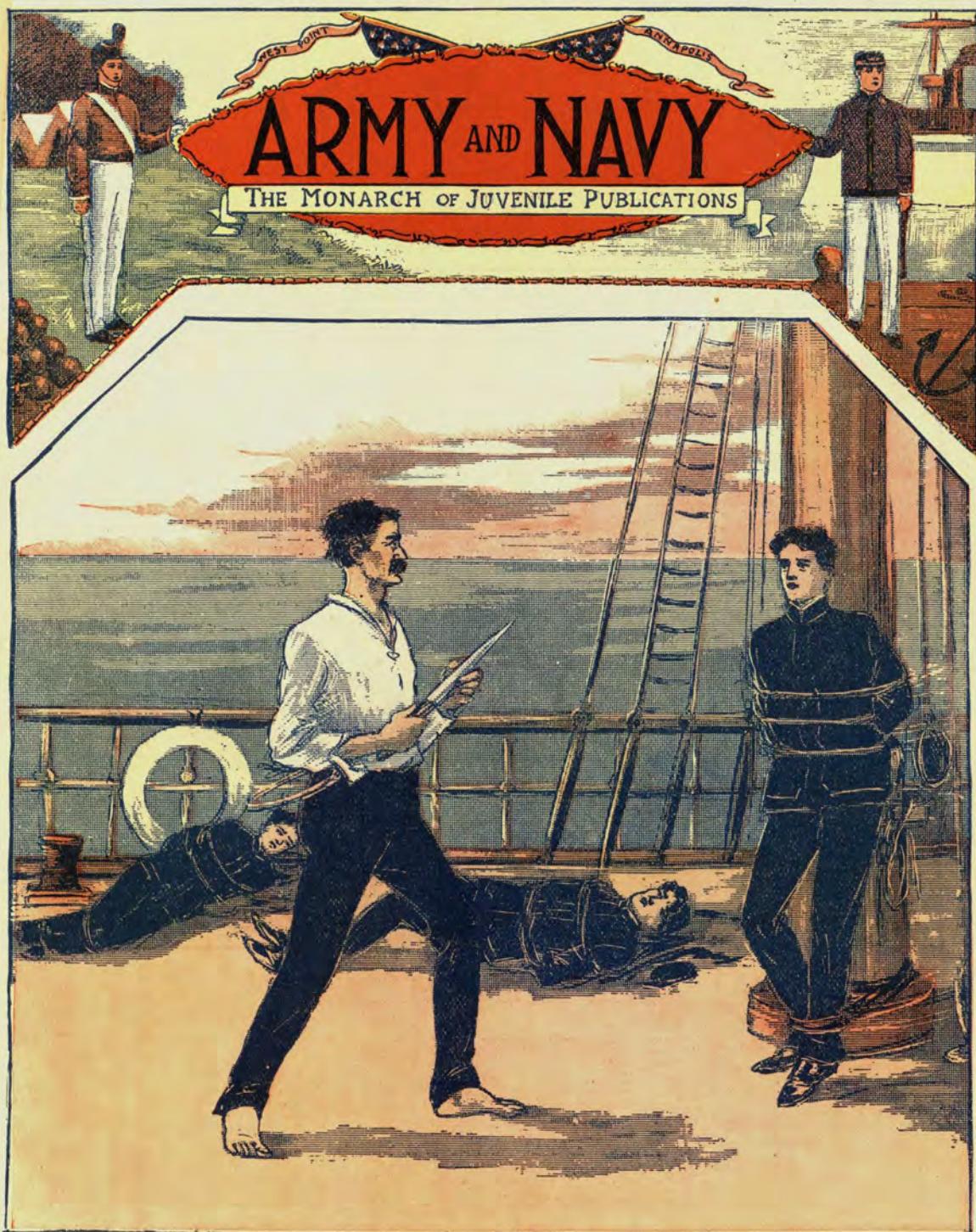


Nº 33

Two Thrilling Cadet Stories
of Adventure afloat and ashore
complete in this number.

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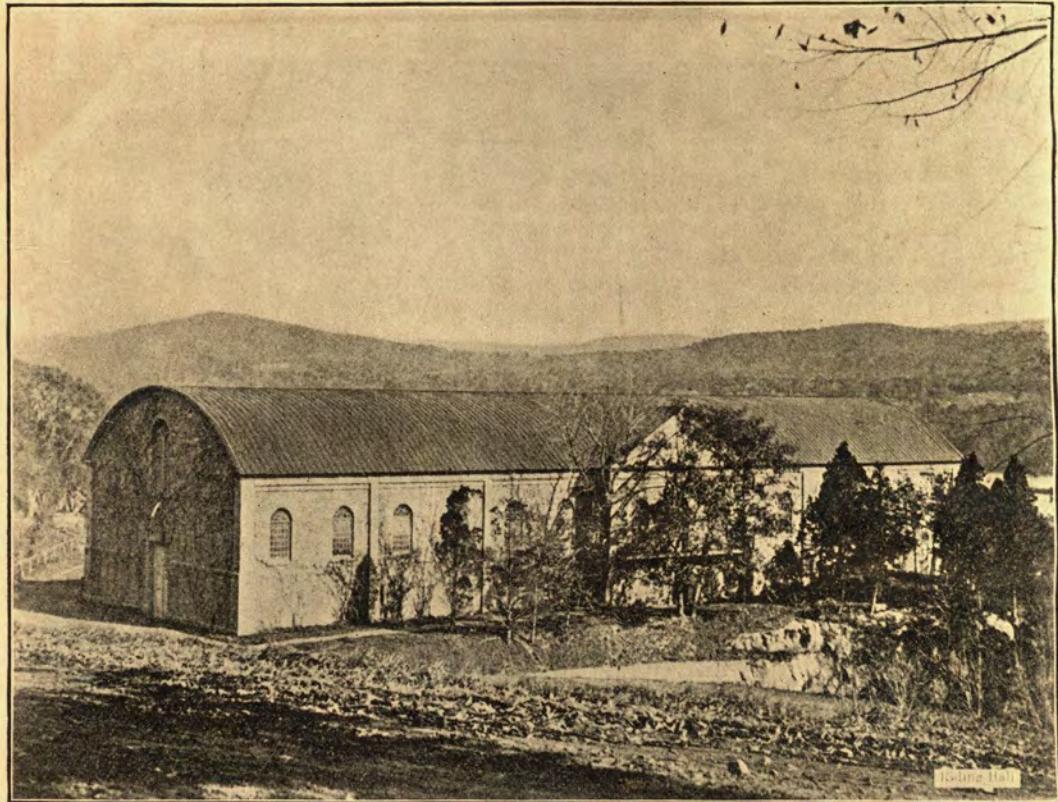


"We will settle that question once for all, Faraday," exclaimed the crazy lieutenant.
("A Strange Cruise ; or, Clif Faraday's Last Resort" by Ensign Clarke Fitch, U. S. N. Complete in this number)

Vol. 1 }
No. 33 }

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ARMY AND NAVY.

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CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER:

	PAGE.
A Strange Cruise (Complete story), Ensign Clarke Fitch, U. S. N.	1538
Mark Mallory's Cleverness (Complete story), Lieut. Fredenck Garrison, U. S. A.	1551
Dick Hammond's Leap (Illustrated Short Story) S. W. Bell	1563
The Treasure of Isora (Serial) Brooks McCormick	1566
A Young Breadwinner (Serial) Matthew White, Jr.	1571
A Diamond in the Rough (Serial), Arthur Lee Putnam	1575
The Cryptogram (Serial), William Murray Graydon	1579
Editorial Chat	Department 1582
Amateur Journalism	Department 1583
Letters from Prize Winners	1583

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

COMMENCING with number thirty-four, out next week, the name of this publication will be changed. It will be called THE HALF-HOLIDAY. See Editorial Chat in this number for full details. * * * *



A STRANGE CRUISE;

or,
Clif Faraday's Last Resort.

By Ensign Clarke Fitch, U. S. N.

CHAPTER I.

A JOKE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

"By Jake! that must be a whopper!"

"Dismal" Joy awoke with a start and eagerly peered over the rail of the schooner yacht Fleetwing. He held grasped in both hands a stout fishing line and, from the peculiar downward jerk of the cord, it was evident he "had a bite."

"What's the matter, chum?" called a voice from the other side of the deck.

"Come here, Clif. Quick! I've got the fish of my life. Whew! it's a whale at the very least. Quick!"

Clif Faraday, looking very cool and contented in his white uniform, sauntered lazily across the deck. There was an amused smile upon his handsome face.

"Don't have a spasm, chum," he drawled. "There are as good fish in the sea—"

"Confound your quotations," interrupted Joy, excitedly. "Lend me a hand, will you! Quick, catch hold here."

Just then there came an extra tug and the line whizzed through his fingers. He caught the end just in time, and hastily belayed it to the rail. Turning an appealing face to his companion, he cried reproachfully:

"If you don't help me, Clif, I'll never forgive you. Here I have been fishing for

two mortal hours and this is the first sign of a bite. Give me a hand, chum."

Clif, unnoticed by Joy, tapped upon the deck with the heel of his boot, then he went to the anxious fisherman's assistance.

"Now a long pull and a strong pull," he exclaimed. "Yo, yo! yo ho-o! Heave ho-o-o! Up she comes."

And up "she" did come with a suddenness that sent Joy tumbling backward to the deck. Clif, strange to say, escaped the fall.

When "Dismal" Joy sat up, ruefully rubbing his head, his gaze lighted upon the fish.

And what a fish!

It was not three inches long—in fact, a common ordinary everyday fresh water smelt!

"Wh-wh-what's th-that?" he stammered, his eyes almost starting from their sockets.

"Ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! that's your—your whale!" gasped Clif, leaning against the railing and holding his sides. "You've caught the very one that swallowed Jonah! Ha-a! ha!"

The steersman at the wheel was so convulsed with laughter that he almost brought the yacht aback.

Ensign Dudley, who had the deck, was also highly amused at the scene, and in his enjoyment he forgot to rebuke the

two naval cadets for their unseemly breach of discipline in making a "circus" within the sacred precincts of the quarter deck.

"Dismal" Joy rose to his feet in a rage. It is not altogether pleasant for one to find that he has been made the victim of a practical joke. There is something in the jeering laugh which follows such a perpetration that jangles the chords of a man's good nature.

And Joy's "chords" were very badly jangled just then. Otherwise he would not have been wrothy against Clif Faraday, his steadfast chum, and the lad he admired and revered more than any other on earth.

It was an innocent joke Clif had played. He had watched Joy dozing peacefully with the motionless line in his hand for some time, and he thought it would be a pity to see him go unrewarded.

A sly tip to the sailor acting as cabin steward had caused that individual to fasten a smelt brought from shore the previous day to Joy's hook, the line of which dangled temptingly near one of the after cabin deadlights.

And now Dismal was hopping mad!

"You may think that was a very clever trick, Faraday," he snorted, doubling his fists. "But I want you to understand that I'll not let any person make a fool of me."

"It was only a joke, chum," expostulated Clif, soothingly.

"Joke be hanged. By Jake! I won't have it," sputtered the enraged lad, advancing with clinched fists extended.

Clif stared at him in amazement. Was it possible he meant to fight? Could this be the mild, easy-going, good-natured Joy?

"Why, chum," he began, then he sprang lightly to one side.

The lanky cadet had aimed a blow at him!

After that events took place rapidly. Ensign Dudley had gone forward to give

an order, and the quarter deck was clear with the exception of the man at the wheel, who had no intention of interfering in such an affair between two naval cadets.

Clif lost little time in making up his mind. He was not the least bit angered at Joy's action. He knew that the lad was beside himself with rage, and that if given time he would recover.

"I'll play him out and let him cool down," he muttered as he dodged another blow.

Watching his chance he gave an agile spring and threw both of his sinewy arms about Joy's body. Then step by step he forced him back against the cabin companionway.

The lanky plebe was strong, but he was no match for Clif. The latter's muscle's, hardened by constant athletic exercise, allowed him to hold Joy despite his furious struggles.

"Steady, chum, steady," said Clif, smilingly. "This isn't like you. Why, Joy, would you strike me, your old friend and shipmate, because of an innocent joke. Just think it over, that's a good fellow."

"By Jake! you hadn't any right to play a trick on me, Clif," expostulated Joy, showing signs of yielding. "I don't like to be laughed at any more than you."

"I am sorry, chum. I didn't think you would mind. Forget it, and let us be friends again, will you?"

Joy was just on the point of replying in the affirmative, when the companion door was thrown violently open and a tall, dark man in the uniform of a naval lieutenant bounded on deck.

"What is all this row up here?" he demanded, harshly. "How dare you boys turn the quarterdeck into a playground? I won't have it, and if you do it again I'll put you on the report."

He glared at the amazed cadets for a

moment, then passed one hand wearily across his forehead and added in a softer tone:

"I can't sleep below, boys. It is so hot and the beat of the waves against the side plays such a mournful tune that I must listen."

With that he turned and slowly descended the companion ladder to the cabin.

Clif and Joy exchanged glances. There was a thoughtful look in the former's eyes, and a certain compression of the lips that denoted concentration of interest.

The joke and its unpleasant result had passed entirely from the minds of both cadets. They were firm friends again.

"Well, what do you think of that?" exploded Joy. "Did you ever see him so cranky?"

"He certainly acts peculiar," was Clif's rather evasive reply.

"Lieutenant Cole wasn't that kind of a man on board the Monongahela. He was never harsh like some of the officers. It's funny he should change since he took command of the prize crew on this yacht. I say, Clif!"

"Yes?"

Joy leaned over and whispered:

"Do you think his head is swelled?"

Faraday smiled, but it was faint and indicative of worry.

"No, chum," he replied, gravely. "Lieutenant Cole is not that kind of a man. I can't understand his actions any more than you. It seems to me——" He paused and glanced absently over the rail at the great stretch of calm blue sea shimmering under the rays of the August sun.

"It seems to you what?" asked Joy.

"You remember the accident he had the day we left the Delaware breakwater where we put in to escape the storm?"

"When he slipped from the gangway ladder and struck on his head?"

"Yes."

"It wasn't much of an accident, although he did almost crack his skull. What about it?"

"It was a pretty serious fall, more serious than you think. Ensign Dudley told me they worked over him two hours before they brought him around. The ensign and Blakely, the first classman,

almost decided to put back into Lewes, but Lieutenant Cole came to and forbade them."

"Then you think the accident has something to do with his queer actions?"

"I don't think anything, chum, but we might as well keep our eyes open until we reach Norfolk. It won't do any harm."

CHAPTER II.

THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE PEAVILLE BUGLE.

"Your friend Joy keeps up a deuce of a correspondence, Faraday," said Cadet Captain Blakely, the same afternoon, indicating with his thumb the lanky plebe who was seated cross-legged upon the Fleetwing's forecastle and writing for dear life.

Scattered about him on the clean white deck were a number of sheets of paper closely covered with writing.

From the tense expression upon the scribbler's face and the drawn lines about his eyes he was having heavy weather of it, to use a nautical phrase.

"Joy is a special correspondent of the Peaville Bugle, his town paper," smiled Clif. "He lives in Nebraska, you know, which is a mighty fine state, even if it is somewhat rural."

"A correspondent, eh? What in thunder does he find to write about?" yawned the cadet captain, wearily stretching his arms. "There's not enough action in this life to interest a mummy."

"Oh, I don't know. We had it pretty lively the other day when we captured this yacht from the mutineers. But suppose we get Dismal to read us a few extracts from his special article."

"I'll go you."

"I say, Joy," called out Clif, approaching the lanky plebe, "how is the letter? Pouring hot shot into Peaville?"

Joy glanced up and sighed. He eyed Faraday doubtfully for a moment, then resumed his writing, without vouchsafing a reply.

"He's suspicious," grinned Blakely. "He hasn't forgotten that whale he caught to-day."

Clif sat down cross-legged fashion and coolly picked up one of the sheets. It

happened to be the beginning of the article, and he read aloud:

"A TRAGEDY AT SEA!!

Blood, Murder and Death!

HUMAN PASSIONS LET LOOSE!

The Most Diabolical Crime of the Century!

A MUTINY NIPPED IN THE BUD!"

"Wow!" chuckled Blakely, striking an attitude. "Talk of your yellow journalism. The Peaville Bugle will be red hot. Go on, Clif."

But the latter found it necessary to get up and sprint to escape the avenging hand of Joy. He snatched several sheets of paper as he ran, however, and perching himself in the port forerigging, prepared to continue the reading.

Blakely and several other cadets, a half dozen of whom were in the prize crew taking the Fleetwing to Norfolk, held Joy while Faraday read:

"Norfolk, Va., August 12th, 18—.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

"We are enabled to give our readers this morning a vivid and realistic description of a recent terrible crime at sea, a crime which has been all too common in the nautical history of the nations. While the good ship Monongahela, the United States Naval Academy practice cruiser, was bowling long under all sail and in the midst of bright skies and sparkling seas—"

"Skip that," chuckled Blakely. "We've had it for breakfast, dinner and supper ever since we sailed."

"If you don't stop, Clif Faraday, I'll have your life," howled Joy.

"Nice threat for a boy of your peaceable disposition," laughed Clif. Then he resumed:

"While all was quiet and serene with never a thought of possible excitement, the keen-eyed lookout in the foretopmast crosstrees called out in stentorian tones, 'Sail O!' To make the story short—"

"Thank goodness for that!" exclaimed Blakely.

"—the sail was found to be a fine schooner yacht. She was steering a southerly course, but shortly after being

sighted those on board tried to put about. The lubberly way in which the yacht was handled excited the curiosity of the Monongahela's commander and he ordered her to lay to. When within hailing distance—"

"The middle of this remarkable document is missing," announced Clif. "I have the end here. It must be very grand, and I'll read it. Hold Joy, fellows, he's foaming at the mouth."

"The death of the arch mutineer, Mike Kerrigan, was the signal for the surrender of his mates and Lieutenant Cole's party found themselves in possession of the Fleetwing. The prisoners were sent to the Monongahela and a prize crew, consisting of Lieutenant Cole, Ensign Dudley, Cadet Captain Blakely, Cadets Faraday, Joy (the latter our special correspondent. In passing it is well to say that Cadet Joy is a native of Peaville, and one of whom the good citizens of this city may well be proud.)—"

A groan came from the spectators and many reproachful glances were given the unhappy "special correspondent."

"To think that one so young should develop such enormous gall," murmured Blakely. "Joy, Joy, I see your finish."

"He winds up with a glowing description of the storm and tells how we were compelled to put into Lewes, Delaware for shelter," laughed Clif. "Then after saying we left there day before yesterday bound for Norfolk, he tells some more good things of himself. Isn't he a corker? Wow! I vote we recommend him to the Secretary of the Navy for the position of Chief Naval Blower and Fake Writer. Just listen to this, will you? It's a poem about the same incident. He calls it 'The Chase of the Fleetwing,' and goes on:

'The day it was hot and bright.—

High circled the gulls from their feast.
Ho,' cries the lookout, 'a sail in sight
Steering south-east by east.' "

"That's not true," spoke up a fat little cadet named Podge. "I took her bearings and she was steering south-west half west. She—"

"Get out, you are way off," interrupted a sallow-faced youth from Oregon. "I had her dead when we first ran her above

the horizon. She was steering south-south-east as straight as a die."

"She wasn't," shrieked Podge excitedly. "I guess I know how to take a bearing. I've got ten dollars that says—"

"That you are short in brains," contemptuously added the Oregonian. "If you bet that way you'll win. You don't know any more about taking bearings than a sea cow does of a milking stool."

"I don't, hey? I'll show you."

And the next second Podge was thumping away at his tormentor's breast with an energy that sent the astounded lad reeling backward.

"Here, you children," drawled Blakely, "if you don't stop I'll have you spanked and put to bed."

"Shi-li-h! here comes the lieutenant," exclaimed one of the cadets warningly.

The fighting ceased at once, and the occupants of the forecastle stood at attention. Clif slipped down to the deck and joined the others.

Lieutenant Cole, looking ill and worried, slowly advanced and passed to the bow. Leaning over the railing he stared absently at the water.

Suddenly there came a blowing sound and a huge porpoise leaped its full length above the surface falling backward with a loud splash.

The lieutenant staggered as if shot. His face blanched to the color of paper, and he cried aloud as if with mortal fear. Then to the amazement of the spectators he turned and ran swiftly aft, disappearing in the cabin.

"What in the deuce is the matter with him?" gasped Podge.

"What struck him," exclaimed Joy. "By Jake! he—"

"No criticism, sir," interrupted Blakely stiffly. "Remember, he is your superior officer."

The cadet captain walked away and, as he did so, he made a sign to Clif. The latter waited a moment, then he strolled after him.

"Did you wish to speak to me?" he asked.

Blakely made no answer at first, but glanced thoughtfully at a distant sail visible off the port beam.

"I don't know whether I ought to talk about this affair or not, Faraday," he

said finally. "But I feel that it is too serious to let pass."

"You mean the lieutenant?"

