onto us yet, an' we tries not to plant a scare into him. He's leary enough as it is; just havin' such a roll wit' him rattles him.

“ So I makes up me mind to do d' job on d' train runnin' into New York. As he sinks d' stuff away, I notes how d' ends of d' bills sticks out over d' pocket-book. Me idee is to weed it—get d' dough an' leave d' leather in his pocket—if I can make d' play. Weedin' was d' way to do; you gets d' long green an' d' sucker still has d' leather to feel of, an' it's some time before he tumbles he's been touched, see!

“ D' guy wit' d' stuff plants himself in a seat. Two

of me stalls sits ahead of him, me an' me other pal is behint him. We only waits now for him to get up an' come along d' aisle of d' car to get in our hooks.

"Foist I goes d' len'th of d' train to see who's onto it. I always does that; I wants to see if any guy aboard knows Mollie Matches. You see, if there is, when d' holler comes, an' some duck declares himself shy his spark, or roll, or ticker, it's 40 to 1 Mr. Know-all, who's onto me for a crook, sends a tip to d' p'lice: 'Matches was on d' train!' an' I gets d' collar. No, I never woiks when one of me acquaintances is along be accident. D' cops, in such case, as I says, is put onto me an' spots me wit' d' foist yell.

"I covers d' train an' comes back. There's no guy on me visiting list who's along. So I sits down wit' me pal to d' rear of d' sucker an' waits.

"It's not for long. D' leather's still in his inside keck, 'cause I can see him pressin' on it wit' his mit to make sure it's there. At last he gets up to go to d' watercooler. I sees d' move comin', an' is in d' aisle before him. So's me stalls. From start to finish no one bungles d' stunt. There's a tangle—all be accident, of course—every mug 'pologises, we break away, an' I've got d' blunt. But d' woist part is, I can't weed it. D' stuff won't come no other way, an' so I lifts leather an' all.

"There's due to be a roar in no time;—this mark's bound to be on he's frisked!—so I splits out each stall's bit in a hurry an' says: 'Every gent for himself! an' if youse is nipped, don't knock!' an' then I sherries me nibs for d' rear coach. It was great graft. Me bit was \$9,000, an' I has me plan all set up to save it an' meself wit' it. This is d' racket I has in me cocoa.

“In d’ last coach is an old w’ite choker—a pulpit t’umper, you understan’s. Wit’ him is his daughter, an’ wit’ her is her kid. Mebby d’ kid, say, is six years. I heads for ’em an’ begins to give d’ old skate a jolly. I was dead strong on patter in them days, an’ puts it up I’m a gospel sharp from Hamilton. I saws it off on his nibs how me choich boins down, an’ how I’m linin’ out to New York to see if d’ good folks down there won’t spring their rolls—cough up be way of donations, you understan’s, an’ help us slam up a new box—choich, I means—so we can go back to our graft.

“It’s all right. Me razzle dazzle takes like spring water. In two minutes me an’ d’ old party an’ d’ loidy, an’ for that matter d’ kid, is t’ick as t’ieves. We was bunched together, singin’ ‘Jesus, Lover of me Soul,’ to beat four of a kind, when d’ galoot I skins for his bundle lifts d’ shout he’s been done, see!

“This dub who lose is t’ree coaches ahead. D’ foist we knows of his troubles—all but me—d’ Con’ comes an’ locks d’ door. No one can get off d’ train. Then he stops an’ taps d’ wires wit’ a machine from d’ baggage car an’ sends d’ story chasin’ into New York.

“‘Party t’run down for \$36,000, says d’ message; ‘swag an’ crooks still on me train. Send orders.’

“D’ order comes to keep d’ doors locked an’ run to New York wit’ no more stops. An’ after puttin’ a Brakey in each coach to see what goes on, that’s what dey does. We go spinnin’ into New York at forty-five miles an hour.

“Naturally, I’m in a steam. I goes all right wit’ d’ Con’, an’ d’ train crew, as a sky pilot, but how was I to make d’ riffle wit’ de fly cop of New York, who’d be waitin’ for d’ train—me mug in d’ gallery, an’ four out

o' five of 'em twiggin' me be me foist name? But I t'ought it out.

"When d' train rumbles into d' Gran' Central, d' door is slammed open an' we all gets up to go. A fly-cop is comin' in just as we starts. I grabs up d' kid to carry him, see! bein' d' old preacher party nor d' skirt ain't so able as me.

"Say! it was a winner. I buries me map in d' kid's make-up, gets between d' goil an' d' old stumblin' mucker of a gran'dad, an' walks slap t'rough d' entire day-push of d' Central office. An' hard, sharp marks dey is to beat, see!

"Fly dey is, but not swift enough for Matches wit a scare on, see! Not a dub of 'em tumbles to me.

"In two moves an' ten seconts I'm in d' street. As I goes along I pulls a ring off one of me north hooks wit' me teet,' an' t'oins it over to d' kid as his bit for makin' d' good front for me. No; d' others don't catch on, but d'way he cinches it in his small mit shows me he's goin' to save it out for fair.

"When I hits d' street I drops d' youngone, who's still froze to his solitaire, an' grabs off a cab, an' in twenty minutes I'm buried where all d' p'lice in New York couldn't toin me up in a t'ousand years.

"No; me pals got d' collar, an' each does a stretch. But dey lays dead about me; never peached nor squealed. I win out.

"Who?—d' w'ite choker an' his party? Nit; never hears of 'em ag'in. For four days I gets one of d' fam'ly—he's a crook who's under cover for a bank trick, an' who's eddicted—to read me all d' poipers. I wants to see if d' preacher an' his goil gives up anyt'ing about d' ring I swaps to d' kid.

“ Never hears a peep ! Nixie ; dey was on all right, you bet your life ! when their lamps lights on that jewelry ; but most likely dey needs d’ ring in their graft. It was a spark wort’ five hundred cases from any fence in d’ land, an’ so d’ old guy an’ his goil sort o’ stan’s for d’ play, see ! ”

THE FATAL KEY

YOUNG Jenkins prided himself on sharp eyes. He said he could "give a hawk cards and spades." He could find four-leaf clovers where no one else could see them. He took in the smallest detail of the scenery all about him.

As a result, young Jenkins was a great finder of small trifles, and that he might miss nothing, lost, strayed or stolen, he went about during the little journeys of the day, with his eyes searching the ground. And he picked up many trinkets of a personal sort that other men had lost. Nothing of much value, perhaps, but it served to please young Jenkins, and it gave him a chance to boast of the sharp, devouring character of his eyes.

Even as a child, young Jenkins was prone to find things. He told how once his talents as a retriever made him the subject of parental suspicion. He was ten years old when he picked up a four-blade Barlow knife.

"Where did you get it?" queried old Jenkins, as young Jenkins displayed his treasure trove.

"Found it," was the reply.

"Oh, you found it!" snorted old Jenkins. "Well, take it straight back, and put it where you found it, and don't 'find' any more. If you do, I'll lick you out of your knickerbockers!"

In spite of such discouragement, young Jenkins kept on finding all sorts of bric-à-brac. He does even to this day.

One evening young Jenkins had a disagreeable adventure, as the fruit of his talent, which for an hour or so made him wish he had weaker vision.

It was on Great Jones Street, and young Jenkins, hurrying along, noticed in the half moonlight a big store key, where the owner had dropped it just after locking up for the night. The hour was full midnight.

Young Jenkins possessed himself of the key. He looked at it as he held it in his hand, and wondered how the careless shopman would open up in the morning without it.

From where it lay it wasn't hard to infer the store to which the key belonged. Yet to make sure on that point it occurred to young Jenkins that he might better try the lock with it.

Young Jenkins had just fitted the big key to the lock when some one seized him by the wrist. It startled him so that he dropped the key and allowed it to go rattling along the sidewalk. As young Jenkins looked up he saw that the party who had got him was a member of the police.

"I was trying to unlock the door!" stammered young Jenkins.

"I saw what you were about," said the officer with suspicious severity. "What were you monkeying with the door for? You aren't the owner of this store?"

"No, sir," said young Jenkins, much impressed. "No, sir; I——"

"Nor one of the clerks?"

"No, sir," replied young Jenkins again, "I have nothing to do with the store. I found the key, and thought I'd see if it opened this door."

"What did you want to see if it would open the door for? Don't you think it is a little late for a joke of that sort?"

"It wasn't a joke," said young Jenkins, beginning to perspire rather copiously; "it was an experiment. I found the key on the sidewalk, and wanted to see——"

"Yes!" interrupted the blue coat with a fine scorn; "you wanted to see if you could get into the store and rob it bare. That is what you wanted to see. You're a box-worker, if ever I met one, and if I hadn't come along you would have had this bin cracked and cleaned out in another ten minutes."

"I told you I found the key," protested young Jenkins.

"That's all right about your finding the key!" said the policeman in supreme contempt. "You found the key and I found you, and we'll both keep what we've found. That's square, ain't it?"

And in spite of all young Jenkins could say at that late hour of the twenty-four, the faithful officer dragged him to the station, where a faithful sergeant faithfully registered him, and a faithful turnkey locked him faithfully up.

As young Jenkins sat unhappy in his cell, while vermin sparred with him for an opening, he registered a vow that never again would he find anything.

Young Jenkins wouldn't pick up a twenty-dollar gold piece were he to meet one to-day in the street.

AN OCEAN ERROR

“NO ; neither my name nor the name of my vessel can I give. Our navy has a way of courtmartialing its officers who wax garrulous.”

It was just as the Lieutenant called for the *crème de menthe*, that may properly succeed a dinner well ordered and well stowed.

“But you are welcome to the raw facts,” continued the Lieutenant. “It was during those anxious days that went before the penning in of Cervera at Santiago. We had been ordered on a ticklish service. Schley was over south of the island on a prowl for the Spanish fleet. Sampson was, or should have been, off the Windward Passage similarly employed. Cervera was last heard of two weeks before at Barbadoes. Then he disappeared like a ghost ; no one knew where his smoke would be sighted next. The one sure thing, of which all were aware, was that with Sampson anywhere between the Mole and Cape Mazie, and Schley searching the wide seas south of Cuba, Cervera might easily with little luck and less seamanship dodge either and appear off Havana. There the cardboard fleet left on blockade wouldn’t, with such heavy odds, last as long as a drink of whiskey.

“It stood thus when our orders came to my Captain to proceed to Bayou Hondu, some seventy miles west of Havana, and there stand off and on, like a policeman

walking his beat, in what would be the path of Cervera should he work to the rear of Schley and to the north of Cuba by the way of St. Antonio.

“Our vessel was detailed on this duty because of her perfect order and speed of seventeen knots. Our heavy armament was eight 4-inch broadside guns, with a 6-inch rifle forward and another mounted aft. Our orders were: If Cervera came upon us to fight!—steam as slowly as might be for Havana and fight!—and to keep fighting until sunk or sure that the blockaders off Havana were warned, whether by our signals or our racket, of Cervera’s coming.

“It was a grinding task, this lonely patrol off Bayou Hondu. The rains had just begun, the weather was a dripping hash of fog and squall and rain. If Cervera didn’t come, it meant discomfort; and if he did, it meant death. Take it full and by, the outlook was depressing.

“At night no light burned and the ship was dark as a coffin. This, with the service, contributed to keep us all in a mood of alert nervousness. Cervera’s ships would also be dark. We didn’t care to be crept upon, and get our first notice of his advent from the broadside that sent us to the bottom like an anvil.

“We had been on this dreary duty some ten days. It was a dark, heavy night. I myself had the bridge, and the captain, whose anxiety kept him up, was seated in the starboard corner, dozing. His sea cloak was thrown over his head to keep out the weather. We were working to the eastward, with engines at quarter speed, and with a head sea running, were making perhaps three knots.

“The ship’s bells were not being struck for the hours,

and I had just looked at my watch by the light of the binnacle. It was half-past two in the morning.

“‘How’s your head?’ I asked of the man at the wheel, as I put up my timepiece.

“‘East by south, half south,’ he replied.

“‘This was taking us too much inshore. ‘Starboard for a point!’ I said.

“As I turned from the wheel I saw that which sent a thrill over me and brought me up all standing. It was the murky loom of a great ship, black and dim and dark and silent as ourselves. She was off our port quarter and not five hundred yards away. It gave me a start, I confess. None of our ships should be that far to the west of Havana. It was a sword to a sheath knife she was one of Cervera’s advance.

“Instantly I reached for the electric button; and instantly the red and white lights, which stood for the letter of that night, burned in our semaphore. The stranger replied with a red over two white lights. It was the wrong letter.

“With my first motion, the captain was on his feet; his hand gripped the lever that worked the engine bells.

“‘Try her again!’ he said.

“Again I flashed the proper letter, and again came a queer reply.

“The next moment the captain jammed the lever ‘Full steam, ahead!’ and a general call to quarters went singing through the ship.

“‘Starboard!’ shouted the captain to the man at the wheel; ‘starboard! pull her over!’

“There was a vast churning from the propellers; the vessel leaped forward like a horse; the sailor climbed the wheel like a squirrel. We surged forward

with a broad sheer to port. The next instant we opened on our dark visitor with every gun in the larboard battery. It wasn't ten seconds after she gave us the wrong signal when she got our broadside.

"The result was amazing. With the first crash of our guns the stranger went from utter darkness to the extreme of light. She flashed out all over like a Fall River steamer. Knowing who we were—for they bore orders for us—and realizing that there had been some mixing of signals, the officer on her bridge had the wit to turn on every light in his ship. It was an inspiration and saved them from a second broadside.

"Who was she? One of our own vessels. Cervera was locked in Santiago and she had come up to tell us the news. Her officer blundered in giving out the wrong letter for the night, and thereby sowed the seed of our misunderstanding.

"No, beyond peppering her a bit, our fire did no harm. We were so close that most of our shot went over her. Still, I don't believe that vessel will ever get her signals fouled again. And it's just as well that way. If she had made the wrong talk to some one of our heavy-weights, the Oregon, for instance, she would have gone down like so much pig-iron."