"Yes. What have you noticed?"

Clif hesitated. He felt rather averse to discussing such a subject even with Blakely. Discipline hedges in a naval officer as royalty does a king. Still, being asked his opinion, he realized that it would be well to answer. It was a distinct compliment to be consulted by a first class cadet, a captain too.

"I'll tell you just what I know and think," he replied frankly. "I have noticed that Lieutenant Cole has been acting peculiarly since yesterday morning and I believe there is something wrong with him. It is a serious thing to say but—"

"There he is now," hastily interrupted Blakely. "He's walking toward the man at the wheel. He—great Scott! he has shoved him away and grasped the spokes himself. Quick, Faraday, let's see what is the matter!"

CHAPTER III.

STARK, STARING MAD.

The two cadets hurried to the quarter-deck, reaching it just as Ensign Dudley, who was on watch, noticed the disturbance.

By that time Lieutenant Cole had thrown the wheel over causing the two large fore-and-aft sails to "slat" violently. Another moment and the Fleetwing would be aback.

The ensign seemed stupefied with amazement. He made no effort to interfere, but stood and stared at his superior officer as if scarcely believing the evidence of his eyes.

Matters were in this condition and the lean graceful hull of the yacht was lurching about when suddenly a lithe figure leaped to the lieutenant's side and wrenched the wheel from his grasp.

Over went the spokes just as a puff of wind came from off the quarter. The great spread of canvas filled again and the Fleetwing sped away on her course safe and sound.

Just as Clif—for it was he who had sprang forward so opportunely—was inwardly congratulating himself, he felt his

arm grasped roughly, and a voice choking with rage, cried:

"What do you mean, you—you miserable whelp? How dare you interfere with me in the lawful discharge of my duties? I'll have you court-martialed and hanged to the yardarm for mutiny before morning."

Thrust close to his face was that of the lieutenant's fairly convulsed with fury. The eyes were blazing and the lips curled back from the teeth in a fiendish grin. Clif, despite his courage, shrank back in sudden fear.

"I thought the rudder had gotten away from you, sir?" he stammered.

"You lie! You are trying to take the command from me," almost shrieked the officer, menacing Clif with his clinched fist. "I'll make an example of you for the fleet."

He glared about and beckoned to Ensign Dudley.

"Take this mutineer and put him in irons at once," he added. "And you, Mr. Blakely, fetch my revolvers from the cabin. There is a conspiracy to seize the yacht. By Heaven! I'll thwart it if I have to kill every man on board. This dog of a steersman was quietly putting the yacht on a wrong course when I caught him. Our direction is due east."

This last remark settled the question in the minds of his hearers. Due east meant the broad Atlantic. The lieutenant was stark, staring mad!

Such is the effect of discipline, however, that none cared to resort to extreme measures. Ensign Dudley, who was not the brightest officer and the most clever in an emergency, glanced helplessly at Blakely.

"For God's sake! what shall we do?" he whispered.

"We must get him below, sir," was the hurried response. "He is temporarily out of his head and he must be placed under guard."

The commotion had attracted the attention of the entire crew, and the naval cadets and sailors were crowding aft. Joy, who had been absorbed in his writing, was the last to reach the scene.

Forcing his way past his shipmates, he hastened to Clif's side.

"Do you need me, chum?" he asked in a loud whisper.

Before Faraday could reply, Lieutenant Cole made a sudden spring and ran swiftly toward the companionway leading to the cabin.

"Stop him!" called out Blakely hurrying in pursuit. "Don't let him—confound it! he's down the steps."

"He is after his revolver," cried Clif. "We must close the companionway."

All was confusion. It had spread from one to the other that Lieutenant Cole was mad, and that he had threatened to kill the entire crew. Everyone turned instinctively to Ensign Dudley, but one glance at his pale, frightened face was enough.

"Blakely, you'll have to take charge," hurriedly said Clif. "We can't depend on Dudley."

The cadet captain was a youth of extraordinary intelligence and quick perception. He realized that Clif's words were true, and he did not hesitate to act.

"You see that the door is closed and I'll consult with the ensign," he replied. The last was a final flicker of the fire of discipline.

Clif and Joy both raced to the companionway. Just as they gained it a head showed above the level of the top step. Then a revolver flashed in the sun's rays, and a sharp report rang out.

Simultaneous with the latter came a bang. It was caused by the violent slamming of the door. Clif had acted barely in time.

Eager hands brought coils of rope, chests and other articles. These were piled haphazard and a barricade soon rose about the companionway.

"Quick work, Faraday," said Blakely, hurrying up. "We have him caged for the time being anyway. We must run this alone. Ensign Dudley has collapsed."

"I thought as much," was Clif's brief response. "You have a heavy responsibility on your shoulders, and I don't envy you."

"We are a considerable distance from any port and if the wind fails us we'll find ourselves in a pretty pickle with a maniac armed with a revolver in charge below."

"We may sight a passing steamer," suggested Joy.

"Small chance out here. No, our only hope is in making port. Whether we will or not will depend on circumstances."

"Such as fire and scuttling and other pleasant things," said Clif significantly.

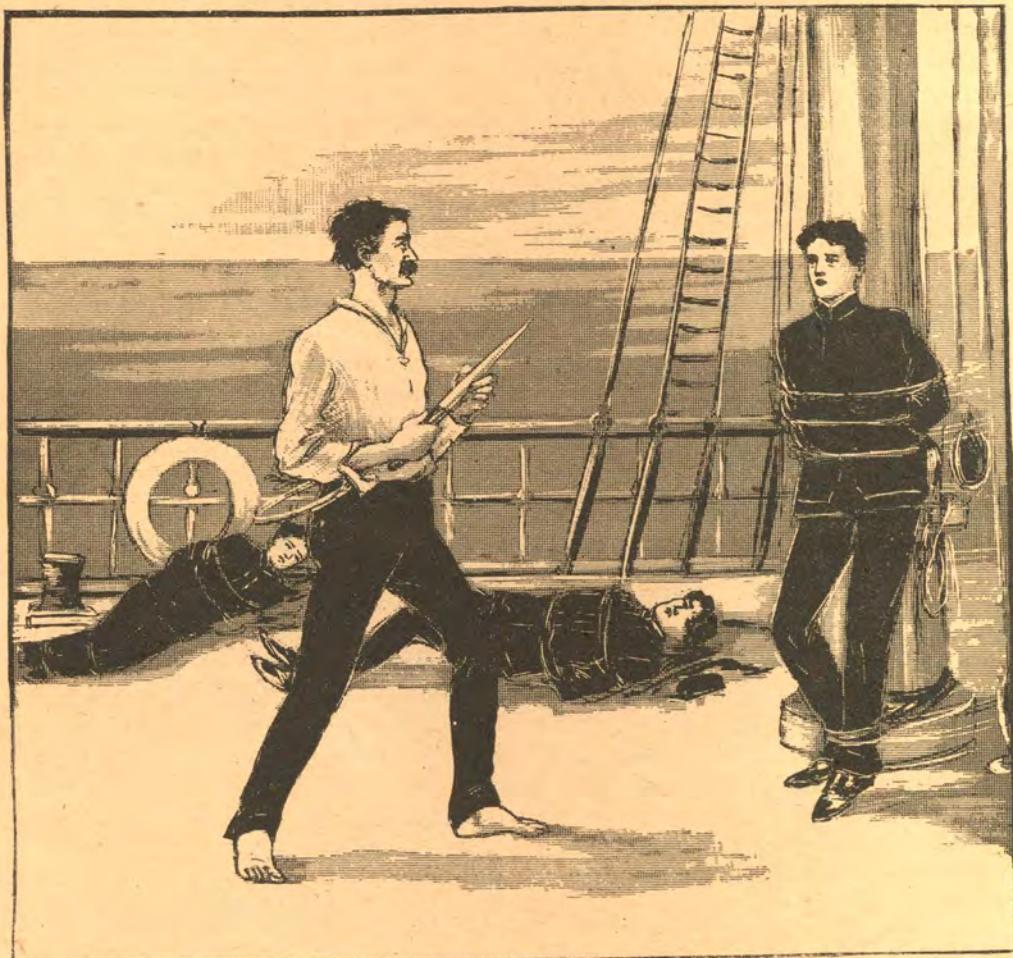
The grave expression on the cadet captain's face deepened. He was beginning to realize the responsibility resting upon him.

"That's one thing I haven't thought

"I thought I saw him peering through the glass," he explained as he rejoined Blakely and Clif.

There was silence for a moment. Ensign Dudley approached the group. He had passed through a severe attack of illness while the Monongahela was in Lisbon, and it had left him extremely nervous and weak.

That coupled with the fact that he was not one of the navy's brightest officers partially explained his evident collapse.



"WE WILL SETTLE THAT QUESTION ONCE FOR ALL, FARADAY!" EXCLAIMED THE CRAZY LIEUTENANT (page 1549)

of, Faraday," he said. "The lieutenant may take it into his head to set the yacht on fire or scuttle her. By Jove! I think our safest plan will be to move on him in a body."

Joy quietly edged toward the cabin skylight and tossed a heavy tarpaulin over it. Then together with several other cadets, he placed a thick hawser in layers over the tarpaulin.

"I am a sick man, Mr. Blakely," he said in a trembling voice, "and this terrible affair has upset me completely. I—I can't retain charge of the yacht and I want to turn the command over to you. Will you take it?"

He leaned against the mizzenmast and covered his face with his hands. He remained there trembling and shaking like a man with the ague.

Clif nodded significantly to the cadet captain.

"If you make the request, sir," replied the latter kindly, "I'll accept and do the best I can. Probably it would be well for you to go forward and lie down."

The ensign thought the advice good, and he tottered to the forecastle hatchway. Clif and Blakely watched him disappear below, then they again turned their attention to the problem in hand.

That it was a problem and a very complex one, each understood. The prospects were not very encouraging. With the officer in command a dangerous maniac, and the next in authority absolutely incapacitated it was a dreamy outlook indeed.

Blakely's four years in the Academy had made a very fair sailor of him, and he had no fears on that score.

"It's the fact that we have a dangerous maniac roaming at large below decks that stumps me," he said to Clif and Joy. "I can sail the Fleetwing to Norfolk but I don't know what to do with the lieutenant."

"There is a possibility he will recover," suggested Clif, but rather doubtfully. "He may fall asleep and wake up sane."

"There's little chance of that I'm afraid," sighed Blakely. "It is more probable he will get worse and—"

Crash!

Those standing near the cabin skylight leaped away in alarm. The glass had been smashed from below. A second later the whip-like report of a revolver rang out and a bullet tore through the tarpaulin covering the skylight.

"Let me on deck, you cowardly mutineers!" came faintly in Lieutenant Cole's voice. "Let me on deck, I say. I'll hang every one of you to the masthead. Help! help! Murder! Death! Oh-h-h!"

The words died away in a wail so blood curdling that the faces of the hearers blanched.

"That doesn't sound as if he is recovering," remarked Blakely, grimly.

Clif shook his head.

"No, he is still on the warpath," he replied, in the same tone.

"I say, fellows," suddenly spoke up Joy. "Why can't we try the same game

we did when this yacht was in the hands of Mike Kerrigan and his gang of mutineers? I mean the scheme Clif suggested."

"When a man armed with a revolver was lowered over the side and shot Mike through the dead light?"

"Yes."

"It won't do," replied Blakely decisively. "We can't resort to that except to protect the lives of the crew. No, our only plan it to watch and wait, and to get the Fleetwing to port as soon as possible."

He cast an anxious glance aloft. The yacht was under all sail, but a slight wavering of the leeches indicated a lack of strength to the wind. The speed could not have been more than six knots.

The sky at the horizon was clear, the line being sharply drawn. This was a bad sign, as the forerunner of a steady breeze is a distinct haze on the horizon.

"It'll take thirty-six hours to reach port even if the wind holds as it is," said Blakely. "And from the looks of things, we have every reason to expect a calm."

"It is lucky the lieutenant didn't take refuge in the galley," remarked Joy, in such tones of relief that his companions laughed. "And by that same token I think it is time to pipe mess gear."

"It isn't a bad idea," replied Clif, looking forward to where the half dozen sailors forming the enlisted part of the crew were grouped together. "I believe it will have a good effect if we order the cook to serve supper. It will quiet those fellows anyway. They look ready for a panic."

"Discipline must be maintained, that's true," agreed Blakely. "We'll have something to eat. There's nothing better than a full stomach to make a man contented."

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE HANDS OF THE MANIAC.

During the meal hour nothing of interest occurred. The cook served up a hastily prepared supper which was eaten as hastily. By Blakely's orders a regular guard was established over the cabin companionway and skylight.

The ship's work was carried on as usual; the wheel relieved and sails trimmed at intervals. When darkness fell

lanterns were lighted and placed about the decks. This latter was at Clif's suggestion.

"Darkness has terrors of its own, and we don't want to add to those we have," he said.

The wind died out shortly before eight bells, leaving the Fleetwing tossing restlessly in the trough of a moderate sea.

"I don't like the peculiar silence below, Faraday," said Blakely, meeting Clif near the wheel. "It's ominous."

"Haven't heard anything of him since that time he fired the bullet through the skylight, have we?"

"No, and that's two hours ago. I would give a great deal to know what he is doing. He might have fallen asleep from sheer exhaustion; if so it would be a splendid chance to secure him. By Jove! I believe I'll risk a trip below."

"No, no," objected Clif, hastily. "You must not do it. You are too valuable. If you should be disabled, there's no person left to navigate the yacht. Ensign Dudley is completely knocked out."

"But—"

"I will go myself," persisted the handsome young cadet. "It is absolutely necessary for us to find out what he is doing. As you say, he may be sleeping, and we could overpower him. I'll try it."

"No, I can't allow that. If any one goes—"

"We are losing time, Blakely. Just consider the matter settled."

"I am your superior officer, Faraday," said the cadet captain with a smile. "Suppose I order you to remain on deck?"

"Then I will do it. But I hardly think you will go to that length."

"No. I guess you are right. It is necessary to know what Lieutenant Cole is doing. You are a brave fellow, Faraday, and I'll see that your action is remembered. I would a thousand times rather take the risk myself, but I see why it is not right under the circumstances. Have you any plan?"

"I think I'll try the skylight," replied Clif. "If he is watching he'd naturally remain near the companion ladder. Come; we'll get Joy to help us."

The lanky plebe was soon found, and

preparations were made for Clif's perilous trip. Everything was done quietly and the crew remained ignorant of what was in progress.

The task of removing a corner of the tarpaulin covering the skylight was much like tampering with a powder magazine to the three cadets.

The work was done expeditiously and in silence, then the skylight itself was opened sufficiently to admit of the passage of Clif's body.

The three cadets peered down into the blackness below with their hearts beating more rapidly than usual. What was lurking there? Would the daring lad fall into the arms of the maniac? Would he be received with knife or pistol and meet his death in that grim interior?

It was a desperate risk the lad was taking, and none realized it more than he. There was no hesitation in his bearing as he prepared to make the drop, however.

By Blakely's advice he had armed himself with two heavy belaying pins. One he carried attached by a bit of rope yarn to his wrist, the other thrust into his belt.

He shook hands silently with Joy and Blakely, and, after a final glance into the black interior below cautiously lowered himself through the narrow opening.

Clif knew he would find the cabin table directly beneath and within easy reach, but he could not tell whether his feet would land upon crockery or a clear space.

Therefore it was with a sigh of relief that he found himself crouching lightly upon the level surface of the table when he had finally released his clutch upon the skylight frame.

He remained motionless as a statue and tried his utmost to pierce the intense darkness of the apartment. It was a futile effort. Stygian gloom was nothing in comparison.

The arrangement of the Fleetwing's cabin was familiar to Clif. He knew that opening from the dining-room, in which he now stood, were half a dozen doors, some leading into spare staterooms, one into the steward's pantry, another into the owner's private apartment—a spacious room aft extending the entire width of

the vessel—and a sixth into a narrow hall at the end of which were the companion stairs.

In which lurked the maniac? That was the gruesome question Clif asked himself as he vainly glanced about.

He was not a lad to waste time in idle conjectures. He did not propose to wait until Lieutenant Cole attacked him. It would be better to carry the war into the enemy's country, and at once.

He swung himself lightly from the table and then drew back with a gasp of real terror!

He had brushed against some object.

The belaying pin was ready for a blow, but there was no necessity. A hand cautiously extended revealed the welcome fact that he had touched a chair. The incident made Clif's heart beat so rapidly that he was afraid it would be heard.

He nerved himself to renewed efforts, however, and began a cautious advance toward the companion stairs. Once he paused and listened, fancying he had caught the sound of heavy breathing, then he resumed his stealthy creeping, finally reaching the beginning of the short hallway.

Then, just as he was on the point of entering the passage, something leaped upon his shoulders and he was borne downward with a cruel hand clutching at his throat!

CHAPTER V.

THE CAPTURE OF THE FLEETWING.

Clif's first feeling was of stupefaction and horror, then when he realized, as he did in a flash, that he was in the grasp of a maniac, he began to struggle fiercely.

He could not cry out for help, as the hand clutching his throat had too firm a grip, but he wrested and tugged and twisted and fought so desperately that only one strengthened by insanity could successfully resist his efforts.

The battle in the dark did not last long. The lad, strong as he was, was no match for the maniac, and he finally sank to the floor exhausted and half unconscious.

He realized that a rope was being wound around his body and a gag thrust into his mouth, and the discovery came as

a welcome relief. He had expected an instant and horrible death, but it seemed as if the crazy lieutenant had other plans.

Not a word had been spoken by either up to this moment, but the maniac at last broke the silence.

"I have you, Faraday," he grated in tones of satisfaction. "You escaped me on deck, but now I have triumphed. I won't kill you now. No, no! Wait till I capture the rest of the devils. It will take cunning and shrewdness to get the best of them, but I have the arch mutineer and the others will drop into my web. Then—ha! ha! ha!—we'll sail away to a spot I know in the broad ocean. It leads down, down to a beautiful place where all is gold and jewels and everlasting joy."

He mumbled incoherently for a moment, then resumed:

"We'll sail away and I will be at the helm, and the rest of you clad in white and with great gaping wounds in your bodies, will be the crew. Ha! ha! I'll put you dead and stark on lookout, Faraday. You'll watch and let me know when we sight hell, for there we are bound. Now—"

There was a slight noise overhead. It came from the skylight, and it sounded as if some one was dragging the tarpaulin away.

Lieutenant Cole caught Faraday by the shoulders and thrust him into the passage leading to the companion ladder.

"Stay there until I capture the other devils," he muttered. "I want them all—all."

Clif made one last effort to escape. The thought that Joy or Blakely might take it into their heads to follow him lent added strength to his struggles, but the rope and gag had been utilized by a cunning hand.

Sinking back again with a stifled groan Clif awaited events with as much patience as he could muster.

He heard the noise at the skylight increase, then Joy's voice softly called out his name.

Clif would have given his chances of winning a commission if he could have shouted a warning to his chum. It was absolute agony to the loyal-hearted lad to be compelled to remain impotent.

He heard the crazy man creep across the cabin floor; he heard Joy and Blakely talking together in low tones, then came the scrape, scrape of a body against the edge of the skylight.

Clif strained at his bonds until the rope cut deeply into his flesh. He made every effort to call out, to groan, to give some warning, but without avail. Helpless and almost in tears he laid back in the passage and listened.

The sound of an object dropping softly upon the table came to his ears, then Joy's voice whispered:

"Clif! Clif! are you here?"

After waiting a moment the lanky plebe had evidently leaped to the cabin floor as his voice, repeating the words, sounded nearer.

Suddenly something brushed against the prostrate lad, and immediately following came a choking gasp.

The maniac was at work again!

The struggle was brief as in Clif's case, and presently that lad felt a heavy body thrust by his side. Rolling over he nudged Joy—for it was he—with his elbow. An answering touch came, but no words. Joy had also been gagged.

After what seemed hours another voice was heard at the skylight. This time it was Blakely.

"Below there!" he called out boldly. "Faraday, Joy, what are you doing?"

To the infinite horror and consternation of the two prisoners they heard the lieutenant reply from within a few feet of them.

"Come down here, Blakely," he mumbled, in a voice disguised to imitate Clif's. "Come down quick."

The unsuspecting cadet captain promptly obeyed, landing lightly upon the table.

"Have you got him?" he asked eagerly, as he dropped to the cabin floor. "Where are—"

The question ended in a groan, and then came a heavy thud. Both Clif and Joy writhed in agony of spirit. They knew well that it meant the gallant Blakely's capture.

"He has been felled by the lieutenant," groaned Clif. "Heaven help us now! There is none capable of taking command or of saving us."

The maniac took his good time in

binding his new victim. The task was presently accomplished and Blakely was added to the others occupying the little passage.

After that there was silence for at least a half hour. Then one of the men on deck was heard to ask another if anything had been seen of Blakely. "They have just discovered our disappearance," thought Clif.

The sounds above increased, then some one noticed that the skylight was open. That created intense excitement.

"They are below, mates," cried a seaman. "They must have caught the lunatic."

"Below there!" bawled another, "Mr. Blakely, are you—"

Bang! bang!

Two shots rang out amid a crashing of glass, then came the sounds of scurrying feet as the group surrounding the skylight bolted in a panic.

"Ha! ha! That will keep them quiet till morning," chuckled the maniac. "They will run and hide like frightened sheep. When the sun comes I'll go up and kill them all. Then will come the glorious hour of my triumph. With dead men hanging at every yard, with corpses aloft and grinning skeletons below I'll sail on and on in my ship of state like the arch fiend himself, and it will be on an ocean of fire and flame."

His voice rose to a shriek, then it died away and silence, grim and ominous, filled the cabin. Time dragged slowly. The lieutenant kept watch near the skylight; and in the passage the three prisoners chafed and fretted with their enforced confinement. The taut ropes cut deep into their arms and legs, and the cruel gags caused exquisite pain, but the physical agony was as nothing compared with their mental suffering.

The thoughts of the three can well be imagined. Prisoners of a murderous crazy man, bound and helpless to protect themselves, and with no hope of aid from their shipmates it is small wonder that their hearts failed them.

It seemed as if day would never come. Each second was a week, each minute a month, and each hour an eternity. The first gray light of dawn was welcome indeed.

As soon as objects could be seen the trio exchanged glances. There was hopelessness in the eyes of each. Clif essayed a smile of encouragement, but it required a greater effort than he could make.

A few minutes after the dawn the lieutenant mounted the table and made a careful survey of the deck. What he saw seemed to afford considerable satisfaction to him. Returning to the prisoners he glared down at them and hissed:

"You have an hour more to live. I go now to capture your fellow conspirators. Then we will have a saturnalia of blood. The decks will run with it, and the sides of my ship will be painted red. Ha! ha! We'll go sailing over seas of blood and death will ride as a passenger."

His staring, feverish eyes and red, flushed face proved the disordered mind. Mumbling and talking to himself he left the three cadets and bounded lightly to the top of the table.

After another brief survey of the deck, he drew himself up through the open skylight and disappeared.

Presently a revolver shot was heard, followed by the distant banging of a scuttle.

"It's the forecastle hatch," murmured Clif. "Perhaps the fellows have trapped him."

He waited, hoping against hope until at last a sound directly overhead indicated that some was tampering with the companion hatchway.

The door was opened with a bang, and a figure appeared in the opening. Clif and his companions uttered a simultaneous groan of disappointment.

It was Lieutenant Cole.

CHAPTER VI.

CLIF'S LAST RESORT.

"We are ready for the feast of blood," he shouted, exultantly, the fire of insanity flashing from his eyes. "You are all mine, mine! I have the rest in the dungeon forward. The cowards trembled at my approach and fled in fear. Now for the glorious execution."

With maniacal strength he dragged the three helpless boys up the ladder to the quarter-deck. Clif, against whom he seemed to have a special grudge, he

fastened securely to the main mast. Then he removed their gags.

The cadets had eagerly glanced forward on reaching the deck. Not a man was to be seen, and the closed door of the forecastle companion confirmed their worst fears.

The maniac had succeeded in fastening every one below.

"Oho! You can look," cried Lieutenant Cole as Clif gazed around in despair. "Look with all your eyes, for it won't be long before death will be staring from them. Ha! ha! Your face is pale, but it will be whiter yet."

It was not in nature for one to be silent under such circumstances. As a drowning man grasps at a straw, Clif tried to conciliate the lunatic.

"Won't you let us help you sail the yacht, sir?" he asked, cunningly. "We would gladly do it. You can't handle her alone, you know."

"I can't, eh? That's a question, and we will settle that question once for all, Faraday," exclaimed the crazy lieutenant.

As he spoke he drew a long knife from his belt and, feeling its keen edge, advanced toward Clif.

The situation was about as critical as it could well be. Nothing short of a miracle could save the threatened lad, and his two friends, watching from the scuppers, where they had been tossed, closed their eyes in horror.

Clif awaited the approach of the maniac with a calmness born of despair. His brain worked rapidly, however, and he thought of every conceivable plan of escape.

Suddenly a desperate idea flashed into his mind. It was crude and unpromising, but no chance, however slight, could be neglected.

It was, in truth, a last resort. Assuming his fiercest tone, Clif shouted:

"We will settle that question, confound you. I have stood this nonsense long enough. What do you think you are, anyway, a little tin god on wheels? I'll have you understand that you can't bluff me even if you do carry a knife. You are a coward, that's what you are—a miserable, dog of a coward. You don't dare fight me face to face. You must tie

me up like a mummy, and then threaten to kill me. Bah!"

The effect of this remarkable tirade was almost ludicrous. The crazy lieutenant stopped as if rooted to the deck. He stood there within several feet of the lad and gaped at him in genuine amazement.

Clif's heart throbbed with hope. He moistened his parched lips with his tongue and continued with the same assumption of rage:

"Oh, you needn't look at me, durn you. I am not afraid of your ugly face. What are you, anyway? You call yourself a lieutenant in the navy, but you are a big bluff. Bah! There isn't any room for a miserable coward in the service. Do you think they'd have a man who is afraid to face a mere boy? Get out; you make me sick."

"I am a coward, eh?" gasped the lieutenant, purple with fury. His reputation in the service, it may be well to state, was that of a regular dare-devil in bravery.

"Yes, a coward," boldly retorted Clif. "If you are not, you will cut this rope and fight me with fists. Do you dare?"

The answer was a quick leap forward and a sweep of the knife. As Clif's bonds fell from him he whirled back of the mast and snatched up a belaying pin. The next second it whizzed through the air and, sent with unerring aim, struck the maniac full in the face.

Lieutenant Cole dropped to the deck like a log. Leaping upon him Faraday hastily fastened his arms and legs, wrapping them in many folds of rope. Then, picking up the knife, which had fallen from the maniac's hands, he freed Blakely and Joy.

Then, while the two cadets were staggering to their feet, he swooned. The terrible strain had been too much for him.

When he recovered consciousness it

was to find the Fleetwing again in the hands of the crew. Blakely had taken command once more, and the yacht was bowling along on her course before a spanking breeze which had sprung up from the northeast.

Clif was not long in regaining his full strength. He had been carried to the cabin, but he soon left it for the deck.

"Where is Lieutenant Cole?" was his first question.

"Confined in the after stateroom with three armed men guarding him," replied Joy. "He's still unconscious from that knock you gave him, chum. By Jake!" he added, with enthusiasm, "you are right in it. The crew hail you as their savior, and they are going to give you a gold watch or something."

"I don't want it," was Faraday's prompt reply. "I was thinking of my own skin when I bluffed the lieutenant. It was a close call, and I'm glad I'm living. Let's go on deck."

Thirty hours later the Fleetwing sailed gaily into Hampton Roads. The Monongahela was lying at anchor off Fortress Monroe, and a boat from her soon came alongside. After explanations had been made, Lieutenant Cole and Ensign Dudley were transferred to the practice-ship. A new crew under another commissioned officer was sent to take the place of the cadet captain and his companions, and then the yacht got under way for Norfolk.

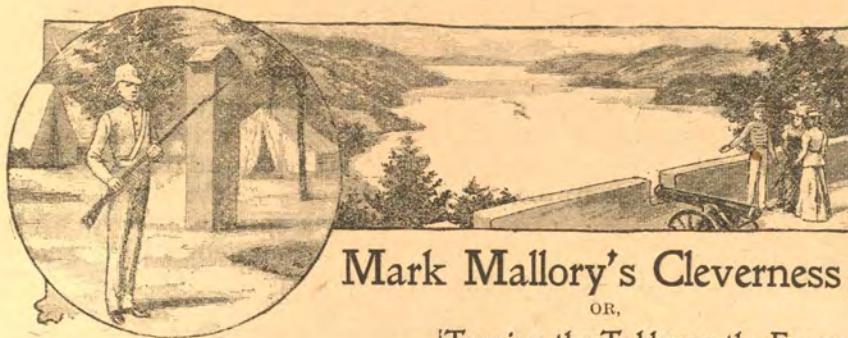
And thus ended her strange voyage.

The following morning the Monongahela raised anchor for the final part of her homeward bound cruise with the Annapolis Naval Academy as her destination.

[THE END.]

"Clif Faraday's Reception; or, The Return from the Summer Cruise," will be the title of Ensign Clarke Fitch's next Naval Academy novelette.





Mark Mallory's Cleverness; OR, Turning the Tables on the Enemy.

By Lieut. Frederick Garrison, U. S. A.

CHAPTER I.

DISCOVERING A PLOT.

"Well, how do you like this? Is it hot enough?"

The speaker was a tall, finely-built lad. He wore the uniform of a West Point cadet of the fourth class, or plebe. It was a broiling hot August afternoon, and the lad was wiping his face with his handkerchief, pausing in the midst of his work.

The question he asked was never answered, for just then another voice interrupted him.

"Hey, plebe! Come here and catch hold of the end of this log."

The plebe had been doing nothing but that all morning, and most of the afternoon, too, but he did as he was told cheerfully.

The scene amidst which he was working might interest the reader. The cadets were building a pontoon bridge, the second one that summer. The cadets of the first class were the "engineering corps" and they were giving the orders; the plebes, quite naturally, were doing the work, carrying out the heavy logs and fastening them in place under the watchful eyes of their superiors. Cadets when they leave West Point after their four years of drill and study are supposed to be fully competent officers, ready to do their share of handling Uncle Sam's army. This of course includes the building of bridges upon which an army may cross a river or stream; it was that the corps was practicing that day.

Our friend, Mark Mallory, the lad intro-

duced at the beginning, had been helping at that task all day, along with his companions, "The Seven Devils," and the other plebes. It was almost over now and Mark was glad of it, for he was tired. Bridge-building in army style may sound romantic, but is no fun during August when the sun shines. There was only one redeeming circumstance to the whole thing that the plebes could see, and that was that on account of it they had been excused from no less than two inspections, two "policings" and two drills.

We shall find Mark Mallory and his friends lying on the grass in a shady nook up by Trophy Point. We must go up there and listen to what they are saying, in order to appreciate the adventures in the following pages.

They were just then discussing with much interest an adventure of the previous night; they were all anxious to know what the cadets thought of it, and this was the first chance they had had to compare notes.

"Do you know," laughed Mark, "there's not a soul has the least idea it was us. Nobody seems to have thought for a moment that cadets were the cause of all the excitement. Just think of it! Lunatics!"

Mark, shaking all over with merriment, drew out from under his coat a sheet of paper, the New York Globe, of that same morning. It contained a graphic, full-page description of how seven strangely dressed men had done most extraordinary deeds in Highland Falls—performed in a circus, lassoed the propri-

etor, set loose his wild buffalo, and finally lassoed the buffalo out in the middle of the Hudson. These same outlandishly dressed creatures had finally confessed to a "Globe" reporter that they were lunatics escaped from an asylum, where they had been driven to desperation by frightful cruelty. The *Globe* proposed to bring those officials to justice, so it informed its readers.

It was but little wonder that nobody connected the Seven Devils with that band of raving madmen, so called. West Point was fairly on tiptoe with excitement concerning the creatures, who were supposed to be still loose in the woods.

Naturally the seven were hilarious over the state of affairs. Their discussion of the question was stopped, however, by the arrival of one of their number upon the scene. It was Texas, who had been over to the camp for a brief while; from his manner it was evident that Texas had some news.

"Fellers," he cried, scarcely waiting till he was close to them before he began. "I've jes' heerd somebody talkin', 'Yn' durnation, I've discovered a plot!"

"A plot! Whose?"

There was no need of the six asking that so eagerly; one name rose up before all their minds. There was one yearling, and only one, who got up plots to discomfit them.

"It's Bull Harris," continued Texas, hurriedly. "An' dog gone his boots, he—,"

"He hasn't found out about last night?" cried Mark.

"No," said Texas, "'tain't that. He's a-goin' to take that air crowd o' his'n—Gus Murray, an' Merry Vance, an' Baby Edwards, an' them, up to our cave! An' I want to know ef we're agoin' to stand that."

"I don't think we will," laughed Mark, promptly. "At least not if I have anything to say in the matter."

"I've been expecting just this for some time," Mark continued, after a moment's pause. "You see ever since we found that secret cavern in the rock, and had the bad luck to let Bull see us go there, I knew he'd be taking his friends up there to spoil our fun. He probably expects to smash everything to pieces."

"B'gee, I say we lick 'em for daring to think of it, b'gee!" cried Dewey. "That's what I say! Reminds me of a story I once heard, b'gee——"

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Mark, interrupting the unfortunate reconteur. "How does this suit you? Let's follow them to-night, let them get inside, and then take them prisoners."

Texas sprang up with a whoop of delight at that delicious programme.

"Durnation!" he cried. "Secon' the motion! We'll hold 'em up, dog gone their boots, an'——"

Texas felt for his revolvers instinctively as he danced about and thought of this. He had no revolvers on him, however, owing to the fact that they would have been visible in his uniform. So Texas had to content himself with squeezing the hands of the others and vowing by all things a Texan holds dear that he'd capture those yearlings for them that night or die in the effort.

It was in that way that quite a series of adventures got a start, adventures which it is the purpose of the rest of this story to describe.

CHAPTER II.

SEVEN LUNATICS IN TROUBLE.

Now the plan for the circumvention of Bull Harris was all very well in its way. But there were certain all important facts that those adventurous plebes forgot to take account of in their calculations. We must mention these at the start, in order that the situation may be appreciated.

There were seven dangerous lunatics wandering about West Point. That fact every one knew. The sheriff of the county was there to investigate the matter, for it was clearly his duty to arrest the fugitives. Also there were the constables from Highland Falls, the reporters from the New York dailies, and numerous private individuals out to see the fun.

They had hunted all day, finding no one but two unfortunate tramps; they meant to hunt likewise all night.

Now, as for the Seven Devils, their situation was just this. They were going out for a lark that night. They dared not wear their cadet uniforms, for fear of being seen by some sentry. The only

clothes they owned besides these were the curious disguises of yesterday. Naturally, knowing nothing of the excitement they had created, they resolved to wear those.

And that was the way the fun began.

It was about eleven o'clock that evening, as soon as the last inspection was over and the camp quiet, that four figures crept out of one of the tents, dashed past the intentionally oblivious sentry and hid themselves in the shadow of old Fort

woods, stealing along in the shadow of the buildings so as to be observed by no one. It was a difficult task because unfortunately there was a bright moon in the sky. That moon gave the Seven Devils no end of trouble when they set out to follow.

The seven entered the fort just as the others left it. Like them they stowed away their uniforms and put on the "cits" clothing. It is scarcely necessary to



"IN THE NAME OF THE LAW," SHOUTED THE SHERIFF, "I COMMAND YOU TO SURRENDER!" (page 1555)

Clinton. Those of us who have read these stories would have been quick enough to recognize them—the unpleasant features of Bull Harris, and likewise the sallow Vance, the brutal Gus Murray, and the amiable Baby Edwards. Those four were bound for the Seven Devils' den, and, in vulgar parlance, they weren't going to do a thing to it.

They left the fort and made for the

describe the clothing—Mark's tennis costume, the Parson's ragged clerical rig, Indian's full dress, and Chauncey's smutty white flannel. Suffice it to say that no one who saw them could fail to recognize them as the seven described in the New York Globe of that day.

As has been noted, it was no child's play, that task of following the four through the woods. Full-fledged

Apaches would have found it hard, and, as you know, in our crowd, there was only one Indian, and that one as clumsy as a herd of elephants. The woods were bright; also there were dry leaves and sticks to be stepped on and slippery logs for Indian to fall off of. It was therefore to be expected that Bull would very soon discover he was being tracked; which was just exactly what happened.

Bull Harris was no fool; he had plenty of sense, and he used it, too. In fact, he completely outwitted the unsuspecting plebes. And this was how he did it.

Sundry curious sounds from the rear first attracted his attention. Bull suspected, of course, at the very start that it was Mark; he said that to Gus Murray, and also that he'd like to "smash that confounded plebe" for once and for all.

Just then they came to a steep incline, which hid them from their pursuers' view, and, quick as a flash, Bull dodged into the bushes and hid. He lay there with the others, silent as so many mice.

Pretty soon the plebes came along, creeping with stealthiness that was most laughable to the yearlings. You might hunt for ten years without finding a sight more ludicrous than Parson Stanard in a ragged, black clerical frock lanky and solemn, stealing along on tiptoe and glancing about him with cunning and wariness such as the villain assumes in a deep black Bowery melodrama. Indian's round body and saucer-like eyes, going through the same contortions, made a close second for humorous effect. If Bull hadn't hated the plebes too much he would have sneered at them as Vance was doing.

As to the costumes they wore, Bull stared at them for some time before he realized the true state of affairs. Bull noticed their clothes, and he had read the description in the paper. But it was at least a minute before he could bring himself to comprehend what the similarity of the two signified. When he did he seized Gus Murray by the arm in a grip that cut.

"Great Heavens, man!" he gasped. "Don't you see? Don't you see? Those plebes are the seven lunatics! By the Lord!"

The seven saw no reason for stopping

because the yearlings were lost to view for a moment. They knew where the yearlings were going, and all they had to do was to go there, too. In a minute or two more they were out of sight in the darkness, and Bull and his gang were left alone once more.

Bull said not a word for some minutes. He was too busy thinking, trying to realize what that extraordinary revelation meant. So it was Mallory who had caused all this excitement! Mallory who had gotten up that gigantic hoax! Mallory whom the sheriff and every one else were hunting for! Bull took in the situation in all its amazing details, and the more he thought of it the angrier he got.

But then suddenly Bull got an inspiration. He leaped to his feet, whacked his knee with his fist, and with a whoop of joy seized his companions and forced them hastily along. It was back toward West Point he started; the rest were naturally mystified at that.

"Where the dickens are you going?" demanded Vance.

"You wait and see," chuckled Bull. "Wait and see, if you haven't got sense enough to guess. By jingo, I've got him!"

"Got him! Who?"

"Mallory, you idiot!" roared the other. "Don't ask so many stupid questions; hurry up."

After that the party pressed on in silence. The three were too much puzzled to say anything more or to do anything but obey. Their curiosity was destined to be set at rest very soon, however.

They had not walked a hundred yards before they caught sight of some dark figures walking about in the woods. There was a lantern, too, and then suddenly came a voice:

"Hello, there! Here's somebody! Who are you?"

The yearlings shrank back in alarm, that is, all of them except Bull. Bull pressed forward eagerly, and a moment later found himself surrounded by a group of men, armed with sticks and all sorts of weapons. One of them, a tall man with the lantern and a shotgun in his other hand, walked up to Bull and peered into his face.

"What are you doing——" he began,

but Bull was in too much of a hurry to let him finish.

"You the sheriff?" he demanded.

"Yes, I am."

"Hunting for those lunatics, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, come on, then, quick as you can, for I know where they are."

And then the yearlings realized what Bull Harris meant to do.

"How do you know?" demanded the officer.

"I saw them," declared Bull. "I was hunting for them, too. They were dressed just as the paper said. And you'd better hurry."

Without another word he turned and started ahead through the woods; the sheriff and his excited posse followed at his heels.

They hurried along rapidly, making for the cave. They went on for a mile, nobody saying a word, all watching eagerly. The mile stretched out to nearly two miles, and the sheriff began to get impatient. He stared at Bull doubtfully, gripping his shotgun. And then suddenly in the path ahead a wall of rock loomed up, just visible in the faint light. It was in that rock that the cavern lay.

And backed up against the wall, staring at the party in amazement and alarm were seven figures, the lunatics.

The sheriff swung his gun up to his shoulder.

"In the name of the law," he shouted, "I command you to surrender! Hold up your hands!"

CHAPTER III.

THE JAIL AT HIGHLAND FALLS

You may imagine the consternation of our friends, the plebes. The whole thing had come with such horrible suddenness that they were completely taken aback, and helpless. The sheriff's gun looked so huge and menacing that it took all their nerve. Even Texas, hero of a hundred fights, did not dare to move an arm. Experience had taught Texas that a hold-up was a hold-up, a thing that could no more be resisted than a sudden stroke of lightning. And therefore, though he had a huge revolver in each hip pocket, he merely flung up his hands and stared.

It was an awful situation. It took the unfortunate lads some time to realize it in its full horror. Here they were, cadets, wandering about during the forbidden hours of night. And here was a sheriff with all the power of the law at his back, arresting them as lunatics! He would take them to jail. Keep them there all night! And in the morning would come reveille, and then—

"Don't you fellows make a move there," commanded the sheriff, sternly. "I won't take any nonsense. Get those handcuffs out."

The wretched plebes were too dumfounded to disobey the order. Indian had sunk down on the ground with a wail of agony, and the rest were in about as complete a state of collapse. As if the situation were not bad enough already, two men stepped forward to handcuff them, and the prisoners recognized the triumphantly grinning features of Bull Harris and Gus Murray.

That was too much of an insult; Mark Mallory started back, his face flushing.