SKINNY MIKE'S UNWISDOM

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

CHUCKY was posed in his usual corner. As I came in he nodded sullenly as one whom the Fates ill-use. I craved of Chucky to name his drink; it was the surest way to thaw him.

"Make it beer," said Chucky.

Now beer stood as a symbol of gloom with Chucky, as he himself had told me.

"It's always d' way wit' me," said Chucky on that far occasion when he explained "Beer", "when I'm dead sore an' been gettin' it in d' neck, to order beer. It's d' sorrowfulest kind of booze, beer is; there's a sob in every bottle of it, see!"

Realising Chucky's low spirits by virtue of present beer, I suavely made query of his unknown grief and tendered sympathy.

"I've been done for me dough," replied Chucky, softening sulkily. "You minds d' races at d' Springs? That's it; I gets t'run down be d' horses. I get d' gaff for fifty plunks. Now, fifty plunks ain't all d' money in d' woild; but it was wit' me. It was me fortune."

Chucky ruminated bitterly.

"Oh, I'm a good t'ing!" he ejaculated, as he tilted

his chair against the wall with an air of decision. "I'll play d' jumpers agin, nit!

"W'at's d' use? I can't beat nothin'. Say! I couldn't beat a drum! I'm a mut to ever t'ink of it! I ought to give meself up to d' p'lice right now an' ast 'em to put me in Bloomin'dale or some other bug house. I'm nutty, that's what I am; an' that's for fair! Now, I'd as lief tell you. It's d' boss hard luck story, an' that ain't no vision!

"In d' foist place, I was a rank sucker to d' point of deemin' meself a wise guy about d' horses. An' it so follows, bein' stuck on meself about horses, as I says, that when Skinny Mike blows in wit' d' idee that he can pick d' winner of d' big event, I falls to d' play, an easy mark.

"Mike is an oldtime tout; an' wit' me feelin', as I says, dead fly, it ain't a minute before I'm addin' me ignorance to Mike's, an' we're runnin' over d' dopes in d' papers seein' what d' horses has done. To make a long story short, we settles it for a finish that War Song's out to win. Which, after all, ain't such a sucker t'eory.

"'It's a cinch!' says Skinny Mike; 'War Song's got a pushover. Dey can't beat him; never in a t'ousand years!'

"It looks a sure tip to me, too; so I digs for me last dollar an' hocks me ticker besides, an' makes up d' fifty plunks I mentions. Mike sticks in fifty an' then takes d' whole roll an' screws his nut for d' Springs to get it up on War Song. Naw; I don't go. Mike's plenty to make d' play; an' besides I had me lamps on a sure t'ing for a tenner over on d' Bowery.

"Of course, while Mike's gone, I ain't doin' a t'ing but read d' poipers all to pieces. War Song's a 20-to-

I shot; I stan's to make a killin'—stan's to win a t'ousand plunks, see!

"An', say! War Song win! Mebby I don't give d' yell of d' year when I sees it in d' print.

"'W'at's eatin' youse, Chucky?' says me Rag, as I cuts loose me warwhoop.

"'O, I ain't got no nut!' I says, givin' meself d' gran' jolly. 'No! not at all! I has to ast some mark to tell me me name, I don't t'ink! I'm cooney enough to get onto War Song, all d' same! Say! I'm d' soonest galoot that ever comes down d' pike!'

"That's d' way I feels an' that's d' way I chins.

"At last I cools off me dampers an' sets in to wait for Mike. Meanwhile I begins to figger how I'll blow d' stuff, see! an' settle what I'll buy. It's a case of money to boin an' I was gettin' me matches ready before even Mike shows up.

"But Mike don't come. 'W'at th' 'ell!' I t'inks; 'Mike ain't crookt it; he ain't skipped wit' d' bundle?' An' say! you should a-seen me chew d' rag at d' idee.

"But I'm wrong on me lead. Mike hadn't welched, an' he hadn't been sandbagged. He comes creepin' along a day behint d' play, an' d' secont I gets me lamps on his mug I'm dead on we lose. I don't have to have me fortune told to tumble to that. Mike looks like five cents wort' of lard in a paper bag. An' here's d' song he sings.

"Mike says he goes to d' Springs all right, all right, an' is organised to get War Song for d' limit d' nex' day. It's that night, out be d' stables, when he chases up on a horsescraper—a sawed-off coon, he is—an' d' horsescraper breaks off a great yarn on Mike.

“‘I ain’t no tout, an’ dis ain’t no tip,’ Mike says d’ coon says; ‘it’s a rev’lation. On d’ dead! it’s a proph-ecy! It’s las’ night. I’m sleepin’ in d’ stall nex’ to a little horse named Dancer. All at onct I wakes up an’ listens. It’s that Dancer horse in d’ nex’ stall talk-in’ to himself. Over an’ over agin he says: “I’m goin’ to win it! I’m goin’ to win it!” just like that.’

“Well,” continued Chucky, “you know Skinny Mike. There’s a ghost goes wit’ Mike, an’ he’s that sooperstitious, d’ nigger’s story has him on a string in a hully secont. He can’t shake it off. Away he wanders an’ dumps d’ entire wad on Dancer, an’ never puts a splinter on War Song at all.

“W’at do you t’ink of it? On d’ level! w’at d’ youse really t’ink of it? That Mike’s a woild-beater; that’s right; a woild-beater an’ a wonder to boot! I’d like to trade him for a yaller dawg, an’ do d’ dawg!”

“Did Dancer win?” I asked.

“Did Dancer win?” repeated Chucky; and his tones breathed guttural scorn; “d’ old skate never even finished. Naw; he gets ’round on d’ back stretch, stops, bites d’ boy off his back, chases over be d’ fence an’ goes to eatin’ grass; that’s what Dancer does. He’s a dandy race horse, or I don’t want a cent! I’ll bet me mudder-in-law on that Dancer some day. I tells Mike to take a run an’ jump on himself. Naw,” concluded Chucky, with a great gulp, “Dancer don’t win; War Song win.”

MOLLIE PRESCOTT

(WOLFVILLE)

“THE Cactus” was the name bestowed upon her in Wolfville. Her signature, if she had written it, would probably have been Mollie Prescott, at least such was the declaration of Cherokee Hall.

“I sees this yere lady a year ago in Tombstone,” asserted that veracious chronicler, “where she cooks at the stage station; an’ she gives it out she’s Prescott—Mollie Prescott—an’ most likely she knows her name, an’ knows it a year ago.”

As Cherokee was a historian of known firmness of statement, no one cared to challenge either his facts or his conclusions. The true name of “The Cactus” was accepted by the Wolfville public as Prescott.

“The Cactus” was personable, and her advent into Wolfville society caused something of a flutter. Her mission was to cook, and in the fulfilment of her destiny she presided over the range at the stage station.

Being publicly hailed as “The Cactus” seemed in no wise to depress her. It was even possible she took a secret glow over an epithet, meant by the critical taste awarding it, to illustrate those thorns in her nature which repelled and held in check the amorous male of Wolfville.

Women were not frequent in Wolfville, and on her coming, “The Cactus” had many admirers. Every

man in camp loved her the moment she stepped from the Tucson stage ; that is, every man save Cherokee Hall. That scientist, given wholly to faro as a philosophy, had no time—in a day before he met Faro Nell—for so dulcet an affair as love. Also Cherokee had scruples born of his business.

“Life behind a deal box is a mighty sight too fantastic,” observed the thoughtful Cherokee, “for a fam’ly. It does well enough for single-footers, which it don’t make much difference with when some gent they’ve mortified an’ hurt, pulls his six-shooter an’ sends them lopin’ home to heaven all spraddled out. But a lady ain’t got no business with a sport who turns kyards as a pursoot.”

As time unfurled, the train of lovers to sigh on the daily trail of “The Cactus” dwindled. There were those who grew dispirited.

“I’m clean-strain enough,” said Dan Boggs, in apologetic description of his failure to persevere, “but I knows when I’ve got through. I’ll play a game to a finish, but when it’s down to the turn an’ my last chip’s gone over to the dealer, why ! I shoves my chair back an’ quits. An’ it’s about that a-way of an’ concernin’ my yearnin’s for this yere Cactus girl. I jest can’t get her none, an’ that settles it. I now drops out an’ gives up my seat complete.”

“That’s whatever !” said Texas Thompson, who was an interested listener to the defeated Boggs, “an’ you can gamble I’m with you on them views ! Seein’ as how my wife in Laredo gets herse’f that divorce, I turns in an’ loves this Cactus person myse’f to a frightful degree. Thar’s times I simply goes about sobbin’ them sentiments publicly. But yere awhile back I

comes wanderin' 'round her kitchen, an' bing! arrives a skillet at my head. That lets me out! You bet! I don't pursoo them explorations 'round her no more. I has exper'ence with one, an' I don't aim to get any lariat onto a second female who is that callous as to go a-chunkin' of kitchen bric-a-brac at a heart which is merely pinin' for her smiles."

There were two at the shrine of "The Cactus," who were known to Wolfville, respectively, as Cottonwood Wasson and Cape Jinks. These were distinguished for the ardour wherewith they made siege to the affection of "The Cactus," and the energy of their demands for her capitulation.

That virgin, however, paid neither heed to their court, nor took an interest in the comment of onlooking Wolfville. She pursued her path in life, even and unmoved. She set her tables, washed her dishes, and perfected her daily beefsteaks by the ingenious process, popular in the Southwest, of burning them on the griddles of the range, and all with a composure bordering hard on the stolid.

"All I'm afraid of," said Old Man Enright, the head of the local vigilance committee, "is that some of these yere young bucks'll take to pawin' 'round for trouble with each other. As the upshot of sech doin's would most likely be the stringin' of the survivors by the committee, nuptials, which now looks plenty feasible, would be plumb busted an' alienated, an' the camp get a setback it would be hard to rally from. I wishes this maiden would tip her hand to some discreet gent, so a play could be made in advance to get the wrong parties over to Tucson or some'ers. Whatever do you think yourse'f, Cherokee?"

"It's a delicate deal," replied that philosopher, "to go tamperin' 'round a lady for the secret of her soul. But I shorely deems the occasion a crisis, an' public interest demands somethin' is done. I wish Doc Peets was yere; he knows these skirted cattle like I does an ace. But Peets won't be back for a month; pendin' of which, onless we-alls interféres, it's my judgment some of this yere amorousness'll come off in the smoke."

"Thar ought to be statoots," observed Texas Thompson, with a fine air of wisdom, "ag'in love-makin' in the far West. The East should be kept for sech purposes speshul; same as reservations for Injuns. The Western climate's too exyooberant for love."

"S'pose me an' you an' Thompson yere goes to this young person, an' all p'lite an' congenial like, we ups an' asks her intentions?" remarked Enright. This was offered to Cherokee.

"Excuse me, pards!" said Texas Thompson with eagerness, "but I don't reckon I wants kyards in this at all. 'The Cactus' is a mighty fine young bein', but you-alls recalls as how I've been ha'ntin' 'round her somewhat in the past myse'f. For which reason, with others, she might take my comin' on sech errants derisive, an' bust me over the forehead with a dipper, or some sech objectionable play. I allows I better keep out of this embroglio a whole lot. I ain't aiming to shirk nothin', but it'll be a heap more shore to win."

"Thompson ain't unlikely to be plenty right about this," said Cherokee, "an' I reckons, Enright, we-alls better take this trick ourse'ves."

The mission was not a success. When the worthy pair of peace-preservers appeared in the presence of

"The Cactus," and made the inquiries noted, the scorn of that damsel was excited beyond the power of words to describe.

"What be you-alls doin' in my kitchen?" she cried, her face a-flush with rage and noonday cookery. "Who sends you-alls curvin' over to me, a-makin' of them insultin' bluffs? I demands to know!"

"An' yere," said Cherokee Hall, relating the exploit in the Red Light immediately thereafter, "she stamps her foot like a buck antelope, an' lets fly a stovelifter at us; an' all with a proud, high air, which reminds me a mighty sight of a goddess."

At the time, it would seem, the duo attempted to show popular cause for their presence, and made an effort to point out to "The Cactus" the crying public need of some decision on her part.

"You-all don't want the young male persons of this village to take to shootin' of each other all up none, do you?" asked Enright.

"I wants you two beasts to get outen my kitchen!" replied "The Cactus" vigorously; "an' I wants you to move some hurried, too. Don't never let me find your moccasin tracks 'round yere no more, or I'll turn in an' mark you up."

"Yere, you!" she continued as the ambassadors were about to leave, something cast down by the conference; "you-alls can tell the folks of this town, that if they're idiots enough to go makin' a gun play over me, to make it. They has shore pestered me enough!"

"Which I don't wonder none at Thompson bein' reluctant an' doobious about seein' this Cactus lady," said Enright, as the two walked away.



"I WANTS YOU TO MOVE SOME HURRIED, TOO!"—Page 250.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or a set of initials, located at the bottom of the page. The text is faint and difficult to decipher, but appears to consist of several lines of cursive or semi-cursive writing.

"She's some fiery, an' that's a fact!" observed Cherokee in assent.

The result of the talk with "The Cactus" found its way about Wolfville, and in less than an hour bore its hateful fruit. The peaceful quiet of the Red Light, which, as a rule, was wounded by no harsher notes than the flutter of a stack of chips, was rudely broken.

"Gents who ain't interested, better hunt a lower limb!"

It was the voice of Cottonwood Wasson. The trained instincts of Wolfville at once grasped the trouble, and proceeded to hide its many heads behind barrels, tables, counters, and anything which promised refuge from the bullets.

All but one; Cape Jinks. He knew it meant him the moment Cottonwood Wasson uttered the first syllable, and his pistol came bluntly to the fore without a word. His rival's was already there, and the shooting set in like a hailstorm. As a result, Cottonwood Wasson received an injury that crippled his arm for days, while Cape Jinks was picked up with a hole in his side, which even the sanguine sentiment of Wolfville, inclined to a hardy optimism at all times, called dangerous.

"Well!" said Old Man Enright, drawing a deep, troubled breath, after the duellists were cared for at the O. K. House, "yere we be ag'in an' nothin' settled! Thar's all this shootin', an' this blood-lettin'; an' the camp gets all torn up; an' thar's as many of these people now as thar is before, an' most likely the whole deal to go over ag'in."

"I shore 'bominates things a-splittin' even that a-way!" said Cherokee.

The next day a new face was given the affair when "The Cactus" was observed, clothed in her best frock and with two violent red roses in her straw hat, to take the stage for Tucson. The stage company reported, in deference to the excited state of the Wolfville mind, that "The Cactus" would return in a week.

"Goin' for her weddin' trowsoo, most likely," said Dan Boggs, as he gazed after the stage.

"Let's drink to the hope she wins out a red dress!" remarked Texas Thompson. "Set up the bottles, bar-keep, an' don't let no gent pass up the play. Which red is my fav'rite colour!"

No one seemed to know the intentions of "The Cactus." The shooting would appear to have in no wise disturbed her. That may have been her obdurate heart, or it may have come from a familiarity with the evanescent tenure of human life, born of her years on the border. Be that as one will, she expressed not the least concern touching her brace of wounded lovers, and took the stage without saying good-bye to any one.

"An' some fools say women is talkers!" remarked Jack Moore, the Marshal, in high disgust.

Three days later Old Monte, the stage driver, came in with thrilling news. "The Cactus" had wedded a man in Tucson, and would bring him to Wolfville in a week.

"When I first hears of it," went on Old Monte with a groan, "an' when I thinks of them two pore boys a-layin' in Wolfville, an' their claims bein' raffled off in that heartless way, I shore thinks I'll take my Winchester an' stop them marriage rites if I has to crease the preacher. But, pards, the Tucson marshal wouldn't

have it. He stan's me off. So she nails him; an' the barkeep at the Oriental Saloon tells me over thar, how she's been organisin' to wed this yere prairie dog before she ever hops into Wolfville at all. I sees him afterwards; an', gents! for looks, he don't break even with horned toads!"

"Thar you be!" said Enright, making a deprecatory gesture, "another case of woman, lovely woman! However, even if this Cactus lady has done rung in a cold hand onto us, we must still prance 'round an' show her a good time when she trails in with her prey. Where the honour of the camp is concerned, we whoops it up! Of course the Cactus don't please us none with this deal; but most likely she pleases herse'f, which, after all, is the next best thing. Gents," concluded Enright, after a pause, "the return of the new couple will be the signal of a general upheaval in their honour. It's to be hoped our young friends, Cottonwood an' Jinks, will by then be healthful enough to participate tharin. Barkeep! the liquor, please! Boys, the limit's off; wherefore drink hearty!"

"Which I has preemonitions from the first, this yere Cactus female is a brace game," remarked Texas Thompson, as he filled his glass; "that's whatever!"

"Oh! I don't know!" replied Cherokee Hall thoughtfully. "She has her right to place her bets to please herse'f, an' win or lose, this camp should be proud to turn for her. Wolfville can't always make a killin'—can't always be on velvet; but as long as the Cactus an' her victim pitches camp yere, Wolfville can call herse'f ahead on the deal. I sees no room for cavil, an' I yereby freights my glass to the Cactus an' the shorthorn she's tied down."

ANNA MARIE

ANNA MARIE was to be a new woman. She had decided that for herself. In the carrying out of her destinies, Anna Marie had cut her hair short. She also made a specialty of very mannish costumes, and, outwardly, at least, became as virile as a woman might be with a make-up the basis of which was bound to be a skirt.

Anna Marie was motherless, and at the age of nineteen, when she determined to become a new woman, had no advice save her father's to depend on. When she discussed an adoption of broader and more masculine methods on her girlish part with her father, the old gentleman looked puzzled, and said :

"Well, my dear ! I have great confidence in your judgment. There is nothing like experience, so go ahead. You will find, however, before you have gone far, that you labour under many structural defects. The great Architect didn't lay you out for a man, Anna Marie ; you were not intended for such a fate."

However, Anna Marie kept on. She was looking for a fuller liberty and a wider field. She was too delicately and too accurately determined in her tastes to be a fool to cigarettes, or swept down in a current of profanity. Bad language she would leave to the real man ; in her career as a new woman nothing so vigorous was needed.

But men did other things, had other freedoms; and from that long male list of liberties Anna Marie proceeded to pick out a line of freedom for herself. She had had enough of that pent-up Utica which confines the conventional woman. What she wanted was more room: that is, of proper, decorous sort.

Of course, as Anna Marie proceeded up the long trail of masculinity, it was noted by critics that she still continued essentially feminine as to many common male accomplishments. She could not throw a stone, except in that vague, pawey, overhand fashion usual with ladies, and which confers on the missile neither direction nor force. And when Anna Marie essayed to run, she still put everybody in mind of a cow trying to keep an engagement.

While others noted those solemn truths, Anna Marie did not. She thought she was making strenuous progress, and combed her short hair as a man combs his, and walked with long, decided stride.

Anna Marie rode a bike, and decided to don bloomers for this ceremony. She came to the bloomer decision hesitatingly, but made up her mind at last. Secretly she regarded bloomers as the Rubicon. It was bloomers which flowed between herself and the new woman in full standing; and once Anna Marie had broken on the world in this ill-considered costume, she would feel herself graduated, and no longer at school to Destiny. Therefore, there dawned a day when Anna Marie came down the avenue on her bike, be-bloomered to heart's content. She had made the plunge; the Rubicon was crossed, and Anna Marie felt now like a female Cæsar who must conquer or die.

On the bike-bloomer occasion Anna Marie was weak

enough to hurry. She put her unbridled steed to fullest speed, and flashed by the onlookers like unto some sweet meteor. She blamed herself afterward for being such a craven, but concluded that by sticking to her bloomers she would acquire heart and slacken speed in time.

The worst feature about the bloomer business was that Anna Marie wotted not how hideous she looked. She did not know that a printer on his way to his case, caught a fleeting impression of her as she sped by, and that he at once "put on a sub.," took a night off, and became dejectedly yet fully drunk. Nor did she wist that a nervous person was so affected by the awful *tout ensemble* of herself, bike, and bloomers that he repaired to Bloomingdale and sternly demanded admission as a right.

No; Anna Marie rode all too frightened and too fast to reap these truths. Still, she might not have altered her system if she had known. For Anna Marie was resolute. Bent as Anna Marie was on her completion as a new woman, she resolved to inhabit bloomers and ride her two-wheeled vehicle even unto a grey old age. How else, indeed, could she be a new woman? A girl friend who had stood appalled at the vigour of Anna Marie asked her as to the bloomers.

"They are good things," observed Anna Marie. "There's a comfort in bloomers which lurks not in the tangled wilderness of the ordinary skirt. Their fault is that in donning bloomers one does not put them on over one's head. It is a great defect. As it is, one never feels more than half-dressed." Anna Marie declared that the great want of the day was bloomers,

through which one thrust one's arms and head in the process of harnessing.

Anna Marie had a brother George. This youth was twelve years of age. George was essentially masculine. Anna Marie could see that, and it came to her as a thought that in the course of becoming a new woman of fullest feather, a good, ripe method would be to study George. Should she do as George did, young though he was, she was sure to succeed. George would do from instinct what she must do by imitation. Anna Marie felt these things without really and definitely thinking them. It so fell out that, without telling George, Anna Marie began to take him as guide, philosopher and friend. And all without really knowing it herself.

Unconsciously, George loved her all the better because of this, and, moved by a warm, ingenuous lack of years, began to take Anna Marie into his confidence like true comrade. Anna Marie encouraged his frankness.

"George," said Anna Marie, one day, "whenever you are about to do anything peculiarly boyish and interesting, always tell me, so that I may join you in your sport."

George said he would, and he did.

It so befell one day, as the fruit of this comradeship, that George changed the channel of Anna Marie's manly determination, and caused her to abandon the rôle of a new woman. This is the story, and it all taught Anna Marie, with the rush of a landslide, that, however industriously she might prune and train her habits to the trellis of the male, she would never be able to bring her nature to that state of icy, egotistical,

cold-blooded hardihood absolutely necessary to the perfect man, and therefore indispensable to the new woman. But the story.

"Anna Marie," said George, coming on her one day, "Anna Marie, me and Billy Sweet wants you."

"What is it, George?" asked Anna Marie.

"We're going to hang a dog out back of the barn," explained George. "Me and Billy are to be the jury, and we want you for judge. Hurry up, now! that's a good fellow!"

Anna Marie felt a shock at thought of taking the life of anything. Her first feeling was that George was a brute—a mere animal himself. But Anna Marie quickly reflected, that, whatever George might be, at least his hardened sex was the promontory the new woman must steer by. She put down the garment she was sewing and sought the scene of canine trial.

"You see, Anna Marie!" explained George, pointing to a saffron-coloured dog, which stood with dolorous tail between his legs and looked very repentant, "he murdered a kitten, and we are going to try to convict and hang him. You sit down there by the fence, and the trial won't take a minute. Billy and me have got our minds made up, and we won't take no time to decide. There's the rope, and we're going to hang him to the limb of that maple."

Anna Marie felt worried. Still, she allowed herself to be installed, and the trial proceeded. It was very brief. George produced the defunct kitten,—which looked indeed, very dead,—with the remark,

"Say, you yellow dog! you're charged with murdering this cat; have you got anything to say against being hung?"

The yellow cur feebly wagged his disreputable tail, and looked at Anna Marie in a fashion of sneaking appeal. He said as plain as words: "Save me!"

"I wouldn't hang the poor thing, George," said Anna Marie, and she began to pat the felon yellow cur.

"You're a great judge!" remonstrated George, indignantly. "It ain't for you to decide; it's for me and Billy. We are the jury, and in favour of hanging him, ain't we, Billy?"

Billy nodded emphatically.

"But, George," expostulated Anna Marie, "it is so cruel! so brutal!"

"Brutal!" scoffed George. "Don't they hang folks for murder every day? You wear bloomers and talk of being a new woman and having the rights of a man! I have heard you with that Sanford girl! And now you come out here and try to talk off a yellow dog who is guilty of murder, and admits it by his silence! You would act nice if it was a real man and a real murder case! Come on, Billy; let's string him up."

Here George seized on the cowering victim of lynch law, and started for the maple, where the rope already dangled for its prey. Anna Marie became utterly feminine at this, and burst into tears. Her nineteen years and her progress toward a new womanhood did not save her. In her distress she turned to the other member of the jury.

Billy Sweet, at the age of thirteen, was an ardent admirer of George's sister, loved her dearly, if secretly, and meant to marry her in ten or fifteen years, when he grew up. At present he played with George and kept a loving eye on his future bride. Anna Marie knew of Billy's partiality, so she cunningly turned on

this admirer, like a true daughter of the olden woman.

"You think as I do, don't you, Billy?" And Anna Marie's tone had a caress in it which made Billy's ears a happy red.

"Yes, ma'am!" said Billy.

George was disgusted.

"You are the kind of a juryman," said George, full of contempt, "that makes me tired. There, Anna Marie, take your yellow dog, and don't try to play with me no more. You are too soft!"

Anna Marie felt that some vast deposit of good, hard sense lay hidden in George's last remark. On her way to the house she did a good deal of thinking, as girls whose mothers are dead do now and then. The development of her cogitations was told in a remark to her girl friend:

"It's so tiresome, this being a new woman! I am going to give it up. I am afraid, as father says, I am 'not built right.'"

And thus it ended. Marie is exceedingly the olden woman now. She has beaten her sword into a pruning-hook, her bike into a spinning-wheel! She no longer walks with long, decided stride. She is a woman in all things, and will scream and chase a street car as if it were the last going that way for a week, like the tenderest and frailest of her kind. She has retracted as to bloomers. Anna Marie has returned to the agency, and forever abandoned the warpath of a new and manly womanhood.

THE PETERSENS

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

WHEN Chucky came into the little doggery where we werè wont to converse, there arrived with him an emphatic odour of kerosene. Also Chucky's face was worn and sad, and his hands were muffled with many bandages. To add to it all Chucky was not in spirits.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"We've been havin'd' run in' of our lives," replied Chucky, as he called to the barkeeper for his usual bracer, "an' our tenement is just standin' on its nut right now, an' that's for straight!"

"Tell me about it," I urged.

"D' racket this time over to d' joint," said Chucky, "is about a Swede skirt named Petersen who croaks herself be d' gas play last night. D' place is full of cops an' hobos an' all sorts of blokes, pipin' off d' play, while a cor'ner mug is holdin' an inkwest over d' stiff, see! What you smells is d' coal oil on me mits. I soaks me hooks in it to take d' boin away. Me Rag gives me d' tip; an' say! it's a winner at that. D' boins ain't half so bad as dey was."

"But I don't understand," I replied. "How did you come to burn your hands? If the gas was burning, I don't see how the woman could have committed suicide."

“Youse is gettin’ away on d’ wrong hoof,” said Chucky. “I don’t boin me fins over d’ Petersen moll croakin’ herself. I cremates ’em puttin’ out d’ flames when d’ Petersen kid takes fire d’ day before. This inkwest which d’ cor’oner guy is holdin’ to-day, is d’ secont one. He holds d’ foist yesterday over d’ kid.

“On d’ level! I don’t catch on to d’ need of inkwests anyhow. If a mark’s dead, he’s dead. It don’t need no sawbones an’ a mob of snoozers to be ’panelled for a jury, see! to put youse on. It looks to me like a dead case of shakin’ down d’ public for d’ fees; these inkwests do. Cor’ners, I s’pose, has to have some excuse for livin’, so when some poor duck croaks, dey comes chasin’ ’round wit’ a inkwest to see if he’s surely done up, an’ to put a bit of dough in their kecks. Well! I figgers it’s law all right, all right, an’ mebbly it’s d’ proper caper. Anyhow, I passes it up.