"Don't you come near me, you wretch!" he cried. "I'll——"

The sheriff swung his gun around until the muzzle stared full in Mark's face.

"Steady!" said he. "Don't be a fool."

Mark saw that there was no use making trouble, and he bit his lip and was silent. He put out his hands meekly and let Bull snap the irons upon him. Bull hadn't had such a moment of joy as that in his whole lifetime before.

The rest of the seven gave up then and let themselves be secured; only Texas ventured further protest.

"Look a-yere, Mister Sheriff," said he, "I ain't a lunatic. What's the use o' this hyar fool business? I'm a ca——"

"Shut up!"

It was Mark who said that, and he said it with such vehement emphasis that Texas closed his teeth together with the suddenness of a steel trap.

"You mayn't be lunatics," observed the sheriff, stepping forward to make sure that their hands were securely fastened. "But you certainly look a good deal like it. Say, Mr. Hamilton!"

The man who answered the seven prisoners recognized instantly as the report-

er they had fooled. Their hearts sank within them at that.

"Are these the fellows?" demanded the sheriff.

"They're the ones all right," laughed the other. "There's no mistaking such faces and clothes as those."

"That settles it," said the sheriff. "Forward, march!"

It was two or three miles from where they were to Highland Falls, their destination. Fortunately they did not go through West Point, when the plebes were in dread of being recognized. The sheriff did not want to attract a crowd and so he kept in the woods, skirted the edge of the buildings and finally came out into the road below the post.

The unfortunate plebes were very near the end of their journey then. The silent party tramped on rapidly. The buildings of the little town began to loom up in front. There were few lights burning then, but some stray passer-by started a shout, "The lunatics!" and almost instantly windows began to go up and staring faces to appear in the openings. But just then they came to a low square building back from the main street, and the sheriff sprang forward, unlocked the door, and pushed the prisoners in before him. A moment later the heavy door clanged, and that was all.

The sheriff was considerate enough, now that he had them safe, to remove the painful handcuffs. This, however, he did not do until he had searched them carefully, removing the Texan's arsenal. After that he shoved them into the solitary cell in the jail, locked and barred the heavy door, and after warning them to keep quiet and behave themselves, went out and left them in silence and dismay.

About the same time the young reporter hurried down to the telegraph station to send in his report; and Bull and his three friends, having been thanked by the sheriff, set out in high spirits for their favorite drinking place, where they meant to celebrate their glorious triumph. As for the sheriff, he warned the jailer to keep the strictest guard, and then, with a sigh of relief and satisfaction, went home to bed.

As to the seven it is still easier to say

what they did. With one accord they sank down on the floor of the musty cell and stared at each other in complete and absolute consternation and disgust. Nobody said anything, because nobody knew of anything to say. They were simply knocked into a cocked hat, as the phrase has it; they were stumped, helpless and hopeless, and that was all there was to it.

They sat that way for perhaps two solid hours. During that time Indian had gone to sleep, in which "the farmer" had set him a good example. The Parson had been heard to give vent to one "by Zeus," and Dewey a single disconsolate "b'gee," which did not even remind him of a story. And that is the complete inventory of what happened during the desolate period.

But such states of mind cannot last forever, especially in young persons. Mark made up his mind that at least it would be worth while to test the cell they were in, to make sure that the doors and windows were fast. This was a country jail; country jails are often cheaply built, and oftener still very old and unreliable (from the standpoint of the sheriff).

Mark got up and fell to pacing back and forth. His example aroused the rest, and pretty soon the place resembled a menagerie cage, with half a dozen wild animals sniffing at the bars. They shook the door savagely; it had a solid "feel," and the only result of the effort was to bring the cross and sleepy jailer to the cell.

"Keep quiet, there," he growled, "and go to sleep, will you!"

The prisoners relapsed into silence again, and the man went away, after which the examination went on. The floors and walls of the cell were of solid masonry, which was unpromising. Mark had heard of prisoners who dug their way out with such objects as spoons. But the unfortunate plebes had not even a spoon, and besides that operation was apt to take longer than the time between then and the morning gun. It was just two o'clock by Mark's watch.

The only other place where there seemed the faintest possibility of hope was the window. That was large, and it

allowed the moonlight to stray into the cell, which was as light as day. But also there were heavy iron bars, which resisted firmly the most powerful efforts of Mark's strength.

And so that hope also was futile. The seven retired into a corner and discussed the situation in sad whispers. It was evident that they could not escape. It was equally evident that if they did not they would cease to be cadets on the morrow. Thus simply put the proposition was startlingly clear and horrible.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast, they say. Scarcely had they settled the argument thus, before Texas sprang up with a sudden cry; an instant later he fell to work unwinding himself from the lasso that was still about his waist. The sheriff hadn't thought it necessary to remove that lasso; he hadn't the least idea what use a prisoner could make of it. For that matter, neither had Texas's companions, unless he meant to hang himself.

But Texas knew a trick worth two of that; silently and rapidly he proceeded to uncoil it, and when he had done that, he doubled it once, twice, three times.

"What on earth are you going to do?" whispered Mark.

"Show you," chuckled Texas. "Look a-yere!"

He sprang up to the window and slipped the rope about one of the bars. Then the others saw! One man couldn't pull out one of those iron strips; but the whole seven men together? Ah!

Quick as a flash they sprang forward to help him. Texas was very slow and methodical about it, exasperatingly so, for the jailer might peer in at any moment. Texas made the heavy rope fast; he tied knots in it for the plebes to take hold of, like a tug of war rope. Then he and Mark, as the strongest, braced their feet against the wall; the rest laid hold of the trailing end, and then—one, two, three—pull!—there came a terrific strain that made the bars of the window creak.

Four times they put all their strength into it. Then Texas, reaching up, whispered the joyful news that the iron was tearing loose from its fastenings in the stone. Once more they laid hold of the rope, once more swung back with all their

might—and then suddenly the bar gave way!

It was as if a knife had cut the rope. The sudden release sent the unfortunate prisoners stumbling backward, tumbling with a crash into a heap in the corner.

A moment later they heard a loud shout outside, heard the door creak on its hinges, as it was flung open. It was the jailer, dashing into the room, revolver in hand.

"What does this mean!" he shouted. "Hold up your hands!"

CHAPTER IV.

BULL HARRIS GETS INTO TROUBLE.

It was a desperate moment. Things happened with such incredible swiftness that those who saw them could scarcely tell what came first.

Texas had fallen just behind the door which the man had opened. Texas leaped up, his eyes blazing with fury. No risk was too great a risk to take now, for his cadetship was the stake. He was behind the jailer's back as he rose up, and with the swiftness and force of a panther he flung himself upon the man's back.

There was a moment of struggle. Texas devoted every effort to but one thing, holding that revolver. A bullet, even if it hit no one, would give the alarm, prevent the escape. He had seized the man's hand in both of his, and he clung to that hand with all the strength that was in him.

The others sprang to his aid an instant later. Before the jailer could cry out Mark gripped him by the throat, and a moment later down he went to the ground, with the whole seven upon him.

The contest was brief after that. They got the revolver away, which was the chief point. The jailer was speedily choked into submission, bound and gagged. The seven prisoners rose up triumphant and gazed about them in eager haste.

But they were not safe yet by any means. They imagined that no alarm had been given; they had not calculated the effect of the first startled yell of the jailer, which rang and echoed down the silent village street. The plebes realized what was happening a moment later, as

they paused and listened. There were sounds of hurrying feet, of men shouting to each other.

The town was awake.

The prisoners gazed about them anxiously, feverishly. They had yet a chance, a hope. But it would take them so long to unfasten that rope, tie it to another bar, and tear it out in the same way. The sheriff with his dreaded gun would surely be there before that. And they could not get through the window as it was. What then? The door! Mark thought of it an instant later. The jailer had left it open!

A moment more and the plebes were in the hall of the jail; Texas had stopped just long enough to snatch up the jailer's revolver, and then he joined them. There was still the front door, whether locked or not none of them knew. Mark tried it feverishly, shook it. It was locked. And as he tried it again, he heard a shout outside, felt some one on the other side trying it, too. A crowd was gathering! And what were they to do? The solution of the question flashed over Mark first. The key! The jailer! He sprang back into the room, rushed to where the man lay bound, and fell to rummaging in his pockets and about his waist. The others stood in the hall waiting anxiously, tremblingly. Would he find it?

The noise outside swelled. There came blows upon the door, shouts to open. And then suddenly Mark reappeared, his face gleaming with excitement and joy as he ran, holding in one hand the heavy key.

To thrust that key into the lock, turn it, and open the door was the work of but an instant. And then, in response to the quick command of their leader, the seven formed a wedge, Texas with the revolver in front. Mark flung back the heavy door and the seven made a savage dash through the opening.

There were at least a dozen men gathered in front of the building. They recoiled before the unexpected apparition that met their gaze. The fiercely shouting "lunatics" with the wild-eyed cowboy and his gleaming weapon at their head. An instant more and the party had dashed through the crowd and went speeding up the street.

Texas was last, glancing behind him and aiming his revolver menacingly to prevent pursuit.

"Stop thief! Stop thief!" swelled the cry, through all the village; but to the wildly-delighted, hilarious seven, it was a cry that fast receded and died out in the distance.

For no one dared to follow, and the "lunatics" escaped once more, were keeping up a pace that it would have been hard to equal. They counted themselves safe a very few moments later, when they were hidden from view in the woods up toward West Point. And then breathless and exhausted they seated, or rather flung themselves on the ground to rest.

Prudence did not long permit of their staying where they were, however. "The escaped criminal knows no resting place." Already they were beginning to fancy that they heard shouts in the woods and sounds of tramping footsteps; poor Indian would pop up his gasping head every once in a while and look to see if the sheriff wasn't aiming that gun at him. It was a terrible labor for Indian to look anywhere from his present position, because as Dewey explained, he had to see over his stomach. All were ready to move in a short while. Indian alone had not recovered his breath, but he had fear to lend wings to his heels, so to speak. And thus pretty soon the party was fast making tracks for camp.

They were very silent, for some reason; as we know the Seven Devils they are not usually quiet, especially under stress of such excitement as at present—excitement that would have furnished most people a topic of conversation for a month. As it turned out, however, the plebes were all thinking of one subject, and that subject made them grave and quiet.

Mark touched upon this point when he spoke at last; he seemed to divine what was in their minds.

"Fellows," said he, "what do you think of Bull Harris?"

There was no answer to the question; the reason was that nobody could think of any word or combination of words quite adequate to express the fullness of his thought.

"Do you know," Mark continued,

after a few minutes' silence, "do you know Bull actually surprised me?"

Texas had something to say to that.

"Nothin' that aire durnation ole coyote ever did would surprise me," said Texas.

Bull has tried many contemptible tricks," observed Mark, thoughtfully, as if speaking to himself. "He has tried some things that would make the devil himself blush for shame, I think. He has lied about me to the cadets and to the officers. He has enticed me into the woods to beat me; he has played upon my kindness to have me expelled. But he never yet has done anything to equal this."

The silence of the seven as they tramped on expressed to Mark a great deal more assent than any words could have done.

"It was so utterly uncalled for," Mark went on. "It was so utterly contemptible. And the brazen effrontery of it was the most amazing thing of all. One would have thought when he put the sheriff upon our track he would have kept his own identity secret. But to come right out before our faces and betray us—his fellow cadets! I declare I don't know what to do about it."

Texas doubled up his fists suggestively. He knew what to do.

"No," said Mark, noticing the unspoken suggestion. "I do not think it would do much good to whip him. Bull would not face me in a fair fight, and somehow I can't make up my mind to tackle him otherwise, even if he does deserve it. It don't do any good to frighten him, either, or to treat him decently. Every effort seems to deepen his vindictiveness. I don't see fellows, how we are ever to have any peace while Bull is in West Point."

That just about expressed the situation, as it appeared to the seven. No peace with Bull Harris in West Point!"

"B'gee!" exclaimed Dewey, suddenly. "I don't see any reason why he has to stay."

"How do you mean?" asked Mark, slowly.

He knew what Dewey meant, and so did all the others, but none of them liked to say it.

"Simply," said Dewey—"as the Par-

son always remarks when he starts one of his long chemical formulas—simply, b'gee, that Bull has tried to get us dismissed from West Point a few dozen times. I don't now how often it's been, but I know it's been at least seventy times seven we've forgiven him. And now, b'gee, I say we get square, just for once."

"I see what you mean," responded Mark, shaking his head. "It might be fair for me to get Bull expelled in some way, but I don't like that."

"Durnation!" growled Texas, angrily, "I'd like to know why not. Ef we don't Bull Harris will get us fired dead sho', dog gone his boots!"

"And self-preservation is the first law of nature," chimed in Dewey, "as the undertaker remarked when he swallowed his embalming fluid, b'gee."

Mark laughed, but he still shook his head; the solemn Parson cleared his throat.

"Ahem," said he, "by Zeus! Gentlemen, this is no time for a scientific dissertation, or exemplification, so to speak. I was remarking—ahem—that no one would be less inclined to burden you with a lengthy discourse at this most inopportune moment. I shall accordingly confine myself strictly to a lucid exposition of the concatenation of complex circumstances involved, avoiding all technicalities——"

Dewey fainted here and had to be revived by an imaginary bottle of smelling salts. He refused emphatically to come to, but vowed he wanted to stay unconscious till "it was over." All of which byplay was lost upon the grave scholar.

What the Parson meant to say was finally ascertained by the rest, who were now nearly restored to their usual gaiety, forgetful of all such details as sheriffs and shot guns. It appeared that the Parson was quoting the law of self-defence, that a man whose life is threatened may kill the man who menaces him. The Parson cited many authorities, legal, philosophical and theological, to prove the validity of that assumption. Then he proposed the question whether this case might not be an "analogue," as he called it, whether or not Bull Harris, who was threatening to have Mark dis-

missed, did not make himself liable to the same treatment. It was a nice point in casuistry, and the Parson vowed that in all his investigation of theoretical ethical complications he had never met, etc., etc.

The rest listened to all this with much solemnity. The Parson was in one of his most scholarly moods that night, and it was a whole farce comedy to hear him. But unfortunately his discourse put a stop to the serious discussion concerning Bull Harris; that problem was to arise again very soon.

During all this, of course, the party had been hurrying up toward the post, with as much rapidity as they possibly could. They knew that if once they could manage to reach Fort Clinton and get into their uniforms, they would be entirely safe. No one, not even a sheriff, would ever dream that those much-hunted and dreaded lunatics were Uncle Sam's pupils.

Still laughing and joking with the classic Bostonian, they had almost reached the southern buildings of the post, before anything else happened. For it is necessary to say right here that those plebes were not destined to reach camp that night, or rather morning, without further adventure.

It was after one of the longest pauses in the Parson's discussions of that "casuistical complication." The rest were waiting for him to begin again, when suddenly from the woods to one side a sound of footsteps was distinctly heard.

The plebes stopped short as if they had been turned to stone. They were almost turned with alarm. They heard the step again; it was several people advancing; and as one man the seven crouched suddenly to conceal themselves in the shadow of the bushes—the folly of their recklessness flashed across them with horrible clearness at that moment. They had escaped from their danger, almost as if by a miracle. And then, instead of running with all their might for camp, seeking safety with all possible swiftness, here they were loitering along as if there were no such man on earth as a determined sheriff, and now—

The noise of the advancing men grew louder every moment. It was evident that they were to pass almost over the

plebes. There were several of them, tramping heavily, crashing the brush beneath their feet with a sound that to the trembling listeners seemed the advance of a herd of elephants.

Then there came a voice.

"Ho, ho! You bet we've fixed him!"

"Hooray! I just guess! Say, but I bet those plebes are sick just now."

"I never saw a sicker looking plebe than that confounded Mallory in my life. By Heaven, he deserves it all, though. I could kill him."

The last speaker was Bull Harris.

They had gotten very near, almost on top of the crouching listeners. Mark clutched his companions and whispered to them—"Not a sound!"

"I can hardly wait for morning to come, to see what happens when that blamed cad isn't there at reville. Say, isn't it great? Just think of their being shut up in jail all night, without a chance of getting out. And they'll be fired sure as—good Lord!"

This last exclamation was a perfect scream of terror from Bull. He had started back as if he had seen a ghost; his jaw had dropped, his eyes protruding. The rest were no less pictures of consternation.

With folded arms and a smile upon his lips, standing in their path as real as life, though shadowy in the faint moonlight, was the plebe they had left in the dungeon down at Highland Falls!

CHAPTER V.

"REVENGE IS JUST; REVENGE IS SWEET."

The amount of alarm which that apparition caused to the yearlings it would be difficult to imagine. The idea of their hated rival escaping had never once flashed over them, and when they saw him it seemed like a visit from another world. It was so sudden that they had no time to think whether that were possible or not.

Except for Bull's one frightened gasp the four made not one sound. They stood staring, ready to drop from sheer terror. And as for Mallory, he, too, was silent and motionless; he felt that a word would have broken the spell.

There was perhaps a half minute's

wait, and then came another move. There was a waving in the grass behind Mark, and another shadowy form rose silently into view. It was the Parson's solemn features, and the Parson, too, folded his arms and stared.

After that the rest appeared one by one, and at each Bull Harris gasped and trembled more. They seemed to him like the ghosts of men he had murdered. There was Dewey, not smiling for once. There was Indian, not scared for once. There was Sleepy, wide awake for once. There was Chauncey, dignified forever. And then last of all was Texas; Texas broke the spell.

It was not the latter's features, though, as Dewey facetiously informed him, he had a face that would break anything from a spell to a broncho. But it was what Texas held in his hand. It was his usual style—forty-four calibre—and Texas was aiming it right at Bull's head.

"Move one whisker, an' I'll fire, you durnation ole coyote. Dog gone your boots!"

That, quite naturally, proved that the plebes were of ordinary flesh and blood. There was nothing shadowy about the gleam of that revolver, and Bull started back in still greater alarm.

It was the Seven Devils' turn, after that.

Mark always declared that it was perfectly safe to let Texas "hold up" Bull and his gang whenever it was necessary to capture them, for Bull and his gang never had the courage to blink one eye when Texas was waving his weapons. There are some advantages in being known as a "bad man." It was so in this case; the seven sprang forward and flung themselves upon their tormentors and speedily had them flat on the ground, tied up with the remnants of the cowboy's most serviceable lasso.

The question was then what shall we do with them? The plebes retired to a distance to talk that over. They had a little more than two hours left, by the watch. During that time they were to devise and execute some act of retaliation.

The council proceeded to discuss ways and means. Not to delay with details, suffice it to say that they talked for some

ten minutes—and that then suddenly Mark sprang up and slapped his knee with excitement.

"By jingo!" he cried. "I've got it!"

After that there was excitement. Mark hastily outlined his scheme, the others chuckling and dancing about in the meantime with sheer delight. Evidently this was an idea. Bull heard the merry laughter in the distance, and he realized that it boded ill for him. Bull bit his lip with vexation and struggled with his bonds. His peace of mind was not increased in the least by the realization of the fact that every thing that happened to him was richly deserved.

He heard the hasty steps of the plebes as they approached him again. The plebes set about putting their plans into effect with all possible celerity, and it was just a very short while before he comprehended the horrible deed they were going to do. Bull kicked and fought till he was blue in the face, but it did him not a bit of good, and it seemed to amuse his captors.

They untied him almost entirely. But he could not run because he was surrounded, and he dared not fight because Texas kept his revolver levelled. They removed Bull's coat and trousers, and in their place put on the outlandish rig that Mark had worn. Then they tied him up again and turned their attention to the others.

Indian managed to pull himself out of the almost bursting dress-suit he wore; the suit was put on Baby Edwards, and, so Dewey informed him, it fit him "like der paper on der vall." Chauncey, to his infinite relief, shed his smutty white outing costume at last. And Dewey came out of his drum orderly uniform to furnish the fourth garment. After which the plebes put on the clothing they had taken from their prisoners and everything was well.

Having once realized the design of their enemies and likewise their own helplessness, the yearlings were completely subdued, even terrified. It was all very well to send some hated plebes to jail as lunatics, but to go themselves was horrible. They saw that was the ultimate purpose of the Seven Devils.

After a brief consultation the latter

picked up their helpless captors and set out in haste for the road, which lay about one hundred yards to the left. They reached that, and after glancing about cautiously, hurried out and tied the yearlings tightly to conspicuous trees along the road. After that they had another whispered discussion, then turned and vanished in the woods.

As to the rest of the Seven Devil's actions, suffice it to say that they hurried up to camp, which they reached in safety. They hid their clothing, the source of so much trouble, and then stole past the sentry and entered their tents. They were soon sound asleep and utterly oblivious of the troubles of their unfortunate rivals.

"If they can have the same luck as we," said Mark, briefly, "they may get away, and welcome. If they can't, they must bear what would have been our fate. That is about as near to justice as I can come."

Which summary contained the whole situation.

Meanwhile exciting adventures were happening to Bull. It is presumed that the reader is interested, though so far as Mark and his friends are concerned this story is already finished.