“What about this Petersen push? Well, if ever a household strikes it hard, I’m here to say it’s d’ Petersens. When it comes to d’ boss hard luck story, I’ll place me bets wit’ that outfit every time.

“It’s two spaces back when this Petersen gang comes ashore at Ellis Island. There’s t’ree of ’em; husband, wife, an’ kid, see! Dey comes in as steerage, an’ naturally d’ Ellis Island gezebos collars ’em an’ t’rows ’em into hock d’ moment dey hits d’ pier. Nit; dey ain’t arrested. But youse is on, how dey puts d’ clamps to emigrants. Dey ‘detains’ ’em, as it’s called.

“Every mug who comes steerage has to spring his plant when he lands, an’ if he ain’t as strong as \$30, dey—d’ offishuls—don’t do a t’ing but chase him back on d’ nex’ boat. He’s a pauper, see! an’ he gets d’ razzle dazzle an’ d’ gran’ rinky dink. Back he goes

where he hails from, like a bundle of old clothes. Paupers is barred at Ellis Island; dey don't go wit' these United States, not on your overshoes!

"So d' Petersens is stood up, like I tells youse, at Ellis Island to see be dey tramps. It toins out, nit. Dey ain't paupers. Petersen has more'n enough money to get be d' gate, see! Petersen has a hundred an' fifty plunks, an' bein' there's only t'ree, it's plenty to go 'round an' show \$30 for each.

"Still them Ellis Island snoozers detains d' Petersens a week just d' same. D' place where dey stays is worse'n any holdover or station house I'm ever in; an', bein' d' weather's winter, an' this 'detention' pen is wet an' cold, Petersen himself cops off d' pneumonia an' out goes his light before ever he leaves Ellis Island at all. Dey plants him in d' graveyard dey has for emigrants, an' d' wife an' kid comes over to d' city alone.

"That's d' foist I knows of d' Petersens. D' mother an' kid takes a back-room in our tenement; an' after dey gets 'quainted, she tells me Rag about her man dyin'. She ain't so old, this Petersen woman, an' only she's all broke up about her man croakin', she ain't a bad looker, see! wit' blue eyes an' a mop of gold hair. D' kid's name is Hilda, an', except she's only seven years an' no bigger'n a drink of whiskey, she's a ringer for her mother.

"Well! like I says, d' Petersens—what's left of 'em after d' man quits livin'—organised in d' back room on our floor. An' because folks who wants to chew must woik, d' Petersen woman gets a curve on an' goes to doin' stunts wit' a tub. She chases 'round doin' washin', see!

"It's when d' old goil is away slingin' suds that I

gets nex' wit' d' kid. She's dropped her ragbaby down be a gratin' one day an' her heart is broke. She t'inks it's a cinch case of all over wit' d' poor ragbaby, an' she's cryin' to beat d' band.

"But she gets it ag'in. Me an' a big fat cop who comes waddlin' along, tears up d' gratin' an' fishes out Hilda's doll, an' after that me an' her gets to be dead chummy; what youse might call 'pals.'

"Hilda's shy at foist, an' a bit leary of me—I ain't no bute at me best—but she gets used to seein' me about, an' as I stakes her to or'nges onct or twict, at last she gets stuck on me.

"D' Petersens, an' me, an' me Rag is neighbours on d' same floor for near two years. An' days when I comes home early, an' me breat' ain't smellin' of booze—for d' kid welches every time she sniffs d' lush on me, see!—I used to go in an' kiss Hilda same as she's me own. An' between youse an' me," and here a drop gathered in Chucky's cold eye, "I ain't above tippin' it off on d' quiet, I t'inks a heap of this young-one, an' feels better every time I gets me lamps on her.

"D' finish comes t'ree days ago. D' old goil Petersen is away woikin', an' Hilda, for all it's so cold, is playin' in d' passage-way. There's one of them plumber hold-ups fixin' d' water pipe where it's sprung a leak, an' he's got one of them dinky little fire pots which plumbers lug 'round wit' em.

"While this plumber stiff is busy wit' his graft, poor little Hilda t'inks she'll warm her dolly's mits be d' blaze. She's holdin' her ragbaby's hooks over d' plumber's fire as I comes up d' stairs; an' as she hears me foot, an' toins smilin' to make sure it's me, her frock catches, an' when she chases screechin' into me

arms, she's a bundle of live flame. Say! I'd sooner ten to one it was me, an' that's no bluff!

"I wraps me coat over her, an' gives d' fire d' quick smother, see! An' I boins me dukes until it comes to bein' mighty near a case of stumps wit' Chucky d' balance of his joiney to d' tomb.

"But what th' 'ell! It all don't do no good. D' poor kid has swallered d' fire, an' she's d' deadest ever before even I takes her out of me coat.

"We lays Hilda out, me Rag an' me, on d' Petersens' bed; an' d' cor'ner sucker, as I says at d' beginnin', comes sprintin' over an' goes to holdin' his inkwests.

"Bimeby, d' mother gets home from her tubs, an' that's where d' hard play comes in. Me Rag tells her as easy as she can; but youse could see it was a centre shot all d' same. It soaked her where she lived.

"'Foist d' man, an' then d' baby!' says d' Petersen woman, as she sets on d' floor an' mourns; 'now I'll soon go hunt for 'em.'

"Me Rag tries to get her to come in wit' us, but she won't stan' for it. All t'rough d' night we hears her mournin' an' groanin' on d' floor be d' side of little Hilda's coffin.

"D' kid's fun'ral was yesterday, an' a pulpit sharp from one of d' Missions gets in on d' play, an' offshitates. Sure! it's a case of Potter's Field—for d' mother ain't got d' dough to make good for a grave—but me an' me Rag gets a car'ge, an' takes d' mother out to see little Hilda planted. No, she don't cry much at that; but me Rag toins in an' don't do a t'ing but break d' record for tears. If Hilda was her own kid,

she couldn't have made more of a row. When it comes to what youse might 'call 'd' outward evidences of grief,' me Rag simply lose d' Petersen mother.

"D' mother was feelin' it all d' same. She keeps whisperin' to herself: 'Soon I'll go find 'em!' like that; an' that's d' limit of what youse could get out of her.

"It's last night, after little Hilda's put away,—it's mebbly, say, t'ree this mornin', when wit'out a woid of warnin' me Rag sets up straight in bed an' gives a sniff.

"'Be d' mother of d' Holy Mary! it's gas!' she says, an' nex' she makes a straight wake for d' Petersen door.

"An' me Rag guesses right d' v'ery foist time, like d' kid in d' song. Gas it was; d' poor Petersen mother toins it on full blast. She's croaked an' cold as a wedge, hours before we tumbles to her game.

"That's d' finish. As I states d' foist dash out of d' box, it's d' dandy hard luck story of d' year. D' whole Petersen push is wiped out, same as that bar-keep would swab off his bar. On d' dead! it's all too many for me! What's d' use of folks bein' born at all, if dey's goin' to get yanked in like that—t'ree at a clatter, an' all young!

"Do dey have re-latiffs? Some in d' old country, I takes it. There's a note d' Petersen woman leaves for me Rag, astin' her to write d' hist'ry of d' last round an' wind-up to d' folks at home, an' givin' d' address. But me ownliest own says 'nit!' an' chucks d' note in d' stove.

"'Dey's better off not knowin',' says me Rag."

BOWLDER'S BURGLAR

BOWLDER'S wife and offspring were away at the time ; and the time was a night last summer. Mrs. B. was in Long Branch, and Boulder, left lonely and forlorn, to look after the house and earn money, was having a sad, bad time, indeed.

Not that Boulder really lacked anything ; but he missed his wife and little ones. Where before the merry prattle of his children made the racket of a boiler shop, all was solemn peace and hush. The Boulder mansion was like a graveyard.

Naturally Boulder felt lonesome ; and to avoid, as much as might be, having his loneliness thrust upon him by the empty desolation of the house, he made it a rule during his wife's absence not to go home until 3 o'clock A. M.

He was "dead on his legs" by that time, as he expressed it, and went at once to sleep, before the absence of Mrs. B. began to prey upon him.

On the night, or more properly morning, in question, Boulder wended homeward at sharp 3. He had been missing Mrs. B. painfully all the evening, and, to uphold himself, subscribed to divers drinks. These last Boulder put safely away within his belt, and they cherished him and taught him resignation, and he didn't miss his wife as much as he had.

The hoary truth is that as Boulder drew near his

home, he had so far conquered his sense of abandonment that he wasn't even thinking of his wife. He was plodding along in the middle of the street for fear of footpads, whom he fancied might be sauntering in the shadows on either side, and was really in quite a happy, fortunate frame of mind. As Bowlder turned in toward his door he was softly repeating the lines:

“ 'Tis sweet to hear the watch dog's honest bark,
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home,
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and grow brighter when we come.”

Not that Bowlder had a watch dog, honest or otherwise, to bay him deep-mouthed welcome. And inasmuch as they had discharged the exile from Erin, who aforetime did service as the Bowlder maid-of-all-work, when Mrs. B. took flight for the summer, there was slight hope of an eye on the premises to grow brighter when he came.

No; it was not that Bowlder was really looking for deep-mouthed bays or brightening eyes; he was naturally musical and poetical, and the drinks he had corralled had unlocked his nature in that behalf. Bowlder was reciting the lines quoted for the pleasure he drew from their beauty; not from the prophecy they put forth of any meeting to which he looked forward. A remark which escaped Bowlder as he climbed his steps and dexterously fitted his night key to the day key-hole showed this.

“ I ought to have stayed at a hotel,” said Bowlder. “ There's nobody here to rake me over the coals for it, and I'm going to have a great head on me when I wake up.”



"HOLD UP YOUR HANDS!" Page 209.

Bowlder at last by mistake got his latchkey into the keyhole to which it related, and the door swung inward. This was a distinct success and Bowlder heaved a breath of relief. This door, which had grown singularly obdurate since Mrs. B.'s departure, had been known to hold Bowlder at bay for twenty minutes.

Bowlder had just cast his hat on the hall floor—he intended to hang it up in the morning when he would have more time—and got as far on a journey to the second story as one step, when a noise in the basement dining-room enlisted Bowlder's attention. His curiosity rather than his fears was aroused; another happy effect of his libations.

Without one thought of burglars, Bowlder deferred his journey upstairs, and repaired instead to the dining-room below. Bowlder would investigate the untoward noises which, while soft and light, were still of such volume as might tell upon the ear.

"Wonder 'f the houshe is haunted?" observed Bowlder as he went deviously below.

It has already been noted that Bowlder not once bethought him of burglars. In truth he had often scoffed at burglars while conversing with Mrs. B. on this subject so interesting to ladies. Bowlder had said that no burglar could make day wages robbing the house.

It had all the thrill of perfect surprise then when, as Bowlder turned into his dining-room, he beheld a bull's-eye lantern shedding a malevolent stream of light in his face, and caught the shadowy outlines of a tall man behind it who seemed engaged in pointing a pistol at him.

"Hold up your hands!" said the tall man, "and don't come a step further, or out goes your light!"

"Well! I like thish!" squeaked Bowlder, in a tone of querulous complaint, at the same time, however, clasping his hands above his head; "I like thish! What's the row here?"

The tall man made no reply, but came across and deftly ran his hands over Bowlder for possible arms. Bowlder had no gun. The tall man seemed satisfied, and stepping back, told Bowlder he might sit down on a chair and rest his hands in his lap. Bowlder took advantage of the permission.

"Any 'bjections to me lighting a shegar?" queried Bowlder.

"Not at all," said the tall man.

Bowlder was soon puffing away. Being friendly, not to say polite by nature, Bowlder bestowed one on his visitor.

"Is it a mild cigar?" asked the burglar.

"Colorado claro," said Bowlder.

"That's all right!" assented the other. "I don't like a strong smoke; it makes my head ache."

As the visitor lighted the cigar, Bowlder noticed that he wore a black mask across his eyes, and that the latter shone through the apertures cut for their convenience like beads. The mask gave Bowlder a chill which the pistol had not evoked. Indeed, it came very near destroying the whole force of the drinks he had accumulated.

When the stranger had lighted his cigar, Bowlder and he puffed at each other a moment without a word.

"What are you doing in my houshe?" at last demanded Bowlder.

The stranger smiled and puffed on. Then he kicked a large sack with his foot. Bowlder had not observed

this sack before. As the stranger touched it with his foot, it gave out a metallic clinking.

Bowler's eyes roamed instinctively to the sideboard. There wasn't much light; enough, however, to show Bowlder that the sideboard's burden of silverware was gone. With such a start, Bowlder was able to infer a great deal.

"Made a clean shweep, eh?" remarked Bowlder.

The masked stranger nodded.

"If you've got all there is loose and little in the houshe," said Bowlder—he was talking plainer every moment now—"you've got \$1,500 worth. Been upstairs yet?"

Again the man of the mask nodded. Also he exhibited symptoms of being about to depart.

"Don't go yet!" remonstrated Bowlder. "Want to talk to you. Did you get the old lady's jewellery upstairs?"

Again the burglar nodded. He seemed disinclined to use his voice unless it was necessary.

"Thash's bad!" remarked Bowlder reflectively; referring to the conquest of his wife's jewellery. "The old lady won't do a thing but make me buy her some more. And the worst of it is, she'll put up the figures on what jimcracks you've got, and insisht they're worth four times their true value. I'm lucky if she don't put it higher than \$1,000. And they ain't worth \$200; you'll be lucky if you get that on 'em."

The burglar looked hopeful as well as he could with a mask, but retorted nothing to Bowlder. The latter mused sorrowfully over his wife's jewels.

"You see it putsh me in the hole!" said Bowlder. "I get it going and coming. You come along and rob

me; and then Mrs. B. comes home and robs me again. Don't you think that's a little rough?"

The stranger said it was rough. He didn't nod this time, but used his voice. Encouraged by the agreement with his views, Bowlder urged the return of his wife's jewellery.