The plebes had certainly not been gone ten minutes before the excitement began. The horrified and hopeless yearlings got their first warning when they heard sounds of approaching footsteps and excitedly discussing voices.

"They came up this way, I tell you. We ought to go up and hunt above the Point, for the sheriff'll 'tend to this part."

"Are you sure that gun's loaded, Jack? This is no child's play, for one of those fellows is armed."

There were a few more remarks of this kind and then the party came into view, almost in front of the prisoners. The latter were silent and motionless, for they hoped vaguely that somehow they might not be noticed. But alas, the white flannel was like a torch in moonlight. The searchers stopped short and stared in amazement.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed one, apparently the leader. "Here they are now!"

The surprise that the apparition caused

can well be imagined. They counted one, two, three, four—of the very men they were pursuing, tied hand and foot to trees along the roadside. Here was a mystery indeed! This was a strange thing for even lunatics to do, and the crowd of men handled their weapons nervously as they stared.

"I have it!" cried one of them suddenly. "I know!"

"What is it?" demanded the others.

"The sheriff's caught and tied 'em here for us."

That was a likely conjecture, and it took with the puzzled crowd, who were glad for any theory. In vain Bull and his crowd protested, in the words of Poe's poem, "I am not mad!" That was a likely story, coming from lunatics. And where did they get those clothes? None of the sheriff's posse chanced to be there; so there was no one to recognize Bull as the original giver of the information. And as for his own protests and cries, they were of course insane ravings, to be listened to with gaping mouths and some pity.

There was nothing for the captors to do but march the yearlings down to jail. This they did with no little caution, and considerable display of firearms. There was not a man of them who did not feel relieved when the gates clanged once more upon those desperate creatures.

There is no need of describing the sensations which that same clang produced upon the creatures. It has all been described in the case of the Seven Devils; it was just the same here, only aggravated by a feeling of baffled rage. It was Bull Harris deathknell, the clang of that gate.

They were put in the same cell, but they were tied securely, and so there was no danger of their escaping "again." Having seen to this, the party went out, paying not the least heed to Bull's frenzied entreaties to send for the sheriff. It was natural that a captured lunatic should rave and foam at the mouth a little.

Darkness and silence having fallen upon the jail the situation became clear at last to the wretched captives. They were tied hand and foot behind prison bars, it lacking then perhaps an hour and a half of reveille—and dismissal. They

had no watch to let them see the time, which made the situation all the more agonizing. If the sheriff came in time—though there was not the least reason for supposing he would—they might get out. If he didn't—Bull ground his teeth with rage when he thought of it. If he could have gotten his fingers free and on Mallory's throat there would have been murder done that night.

It was perfectly clear to the yearlings how the former occupants of the cell had gotten out; the broken bar told the story. But the prisoners scarcely noticed that, so wild were they with excitement and suspense and dread.

The time sped on. Nobody knew how much of it, and the four kept their brains busy disputing with each other, some vowing that it was an hour, some a half. It seemed as if Father Time were taking an interest in punishing these villains, for he went with agonizing slowness. Sometimes a minute may seem an age. After all time is only relative; every man has his own time; depending upon the swiftness with which ideas are passing through his mind.

It was thus a very long period, that hour and a half. The four knew not, as the end came near whether it were one hour that had passed or six. And they had almost given up hope and become resigned, when suddenly there came a step that made their hearts leap up and begin to pound.

The outer door opened; then the door to their cell. A figure strode in. It was the sheriff!

A perfect pandemonium resulted. It took the official but a moment to recognize that these were not the lunatics. From their excited and frenzied pleadings he managed to make out the story of their misfortune, their capture by the real lunatics. Also he made out that they were

in a simply agonizing hurry to get out, to go somewhere.

He knew that he had no right to hold them. He stepped forward and cut them loose, showed them to the door. An instant later four figures were dashing up the street toward West Point at a speed that would have done credit to an antelope. This was a go-as-you-please race, each man for himself, and the devil, in the shape of dismissal, take the hindmost.

They sped on, past the boundary of cadet limits, the officer's houses, the Mess Hall. They were careless of consequences, making no effort to hide from any one. Time was too precious. A single glance at the parade ground ahead showed them that the gun had not yet sounded, that still there was hope. Their pace grew faster still at that.

The Academy Building and the chapel they left behind them, and bounded up the road toward the camp. They saw—oh horrors!—the corporal and his single private standing in front of the morning gun, about to fire! And a moment later the four, one after another, dashed wildly around the camp, past the astonished officer of the day, and plunged over the embankment of Fort Clinton, where their uniforms lay hid.

Just then—bang! went the gun.

And two minutes later, red and breathless, but still in uniform and safe, the four signalled the sentry, rushed into camp, and fell in for roll-call with their class-mates on the company street. The escape was narrow; but the miss was as good as a mile.

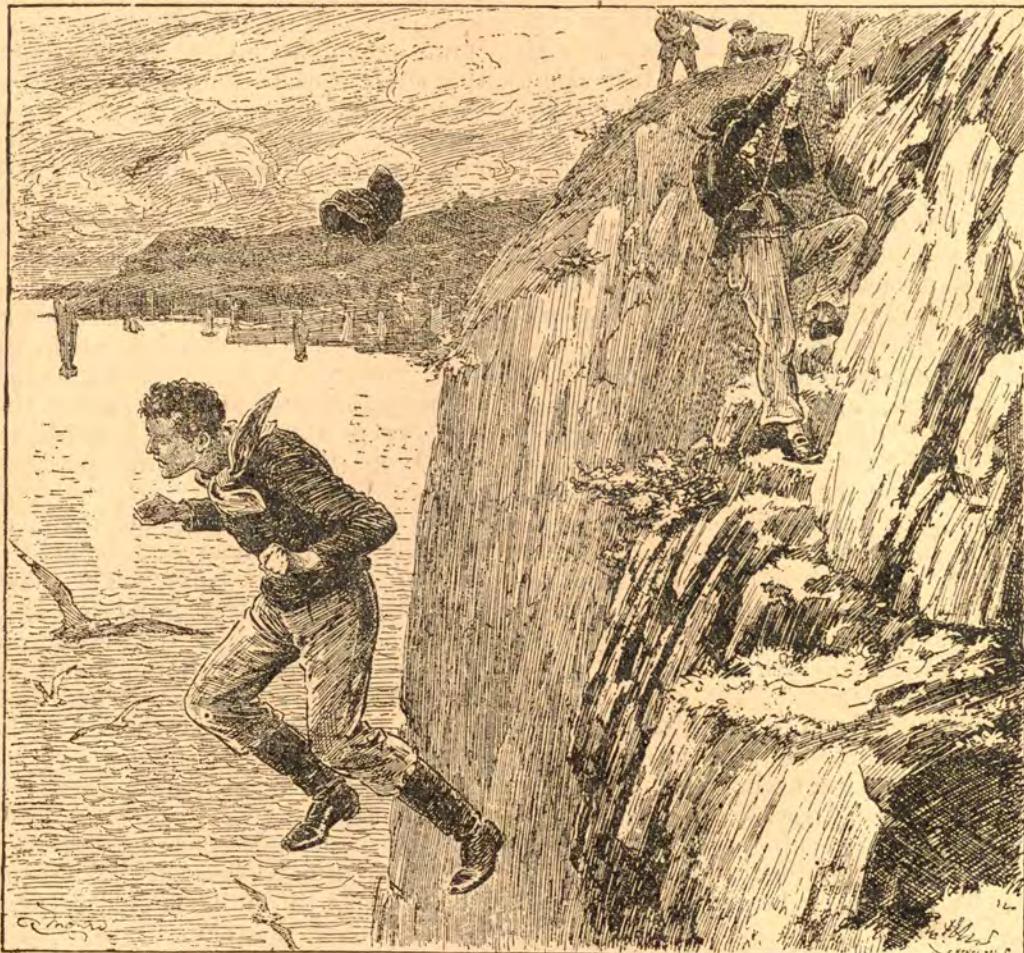
[THE END.]

The next West Point novelette will be entitled, "Mark Mallory's Defense; or, The Siege of the Devil's Den," by Lieutenant Frederick Garrison, U. S. A.



DICK HAMMOND'S LEAP.

BY S. W. BELL.



DICK LEAPED STRAIGHT OUT INTO MIDAIR.

THE present century was still in its infancy when, one fine May morning Dick Hammond strode briskly along the cliff path which led from the little fishing village of Sunningbeam to the large and important seaport, Olivehampton. Dick—known in the locality to which he belonged as "Daring Dick"—was, at the time of our story a strapping young fellow of sixteen, with black locks curling over a brow which constant exposure to all kinds of weather had rendered as brown as a berry.

Although a boy in years, he was a man in strength and experience, for on his young shoulders rested the burden of providing for a family which a tremendous and unexpected gale had left fatherless some ten months since. So this explains why our hero was tramping along with a heavy basket of fish slung across his back, which fish he hoped to dispose of to the good people of Olivehampton before many hours had elapsed.

It was four miles from Sunningbeam to the great seaport. Dick's long legs had accomplished the

greater part of this distance when he reached a small hotel situated on the outskirts of Olivehampton, a few hundred yards from the shore.

Thinking that buxom Mrs. Pride, the landlady of the same, might be in need of some fresh mackerel, Dick walked into the hotel and was proceeding to the kitchen when a loud, hoarse voice arrested his steps.

"What, ho! my fine young seadog!" bawled the owner of the voice, who, judging by the direction from which the sound came, appeared to be in the parlor. "What are your prices to-day, boy?"

Dick, who had passed the parlor door on his way to the kitchen, retraced his steps and entered the apartment in question, since he was always prepared to do business with any one who would do business with him.

Entering the parlor, he saw, sitting at the table, with long pipe in mouth and glass in hand, a boatswain, whose dress showed him to belong to the navy. A dozen other sailors and marines were sitting about the room smoking and drinking.

"Fresh mackerel, sir!" said Dick, swinging the basket off his back and opening it in such a manner that the other could take stock of its contents. "Caught this morning off Sunningbeach and as fine a lot as ever I've netted."

As Dick spoke one of the marines rose carelessly to his feet and sauntered toward the door, against the posts of which he proceeded to lean in such a way that no one could enter or leave the room without first displacing his bulky form.

"They're fine fish, and you are a fine lad," said the boatswain, surveying Dick's lithe form with much interest. "Do you intend to be a fisherman all your life, boy?"

"Ay, ay, sir, it's good enough a life for me," replied Dick, stoutly.

"And you wouldn't like to go fightin'?" asked the boatswain, playing with Dick as a cat does with a mouse, "and get heaps of prize money and as much grog as you like to swallow?"

"I want to sell my fish," replied Dick, bluntly, taking in his surroundings with a wary eye, for, as soon as he had entered the room he had seen that he had fallen into a trap, and was surrounded by the press-gang of the U. S. S. Thunderer, about the doings of which he had heard so much lately.

"But you wouldn't have no more need to sell fish," said the boatswain, persuasively, "if you turned seaman."

"I'm quite content to remain as I am," said Dick, boldly. "And so, sir, perhaps you'll say whether you'll have the fish or not?"

"I won't have the fish; but I'll have you," gruffly rejoined the boatswain. "So will you come along quietly, my lad, or will my jolly sea-boys here have to take you?"

Dick looked round the room and saw that he was one boy against thirteen men, and then he thought of the little white cottage at Sunningbeach, and of the dear ones it contained, and of what they would do if he went off to fight. The mere idea of their helplessness made him set his teeth and determine to escape if he could possibly battle with such fearful odds.

All the members of the gang were tough seamen, wiry and active as cats, any one of whom would be a match for him if it came to a hand-to-hand encounter. As for the man at the door, he was the sturdiest of the lot, and there seemed to be no possibility of upsetting him, muscular and agile though the fisher boy was. But just as he was beginning to despair of ever escaping, Dick's quick eyes noted that the window, which was pretty near the floor, was open.

"Well, boy," said the boatswain, "what's it to be?"

"I'm not after joining the navy, sir," said Dick, "and I want to be about my business, if you're agreeable."

The leader of the gang winked at one of his men, who sprang toward the boy. Dick, quick as lightning, flung his basket of fish at the seaman's head, and at the same time sprang through the open window and sped away as fast as his legs could carry him in the direction of Sunningbeach.

Hardly a moment elapsed, however, before the whole gang were in pursuit of their prey. Dick looked back and saw that the men were not far

behind, and that he would have to run "all he knew" if he wished to elude them. He was pretty confident in his own running powers, for not a man or boy in Sunningbeach could compete with him in point of speed. But he also knew that the marines who composed the gang were picked men, and not at all likely to give up the chase simply because their quarry had got a short start of them.

Dick possessed one advantage over them, which was that he knew every inch of the country, which he would have to traverse in order to place himself out of danger, and he rapidly made up his mind to head for a point of the cliffs from which he could make his way down to a cave known as the "Pigeon's Nest," with the labyrinths of which very few people were acquainted.

As the fugitive neared the point for which he was heading, he observed a party of sailors running toward him from the opposite direction. The members of the press-gang gave a loud shout as they, too, perceived the new comers, who were no other than a portion of the same gang, who had been searching for fresh victims farther afield, and were returning by way of the cliffs.

Dick strained every nerve to reach the desired haven before these fresh foes could come up, and, by dint of a tremendous spurt managed to achieve his object while both parties were still some fifty yards away from him. At this point the cliffs were full a hundred and fifty feet high, and went almost sheer down to the water, which—it being high tide at the time—lay calm and deep below, like a great mill pond.

To the casual eye it would have seemed an impossibility to descend the cliff at this point, but Dick, as I have said before, was well acquainted with the difficulties of the descent and knew that, if once he could get past a certain point safely, he would be beyond reach of a hundred press gangs.

Arrived at the top of the cliff, our fugitive hastily swung himself over its edge, and, taking advantage of every root, bush and projection, rapidly placed a considerable distance between himself and the summit. The sailors and marines in pursuit quickly arrived at the spot which he had just quitted, and at once came to the conclusion—and rightly—that he was making for some hiding place.

One of the party carried a coil of stout rope, and one end of this he hastily proceeded to fasten round his waist.

"If I can get a grip of the young bantam," he said, "he's ours; and I'll make him smart for flinging his fish at my figurehead! Now, my lads, lower away, and when I get hold of him, haul away for all you're worth!"

By this time Dick had reached a broad ledge which stood out from the face of the cliff. He had to drop from here on to another and a narrower ledge, and thence proceed with the utmost caution to slide down to a natural footpath which led to the mouth of the "Pigeon's Nest." From this footpath the cliff went straight down to the beach—one smooth slab of rock.

When Dick reached the broad ledge already mentioned, he looked up and saw that one of his pursuers was being lowered by means of a rope. Now he calculated that this member of the gang would reach him long before he could arrive at the

footpath, and so there was only one chance of escape left.

He must jump into the sea!

The marines on the top of the cliff were gazing intently at the fugitive and his rapidly-approaching pursuer, when they saw the boy put his hands above his head, advance to the edge of the ledge, and, just as the seaman was about to grasp his arm, leap straight out into mid air. Keeping his body perfectly stiff, he shot through the intervening space and fell into the sea with a splash that sent all the gulls in the neighborhood screaming away.

Spellbound at the sight, the press-gang gazed at the spot where Dick fell, feeling pretty certain that he had met his death by adopting such desperate means in order to escape their clutches.

But Dick was a first-rate diver and swimmer, and a few moments after he disappeared he rose to the surface of the water and struck out for a little bit of beach which had not been covered by the tide. The men on the cliff could not refrain from uttering a loud cheer as he reappeared.

"That's a bold boy and no mistake!" exclaimed the boatswain, who had come up in time to witness Dick's leap. "It must be nigh on ninety feet from

that ledge to the water. Well, let him be, lads—he deserves to get away after that. Ah! if every Jack Tar was of like mettle there wouldn't be a single enemy left to fight agen us."

So Dick, not much the worse for his ducking, was allowed to make his way back to Sunning-beach in peace, and when he next went into Olive-hampton the landlady of the hotel paid him for the fish which he had seen fit to leave in her parlor when he had made such an unceremonious exit by the window.

And as the boatswain and his men spread the story of Dick's leap about the town, he found that he was quite a celebrity, and if you go to Olive-hampton you will be shown the spot from which "Daring Dick Hammond" took his great leap into the sea when chased by the press-gang.

Later, as a relation of the family left some money to Mrs. Hammond, Dick went to sea and in course of time, met his old enemy the boatswain, by whom he was greeted and thumped on the back with the utmost cordiality.

And not only did Dick help fight the enemy, but eventually rose to the rank of boatswain himself, and finished up a gallant career by losing his left leg for his country.



THE TREASURE OF ISORA;

OR,

The Giant Islanders of Tiburon.

BY BROOKS McCORMICK,

Author of "How He Won," Etc., Etc.

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("THE TREASURE OF ISORA" was commenced in No. 29. Back numbers can be obtained of all newsdealers,

CHAPTER XII.

PREPARATIONS TO REPEL AN ATTACK.

CAPTAIN WELLPOOL lowered his rifle, which he had aimed at the two men in the boat with his wife and daughter. Probably he would not have pointed it at them if he had not, while down in his cabin, added a very heavy dram to several he had taken before.

But the sudden appearance of the three rudely-built boats, filled with savage giants, was almost enough to sober him, or at least to restore some portion of his common sense to him, for the situation was really appalling, even to him.

The boat had just started from the shore, after being delayed by grounding in the shoal water, and it contained his wife and daughter. Though he was a rather brutal man, he had considerable affection for the members of his own family, exact-

ing as he often was in his requirements upon them, especially upon Dunk, who was not inclined to work any harder than he could help, and for this reason his father was all the more severe with him.

Lon Packwood was still pulling the boat with all his might, but he was farther off than the three boats of the enemy, still he was likely to keep out of their way if an arrow from some sharpshooter among the savages did not disable him.

In a word, the three boats of the Indians were nearer to the Vulture than either the boat which contained Lon Packwood or that in which Mrs. Wellpool and Roxy had embarked; and for this reason the enemy might intercept either or both of them before they could reach the vessel.

Captain Wellpool seemed to be confused, probably because his mind was not clear after he had drenched his brain with whisky, for he did not say a word, though he was usually prompt and decisive at critical times, at least, so far as the management of his schooner was concerned.

The present situation was new and strange to him, and he did not seem equal to the occasion, in his present condition of semi-intoxication, and he did nothing, though it might have puzzled a brighter man than he to know what to do under such circumstances.

It did not yet appear, from any actual demonstration, that the Indians had appeared with hostile intentions, though the captain and his companions, had no doubt of the fact, for they were paddling their boats with all the speed they could get out of them toward the vessel.

Three of the hands belonging to the Vulture were in the two boats, and there remained only five on board of the schooner, and it looked as though they were to bear the brunt of the battle.

"Bring up all the rifles, Duncan," said Captain Wellpool, as soon as he had in some measure collected his scattered senses, and began to realize the perils of the situation.

"Don't you want the revolvers, too, father?" asked Dunk, as he moved toward the companionway.

"Yes; bring up half a dozen of them, with the cartridges. They are in the locker under my berth," replied the captain.

The master of the Vulture had considered the possibility of a quarrel with his former friend and his company, rather than with the Indians, though he did not expect any favor from the latter, and he had provided ten rifles and a dozen navy revolvers, with a sufficient quantity of ammunition or both arms.

The rifles were all breech-loaders, capable of delivering a hundred balls in a very small space of time, depending somewhat upon the skill with which they were handled, if all of them were brought into use.

Captain Wellpool had been confident that he could easily repel the attack of a hundred Indians with this arsenal of weapons, if so many should attack him; but he made his calculations with all the conditions favorable to his own side in the conflict, and he did not suppose such a thing as a separation of his forces, as happened to be the case at the present time.

"It looks as though we were in a bad box," said Mr. Tobias Boscock, the mate, coming up to the captain as soon as Dunk went below.

"It don't look just right at this minute," replied Captain Wellpool, looking first at the boat containing his wife and daughter, and then at the one in which Lon Packwood was struggling to reach the schooner before the savages cut off his retreat.

"Lon ought to pull two miles to their one, and I think he can do it. We want all our men if there is to be a fight, and it looks like it now," continued the mate. "But it is time something was done to stop those villains."

"We will do something as soon as Duncan brings up the arms. Go down into the cabin and help him bring them up, Lord," returned the captain, addressing the cook, who was standing near him, as was also Lark Bidwell, who had been shipped at Rio Janeiro, to take the place of Livy Wooster.

Lord Percy sprang with a will to obey this order, for all the men were nervous while they waited for the attack, or whatever was to happen.

"The boats of the Indians have stopped," said Mr. Boscock, as the cook disappeared. "There is a big fellow standing up in the stern of the head boat looking about him."

"He is pointing to the boat coming from the shore," replied the captain; "and he has not noticed it before. They are having a talk to decide what they will do."

"They have settled it now," said the mate, "for there goes one of the craft in the direction of the boat with the women in it."

"They will capture my wife and daughter as sure as you live!" exclaimed Captain Wellpool. "Leeks and Reeldon can't do anything against twenty of those big fellows."

The captain spoke with a feeling of anguish in his tones, and perhaps he realized by this time that he had been very imprudent in putting off his preparations for defense, of whose necessity even Dunk had been aware.

But Leeks had not been drinking whisky, and having all his faculties at his command, he had taken upon himself, as the abler of the two men, to assume the direction of the affairs of the boat.

As soon as he saw that one of the three boats had headed toward him, he changed his course, and pulled toward the island, at the head of the bay.

The squadron of the savages was nearer to the schooner than the boat from the cottage was, and the change in the course of the latter seemed to cut off the possibility of reaching the Vulture before she was attacked by the gigantic Indians.

"The other two boats are pulling for the vessel," said the mate, after he had noted the action of Leeks.

"I think we can stop that boat," added the captain. "Hurry up with the arms, Duncan!"

"I don't believe they can stand up against rifle shots, if we follow them up sharp," continued Mr. Boscock, as he went down into the cabin to assist in getting out the weapons which were so much needed.

In the Straits of Magellan on the voyage, the men had used the rifles, and all of them had had considerable practice in the use of weapons, so that the captain was confident they would be able to accomplish all that was required of them.

With the aid of the mate, all the rifles and revolvers were brought on deck, and the party on board proceeded to load them for use, which was very readily done with the patent cartridges.

In a few minutes the captain was ready to repel the expected assault, though when he was in a condition for action, he had some doubts about shooting down the Indians before they had actually made any hostile demonstration.

"Sheer off!" he shouted to the head boat of the two that were approaching the schooner. "Keep off! Don't come any nearer!"

It was hardly probable that the savages understood what he said to them, though they were now near enough to hear him; and the captain did the best he could in repeating his warning in Spanish, of which his voyages to the West Indies had given him a slight knowledge.

At any rate, they did not cease to paddle their clumsy craft toward the schooner, and the big fellow in the stern of the head boat replied with what sounded like a yell of defiance.

By this time five breech-loaders were pointed at the enemy.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EFFECT OF BREECH LOADERS.

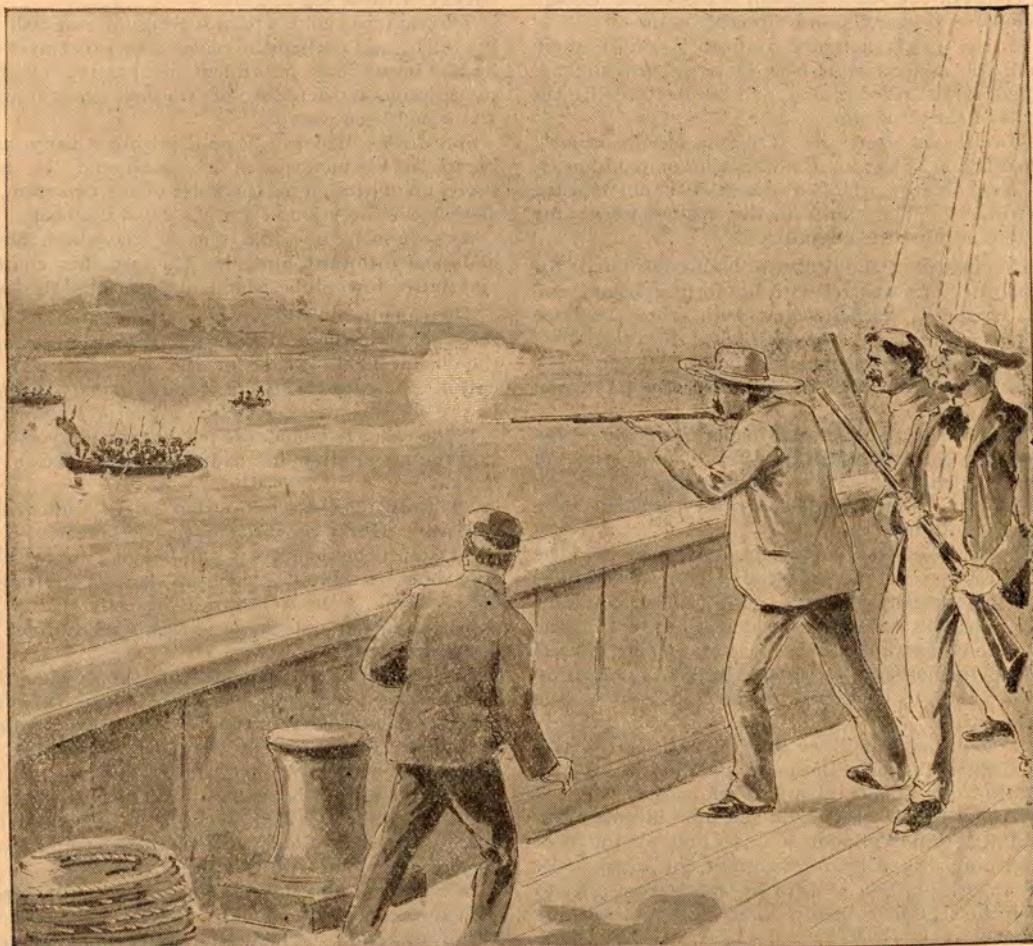
"Keep off, or we will fire at you!" shouted Captain Wellpool, at the top of his lungs, and he attempted to say the same thing in Spanish, though he did not fully succeed.

Another yell of defiance came from the head boat of the savages, with a grand flourish on the part of the chief.

Before the mate could discharge his rifle, several arrows came from the head boat, but all of them fell far short of the vessel, and the defenders of the Vulture had a chance to ascertain the range of the poisoned missiles, if they were poisoned.

"That looks as though the villains meant business," said the captain.

The mate took deliberate aim with his breech-loader at the chief in the stern of the leading boat and then fired. A yell of consternation came from the boat, for the chief sank down into the bottom of the craft while the gaze of all the savages was directed toward him.



THE MATE TOOK DELIBERATE AIM AT THE CHIEF IN THE LEADING BOAT, AND THEN FIRED.

"It is no use to fool with such villains as they are," said the mate.

"I don't think it is," replied the captain. "They say you are the best shot on board, Boscook, and you may put a rifle ball into that fellow in the stern sheets."

"Can't we all fire, father?" asked Dunk, impatiently.

"No; don't one of you fire till you get an order to do so," answered the captain.

"What's the use of fooling with such cattle as they are?" muttered the son, in disgust at the policy of his father.

The paddling ceased, and both boats came to a stand, apparently paralyzed by the disaster to the leading spirit of the expedition, and a confused din of strange sounds came from the scene.

"That was well done, Boscook," said the captain, with something like a smile on his brown and bloated face. "I don't believe they will want anything more of that sort."

"I used to be good for every moose I could see when I went out hunting," remarked the mate, pleased with the commendation of the captain. "But I don't think that will be the end of this business, and though they may change their tactics,

they will be so mad that they won't give up till they have had their revenge."

"If they will only keep at a fair distance from us, I don't care for them," said the captain.

"They won't keep at a fair distance from us; and you will never have any peace while those villains are within fifty miles of us," answered the mate. "If it was my case, I would no more try to settle on that island than I would try to sit down on a hornets' nest."

"Would you give up your plan after you had come twelve thousand miles, and spent as much money as I have to carry it out?" asked Captain Wellpool, greatly astonished at the remark of his companion.

"If I wanted anything on that island I would get it and clear out; but I would not try to live ashore."

"I don't know; we will see," said the captain, as he turned to look at the boat which contained his wife and daughter.

Leeks and Reelton seemed to have no difficulty in keeping out of the way of the craft that was pursuing them, but it was clear enough that they could never reach the Vulture while the boat of the savages was in position to intercept them.

"I think you had better see what you can do on the other side of the schooner, Boscook. Perhaps you can stop that boat, and let my wife and daughter get on board," suggested the captain.

"If we set about it we can drop every Indian in that boat," replied the mate, as he walked over to the other rail of the vessel. "Shall I bring down the big fellow in the stern sheets of that boat, Captain Wellpool?"

"Yes; that boat if you can," replied the captain.

The mate elevated his weapon, and aiming at the fellow who stood up in the stern of the boat, urging on those who were paddling, fired his rifle.

The big Indian put one of his hands on his left shoulder, but he did not fall as the first had done, though it was immediately evident that the shot had produced consternation in his boat, for the paddling ceased.

"You didn't drop him, Boscook, but the villains have stopped paddling, and that is all we want of them," said the captain.

"Here comes Lou Packwood!" shouted Dunk, as the signalman came within hail of the schooner, for the rorer had improved his time while the savages were paralyzed by the sharpshooting of the mate.

All the boats of the Indians had come to a stand, for the two shots had certainly made a decided impression upon them, and brought them to a realizing sense of the danger of attacking civilized people.

Lou Packwood used his oars with renewed vigor when he saw that he could get to the schooner before he was intercepted by the boats of the savages, and in a few minutes more he came alongside of the Vulture.

But he was so exhausted by his exertions that he seemed to be unable to do anything more, and he breathed as though he had just come in from a five-mile foot race.

He threw the painter of his boat on the deck of the schooner, where it was made fast by Dunk,

and then, with his gaze fixed on the enemy, he endeavored to recover his lost wind.

"Come on board, Packwood, and let us know what you have been about," said the captain.

"I can't do anything yet; I am used up," gasped the oarsman.

"Let him rest a minute or two," suggested the mate. "He has spent all the wind there is in him."

Ordinarily the captain would not have waited for any hand, even if he had lost his head, to say anything in opposition to his will, but the experience during the last hour had modified his temper a little, and he turned his attention to the other of the schooner's boats.

Leeks was not slow to realize that something had happened on board of the boat nearest to him, as well as in the others, and he changed his course so as to pass ahead of the former. Mrs. Wellpool and Roxy, with a proper respect for the poisoned arrows of which they had heard, had lain down in the boat, probably by the advice of Leeks, and they were in no immediate danger of being hit by them.

"That is a good move, and Leeks means to run by that boat while it is waiting," said the captain. "No! they see what he is about, and they are paddling again. He can't get by it."

"Perhaps I can stop that boat again, for the fellow that was standing up in the stern was not very badly hurt, though he has dropped down among the rest of them," said the mate, as he raised his rifle.

"Stop it, if you can, Boscook!" exclaimed Captain Wellpool, alarmed for the safety of his wife and daughter, for the Indian boat looked as though it was on the point of falling on the other.

But Leeks was wide awake, and when he saw his danger, he changed his course, pulling away from his dangerous opponent, for at this moment the arrows began to fall near him.

"I think we had all better do the best we can with the rifles," said the captain, when he saw that it would not be possible for the boat to reach the vessel. "All of you fire away as fast as you can, for they are shooting arrows at the boat, and we can't stand any more nonsense."

Boscook fired first, but there was no prominent man in sight now to aim at, and all he could do was to fire into the occupants of the boat without selecting an object for his sight.

The captain and the rest of the party began to fire, and the shots came thick and fast, though the men were unable to see with what effect.

But the firing had hardly begun before the Indian craft changed her course, paddling after the boat, which was headed directly toward the shore, for this was the only direction left open to it.

"Hold on, all!" shouted the mate, after he had discharged several balls from his rifle.

"What is that for?" demanded the captain, who was disposed to keep up the volley.

"You will shoot your wife and daughter if you keep up the fire," replied the mate, who was the coolest man in the party, and was evidently better qualified to command in the affair than Captain Wellpool. "The Indians are between us and our boat, and you may shoot your wife and daughter if you keep it up."

The firing ceased for the present.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEHELPLESS CONDITION OF THE SCHOONER.

Leeks and Reeldon appeared to be increasing their distance from the Indian boat in pursuit of them, and the enemy had ceased to fire arrows at their craft, either because the distance was too great for them, or because they were too much occupied with their paddles to use their time in that way.

While the party on board of the Vulture were busily watching the contest between oars and paddles nearer the head of the bay, Lon Packwood had come on the deck of the schooner.

He had recovered his wind and was in condition to speak, and there was a little respite in the course of the affair which enabled him to explain, if he could, how the savages happened to be in the bay, instead of approaching the entrance of the bay where the schooner had come in.

"What have you been about, Packwood?" asked Captain Wellpool, as soon as he saw the signalman on deck. "Why didn't you let us know that the Indians were upon us soon enough to let us get ready for them?"

That was just like the captain, to ask somebody else why his own duty had not been properly done; for he himself had delayed to do anything till the savages were upon him, in spite of the suggestions of those around him.

"I obeyed my orders to the letter as long as I could, and when I could not do so any longer, I did the next best thing I could," replied Lon, who was a very intelligent young man.

"Then you did not obey your orders?" demanded the captain, sourly.

"I did so as long as I could," returned Lon. "When the orders did not fit the situation, I had to act on my own responsibility."

"You had no business to act on your own responsibility, I gave you orders what to do, and you ought to have obeyed them, and done nothing else."

Captain Wellpool had been below again, and imbibed another tumbler of raw whisky, and his judgment was not a little affected by the increased heat in his brain.

There was something wrong, but he could not realize what it was, for the savages had been expected to appear at the entrance of the bay, whereas they had first shown themselves near the head of the bay, at a short distance from the location of the cottage.

"If I had obeyed my orders, I should have been on the hill at this moment instead of being on board of the Vulture," replied Lon. "My orders were to hoist the signal if I saw any Indians coming toward the island, and that was precisely what I did."

"Where were they when you saw them first?" asked the mate, who saw that the feelings of the signalman were hurt by the remarks of the captain, and that he was very unjust to blame him for what was not his fault.

"Yes; where were the Indians when you saw them first?" repeated Captain Wellpool, whose speech was rather thick after the dram he had just taken. "Tell me just where you first saw them."

"I first saw them down toward the south end of the island, when they were at least three miles from me; and then I hoisted the signal."

"You did hoist it, for I saw it myself," stammered the captain. "But you did not take to your boat and pull to the schooner when the villains came to the entrance of the bay; and you hadn't any business to disobey your orders."

Mr. Boscook looked very nervous and impatient, and it was plain enough that all his sympathies were with the signalman, as it was that the master of the Vulture did not know what he was talking about.

"The Indians did not come to the entrance of the bay, Captain Wellpool," returned Lon, in a decided tone, for he could not help feeling an utter contempt for the master of a vessel who would allow himself to be in such a condition in the hour of imminent danger.

"Didn't the Indians come into the bay?" demanded the tipsy commander. "But I know they did, for I saw them here. I am willing to swear on the mainmast that I saw them in the bay. In fact, they are here now, and there they are."

He reeled to the rail and pointed to the two boats which were still where they were when the chief fell in one of them; and some sort of a discussion seemed to be in progress among the savages.

"The Indians did not come into the bay by the entrance, where we came in," interposed the mate, wishing to protect the signalman from the needless abuse.

"They couldn't be here if they didn't come in," replied the captain, trying to brace himself up for an argument. "Don't you see they are in the bay, Mis' Boscook?" and he pointed at the two boats again.

"I know they are here; but they did not come in the way we did," said the mate.

"How'd they get in then?"

"I don't know, and that is what I should like to ascertain," answered the mate. "Perhaps Lon Packwood can tell us something about it."

"Tell us what you know, Packwood," continued the captain, holding on at the rail to support himself.

"After I hoisted the danger signal, as I was ordered to do, I watched the three boats of the Indians," replied Lon. "They came within a mile and a half or two miles of the hill where I was, and then they paddled in shore."

"What they do that for?"

"They didn't tell me what they did it for, and I couldn't see any reason why they should do so at that time."

"They didn't tell you?"

"They did not; they didn't say a word to me," answered Lon, hardly able to keep his gravity at the silly questions of the captain. "I waited some time for them to appear again; but I did not see anything more of them. I feared there might be something wrong, and I followed the high shore for some distance, till I saw what looked like an opening in the high cliff."

"An opening?" exclaimed the mate.

"It was almost concealed by the trees; but I satisfied myself that there was a passage through the land to the bay. Then I was satisfied that the boats were going through that way, and I ran all the way back to the place where I left the boat, and pulled with all my might to give you warning that the savages would be soon upon you; but I

had not made half a mile before I saw them coming out of a passage among the trees."

The captain had dropped upon one of the water casks lashed to the bulwarks, and by the time Lon finished his narrative he was fast asleep, overcome by the strong drink he had poured down his throat in his excitement.

"He is in a pretty condition to save his wife and children from the Indians," said the mate, and when Dunk had gone forward to obtain a better view of the position of the boat in which his mother and sister were pursued by the savages.

Mr. Boscook said no more, but he was conscious that the duty of the commander devolved upon him in the present state of things, and he was ready to assume the responsibility of his position.

Just as Dunk came aft again, his father rolled upon the deck for the round side of the cask was not a secure position for a man in his condition, and he lay on the deck, unable to get up.

"Here, Lord Percy, take hold of him and we will put him in his berth, for he will be of no use no deck," continued the mate, calling in the cook to his assistance.

Dunk offered no objection to this step, and the

mate and the cook bore the tipsy commander to his stateroom, where he was disposed in an easy position in his berth and left to sleep off his drams.

By this time the two boats nearest to the Vulture appeared to be in motion again, and a bigger man than the one who had been shot down was standing up in the stern of the head one.

It looked as though the discussion had been in regard to the succession to authority, and that the question had been settled by the adoption of the fellow who occupied the place of his predecessor in office.

Mr. Boscook took his rifle again, and directed the rest of the party to do the same, and he took careful aim, and fired, but it did not appear that the new chief had been hit, or, if he was, he made no sign to that effect.

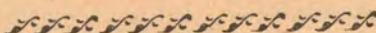
"Sail, ho!" shouted Lon Packwood, at this moment.

All eyes were directed toward the entrance of the harbor, where alone a sail could be seen.

"That's the Albatross!" shouted Dunk.

Captain Ridgefield's vessel had arrived at a critical moment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



A YOUNG BREADWINNER;

OR,
GUY HAMMERSLEY'S TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

The Story of a Brave Boy's Struggle for Fame in the Great Metropolis.

By MATTHEW WHITE, JR.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

WAR ON WHEELS.



BEFORE Colonel Starr could do anything to prevent it, Harold had given vent to a piercing cry, "Help! help!" To be sure the colonel at once clapped his hand over his mouth, but the mischief had been done.

"Hallo; what's up there, I wonder?" said the young wheelman to himself, and checking his speed, he dismounted with the intention of making an investigation.

But meanwhile the instigator of this bold abduction, holding poor Harold with one hand, had leaned over and grasped the lines from Edward with the other.

"Whip up, whip him up, I tell you!" he cried under his breath, and slashing the poor nag on the back with the reins, he tried to urge him into a gallop.

Edward obediently plied the whip, and sur-

prised into a spurt, the horse left his jog trot for a few minutes, so that, when the bicyclist turned round he found the carriage quite a distance in the rear. But this fact only fired him with a greater desire to make his investigation.

"Here's a chance I've been wishing for ever since I learned to ride," he muttered to himself, as, springing into the saddle, he started in pursuit of the vanishing vehicle.

Silently as an airship the rubber-shod steed sped over the ground, and before Colonel Starr was aware that his flight was really a chase, the stranger was alongside.

"Hallo, hold on here!" he called. "I want to speak to you."

"Don't answer him," the colonel warned Edward, still keeping his hand over Harold's mouth. "Drive faster."

This last, however, was something which could not be compassed, especially since the young wheelman had ridden up alongside of the horse and was calling out two "Whoas" for every one of Edward's "Get up theres."

This terribly exasperated Colonel Starr.

"Hi, there," he finally shouted. "What are you doing? Can't you see we're in a hurry? Look out, or we'll run you down."

But to this the cyclist paid no other attention than to slightly turn his head and call back:

"I'm bound to see this thing through. There's something wrong inside there, so you might as well stop and explain first as last."

"Confound your impudence!" roared the colonel. "I'll have you arrested at the first town. What do you mean by obstructing travel on the public highway in this manner?"

The cyclist made no reply, merely spun ahead and straight across the road, right under the horse's nose, crying, "Whoa there!" at the top of his lungs. Now, as the beast was nearly blown from the effect of his spurt, this little act of heading off furnished him with all the excuse he wanted for stopping short, which he did with such suddenness that Edward was thrown forward on his knees with his chin on the dashboard.

The wheelman did not lose a second, but dismounting in a trice and letting his machine down on the ground, he rushed up to seize the horse by the bridle.

"Now, then," he cried, "I want to know who you've got in there that gave that cry for help. Who's that boy that you're holding down, Mr. Fat One?"

There was a twinkle in the young man's eye as he added these last words, but there was no fooling about the tone in which he spoke. He was a tall, well-built fellow, dressed in regular cycling rig, and it was plain to be seen that Edward was already overawed by his appearance.

As for the colonel, he was terrible in his wrath. He could not do much himself, as one arm was fully occupied in keeping Harold quiet. But his voice was unencumbered, and he used some pretty strong language, that is, it was strong, if not pretty. It was all in the line of abuse of the man who dared to stop a traveler on a State highway in this unlawful manner.