"Just gimme back what's hers," said Bowlder, "and you can keep the rest. That'll let me out with her, and I don't care for the balance."

But the man of midnight stoutly objected. It would be a dead loss of \$200, he said, and worse yet, it would be unprofessional.

Bowlder thought deeply a moment. Then he took a new tack.

"Any 'bjections to taking a drink with me?" he asked.

"None in the world!" said the burglar.

Bowlder explored his coat pocket for a bottle he'd brought home to restore him after his sleep. He proffered the bottle to the burglar.

"After you is manners!" said that person.

Bowlder drank and then the burglar did the same.

"You a Republican?" demanded Bowlder suddenly. "I s'pose even burglars have their politics!"

"Administration Republican!" said the burglar; "that's what I am. I believe in Imperialism and a sound currency."

"I'm an Administration Republican, too," remarked Bowlder. "I knew we'd find common ground at last. Now, as a member of the same party as yourself, I want to ask a favour of you. You've got about \$1,500 worth of plunder there; and yet, you see yourself, there's a good deal of furniture you're leaving behind;

piano upstairs and all that. I'll play you one game of ten-point seven-up to see whether you take all or nothing. Come, now, as a favour!"

The burglar hesitated. He feared there was a trap in it. Bowlder gave him his word as a goldbug that he made the proffer in all honesty.

"If you win," said Bowlder, "you can cart the furniture away to-morrow. I'll order you a waggon as I go down, and you can sleep in the house and see that I don't carry off anything or hold out on you."

"But it ain't worth as much as what I've got," demurred the burglar.

"Well, see here!" said Bowlder—sober he was now—"to avoid spoiling sport I'll throw in my watch and \$30. That's square!"

The burglar admitted that the proposal was fair, but stuck for seven points.

"I like straight seven-up," he said. "Make it a seven-point game and I'll go you."

Bowlder produced a deck of cards from the sewing-machine drawer. At the burglar's own suggestion they lighted one gas jet.

"Cut for deal!" said Bowlder.

The burglar cut a ten-spot, Bowlder a deuce. The burglar had the deal.

The king of diamonds was turned as trump.

"Beg!" said Bowlder.

"Take it!" remarked the burglar.

The hands were played. Bowlder had the queen and six-spot of diamonds; the marauder had the ten, nine, and seven of diamonds. Bowlder took high, low and the burglar counted game.

"No jack out!" remarked Bowlder.

"No," said the other. And then in an abused tone; "Say! you don't beg nor nuthin', do you? The idee of a gent's beggin' in a two-hand game, a-holdin' of the queen and six."

They played three hands; Jack had been out once. Bowlder was keeping score. It stood:

"Bowl., I I I I I I."

"Burg., I I I I."

It was Bowlder's deal. He riffled the cards with the deftness of one who plays often and well.

"Bound to settle it this time!" said the burglar. "The score stands 6 to 4. You bet your life! I'll stand on the bare jack if I get it."

Bowlder threw the cards around and turned trump with a snap. It was the jack of clubs.

The burglar looked at it wistfully, even sadly.

"That's square, is it?" he said to Bowlder in a tone of half reproach. "You ain't the party to go and turn a jack on a poor crook from the bottom of the deck, and you only one to go?"

Bowlder assured him the transaction was perfectly honest.

"Yes, I guess it was," said the burglar, rising. "I was watching you, and I guess it was straight. It's just my luck, that's all. Well! I must go; it's getting along towards 4:30 o'clock."

"Have a drink!" said Bowlder, "and take another cigar!"

The cracksman took a drink. Then he selected a cigar from Bowlder's proffered case.

"If it's all the same to youse," said the burglar, "I'll smoke this later on—after breakfast." And he put the cigar in his pocket.

"Here; let me show you out this way," said Bowlder, leading the way to the front basement door.

"I hates to ask it of a stranger," said the burglar, as he hesitated just outside the door, "but the Eight' Avenoo cars'll be runnin' in a little while now, and would you mind lendin' me a nickel? I lives down be the Desbrosses Ferry."

Of course Bowlder would lend him car-fare. This somewhat raised the burglar's spirits, made sad by seven-up. As he closed the door behind him, the burglar looked back at Bowlder.

"Do you know, pard," he said, "if it wasn't for my weakness for gamblin', I'd been a rich man a dozen times."

ANGELINA McLaurin

(BY THE OFFICE BOY)

ANGELINA McLaurin's was a rare face; a beautiful face. It had but one defect: Angelina's nose was curved like the wing of a gull. This gave her an air of resolution and command that affected the onlooker like a sign which says: "Look out for the engine."

Still, Angelina McLaurin was bewitchingly lovely, a result much aided in its coming about by a form so admirably upholstered that to look upon her would have made Diana tired.

It was a soft, sensuous September afternoon. Angelina McLaurin was impatiently holding down a richly cushioned chair in the library of the noble McLaurin mansion—one of those stately piles which are the pride of Washington Heights. She was awaiting the coming of her affianced husband, George Maurice St. John.

"Why does he prove so dilatory?" she murmured. "Methinks true love would not own such leaden feet!"

As Angelina McLaurin arose to gaze from the window she rocked on the tail of the ample Angora cat.

The cat made it a point to hang out in the library every afternoon. On this occasion, while Angelina McLaurin was dreaming of her lover, the cat had taken advantage of her abstraction to deftly bestow his tail beneath the rocker of her chair. When Angelina arose, as stated, the cat got the worst of it.

As the rocker came down on the cat's tail, the cat exploded into observations in Angorese that are unfit for these pages. Angelina was not only startled out of herself, but almost out of her frock. Angelina and the cat arose hastily, and stood there panting.

As the shrieks of the wronged exile from Angora were uplifted into space, the door of the library burst violently open.

"What is the matter, dearest? Are you injured? Why do you cry for help?"

It was George Maurice St. John who asked the question. As he did so, he caught Angelina McLaurin in his powerful arms, while the Angora cat, his worst fears now realised, chased himself down the hall with tail excited to lamp-cleaner size.

"What is it, love?" asked George Maurice St. John, as he tenderly unloaded his delicious burden onto a sofa. "Speak! it is the voice of your George who bids you. Has any one dared to insult the coming bride of a St. John?"

"Bear with me, George!" she whispered. "Believe me, I will be better anon!"

After a few moments she recovered, and was able to smile through her tears at the alarm of her dear one. Then she told George all: how the cat had been ass enough to leave his tail lying around loose while asleep; how, in the intensity of her waiting, she had put a crimp in it with the fell rocker of the chair; and how the cat had been drawn into statements, by sheer dint of agony, which it was impolitic as well as useless to repeat.

"So I was just in time, Angelina, to relieve both you and the cat of what was doubtless an awkward situation." And George Maurice St. John laughed gaily.

Then he kissed her with a fervour that left nothing to be wished for, and Angelina took a brace and sat erect on the sofa.

“I feel better now!” she remarked.

George tried to get in another kiss, but she stood him off.

“Don’t crowd your luck, dear!” she said, with a sweet softness. “I am yours for ever, and there is not the slightest need for any excess of osculatory zeal. You are to have me with you always, so set a brake or two and take the grades easy.”

Thus repulsed, George Maurice St. John sat abashed. A pained look seamed his features; he bit his lips and was silent.

* * * * *

Daylight became twilight, and twilight retreated into the darkness of a new night. It struck eight o’clock in the adjoining tower, and George Maurice St John was a-hungered. His stomach was the first to tip it off to him.

“Don’t we feed to-night?” asked George Maurice St. John.

The lovers for two hours had chattered aimlessly, as ones wandering in a wilderness of bliss. This was the first pointed remark.

“Anon! love; we will feed anon!” replied Angelina McLaurin dreamily. “But, George, before we get in our gustatory work, I would a word with you—indeed! sundry words.”

“Aim low, and send ’em along!” said George. “What is it my Queen would learn from her slave?”

In his ecstasy he achieved a “half Nelson” on the

lovely girl, and caught her in the back of the neck with a kiss.

The Angora cat, who was stealthily threading the hall, intending to play a return game with the library rug, gave a great convulsive start at the kiss, which carried him out of the mansion, and over the alley fence.

"They're a mark too high for me!" said the Angora to himself.

Then inflating his lungs to the last limit of expansion, the Angora sent a song of invitation down the line that set every Tabby in the block to washing her face and combing her ears.

"Your Queen wants a square heel-and-toe talk, George," said the sweet girl, as she tucked up her silken locks, dishevelled by his caresses into querulous little rings. "And your Queen wants straight goods this time, and no guff! Oh, darling!" continued Angelina McLaurin in a passionate outburst, "be square with me, and make me those promises upon which my life's happiness depends!"

George Maurice St. John strained Angelina to his bosom.

"I'll promise anything!" he said. "What wouldst thou have me do? My life, my fortune, my honour—my all, I lay at your feet! Monkey with them as thou wilt."

"Then listen!" said Angelina.

* * * * *

"George, we are to be wedded in a month, are we not?"

"We are!" he cried exultantly; and again he essayed the "half Nelson," and attempted to bury his nose in her mane.

"Don't get gay, George!" she said mournfully, as she broke George's lock, and gently but firmly pushed his bows off a point; "don't get funny! but hear me."

"Go on," said George, and his tones showed that his failure pierced him like a javelin. "We are to be wedded in a month. What then, lady?"

"George," said Angelina McLaurin, and the tear-jewels shone in her eyes, "don't think me unwomanly, but you know how I am fixed;—father and mother both dead! I am an orphan, George, and must heel-and-handle myself."

"Even so!" said George, and his face showed his sympathy.

"Then, George, before we take that step to the altar," she went on steadily enough, but with a quaver in her voice which his ear, made sensitive by great love, did not fail to detect: "before we take that step, I say, from which there is no retreat, I must know certain things. You must make me certain promises."

"Name them," he whispered, and his deep voice overran her like a melody.

"Then, George," she said, "is it too much to ask that \$100,000 worth of property be settled upon me at this time?"

"My solicitors have already received my instructions to make it a million." George Maurice St. John's voice dwelt fondly on the settlement. "It is but a beggarly ante in such a game of table-stakes as this!"

This time Angelina McLaurin did not decline his endearments. When he let up, she continued:

"And it's dead sure I go to the Shore each summer?"

"It is a welded cinch," he replied, as he drew her

nearer to him. "You take in the coast from Bar Harbour to the Florida Keys."

"And servants?"

"A mob shall minister unto thee," he said.

"Then I have but one more boon, George," she murmured, "grant that, and I am thine forever."

"Board the card!" cried George; "I promise before you ask."

"Say not so," she said with a sweet sadness; "but muzzle your lips and listen. You must quit golf."

"What!" shrieked George, with an energy that sent the Angora backward off a shed-roof of dubious repute, from which he was carolling to his low companions; "what!" he repeated. "Woman, think!"

"I have thought, George," responded Angelina McLaurin, with an air of sorrowful firmness. "There is but one alternative: saw short off,—saw short off on golf, or give me up forever!"

"Is this some horrid dream?" he hissed, as he strode up and down the library.

At last he paused before her.

"Woman," he said sternly, "look on me! Is this some lightsome bluff, or does it go? Dost mean it, woman?"

"Ay! I mean it!" answered Angelina, while her cheek paled and her breath came quick and fast. "Don't make any mistake on that; I mean it. My talk goes. And my hand is off my chips."

"Is this your love?" he sneered, bitterly.

"It is," she faltered. "I have spoken, and I abide your answer."

"Then, girl," said George Maurice St. John, and his words were cold and hard, "all is over between us."

You would drive me into a corner and take away my golf! I say No! No! a thousand times, No!"

At this outbreak the curve in Angelina's nose became more intense. She dried her eyes. Her features, too, became as flint. She even cut loose a low, mocking laugh.

"Be it so!" she said; "sirrah, take your ring!"

He seized the bauble and ground it beneath his heel. As he did so her strength failed her, and she sank to the floor.

"That knocked her out!" he muttered, and he started to count: "One!—Two!—Three—Four!—"

"Oh, not necessarily!" she said, struggling to her feet. "I'm still in it; and I say again, give up golf, or give up me!"

"The die is cast!" and as he spoke the fatal words, the eyes of George Maurice St. John took on the firm, irrevocable expression of a fish's set in death. "I wouldn't give up golf for the best woman that ever put a dress on over her head. Maiden, you ask too much; you come too high! Damsel, I quit you cold!"

* * * * *

George Maurice St. John rushed from the scene. The ponderous door, as it slammed behind him, echoed and re-echoed through the vaulted apartments of the McLaurin mansion. Angelina McLaurin listened until his footsteps died away far up the street.

"He has flew the coop on me!" she wailed.

Then she gave way to a torrent of tears. In her distress Angelina McLaurin was more beautiful than ever. Two minutes! Five minutes! Ten minutes went by! Her tears still fell like rain.

"I have turned the hose on my hopes!" she said.

This was the thought that crossed her mind; but she desperately womanned (word coined since advent of new woman) herself to bear it.

Still afloat on the sad currents of her tears, her head bowed, a light sound beat upon the tympanum of Angelina McLaurin. She looked quickly up and squared herself to emit a glad cry, if one should be necessary.

What was it?

Something had come back.

True! it was the Angora cat.

As the Angora flung himself upon the rug with an air of reckless abandon, Angelina McLaurin gazed at him with a wistful fixedness. One eye was closed, his fur was torn, blood dripped from his lacerated ears. He was, in good sooth, but a tattered Angora! Angelina McLaurin laughed long and wildly.

"He, too; has got it in the neck!"

DINKY PETE

(ANNALS OF THE BEND)

“DO we have romances on d’ East Side!” and Chucky’s voice was vibrant with the scorn my doubts provoked. “Do we have romances! Well, I don’t t’ink! Say! there’s days when we don’t have nothin’ else.”

At this crisis Chucky called for another glass; did it without invitation. This last spoke of and betrayed a sense of injury.