"Get out of the way instantly," he thundered, "or I shall drive over you. Edward, go on," and finished up by chirruping loudly to the horse himself.

But with a young giant at his head and only a weak-minded hireling at the reins, the animal decided that he preferred to stand still.

"Now what are you doing to that boy," demanded the wheelman. "Let him talk for himself."

"He is my son, and I have a right to do as I please with him," returned the colonel, finding that he would be compelled to give some explanation.

"Then why are you afraid to let him speak for himself?" returned the stranger promptly.

"I'm not," and removing his hand from Harold's mouth, the colonel bent down and whispered in the boy's ear, "Remember what I told you."

Harold hesitated for an instant. What if the colonel should turn out to be really his father? Besides, if he spoke now and the young man with the bicycle did not succeed in wresting him from the clutches of his captor, his last state would certainly be worse than his first.

But it was only for an instant that the boy hesitated. Then came the thought of his mother, her failing health, and the realization that his disappearance might prove a shock from which she could scarcely rally.

"I will be brave," was the boy's decision, and instantly his clear voice rang out with the words:

"I am not his son. He is kidnapping me. My name is Harold Glenn, and——"

But at this point the colonel, noting the sudden gleam of recognition that came into the wheelman's eyes at the mention of this name, once more clapped his hand over the boy's mouth, and forced him into the back part of the carriage, where he commanded Edward to stand guard over him.

"Oh, ho, I see it all now!" exclaimed the cyclist. "You want the boy for what he can bring you in. What an item for the morning papers! Come, now, instantly set that young gentleman out on the road here, or I will follow you till I get force enough to compel you to do it. Oh, no fear but what I can keep up with you. I am out for an afternoon's ride, with no particular destination, so I can just as well afford the time as not."

The colonel's only reply was a torrent of threats and another attempt to urge the horse on past the determined young man who stood holding his bridle. But the urgings no more moved the horse than did the abuse the man, and things were at this deadlock when a market wagon, loaded to the brim, and bound for the ferry, appeared on the scene.

On the seats were the farmer and his wife, and, as the colonel was the first to catch sight of them, he called out:

"Hey, there, run your team over this young man's wheel, will you? He is trying to stop travel on the highway."

The cyclist turned like a flash.

"Don't you do it!" he cried. "But come and hold his horse while I go into that carriage and rescue a boy this man's trying to kidnap."

"Law's a massy, Ephraim, what be all this?" exclaimed the farmer's wife, as the heavy wagon was brought to a standstill.

"Don't know, Maria, but ef ye'll hold on ter the animals, I'm boun' ter fin' out," and, as he spoke, "Ephraim" climbed down from his lofty perch, and with eyes agog walked over to the spot where the young bicyclist was standing.

"Here, hold this horse, and don't let him stir, no matter what the fellow in there says," commanded the man who had stopped travel, and, without giving the farmer opportunity to say whether he would or wouldn't, he sprang upon the shaft, and in another instant was grappling with the colonel.

"Now you scoot out the back—never mind tearing the curtains," he called out to Harold.

For the colonel had been obliged to call Edward to his aid, and thus left free Harold was not slow in availing himself of the opportunity for escape pointed out to him by his unexpected champion. Pressing against the rear curtain of the rickety vehicle with all his might, he worked himself down, feet foremost, the slimy canvas answering with a "sish sish" to the strain.

The next instant he was on the ground, and in

obedience to the beckoning hand of the farmer's wife, made a dash for the clumsy vehicle and in a trice was seated on the lofty driver's perch.

As soon as the young wheelman became aware that his plan had been successful, he adroitly extricated himself from the entwining arm of the colonel, who was as clumsy as he was big, sprang back to the ground, and calling to the farmer to leave the horse's head, administered a lusty slap on the hip to that much-enduring animal which sent him off on another spurt.

"For the love o' mercy, what war all the trouble about?" inquired the old farmer, rubbing his chin, and gazing from the rescuing cyclist to the rescued boy as if he had been bewitched by one or the other of them, he couldn't decide which. "I jess stepped down ter look into matters—didn't want ter take sides till I was sartain what one I ought to go in with, but somehow——"

"Never mind, squire," broke in the young man. "You did just the right thing, and you'll never regret it, and I'll see that they spell your name right when they put it in the papers to-morrow morning."

"My name in the papers!" repeated the old man, looking more dazed than ever.

"Yes, yes," the other assured him. "But we haven't time to stop and explain matters now. I'll do that on the ferryboat. Just you take that young gentleman along with you to the river, and I'll see that our fat friend doesn't interfere again."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FREQUENT CHANGING OF SUBJECT.

Our friend, the cyclist who had championed Harold's cause, did not find it necessary to prevent Colonel Starr from interfering with the boy's journey to the ferry on the farm wagon. The colonel evidently considered that it would be best for himself in the end to own up to being beaten, for he never turned is carriage around.

The farmer's horses were put to a trot, so that the wheelman could ride by the side of the wagon, and Harold told his story. It would be hard to say whether the worthy couple who had assisted in the rescue were more astounded at the boldness of the colonel's scheme for abduction than at the fact that such a small boy should be a "play actor."

The wheelman gave his name as Stanley Cross, and on reaching the New York side padlocked his machine and left it at the ferry house while he went up town with Harold.

"I'm ever so much obliged to you both," said the latter, in parting with farmer Ephraim and his wife, "and if you'd like to see me act I'll get Mr. English to send you tickets for the first matinee if you'll give me your address."

"Well, well, I do declare now," was all the old man could say, but he produced the stub of a lead pencil and wrote directions for sending the tickets that filled the entire back of an old envelope Cross handed him, for he was so fearful the letter would miscarry that he put down the county and township even.

It was by this time five o'clock and almost dark.

"I wonder if mamma knows about it yet," remarked Harold, soberly, as he and Cross descended

the elevated stairs at Ninety-third street. "If she does, she must—— Why, there's Guy!"

And so it was, and Ridley Westmore and Arthur Shepard with him, all three with the most solemn visages. They were just about to cross the avenue to the down-town station when Harold saw them.

"Guy, Guy!" he called out, making a dash for the middle of the street. "Were you looking for me?"

All three of the young fellows started as though it had been Harold's wraith who had spoken. Then they pounced on the boy in a body, and for awhile there was such a babel of questions and exclamations that there was no room for either answers or counter queries.

But at length Harold managed to make them understand that not himself but Mr. Stanley Cross was the hero of the day, whereupon the whole party right about faced and bore Mr. Cross off to the flat to receive the thanks of Mrs. Hammersley.

"Does she know?" asked Harold.

"Well, we didn't tell her you were lost," returned Guy. "We only let her suppose that you were 'misled.' But what an audacious scheme of Starr's that was! He counted on your being chicken-hearted Harry, my boy, and that is where he slipped up. But what a 'jolly scare' as Ward would say the whole thing has given us! When I got to the Westmore's at dinner time I found Ridley here fuming away, for he'd got it into his head that I must have sent for you, and the people at the theatre in telling about it had got things mixed."

"And didn't you ever think that Mr. Starr—I just won't call him 'colonel'—had anything to do with it?" asked Harold.

"How should we? When I found you weren't at the Westmores', we posted down to the Jura to see Shepard about it, and it was he told us the note that took you away was supposed to have come from Ridley here."

"And what did you do then?" Harold wanted to know.

"Betook ourselves to the Westmore stables as quickly as an engine could carry us, only to find out that nobody there knew anything about you. Then we came over home and were just bound, some of us for police headquarters, others to put a note in the papers, when we met you."

Before they reached the flat Ridley and Cross discovered that they knew friends in common, and on opening the door of the cozy little apartment another surprise was found to be in waiting. This was Judge Dodge, who had come to call on Mrs. Hammersley, and whom Ruth was endeavoring to entertain without letting him know that Harold was missing.

"I should have felt so humiliated," she explained afterward, "to have him think that we couldn't take care of the boy after we'd got him."

But there was no keeping the thing secret now, and a general jollification over the "lost found" was held in those little rooms. Besides it was all out in the papers next morning exactly as Stanley Cross had predicted. Indeed, Guy more than suspected that the enterprising young gentleman had a hand in getting it there, as he was a Columbia sophomore with a predilection for scribbling. And he was heard to remark, moreover, that the publi-

cation of the item would prove a first-class advertisement for the new Fauntleroy.

Well, the first performance was a great success. Harold became the talk of the town, the Four Hundred "took him up," and the Hammersley's modest flat formed the stopping place for many swell turnouts, whose owners were only too rejoiced if the "little lord" would condescend to take a turn in the park with them. And such an avalanche of requests for autographs came in that Ward suggested Harold should get a typewriter to save him from writer's cramp in supplying them.

Judge Dodge remained in the city, and twice attended the theatre with Mrs. Hammersley, who soon became well enough to take Guy's place as Harold's dresser. Of course Harold's salary removed all cause of financial worriment from the minds of the members of the "assorted family," and the sight of the boy's glowing face as he placed the envelope containing it in his mother's lap was something long to be remembered.

Now that Mrs. Hammersley had recovered and no longer needed her ministrations, Ruth, through Dr. Pendleton's influence, secured three pupils for violin instruction, and by the first of February had saved up enough money to pay the passage back to England of herself and Ward. They were to sail on Washington's Birthday.

On Valentine's Day Ruth, chatting with Guy at the breakfast table, remarked, with a smile:

"Mrs. Westmore called again yesterday afternoon. She seems to take it very much to heart that you won't come and live with them. She told Mrs. Hammersley that it was your loyalty to her that kept you here. 'Of course, I understand, Mrs. Hammersley,' she said, 'just how he feels about it, for now that the Farleighs are going away you would be here all alone with the boy.' And—" Here Ruth stopped, colored a little, then went on hesitatingly: "I don't know whether I ought to tell you this or not. Or perhaps you have guessed it yourself."

"Guessed what?" exclaimed Guy, his curiosity thoroughly aroused.

"Well, perhaps you know already," returned Ruth, toying with the spoon in her coffee cup, "and in that case it would be—would be rather embarrassing for me to tell you. Really, now, haven't you any idea of what I mean?"

"Really, I shall begin to think terrible things of somebody unless you tell me plainly what all this is about."

"No, I won't tell it," rejoined Ruth. "I can't. But I'll tell you something else, from which you can infer the other. When Mrs. Westmore said that about your wanting to stay here to keep your mother company, Mrs. Hammersley blushed and changed the conversation. Now do you see?"

"No, I don't," returned Guy, bluntly; "and it's my opinion you're dodging the point at issue."

"Yes, that's just it," burst forth Ruth, with a nervous little laugh. "It's Judge Dodge."

Then Guy comprehended, and wondered why he had been so blind before.

It was even so. Their common interest in Harold had taught Judge Dodge and Mrs. Hammersley to have a common interest in one another, and very soon he who had been the boy's grandfather in name became his stepfather in reality. And at the close of the New York season Harold was withdrawn from the stage and went to live again in that beautiful home in Brilling. The day of the marriage Guy took him to the Westmores with him, where he remained during the wedding trip, and where Guy himself has now taken up his permanent residence.

Early in June he and Ridley drove out to Rye, as the latter was extremely anxious to see the place. They found that the major was dead, and that his son, the owner, had returned to America for a few weeks to see if he could not dispose of the property.

"Now I'm going to find out how that front door came to be locked after you had gone inside," said Ridley, when Guy had pointed out Max to him.

A few inquiries elicited the information that the German had become nervous at the wedding lest he had failed to lock the door behind him, and had come back and tried it. Finding it open, and the key under the mat, where he always placed it, he concluded that he had done what he had suspected himself of doing, locked the door, and hurried back to the festivities.

Ridley was very enthusiastic about the beauties of the place, got his father on his side, thumped his brain till he thought of "View Point" as a new name, and then induced his mother and sister to put aside their prejudice and come up again and look at it. The result was a purchase—after Ridley had agreed to take the major's rooms for his own, with Guy to share them.

And here our hero spends his summers. His salary has already twice been raised at Kenworthy & Clarke's, where he and Arlington—who now shares Shepard's rooms at the Jura—are held in high regard. Guy is obliged to submit to a good deal of teasing from Bert on the score of Amy Westmore. His standard reply to these thrusts is:

"But we are cousins."

"Three times removed, though," laughs Bert, adding: "Three times and out, you know, which in your case, my boy, is sure to mean in—the toils of matrimony."

Whereupon Guy always changes the subject, as Mrs. Hammersley did before him.

[THE END.]



A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH;

or,

HOW RUFUS RODMAN WON SUCCESS.

By ARTHUR LEE PUTNAM.

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CHAPTER VII.

C H E C K M A T E D .



HEN Wilton left the room Rufus crawled out from under the bed. "It's as good as a play," he ejaculated, his face expanding with a broad smile. "I'd like to see Wilton when he opens that wallet."

Joshua Beckwith burst into a hearty laugh.

"I reckon he'll find he's tackled the wrong critter," he chuckled. "Country folk ain't always greenhorns."

"Of course not," responded Rufe, but he could not help thinking how cleverly Mr. Beckwith would have been outwitted but for his interference. He did not care, however, to interfere with his companion's complacency.

"Shall I open the package?" asked Joshua.

"No, Mr. Beckwith, Wilton will be back soon, and you will want to open it before him, or he will pretend that it contained what he said."

"Do you think he'll be back, then?"

"Yes, I am sure of it. When he comes I'll dive under the bed again. I want to see, or hear, the rest of the fun."

Rufus was right. Fifteen minutes later a hasty step was heard advancing along the corridor. Rufe had barely time to get under the bed when a loud and imperative knock resounded on the door.

"Come in!" said Joshua, who had been coached by Rufe as to the part he was to play.

"What, Mr. Wilton!" he exclaimed in apparent astonishment. "I didn't expect you back so soon."

"I daresay not," said Wilton, who seemed to be mad through and through. "You thought I wouldn't find out the mean trick you played upon me."

"Take a seat, Mr. Wilton. You seem to be excited. Sit down and cool off. What's the matter?"

"I'll let you know what's the matter, sir. You have swindled me."

"You don't say! How could I, a country greenhorn, swindle a man like you?"

"I thought you were an honest man."

"You'd better not say I ain't, Wilton, or by the livin' jingo, I'll fire you out of the room quicker'n a wink. Now tell me what's the matter."

"Didn't you engage to give me two hundred and fifty dollars in good money?"

"Didn't I?"

"Didn't you? Look at that!" and the angry man took the wallet from his pocket and drew out the strips of worthless paper with which it was filled. "What do you call that? You don't know me, Beckwith. I'm a bad man when I get riled. I've a great mind to call in the police. What will your friends in Greenville say when they hear that you are in jail?"

He expected to see Beckwith show signs of terror, but Joshua looked calm and imperturbable.

"Hold on a minute, Wilton!" he said. "What was I to give you two hundred and fifty dollars for?"

"For green goods."

"Where are they?"

"In that package."

The package lay on the bed unopened, its real contents unsuspected, as Wilton thought. It was this that made him so bold.

"I haven't looked into it. I guess I'll open it."

"You'd better not," said Wilton, hastily. "It may get you into trouble. Put it into your carpet bag and open it when you get home, that's my advice—that is, when you pay for it as you agreed."

"Do you certify that it contains a thousand dollars' worth of bank bills?"

"Yes, sir."

"So much like the genuine that I can pass it anywhere?"

"Of course."

"Only it ain't genuine?"

"No; if it were I would not sell it at twenty-five cents on a dollar."

"You guarantee it, do you, Mr. Wilton?"

"Of course I do; but I haven't got any time to waste. I've performed my part of the contract. Now give me the two hundred and fifty dollars you promised, or I'll make it hot for you."

Wilton assumed a threatening tone, and frowned ominously.

"It may be as you say, Wilton," said Joshua, "but I'd rather make sure. I'm goin' to open this package and see what's in it."

"I warn you not to do it. It isn't exactly legal, as I told you before, and it will be safer to wait till you get back to Greenville."

"That may be, but I'm not easily scared, Wilton. I'm goin' to open it, and in the presence of a witness."

"What do you mean?" asked the swindler, nervously. "Where are you going to find a witness?"

"I shan't have to look far. Here, boy, you're wanted."

Rufus needed no second bidding, but crawled out from under the bed before the astonished gaze of Leonard Wilton.

"What does this mean?" he ejaculated.

"It means, Wilton, that I ain't quite such a greenhorn as you thought I was."

Joshua Beckwith whipped out a big jack-knife and began to cut the cords that confined the package.

Wilton sprang from his seat and made for the door.

"You have played a trick upon me!" he exclaimed. "I won't stay here to be insulted."

"Not so fast, Wilton," responded Beckwith, placing his back against the door. "You don't move out of this room till I've found out what is in that package."

Leonard Wilton eyed doubtfully the tall, athletic form of his country acquaintance, and decided that he would have to submit. He resumed his seat sullenly while Beckwith cut the cords.

Opening the package it was found to contain a thick pile of green paper slips cut in the shape of a bank note.

"I guess you've made a little mistake, Wilton," said Joshua, coolly. "Our folks up in Greenville ain't quite so green as to take this for genuine money. You've tackled the wrong critter this time. What have you got to say for yourself, any way, Wilton?"

"I've got this to say, that you'd never have found out the trick for yourself, you thick-headed granger. It's this boy that's put you on the scent."

"Well, he did drop me a little hint that you was a scalawag, and I had better not trust you too far."

"I thought so. He'd better have minded his own business."

"And not interfere with an honest man, hey, Wilton?"

"I'll get even with you, boy, for this!" said Wilton, furiously. "Just let me get you alone, and——"

"And what?" asked Rufe, boldly.

"I'll teach you a lesson you won't soon forget."

"Thank you, Mr. Wilton; you're very kind, but you don't scare me. I shan't lose any sleep over what you say."

"You can go now, Wilton," said Joshua stepping aside from his position in front of the door. "The best of friends must part, you know!"

"Confound you for a stupid fool!" said the adventurer, savagely.

"I wasn't quite stupid enough to get taken in by you. Good-by, Wilton. Don't forget your package."

But by this time Wilton was on his way downstairs.

"My young friend," said Joshua Beckwith, changing his tone, "you've done me a good turn. If it hadn't been for you I'd have been two hundred and fifty dollars out, and served me right, too, for conspirin' to cheat the gover'ment. I want you to accept this money to show that I'm sensible of what you've done."

He drew from his vest pocket a ten dollar bill and offered it to Rufus.

The boy hung back.

"I'd rather not take it, Mr. Beckwith."

"I'd rather you would," said Joshua, earnestly. "If you won't take it as a gift, I'll lend it to you,

and when you're rich enough you can return it to Joshua Beckwith, of Greenville, New Hampshire."

"Thank you, sir. If you put it that way, I'll take it. And now, Mr. Beckwith, I'll bid you good-by."

"Not just yet, boy. I want you to dine with me. We'll have a good dinner, too, if it breaks me."

Mr. Beckwith was as good as his word. He gave Rufus such a dinner in the hotel restaurant as he never remembered to have eaten before. When he rose from the table he was obliged to loosen his vest. Later in the afternoon he guided his new friend to the Fall River boat, and returned to his room feeling that he had been a favorite of fortune.

"Look at that, Micky!" said he, showing his ten-dollar bill. "Would you advise me to buy a house on Fifth avenue or——"

"Put it in the savings bank," said Micky, promptly.

"Micky, you're a boy of sense," said Rufe. "I'll do it to-morrow."

The next forenoon he had an errand to Brooklyn, and on his return decided to walk across the bridge. About midway his attention was drawn to a young man of perhaps twenty-five, whose unsteady gait showed that he had been drinking too much. Rufus was but a few feet behind him, when the young man, under some mad impulse, swung himself to a plank that crossed the cable road to an electric lamp, darted across this and clambered hastily down an iron girder to the roadway, across which he dashed and started to climb the outer parapet, with the evident intention of throwing himself into the river. Rufe took it all in at a glance, and followed with all possible speed.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE.

Rufe seized him forcibly by the leg just in time.

"Let go!" shouted the young man, struggling desperately.

Rufe did not answer, but exerting all his strength held the inebriate till he was compelled to jump back to the driveway.

"What were you goin' to do?" asked Rufe.

"I don't know," answered the young man, gazing about him with a vacant expression.

"Did you want to drown yourself?"

The inebriate muttered something about swimming across.

Rufus took the opportunity to scrutinize the man he had rescued. He was a young fellow of middle height, very well dressed, and appeared to be in good circumstances, perhaps rich. It was difficult to conceive a reason for such a man wishing to make away with himself.

"Where do you live?" asked Rufe.

"I am stopping at the Grand Central Hotel."

"Shall I go home with you?"

"I wish you would—I don't feel right here," and the young man put his hand to his forehead.

"Will you take my arm?" said Rufus—noticing that his companion found a difficulty in walking straight.

"Yes," answered the young man, who seemed disinclined to say more than was necessary.

When they reached the New York end of the bridge he walked with difficulty, and Rufus suggested taking the horse cars.