“Let me tell youse,” continued Chucky, “an’ d’ yarn don’t cost you a cent, see! how Dinky Pete sends Jimmy d’ barkeep back to his wife. It’s what I calls romantic for a hundred plunks.

“Not that Jimmy ever leaves her, for that matter; that is, he don’t leave her for fair! But he’s sort o’ organisin’ for d’ play when Dinky Pete puts d’ kybosh on d’ notion, an’ wit’ that Jimmy don’t chase at all, see!

“Jimmy d’ barkeep is some soft in d’ nut, see! Nit, he ain’t really got w’eels; ain’t bad enough for d’ bug house; but he’s a bit funny in his cocoa—mostly be way of bein’ dead stuck on himself.

“An’ bein’ weak d’ way I says, Jimmy is a high roller for clothes; always sports a w’ite t’ree-sheet, wit’ a rock blazin’ in d’ centre, big enough to trip a dog. An’ say! his necktie’s a dream, an’ his hat’s d’ limit!

"What's a t'ree-sheet? an' what's a rock? I don't want to give you no insultin' tips, but on d' square! youse ought to take a toim at night school. Why! a t'ree-sheet is his shirt, an' d' rock I names is Jimmy's spark! Of course, d' spark ain't d' real t'ing; only a rhinestone; but it goes in d' Bend all d' same for a 2-carat headlight.

"Jimmy makes a tidy bit of dough, see! He gets, mebbly it's fifteen bones a week, an' I makes no doubt he shakes down d' bar for ten more, which is far from bad graft. So it ain't s'prisin' one day when Jimmy gets it stuck in his frizzes he'll be married.

"Jimmy's Bundle is all right at that. Her name's Annie, an' she's a proper straight chip. An' that ain't no song an' dance; square as a die she was. An' a bute! She was d' pick of d' Bowery crush, an' don't youse doubt it.

"Well, Jimmy an' Annie goes on wit' their courtships, I takes it, same as if dey lives on Fift' Avenoo. Annie's a mil'ner, an' while she don't have money to t'row to d' boids, she woiks for enough so it's as good as a stan'-off on livin', which is all her hand calls for an' all she asts. If she don't quit winner after trimmin' hats a week, at any rate she don't get in d' hole, see!

"Oh, yes; she an' Jimmy gets action on d' sights. Now an' then it's Coney Island; then ag'in it's a front seat at d' People's; or mebbly if some of d' squeeze has a dance, dey pulls on their skates an' steps in on d' spiel. An' say! as a spieler Annie's a wonder, an' don't youse forget it. I has d' woid for it from me own Rag, an' when it comes to pickin' out a dancer, you can trust me Rag to be dead on in a minute. D'

loidy can do a dizzy stunt or two on a wax floor herself when it comes to a show-down.

“But about me romance. Jimmy has chased around wit’ Annie, say it’s t’ree mont’s. An’ all this time his strong play is voylets, see! Annie is gone on voylets, so each evenin’ Jimmy toins in on Dinky Pete, who sells poipers an’ peanuts, an’ some of this hard, bum candy you breaks your teet’s on. Dinky also deals a little flower game, wit’ about a 5-cent limit, an’ that’s what gets Jimmy. Just as I says, each evenin’ Jimmy sticks in a nickel for a bunch of voylets at Dinky’s an’ sends some kid—Dinky’s joint is a great hang-out for d’ kids—to take ’em up to Annie.

“An’ them voylets tickles Annie to death.

“At last all goes well, an’ Jimmy an’ Annie gets spliced. An’ it’s all right at that! Me Rag, who calls on ’em, says Jimmy an’ Annie’s d’ happiest ever, an’ gettin’ d’ boss run for their money.

“It’s about a year when Annie don’t do a t’ing but have a kid. At foist Jimmy likes it, an’ lets on it’s d’ racket of his career. But after a while Jimmy gets chilly—sort o’ gets sore on d’ kid. Me Rag gives me a pointer it’s mostly Annie’s fault. She stars d’ kid too heavy, an’ it makes Jimmy feel like a deuce in a bum deck; makes him t’ink he ain’t so strong—ain’t so warm as he was. An’ it toins out’ Annie, bein’ always busy monkeyin’ wit’ d’ young-one, an’ givin’ Jimmy d’ languid eye, d’ nex’ news you get, Jimmy is back on d’ street when he is off watch, tryin’ to pipe off some fun.

“I never knows where she catches on wit’ Jimmy, but it ain’t no time when one of them razzle-dazzle blondes has him on d’ string. She’s doin’ d’ grand at that, see! an’ givin’ him d’ haughty stand-off.

"Mebby Jimmy met her on d' street onct or twict, when for d' foist time, Goldie—which is this blonde tart's name—says Jimmy can come an' see her.

"It's been mont's since Jimmy's done d' flower act at Dinkey Pete's. But d' sucker t'inks it's d' night of his life, an' so he chases in an' goes ag'inst Pete's counter for a bunch.

"This Dinky Pete's a dead queer little mug. He's a short, sawed-off mark, wit' a humpy back an' a bum lamp. But you can gamble your life! Dinky Pete's heart is on straight, whether his back is or not.

"It's be chanct I'm in Dinky Pete's meself d' time Jimmy is out to meet this blonde mash. Now, at d' time I ain't onto Jimmy's curves; I don't tumble to d' play till a week later, when me Rag puts me on.

"W'at was I doin' in Dinky Pete's? Flowers? Nit; not on your life! Naw; I wants to change me luck. I'd got d' gaff at draw poker d' night before, an' I'm layin' for Dinky Pete for to rub his hump on d' sly. Sure! Youse'll have luck out of sight. Only you mustn't let d' humpback guy get on. If he notices you rubbin' his hump it'll give youse bad luck, see!

"Jimmy comes in, an' at foist, be force of habit, I s'spose, he's goin' to plunge on voylets. But he t'inks of Annie, an' he can't stand for it. Wit' that, Jimmy shifts his brush an' tells Dinky Pete to toin him out some roses.

"'An' make 'em d' reddest in d' joint, see!' says Jimmy.

"Dinky Pete's got his mits on some voylets, but when Jimmy says 'roses' Dinky comes to a stan' still.

“ ‘W’at! roses?’ says Dinky Pete, an’ his ratty eyes—one of ’em on d’ hog, as I states—looks dead sharp at Jimmy. ‘Roses?’ he repeats.

“ ‘That’s what I says!’ is d’ way Jimmy comes back.

“ ‘Better take voylets,’ says Dinky, an’ he stops foolin’ wit’ d’ flowers an’ gives Jimmy d’ gimlet eye.

“ ‘Nit,’ declares Jimmy; ‘I’m dead onto me needs. Give me roses.’

“ ‘But roses won’t last,’ says Dinky, an’ his look is sharp an’ soft an’ sad all at onct. ‘Roses won’t last, an’ that’s for fair,’ says Dinky, ‘while voylets is stayers. Better take voylets, Jimmy!’

“ But Jimmy gets sullen an’ won’t have no voylets, see! An’ he swings an’ rattles wit’ Dinky that he wants roses—roses red as blood.

“ ‘Roses has thorns,’ goes on Dinky, still holdin’ his lamps on Jimmy in d’ same queer way; ‘you don’t want roses, Jimmy; you just t’inks you want roses! Be a square bloke, Jimmy; be yourself an’ take voylets!’

“ ‘An’ I’m damned!’ declares Chucky, “if Jimmy don’t begin to look like a whipped kid, an’ d’ foist t’ing I knows, he welches on roses, grabs off a bunch of voylets big enough to make a salad, an’ goes chasin’ home to Annie. Me Rag is there when Jimmy pours in.

“ ‘Say! It’s d’ finish of d’ blonde! She ain’t in it! Me rag, on d’ quiet, gives Annie d’ chin-chin of her existence, an’ shows her Jimmy ain’t gettin’ a square deal. An’ Annie—who, for all she’s nutty about d’ kid, is a dead wise fowl just d’ same—takes a tumble, an’ from that time she makes d’ bettin’ even money on’ bot’ d’ young-one an’ Jimmy. D’ last time I sees Jimmy he

stops to tell me that Annie's a peach, an' d' kid's a wonder. An' he's lookin' like a nine-times winner himself. Now don't youse call that a romance for Dinky Pete to get onto Jimmy's game so quick, an' stickin' to him till he takes d' voylet steer? Ain't it a romance? Well! I should kiss a pig!"

CRIB OR COFFIN?

I

YOUNG Jones stood in the telegraph office—the one at Twenty-third Street and Broadway. There was an air of triumph about Jones, an atmosphere of insolent sagacity, which might belong to one who, by some sudden, skilful sleight had caught a starling. Yet Jones's victory was in nowise uncommon. Others had achieved it many a time and oft. It was simply a baby; young Jones had become a papa, and it was this that gave him those frills which we have chronicled. The presence of young Jones in the telegraph office might be explained by looking over his shoulder. This is the message he wrote:

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 8, '99.

COLONEL STUYVESANT VAN EPPS,
ALBANY, N. Y.

I still take it you are interested in the census of your family. Recent events in this city have altered the figures. Don't attempt to write a history of the tribe of Van Epps without consulting

SANFORD JONES.

“There!” said young Jones, “that ought to fetch him. He won't know whether I mean the birth of a baby or Mary's death. If he doesn't come to see her now, I will mark him off my list for good. I would as it stands, if it were not for Mary.”

"Won't father worry, dear?" asked Mary, when young Jones repeated the ambiguous message he had aimed at his up-the-State father-in-law.

"I expect him to shed apprehensive tears all the way to New York," replied young Jones. "But don't fret, Mary; I am sure he will come; and a tear or two won't hurt him. They will help his eyes, even though they do his heart no good. I don't resent his treatment of me, but his neglect of you is not so easy to forgive."

II

THIS was the story :

Back four years, Albany would have shown you young Jones opening his law office in that hamlet. Mary was "Mary Van Epps." At that time seventeen years was all the family register allowed to her for age.

Her father, Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps, was one of the leading citizens of Albany. While not a millionaire, he was of sufficient wealth to dazzle the local eye, and he was always mentioned by the denizens of his native place as "rich."

Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps had a weakness. He was slave to the pedigree habit. Never a day went by but he called somebody's attention to those celebrities who aforetime founded and set flowing the family of Van Epps; and he proposed at some hour in the future to write a history of that eminent house. With his wealth and his family pride to prompt him, it came easy one day for Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps to object with decision and vigour to a match between young Jones and his daughter Mary.

“They were both fools!” he said.

Then he pointed out that the day would never dawn when a plebeian like unto Jones, without lineage or lucre, boasting nothing better than a law office vacant of practice, and on which the rent was in arrears three months, would wed a daughter of the Van Epps. Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps, in elaboration of his objection, showed that beyond a taste to drink whiskey and a speculative bent toward draw poker, he knew of nothing which young Jones possessed. Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps closed, as he began, with the emphatic announcement that no orange blossoms would ever blow for the nuptials of young Jones and Mary Van Epps.

Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps in his attitude will have the indorsement of all good Christian people. He was right as a father. As a prophet touching orange blossoms, however, he was what vulgar souls call “off.” Of that anon.

III

YOUNG Jones more than half believed that Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps was right. So far as whiskey and draw poker were concerned, he went with him; but with Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps' objections to him, based on the lack of pedigree and a failure of pocket-book, he didn't sympathise.

“I may be poor, and my family tree may be a mullein stalk, but I am still a fitting mate for any member of the Van Epps tribe.”

Thus spake young Jones to Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps. He then took the earliest private occasion to

kiss Mary good-bye, give her his picture, and make her his promise to wed her within five years.

"Would she wait?"

"I would wait a century," said Mary.

Young Jones kissed Mary again after that. The next day Albany was short one citizen, and that citizen was young Jones. Albany is short to this day.

IV

LET us drop details. Good luck came to young Jones, hard on the lonely heels of his evacuation of Albany. He was named a junior partner of a New York City law firm. His income equalled his hope. He dismissed whiskey and draw poker, and he wrote to Mary Van Epps:

"Could he claim her now?"

Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps said "No" again. Young Jones still lacked ancestry, and a taste for whiskey and four aces still lurked in his blood. Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps would not consent. This served for a time to abate the bridal preparations.

V

TWO years deserted the future for the past. A great deal of water will run under a bridge in two years. Mary Van Epps was nineteen. She went on a visit to a Trenton relative. Young Jones became abundant in Trenton at that very time. They took in a parson while on a stroll one day, and when that experienced divine got through with them they were man and wife. They wired their entangled condition to Colonel

Stuyvesant Van Epps. He sent them a message of wrath.

“I cast Mary off for ever! Never let me see her face again!”

“Very well!” remarked young Jones as he read the wire; “I shall need Mary myself, in New York. Casting her off, therefore, at Albany, cuts no great figure. As for Mary’s face, I will look at it all the more to make up for her brutal dad’s abatement of interest therein.”

Then he kissed Mary as if the feat were entirely fresh. And while Mary wept, she still felt very happy. Next they came to a modest home in the city.

VI

TWO years more trailed the others into history. Young Jones was held a fortunate man. His work was a success. Whiskey and poker were now so far astern as to be hull-down in the horizon. And he loved Mary better than ever. She was the triumph of his life, and he told her so every day.

“It is certainly wonderful,” he said, “how much more beautiful you become every day.”

This pleased Mary; and while her heart turned to her hard old father, she did not repent that episode at Trenton, which changed her name to Jones.

Once a month Mary faithfully addressed a letter, new and fresh each time with the love that fails and fades not, to “Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps, Albany, N. Y.” And once a month Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps read it, gulped a little, and made no reply.

“I will never see her again!” Colonel Stuyvesant



“CRIB OR COFFIN?”—Page 296.

Van Epps remarked to himself on these letter occasions.

All the time he knew he lived for nothing else. But he thought of his family and mustered his pride, and of course became a limitless fool at once, as do those who give way to an attack of pedigree.

But the Jones baby was born; and young Jones concluded to try his hand on Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps. Mary wanted him to come, and that settled the whole matter so far as young Jones was concerned. In his new victory as a successful father, he felt that he could look down on Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps. He therefore wrote the message referred to in our first chapter with perfect confidence, that, turn as matters might, he had nothing to fear.

“The past, at least, is secure!” said young Jones; “and, come what may, I have Mary and the baby.”

Both Mary and young Jones, however, awaited the returns from Albany with anxiety;—Mary, because she loved her father and mourned for his old face, and young Jones because he loved Mary. They were relieved when the bell rang at 7 P. M., and a bicycle boy handed in a yellow paper, which read: “Will be there to-morrow on the 8:30.—Stuyvesant Van Epps.”

Mary was all gladness. Young Jones was calm, but gave way sufficiently to say:

“Mary, we will call the cub ‘Stuyvesant Van Epps Jones.’”

VII

YOUNG Jones met Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps at the Forty-Second Street station. The old gentleman had been torn by doubts and grievous misgivings all

the way down. What did young Jones' ambiguous message mean? Was Mary dead? Was he bound to a funeral? or a christening? Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps knew that something tremendous had happened. But what?

Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps walked up to young Jones at the station, and without pausing to greet him, remarked :

“Crib or coffin?”

“Crib!” said young Jones.

Then Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps fell into a storm of tears, and began to shake young Jones by the hand for the first time in his life.

VIII

THE three happiest people in the world that night were Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps, Mary and young Jones. The baby was the one member of the family who did not give way to emotion. He received his grandfather with a stolid phlegm which became a Van Epps.

“And his name is Stuyvesant Van Epps Jones,” said Mary.

Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps kissed Mary again at this cheering news, and shook hands with young Jones for the second time in his life.

That is all there is to a very true story. Colonel Stuyvesant Van Epps lives now in New York City, and Albany is shy a second citizen. Mary is happy, young Jones feels like a conqueror, and the infant, Stuyvesant Van Epps Jones, beneath the eye of his grandsire, waxes apace.

OHIO DAYS

I

AT THE LEES

“AUNT ANN, be we goin’ to the spellin’ to-night at the Block schoolhouse?”

Jim Lee always called his wife “Aunt Ann.” So did everybody except her daughter Lydia. She called Aunt Ann “Mother.” But to Jim Lee and the other inhabitants of Stowe Township, she was “Aunt Ann Lee.”

As Jim Lee asked Aunt Ann the question, he threw down the armful of maple wood and retreated to the back door to stamp the snow off his boots.

“I want to know,” he said, “so’s to do the chores in time.”

Aunt Ann was chopping mince-meat. She was a clean, beautiful woman of the buxom sort. Her eyes were very blue, while her hair was very black with not a strand of silver, for all her forty-seven years. Jim Lee held Aunt Ann in great respect. Aunt Ann on her part was a tender soul and true, although Jim Lee had found her quite firm at times.

“Now and then she’s a morsel hard on the bit,” said Jim Lee, descriptively.

Perhaps the two old-maid Spranglers meant the same thing when they said: “There never was a body with

blue eyes and black hair who didn't have the snags in 'em."

"Yes," replied Aunt Ann to Jim Lee's question. "Yes, of course we'll go. I've got to see Mrs. Au about some rag carpets she's weavin' for me, and she be there. Better get the Morgan colt and the cutter ready, father; we'll go in that."

"That'll only hold two," said Jim Lee. "How Lide goin' to go?"

"Lide's goin' with Ed Church. She's over to Jenn Ruple's now; she and Jen are goin' to choose up for the spellin' bee. Bnt she'll be back in time, and Ed Church is comin' for her at half-past seven."

Jim Lee's face showed that he didn't like Ed Church. He said nothing for five minutes, and pulling off his kip-skin boots began to give them a coat of tallow.

"Where's Ezra?" at last he asked. Ezra was the heir of the house of Lee. His age was eleven; Lide was twenty.

"Ezra's down cellar sortin' over that bin of peachblows," said Aunt Ann, busy with her mince-meats and chopping-bowl; "they'd started to rot."

"I wanted to send him to the Corners for the mail," suggested Jim Lee, as he kneaded the warm tallow into the instep of his boot to soften the leather.

"You'd better hitch up the colt a mite early," answered Aunt Ann, "and go to the Corners before we start to the spellin'. Ezra's got to churn as soon as he's done the peachblows."

There was another pause. Jim Lee softly drew on his freshly tallowed boots, and then stood up and tried them by raising his heels one after the other.



“YOU’D BETTER HITCH UP THE COLT A MITE EARLY.—*Page 298.*”

bending the boots at the toes as if testing a couple of Damascus sword blades.

"I don't like this here Ed Church sparkin' our Lide," remarked Jim Lee at last; "bimeby they'll want to get married."

"Father!" said Aunt Ann, raising her blue eyes with a look of cold criticism from the mince-meat she was massacring.

"Has he asked Lide yet?" said Jim Lee.

"No, he ain't," replied Aunt Ann, "but he's goin' to."

"How do you know?"

"How do I know?" repeated Aunt Ann, as she set the chopping-bowl on the kitchen table, and turned to put a few select sticks of maple into the oven to the end that they become kiln-dried and highly inflammable; "how do I know Ed Church is goin' to marry Lide? Humph! I can see it."

"I'm goin' to put a stop to it," said Jim Lee. "This Church boy is goin' to keep away from Lide."

"Father, you're goin' to do nothing of the kind," and Aunt Ann's eyes began to sparkle. "You can run the farm and Ezra, father; I'll run Lide and the house. The only person who's goin' to have a syllable to say about Lide's marryin' when the time comes, is Lide herself. If she wants Ed Church she's goin' to have him."

"Aunt Ann, I'm s'prised at you upholdin' for this Church boy!" Jim Lee threw into his tone a strain of strong reproof. "Ed Church drinks."

"Ed Church don't drink," retorted Aunt Ann sharply.

"How about that time two years ago last summer?"

Waren't Ed Church drunk over at the Royaltan Fair?"

"Yes, he was," answered Aunt Ann, "and that's the only time. But so was my father drunk once at a barn-raisin' when he was a boy, for I've heerd him tell it; and I guess my father, William H. Pickering, was as good as any Lee who ever greased his boots. One swallow don't make a summer, and one drunk don't make a drunkard. Ed Church told me himself that he ain't took a drop since."

"I'm goin' to break up this nonsense between him and Lide, at any rate," said Jim Lee. His mood was dogged, and it served to irritate Aunt Ann.

"All you've got ag'inst Ed Church, father," said Aunt Ann, "is that his father voted ag'in you for pathmaster, and I'm glad he did. What under the sun you ever wanted to be pathmaster for, and go about ploughin' up good roads to make 'em bad, was more'n I could see. I'm glad you was beat."

"I'm goin' to stop this Church boy hangin' 'round Lide, jest the same," was the closing remark of Jim Lee. At this point he went out to the barn to put some straw in the cutter and harness the Morgan colt. Aunt Ann turned again to her duties.

"Father is so exasperatin'," remarked Aunt Ann, as she poured some boiling water over a dozen slices of salt pork to "freshen it," in the line of preparing them for the evening frying-pan. "He'll find out, though, that I'll have a tolerable lot to say about Lide's marryin'."

II

ED CHURCH AND LIDE

AT half-past seven, Ed Church swung into Jim Lee's yard, with a horse all bells, and a cutter a billow of buffalo robes. He did not dare leave Grey Eagle, his pet colt, for Grey Eagle was restless with the wintry evening air and wanted to go. So Ed Church notified Lide of his coming by shouting, "House!" with a great voice.

Grey Eagle made a plunge at the sound, but was brought up by the bit.

"How'dy do, Ed," said Lide, as she came out the side door. She looked rosy and pretty with her muskrat muff and cape.

"Hello, Lide," said Ed. "You'll have to scramble in yourself. I can hardly hold the colt this weather, when he don't have nothin' to do but eat."

Lide scrambled in. As Ed Church stood up in the cutter to allow Lide a chance to be seated, her face came close to his. Taking his eyes from Grey Eagle for the mere fraction of a second, he kissed her dexterously. Lide received the caress with the most admirable composure, and Ed Church himself did not act as if the idea was a discovery or the experiment new.

"Let him out, Ed!" said Lide, when they were well into the road.

There was a foot of snow on the ground. The fence corners showed great drifts, while each rail of the fence had a ruffle of its own of cold, white snow. As far as one could see in the moonlight, the fields to each side were like milk. In the background stood the grey

woods laced against the sky. Here and there a lamp shone in a neighbour's window like an eye of fire.

Stowe Township was out that night. The steady beat of the bells could be heard ahead and behind. Ed Church sent Grey Eagle forward with long strides, the cutter following over the hard, packed snow with no more of resistance than a feather. Lide held her muff to her face, so that she might open her mouth to talk without catching any of the flying snowballs from Grey Eagle's nervous hoofs.

"It'll be a big spellin'-school to-night," said Lide.

"Yes, I guess it will," replied Ed. "I hear folks are comin' clear from Hammond Corners."

"If that Gentry girl comes," said Lide, "mind! you're not to speak to her, Ed. If you do, you can go home alone."

Ed grinned with an air of pleased superiority.

"Get up," he said to Grey Eagle. Then to Lide: "Go on! You're jealous!"

"No, I ain't!" said Lide, with a lofty intonation. "Speak to her if you want to! What do I care!"

"I won't speak to her, Lide."

Ed looked at his sweetheart to see how she received his submission. As the road was level and straight at this point, and Grey Eagle had worn away the wire edge of his appetite to "go," Ed put his face in behind the muskrat muff and kissed Lide again. The victim abetted the outrage.

"I saw ye!" yelled a happy voice behind. It was Ben Francis with Jennie Ruple. They also were enthroned in a cutter.

"What if you did?" retorted Lide with a toss.

"Do it again if I want to!" shouted Ed Church with much joyous hardihood.

"I never asked you to marry me yet, did I, Lide?" observed Ed Church, after two minutes of silence.

"No, you didn't," said Lide from behind the muskrat muff. The words would have sounded hard, if it were not for the sudden soft sweetness of the voice, which was half a whisper.

"Well, I'll do it now," said Ed, with much resolution, but a little shake in the tone. "You'll marry me, Lide, when we get ready?"

"Ed, what do you think father'll say?"

Ed Church knew Lide's father found no joy in him. The next time his voice took on a moody, half-sullen sound.

"Don't care what he says! I ain't marryin' the hull Lee family."

"But s'pose he says we can't?"

"If he does, I'll run away with you, Lide," and Ed Church's tones were touched with storm. "I'm goin' to marry you even if all the Lees in the state stand in the way!"

Lide crowded a bit closer to Ed at this, and, holding the muskrat muff against her face to keep her nose from getting red, said nothing. Lide was thinking what a noble fellow Ed was, and how much she admired him.

III

THE SPELLING SCHOOL

THE Block schoolhouse was crowded. Lide and Ed made their way toward the back benches. Jim Lee spoke to his daughter and growled gruffly at Ed.

The latter half growled back. Aunt Ann was all smiles and approval of Ed. At this, Ed thought her the best woman on earth except his own mother, and mentally put her next that excellent old lady in his heart.

It was a Mr. Parker who taught at the Block school-house. At 8 o'clock he rapped on the teacher's desk with a ruler, and everybody who was standing up hunted for a seat. Those who could find none—they were all young men and boys—crouched down along the walls of the big school-room and made seats of their heels. Mr. Parker came down from his desk and opened the stove door with the end of the ruler. The stove—a long-bodied air-tight—was raging red hot from the four-foot wood blazing in its interior. When the door was opened the heat almost singed Mr. Parker's eyebrows. At this he started back nervously, and Ben Weld and Will Jenkins, two very small boys, laughed. The stove on its part began to cool off and the cherry colour faded from its hot sides, leaving them brown and rusty.

"Lydia Lee and Jennie Ruple have been selected to choose sides for the spelling contest," said Mr. Parker.

Lide and Jennie seated themselves side by side on the bench which ran along the rear of the room. It was Lide's first choice.

"Ed Church," called Lide in a low voice.

Several young persons giggled, while Ed, blushing deeply to have his sweetheart's preference thus forced into prominence, blundered along the aisle and sat down by Lide. It was Jennie's choice. Jennie selected Ben Francis.

"Of course!" said Ada Farr in a loud whisper to

Myrtle Jones, "they'd choose their beaux first, so as to sit by 'em."

There was no gainsaying the Farr girl's statement. The "choosing up," however, went on. At last everybody, young and old, from the grey-headed grandpa to the five-year-old just sent to his first school that winter, had been chosen by Lide or Jennie. Then Mr. Parker began to give out the words.

Ed Church failed on the first word. It was "emphasis." Ed thought there was an "f" in it. He straightway sat down and spelled no more that night. Lide made a better showing, and lasted through five words. She tripped on "suet" upon which she conferred an "i." Lide then joined Ed among the silenced ones.

"Lide Lee missed on purpose," whispered the Farr girl to her neighbour Myrtle Jones, "so she could sit and talk with Ed."

Jim Lee spelled well, but fell a prey to "moustache."

At last only three were left standing—Nellie Braddock, a girl from Hammond Corners, and Aunt Ann. Mr. Parker turned over to the back part of the spelling book where the hard words lived. Nellie Braddock fell before "umbrageous."

The struggle between the girl from Hammond Corners and Aunt Ann was a battle of the giantesses. The girl from Hammond Corners was the champion speller of her region, and had spelled down every school so far that winter. The interest was intense, as first to Aunt Ann and then to the girl from Hammond Corners, Mr. Parker put out:

"Fantasy."

"Autobiographer."

"Thaumaturgic."

"Cosmography."

At last the girl from Hammond Corners tripped on:
"Sibylline."

She made it "syb." Mr. Parker had to show her the spelling book to convince the girl from Hammond Corners that she had missed. She glanced in the spelling book where Mr. Parker's finger pointed, and then burst into tears. At this an unknown young man, presumably from Hammond Corners, got up and excitedly declared the book to be wrong. Nobody took any notice of him, however, and Aunt Ann Lee was named the victor. She had spelled down the school.

IV

THE FIGHT

ED CHURCH left Lide talking with the girls in the schoolhouse while he went back to the waggon shed to get Grey Eagle and bring him and the cutter to the door. As Ed was in the entry of the schoolhouse he was stopped by little Joe Barnes.

"Say! Fan Brown's out there waitin' for you."

"What about Fan Brown?" asked Ed Church.

Fan Brown was the bully of Hinckley. He boasted that he could thrash any man between Bath Lakes and the Hinckley Ridge.

"He says he's goin' to wallop you for shootin' his dawg last summer," said little Joe Barnes.

"Joe, will you do something for me?" asked Ed.

"Yep!"

"You go and tell Lide Lee in there that I'm goin'

over to Square Chanler's to get a neck-yoke he borrowed and I'll be right back. Tell her to wait in the schoolhouse till I come."

"He's afraid of Fan Brown and is runnin' over to Square Chanler's to get the constable," said little Joe Barnes to himself. For this he despised Ed Church very much, but went in and delivered the message.

"All right!" said Lide, and then went on gossiping with the girls.

Ed Church stepped out of the schoolhouse and started for the horse-sheds.

He noticed a knot of men standing at the rear corner of the building; among them he discerned the stocky, bull-necked bully of Hinckley, Fan Brown.

"Here he comes now!" said one, as Ed approached.

"Let him come!" gritted the bully; "I'll fix him! I'll show him whose dog he's been shootin'! As fine a coon dog, boys, as ever went into a corn field. He shot him, and I ain't goin' back to Hinckley till I mash his face."

"What's the row here?" said Ed Church, walking straight to the little huddle about Fan Brown. His tones were brittle and bold; a note of ready war ran through them. Not at all the voice in which he talked to Lide. "I understand somebody's lookin' for me. Who is it?"

"It's me, by G—d! You killed my dog last summer, and I'm goin'——"

"No, you ain't," said Ed, interrupting; "you ain't goin' to do a thing. You may be the bully of Hinckley, Fan Brown, but you can't scare me. Your dog was killin' sheep; he was a good deal like you; but bein' a dog I could shoot him."

"Yes, and I ain't goin' back to Hinckley until I maul you so you won't shoot another dog as long as you live."

"Enough said!" replied Ed, "come right down in the hollow back of the horse sheds, where the folks won't see, and do it."

Just then a small, meagre man approached. He walked with a lounging gait, and when he spoke he had a thin, mealy voice.

"What's the matter here?" piped the meagre little man.

His name was Dick Bond. He was renowned widely as a wrestler. Gladiators had come from far and near, and at town meetings and barn raisings, wrestled with little Dick Bond. Where a hundred tried not one succeeded.

He had not lost a "fall" for four years. His skill had given birth to a half proverb, and when somebody said he would do something, and somebody else doubted it, the latter would observe with laughing scorn: "Yes; you'll do it when somebody throws Dick Bond."

Such was the fell repute of this invincible little man that when his shrill, light voice made the inquiry chronicled, a silence fell on the crowd and no one answered.

"Who's goin' to fight?" asked Dick Bond more pointedly.

"I'm goin' to fight Fan Brown," said Ed.

There was a load of ferocity in the way he said it, which showed that Ed, himself, had a latent hunger for battle.

"I guess I'll go 'long and see it," said Dick Bond pipingly.



"IT DIDN'T LAST TEN MINUTES."—Page 309.

“How do you want to fight?” asked Ed of Fan Brown when each had buttoned up his coat tight to the chin. “Stand up, or rough and tumble?”

“Rough and tumble,” said Fan Brown savagely.

“All right!”

“Now, boys,” said Dick Bond when all was ready, “I’ll give the word and then you’re goin’ to fight until one of you says ‘enough.’ And remember! there’s no bitin’ no gougin’, no scratchin’.”

“Bitin’ goes?” declared Fan Brown, in a fashion of savage interrogatory.

“Bitin’ don’t go!” replied the lean little referee, “and if you offer to bite or gouge, Fan Brown, I’ll break your neck. You’ll never go back to Hinckley short of being carried in a blanket.”

The battle was brief and bloody. It didn’t last ten minutes. When it was over, Ed Church, bleeding, but victorious, walked back to the sheds to get Grey Eagle. Fan Brown was unable to rise from the snow without help. His face was beaten badly, and he was a thoroughly whipped person. Dick Bond expressed great satisfaction, and in his high voice said it was a splendid fight.

“But, Brown,” said Dick Bond to the beaten one, “I can’t see how you got it into your head you could lick Ed Church. Why, man! he was all over you like a panther.”

The news of the fight ran like wildfire. Everybody knew of it before an hour passed. It was a source of general satisfaction that Ed Church had whipped Fan Brown, the Hinckley bully, yet no one failed to stamp the whole proceeding as disgraceful; that is, among the older men at least.

Lide, however, when she heard of the valour of her lover felt a great tenderness for him, and was never kinder than when they drove Grey Eagle back from the Block schoolhouse spelling-bee that crisp winter night.

V

JIM LEE INTERFERES

"MOTHER," sobbed Lide, as she threw herself down on the chintz lounge without pausing to take off her hat or cape, "father has just told Ed never to come to the house nor speak to me again."

Jim Lee and Aunt Ann got home before the lovers. The news of the broil overtook them, however. Jim Lee declared it a scandal and a scorn.

"Now you see," he said to Aunt Ann, "what sort of ruffian the Church boy is!"

"Well, I'm glad he whipped that miserable Fan Brown," said Aunt Ann. "He's done nothin' for ten years but come over here to Stowe Township and raise a fuss. I'm glad somebody's at last spunked up and thrashed him. I'd done it years ago if I had been a man."

"Aunt Ann Lee!" said Jim Lee, hitting the Morgan colt a blow with the whip which set that sprightly animal almost astride the thills—"Aunt Ann, do you tell me you approve of Ed Church lickin' Fan Brown?"

"Yes, I do," retorted Aunt Ann, stoutly, "and so will Lide. If you imagine, father, a woman finds fault with a man because he'll fight other men you don't know the sex."

Jim Lee moaned. Absolutely! for the first time in

his life Aunt Ann had shocked him. Not another word was spoken by Jim Lee all the way home.

Aunt Ann went into the house when they arrived, while Jim Lee remained to put up the Morgan colt. He was busy in the barn when Ed and Lide drove into the yard.

"Father came up to Ed," sobbed Lide, as she lay on the lounge, "and called him a brawler and a drunkard, and said he'd got to keep away from me."

"What did Ed say?" asked Aunt Ann, as she sat down by her daughter and began, with kind hands, to take off her hat and cape. Every touch was full of motherly love and tenderness.

"Oh! Ed didn't say much," said Lide, giving way to long-drawn sighs; a fashion of dead swell following the storm of sobs. "He said he'd marry me whether father was willing or not. Then he drove away."

Aunt Ann smiled.

"I guess Ed Church is pretty high strung," said Aunt Ann, "but that won't hurt him any."

Jim Lee came in at that moment, looking a bit sheepish and guilty; but over it all an atmosphere of victory.

"That Church boy will stay away now, I guess!" said Jim Lee, as he got the bootjack and began pulling off his boots.

"Jim Lee, you're an awful fool!" observed Aunt Ann with the air of a sibyl settling all things. "You're the biggest numbskull in Stowe Township!"

"Why?" asked Jim Lee.

He was disturbed because Aunt Ann addressed him by his full name. Experience had taught him that defeat ever followed hard on the heels of his full name, when Aunt Ann made use of it.

"Never mind why!" said Aunt Ann.
And not another word could Jim Lee get from her.

VI

THEY DECORATE

IT was a month after the spelling-school. Stowe Township was decorating the Church for Christmas. For time out of mind Stowe Township had had a Christmas tree at the Church, and everybody, rich or poor, high or low, young or old, great or small, got a present if it were nothing but a gauze stocking full of painted popcorn.

Aunt Ann, as usual, was at the head of the decorating committee. The Church was full of long strings of evergreen, which Aunt Ann's satellites were festooning about the walls, and to that end there was much climbing of step-ladders, much standing on tip-toe, much pounding of thumbs with caitiff tack-hammers, vilely wielded by girlish hands. Occasionally some fair step-ladder maid gave the public a glimpse of a well-filled woollen stocking as she went up and down, or stood on her toes on the top step. At this, the young men present always blushed, while the maidens tittered. Most people don't know it, but the male of our species is more modest, more easily embarrassed, than the female.

The Christmas tree had just arrived. It had been contributed by "Square" Chanler. The tree was a noble hemlock; thick and feathery of bough, perfect of general outline. Old Curl, the Rip Van Winkle of Stowe, had cut it down and hauled it to the church on "Square" Chanler's bob-sleds. All the smallfry of the

Corners had gone with Old Curl after the Christmas tree, and were faithful to him to the last. Every one of them was clamorously forward in unloading the tree and getting it into the Church.

Then it was taken charge of by Aunt Ann, who put the small fry to flight. They were to be beneficiaries of the tree, and it was held that their joy would be enhanced if they were not allowed to remain while the tree was decorated, and were debarred all sight thereof until Christmas Eve, when the presents would be cut from the boughs and bestowed upon their owners.

One little boy had a cold, and Aunt Ann let him remain in the Church. This little boy perched himself in a window where his fellows outside might see and envy him. There was a three-cornered hole in the window pane near him, and the little boy was wont every few moments to place his mouth to this crevice and say to the boys outside :

“ My! but you ought to see what Aunt Ann’s tyin’ on the tree now ! ”

“ What is it ? ” would chorus the outside boys.

“ Can’t tell you ! ”

The boy with the cold became the most unpopular child in Stowe Township, and several of his fellows outside in their agony threatened him with personal violence.

“ I’ll lick you when I ketch you ! ” shouted children in the rabble rout to the lucky child with the cold.

“ I don’t care ! ” said the child inside, “ you just ought to see the tree now ! ”

Lide Lee was aiding the others to festoon the church. Under the maternal direction she was fitting tawdry little wax candles among the branches of the

Christmas tree, and tying on Barlow knives for all the little boys, and "Housewives" for all the little girls.

Lide had not seen Ed save once since the spelling-school, and then she met him in the village drug-store by chance. But they wrote to each other, and some progress in this way had been made toward an elopement which was scheduled for the coming Spring. Aunt Ann in the depths of her sagacity, suspected the arrangement, but it gave her no alarm. As for Jim Lee, so fatuous was he that he believed he had ended all ties between his daughter and Ed Church.

While decorations were in progress in the church, Jim Lee suddenly drove up.

"Aunt Ann," said Jim Lee, after pausing to admire the garish display, "Aunt Ann, I've just got a line from Ludlow, and there's goin' to be a special meetin' of the board of directors of our Ice Company, and I've got to mosey into the city."

Jim Lee had an air of importance. He liked to appear before Aunt Ann in the attitude of a much-sought-for man of business.

"Pshaw! father, that's too bad!" said Aunt Ann. "Can't you be back by Christmas Eve?"

"No; Christmas Eve is only day after to-morrow, and the Ice Company business ought to last a week, so Ludlow says."

"Well!" said Aunt Ann, "if you must go, you must. Ezra can do most of the chores while you're away, and I'll have Old Curl come and do the heaviest of 'em."

So Jim Lee kissed Aunt Ann, and then kissed Lide. This latter caress was a trifle strained, for Jim Lee felt guilty when he looked at his daughter; and Lide

hadn't half forgiven him his actions toward her idolised Ed. Since Ed had been forbidden her society, Lide loved him much better than before.

Thus started Jim Lee for the city on Ice Company matters, Tuesday afternoon. Christmas Eve was the following Thursday. Jim Lee would return on the Monday or Tuesday after. He was fated to find some startling changes on his coming back.

VII

AUNT ANN PLOTS

AUNT ANN found much to occupy her during the hours before Christmas Eve. There were forty-eight of these hours. Aunt Ann needed them all.

For one matter she made Ezra drive her over to the County Seat. She wanted to see her brother, Will Pickering, who was Probate Judge of the County. Aunt Ann also dispatched a letter by trusty messenger to her sister, Mary Newton, who lived at Eastern Crossroads, some seven miles from Stowe. As a last assignment, Aunt Ann told Ezra to go over and ask Ed to come up to the house.

"You'll be at the Christmas tree at the church tonight, won't you, Ed?" asked Aunt Ann, after making some excuse for sending for him. She put the question quite casually.

"Well! be sure and come, Ed," said Aunt Ann. "And more'n that, be sure and dress yourself up. I think I'll need you to help me get things off the high limbs."

With Ed Church's going, Aunt Ann sank back in her

Aunt Ann, as she led Lide to his side. "Now, Brother Crandall, if you will perform the ceremony—the short form, please, and leave out the word 'obey'—the distribution will be complete."

"But the licence!" gasped the Rev. Crandall.

"There it is," said Aunt Ann, "with my brother Will's seal and signature as Probate Judge on it. You don't s'pose I had Ezra drive me clear to the County Seat in the dead of winter for nothing?"

The ceremony was over. Ed and Lide were "Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Church;" and the entire population of Stowe, some in tears, all in earnest, were kissing the bride and shaking hearty hands with the groom. That latter young gentleman was dazed and happy, and looked both.

"Now, Ed," said Aunt Ann, after kissing him and then kissing Lide, "I'm your mother; and I'll begin to tell you what to do. You put Lide in your cutter and head Grey Eagle for Eastern Cross-roads. I sent Mary word you were coming, and there's a trunk full of Lide's things gone over. Stay a week. If you need collars, or shirts or anything, Mary will give you some of John's. Stay a week and then come home. Father will be back from the Ice Company Tuesday, and by Thursday of next week, when you return, I'll have him fully convinced that all is ordered for the best, and whatever is, is right. So kiss your mother again, children, and start. I hear Grey Eagle's bells a-jingling, where Dick Bond's brought him to the door."

THE END