"No, take a carriage," said the young man.

"That will cost more," said Rufus, in a tone of hesitation.

He could not tell whether the young man had money enough for hack hire.

"Here, take my pocketbook and pay out of that," said his companion, handing a well-filled wallet to our hero. "Put it in your pocket, and give it to me at the hotel."

"All right, sir."

Rufus had no difficulty in securing a hack, and a few minutes brought them to the Grand Central Hotel.

When Hugh Morrill, for that was the young man's name, entered his chamber, escorted by his young companion, he asked Rufus to remove his coat and vest, and threw himself on the bed.

"I suppose you won't want me any more, Mr. Morrill," said our hero. "Here is your pocket book."

"Don't go away! I'm not fit to be left alone. Stay with me! I'll pay you. What is your name?"

"Rufus Rodman."

"Are you a poor boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll pay you for your time. Stay with me."

"All right, Mr. Morrill, if you want me to. Is there anything I can get for you?"

"No. I'm going to take a sleep. You can sleep, too—on the sofa."

"Very well, sir."

Rufus took the stranger at his word and lying down on a luxurious sofa soon fell asleep himself. He had been at the theatre late the previous night, having ventured to treat Micky and himself to an evening's amusement out of the ten dollars which Joshua Beckwith had given him. This and the unwonted softness of his bed invited slumber, and three hours passed before he woke up. As he opened his eyes he saw Hugh Merrill sitting up in bed, eyeing him with a puzzled look.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Rufus Rodman."

"Are you a friend of mine?"

"I hope so," answered Rufe, with a smile.

"How did you get in?"

"Don't you remember that I brought you home from the Brooklyn Bridge?"

Light dawned upon the young man, and the events of the morning came back to his recollection.

"Was—I very drunk?" he asked.

"You could not walk straight, Mr. Morrill."

"Did—I try to do anything foolish?"

"You tried to jump off the bridge."

"And you pulled me back?"

"Yes, sir."

"I remember now; I thought I was going to have a swim. I am a very good swimmer, and have been from a boy. I didn't mean to commit suicide, though it looked like it. I was not in a condition to know what I was about."

"That is what I thought, sir."

"And you saved my life," continued the young man, earnestly.

"I suppose, I did, sir," answered Rufus, modestly.

"You must think I am a great fool!"

"I think anyone is foolish who drinks too much," said Rufus, frankly.

"You are right, there, but I was not perhaps so foolish as you imagine. I only drank one glass of whisky."

"Would one glass of whisky affect you like that?"

"That is what I don't understand. I'll tell you how it is. I got acquainted with some young men at a billiard saloon, and they invited me to drink. I think the whisky was doctored."

"Somethin' put in it, sir?"

"Yes, I took out my pocketbook, and they saw that I had considerable money, and I think there was a plot to get me into a condition where I might be robbed without knowing it."

"Did they rob you, sir?"

"No; though I felt my senses reeling, I managed to escape from them when their backs were turned. I wandered out, I don't know where. The first thing I knew I was on the bridge. Then an insane impulse led me to climb the parapet, and but for you I should have jumped into the river, and that would have been the last of Hugh Morrill."

The young man concluded with a shudder.

"If one of the bridge policemen had seen you he would have arrested you," said Rufe.

"That is something else from which you have saved me," said the young man. "I wouldn't for a good deal have had this wretched adventure get into the papers. People would have thought I was regularly drunk, and I should have felt no end of mortification."

"Well, it turned out all right, Mr. Morrill."

"What do you do for a living?" asked the young man.

"Sell papers, run errands, anything I can get to do."

"Have you got a father and mother?"

"No," answered Rufe, soberly, "I'm my own master."

"Then I am better off than you. I have a good father and mother. My father is a rich manufacturer in Syracuse. I live at home generally. I only came to the city on a business errand. I got here last evening, and thought I would enjoy myself a little before attending to what brought me here. That was a great mistake—as my father would say, business first, and pleasure afterward."

"That's a good rule."

"You are right, my boy."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Open the door, Rufus."

"Here's a card, sir. Gentleman below wants to see you," said the bell boy.

Rufus glanced at the card and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

The card bore a name which he knew pretty well already. It read thus:

"Leonard Wilton."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOY IN THE WARDROBE.

"Do you know this person, Rufus?" asked Morril, noticing the boy's exclamation."

"Yes, sir."

"Then you have the advantage of me. I don't

remember that I ever heard the name. What sort of a person is he in appearance?"

This query was addressed to the hall boy.

"He is a young man, rather tall, wears a light overcoat."

"It is one of the men who were with me this morning. How could he have tracked me to this hotel?"

"Perhaps you mentioned where you were staying," said Rufus.

"It is very probable that I did, though I am not very clear as to what passed between us."

"Will you see him, sir?"

"Wait a minute. What do you know about him, Rufus?"

"I know that he is a confidence man. I prevented his swindling an old gentleman from the country yesterday."

"Indeed! Then he is a professional."

"If he comes up let me hide somewhere and hear what he says. If he sees me he won't show himself out."

"A good idea! There is no closet, but you can hide yourself in that wardrobe."

"All right, sir."

Soon steps were heard approaching, and after a slight knock Leonard Wilton entered the room with an engaging smile.

"My dear fellow," he said. "I have found you at last. You gave us the slip."

"How did you know I was here?" asked Morrill, abruptly.

"You told us where you were staying. Don't you remember?"

"Did I? Well, very likely."

"But why did you leave us so suddenly?"

"I wasn't feeling quite well, and went out into the street. I thought the fresh air might do me good."

"I hope it did."

"Oh, yes; I am feeling better now. I have had a nap."

"How on earth did he manage to get home?" thought Wilton. "The potion couldn't have been as strong as I supposed."

"That's unfortunate," he said, aloud. "We had a good time, or would have had if we had not been anxious about you."

"I hope you won't give yourself any concern on that score," said Morrill, dryly. "You are very kind to feel such an interest in a stranger."

"My dear fellow, you don't seem like a stranger," said Wilton, effusively. "You are the image of a very dear cousin of mine, who was at college with me—quite inseparable companions we were. Really, I never saw a more remarkable resemblance."

"I hope he was goodlooking," said Morrill, with a smile.

"Unusually so, but I mustn't say more, or you will think I mean to flatter you. The fellows deputed me to come round and see if you were all right, and also to invite you to join a little social circle this evening. We are to meet at the house of one of the club and may have a quiet game of cards, or go to the theatre, if you like it better."

"Really, Mr. Wilton, I am unused to such marked attention from comparative strangers."

"My dear fellow, all the boys have taken a

fancy to you. I wish you would come to New York to live. We would see that you had a good time. You would make plenty of friends."

"I have no doubt of it. By the way, Mr. Wilton, are you a business man?"

"I am ashamed to say that I am not. My father left me independent as far as money goes, and I am afraid I have wasted my time. But I am young yet, and I mean to buckle down to hard work before long."

"I am a business man already, and do not find as much time for enjoyment as you and your friends."

"Very sensible indeed. You are a bee while I am a drone. However, you can spend this evening with us, and devote to-morrow to business. What do you say?"

"Before deciding you will permit me to consult a friend of mine. Rufus!"

The door of the wardrobe was thrown open, and Rufe Rodman stepped into the room. Leonard Wilton stared at him in ill-concealed amazement, as well he might.

"Confusion!" he muttered. "How comes that kid here?"

"How do you do, Mr. Wilton?" said Rufe. "I didn't expect we should meet again so soon."

"Who are you, boy?" demanded Wilton, loftily.

"Don't you remember meeting me yesterday, Mr. Wilton?"

"Are you the boy that blacked my boots in city hall park?"

"No, I'm not in that business. I met you at a hotel in the Bowery."

"You are quite mistaken, young man," said Wilton, with effrontery.

"You don't remember Joshua Beckwith, of Greenville, New Hampshire?" continued Rufe.

"Really, boy, I don't understand your meaning. You evidently mistake me for some one else. Is Beckwith a friend of yours?"

"Yes, Mr. Wilton, but he doesn't feel very friendly to you. That green goods you came so near selling to him—"

"Is this boy drunk or crazy, Mr. Morrill?" asked Wilton, trying to brazen it out. "May I ask where you picked him up?"

"He picked me up," answered Morrill. "If he is crazy, there is a method in his madness. Rufus, be kind enough to tell me what you know of this gentleman, and then I will decide whether to accept his invitation or not."

Leonard Wilton rose from his seat, for he saw that there was little chance now of carrying out his scheme.

"I cannot consent to remain here and allow myself to be calumniated by a low ragamuffin," he said. "I warn you, Mr. Morrill, that he is deceiving you. I know him to be a thief and—"

"I thought you had never seen him before," said Morrill, shrewdly.

"I thought I had not, but I now remember seeing him on trial before the Court of Special Sessions, for stealing an opera glass from a house where he was engaged to make fires. I think he was sent to the island for three months."

"Whew!" exclaimed Rufus. "What news we hear of ourselves. Mr. Wilton, you ought to write stories. You'd be a success."

"Don't speak to me, you young rascal!" said Wilton, with concentrated anger. "If it were not for the presence of this gentleman, for whom I feel respect, I would thrash you before I left this room. I am really sorry, Mr. Morrill, that you have allowed this young reptile to creep into your confidence. I forgive you for misjudging me. Some day you will find out your mistake."

With a ceremonious bow, Wilton left the room, in apparently good order, but when he was fairly out in the hall he gave way to an access of fury, shaking his fist and grinding his teeth.

"How in the name of all that's mysterious, did that young cub manage to fall in with Morrill?" he exclaimed. "He seems born to defeat my plans. This is the second time he has interfered with me and prevented my making a good haul. If he were a man now I wouldn't mind so much, but a ragged boy—it makes me ashamed!"

"Really, Rufus, that is a good comedy!" said Hugh Morrill, after his visitor had left the room. "Now tell me under what circumstances you met this fellow. He seems the very prince of swindlers."

Rufe told the story in a graphic manner, with an occasional touch of humor which served to amuse his auditor.

"The fellow seems enterprising," said Morrill.

"He is such a clever rascal that I don't need to feel wholly ashamed at so nearly falling a victim to his wiles. He and his gang would have found me a rich prey. How much money do you think I have about me?"

"A hundred dollars?" guessed Rufe.

"That would be a trifle. This wallet," drawing it from his pocket, "contains two thousand dollars."

Rufe eyed the wallet with evident awe. The young man seemed to him a second Vanderbilt.

"Isn't it risky carryin' about so much money?" he asked.

"Yes, it is. It would have served me right if I had lost it; but all the same it would have been very disagreeable. I will put the greater part of it in the hotel safe as soon as I go down stairs."

"Do you want me any longer, Mr. Morrill?"

"No; but you may come around to the hotel tomorrow morning at ten. Wait a minute! You have done me a favor, and I want to make a suitable acknowledgment."

As the young man spoke he detached a bank bill from the roll and handed it to Rufe.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



THE CRYPTOGRAM.

A Story of North-West Canada.

BY WILLIAM MURRAY GRAYDON.

Author of "A Legacy of Peril," "In Forbidden Nepal," etc.

("THE CRYPTOGRAM" was commenced in No. 27. Back numbers can be obtained of all newsdealers.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

A STOLEN INTERVIEW.



HE news of so unexpected an event spread quickly through the fort, and by the time the gates had been closed and barred again, men were hurrying forward from all sides. They surrounded the travelers, greeting them eagerly, and plying them and their guides with rapid questions.

I held aloof, for I was in too bitter a mood to trust myself to speech. The reasons that had brought the London law clerk to Fort Royal—a journey of hundreds of miles through the wilderness—gave me no concern; but I knew what Father Cleary's visit meant, and what would follow speedily on his arrival. Surely, I reflected, there could be no man living more wretched than myself. I thought I had become resigned to the loss of Flora, but now I knew that it was a delusion. I could not contemplate her approaching marriage without grief and heartburning—without a mad desire to dare the worst and claim the girl as my own.

The dogs and sledges were going to the stable, and the travelers, still hemmed in by a crowd, were moving toward the factor's house. Griffith Hawke caught sight of me, and made a gesture; but I

pretended not to see him, and turning on my heel, I strode away to a far corner of the yard.

An hour of solitude put me in a calmer frame of mind—outwardly, at least. The supper horn drew me to quarters. I had little appetite, but I made a pretense of eating, and tried to answer cheerfully the remarks that my comrades addressed to me.

By listening I learned much of interest. The men kept up a ceaseless chatter and discussion, and the sole topic of conversation was the arrival of Christopher Burley and the priest. The travelers, it appeared, had come together from Fort York—where all was quiet at the time of their departure—and by the same roundabout road our party had traversed some days before. Strange to say, they had encountered no Indians, either on the way or when near the fort, and for this the men had two explanations. A part asserted that the redskins had moved off in the direction of Fort York, while others were of the opinion that they had purposely let the travelers enter unmoisted in order to deceive our garrison.

The discussion waxed so hot that no reference was made to the motive of the priest's visit, for which I was heartily thankful. I was anxious to get away from the noise and the light, and as soon as I had finished my supper I rose. Just then Andrew Menzies, a non-commissioned officer of the company, entered the room.

"Carew!" he called out; "the factor wants to see you when you can spare the time."

"All right; I'll go over to the house presently," and lighting my pipe, I sauntered out of quarters.

Why the factor wanted me I could not readily conceive, unless it was for some detail connected with his marriage. There were several things that I wished to turn over in my mind before presenting myself to Griffith Hawke, where I knew I would be likely to meet Flora.

A sound of low voices at the gates, and the rattle of a bolt, drew me first in that direction. A little group of men were standing at the loopholes, peering out.

"What's up, comrades?" I inquired in a whisper.

"Ah, it's you, Denzil?" replied one, looking around. "Didn't you know? Vallee and Maignon, the voyageurs who came in a bit ago, have just started back to Fort York on snowshoes, taking a letter from the factor in regard to the row here this morning."

"They will go as they came," added another, "and I believe they will get through all right. They are out on the river by this time, and they would scarcely have been permitted to pass yonder timber had any Indians been on the watch."

"I agree with you," said I. "Let us hope that the brave fellows will meet with no mishap."

I lingered for a moment, but the quiet of the night remained unbroken. Then I turned back across the yard, taking care that none observed me, and made my way to a small grove of fir trees that lay in the rear of the trading house and some distance to the right of the factor's residence. In the heart of the copse was a rude wooden bench, built some years before by the factor's orders. I made my way to it over the frozen snow crust, and sat down to meditate and smoke.

I had no more than settled myself when I heard the light, crunching patter of feet. The sounds came nearer, and of a sudden, by the dim glow of the moon, I saw the figure of a woman within six feet of me. It was Flora Hatherton. She was bare-headed, and a long cloak was thrown over her shoulders. As she advanced, her hands clasped in front of her, a stifled sob broke from her lips.

I had been on the point of retreating, but the girl's distress altered my mind. By an irresistible impulse I rose and stood before her.

"Flora!" I exclaimed.

She shrank back with a smothered scream.

"Hush! do not be alarmed!" I added. "Surely you know me?"

"Denzil!" she whispered. "Oh, what a fright you gave me!"

"Why are you here?" I asked.

"The house was so warm—they had the stove red hot," she stammered, confusedly. "I slipped out for a breath of fresh air. And you?"

"I came for the same purpose," said I. "This is a favorite spot of mine. But you have been weeping, Flora."

"No—oh, no," she answered, in a tone that belied her words. "You are mistaken, Denzil. I—came here to think."

"Of what?"

"Of my wedding day," she replied, half definitely. "Surely you know that the priest has arrived. I am to be married to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning!" I gasped.

"Yes, unless the world ends before then. Oh, Denzil, I have such wicked thoughts to-night! It is in my heart to wish that the Indians would take the fort—that something would happen before to-morrow."

"Nothing will happen," I said, bitterly. "The fort can stand a siege of days and months. So you are determined to wed Griffith Hawke—to forget what we have been to each other in the past?"

"Denzil, you have no right," she said, sadly.

The words stung me, and I suddenly realized the depths of shame to which I had sunk. She saw her advantage, and pressed it.

"I have lingered too long," she said. "I fear I shall be missed. This is our last meeting. Farewell, Denzil!"

"Farewell!" I answered, bitterly.

She held out her hand, and I pressed it to my lips. It was like marble. Then she turned and glided away, and I heard her light footsteps receding among the trees.

The next instant I regretted that I had yielded and let her go. The thought that I might never see her again maddened me. Without realizing the recklessness and folly of it, I started in pursuit, calling her name in a hoarse whisper.

But I was too late, swiftly as I moved. I reached the edge of the trees in time to see a flash of light as the rear door of the factor's house opened and closed.

I stood for a moment in the moonlight and solitude, and then something happened that cooled my fevered brain and put Flora out of my thoughts. Loud on the frosty night rang the report of a gun; two more followed in quick succession. From the nearest watchtower the sentries shouted a sonorous alarm, and their voices were drowned by a shrill and more distant burst of Indian yells.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANOTHER VISITOR.

That the redskins were making an attack in force on the stockade was my first and immediate conclusion, but it gave me no great uneasiness since I knew how stoutly we were protected. On second thoughts, however, I observed that the shots and yells—which were keeping up lustily—came from a considerable distance, and I began to suspect that something else was in the wind.

Meanwhile, I had not been standing idle. As soon as I heard the alarm I ran like a deer across the yard. It was the work of an instant to dash into quarters and seize my musket. Then I sped on, with a great clamor rising from every part of the fort and armed men hastening right and left of me.

When I reached the gates, where a little group was assembled, no more than a minute could have elapsed since the outbreak. I passed on to the nearest watchtower—it was near by—and darted up the ladder which led to the second floor. Here there were good-sized loopholes commanding a view of the north and east fronts of the stockade. Half a dozen men were watching from them, and above their excited voices I heard the crack of muskets and the whooping chorus of savages.

"What's going on?" I demanded. "They are not attacking the fort?"

"No, not that, Carew," cried one. "The red skins are chasing some poor devils who were bound here. Ah, they have turned on them! Plucky fellows!"

"Will you stand here, sir? Look yonder—quick!"

It was the voice of Baptiste, who was at one of the loopholes. He made room for me, and I peered eagerly out. The view was straight to the north, and what I saw turned my blood hot with anger.

Less than a quarter of a mile away, where the white, moonlit clearing ended at a narrow forest road running parallel with the river, the sorely-harrassed little group was in plain sight—a sledge, a team of dogs, and three men kneeling on the snow. They were exchanging shots with a mass of Indians, who were dancing about on the verge of the timber, and were for the moment being held at bay. I could see the red flashes, and the wreaths of gray smoke against the dark green of the trees.

"They had better make a dash for it," exclaimed Baptiste.

"Now is their chance."

"We are all cowards," I cried, indignantly. "A party could have dashed out to the rescue by this time."

"Just my opinion, Carew," said a man named Walker. "But who was to give the orders? They must come from the factor. He's down at the gates now, and plenty with him."

"Then I'll get his permission to go out," I cried, hotly. "Will you volunteer, men?"

But as I spoke—I had not taken my eyes from the loophole—the situation suddenly took a different turn. The Indians yelled with triumph, and I saw one of the three white men toss up his arms and fall over. At that his companions wheeled about, the one leaping upon the sledge, while the other ran toward the dog leader of the team."

"Only two left!" I shouted. "They are coming! Now for a lively race! God help them to reach the fort!"

"By Heavens, sir! they'll get in if they are quick!" cried Walker, who was on the other side of the tower. "Hawke knows what to do; he is opening the gates! The men are loading their muskets! They are bringing up the howitzer."

His last sentence I scarcely heard, for I had already left the loophole and was scrambling down the ladder. The next instant I was at the double gates, one of which had been unbarred and thrown wide open. A dozen men were lined up on each side of the entrance, among them Menzies and the factor.

"Stand back," Griffith Hawke shouted at me. "Keep the way clear!"

But I edged up to the front, where my view was uninterrupted. How my heart leaped to see the sledge gliding over the snow, the man inside and the one on snow shoes shouting at the plucky, galloping dogs! But they still had one hundred and fifty yards to come, and not far behind them, whooping and yelling, firing muskets and hurling tomahawks, were at least two-score of redskins—the most of them on snowshoes. Crack, crack, crack! They seemed to be aiming poorly, for the sledge swept on, dogs and men uninjured.

"Be ready!" cried the factor; "make room

there! The moment the sledge dashes in let the red devils have a volley—musket and howitzer!"

What happened next, though it was all over in the fraction of a minute, was intensely exciting and tragic. The tower being high up, the men posted there were now opening fire; lusty cheers rose as we saw a couple of Indians go down in the snow.

Bang, bang!—a hit this time. The man on snow-shoes staggered, reeled, fell over. His comrade turned and shot as the sledge swept on—more than that he could not do. Whether the poor fellow was dead or living we never knew; but nothing mattered the next instant, for the foremost savages reached the spot, and there was the quick gleam of a descending tomahawk.

Fifty yards now to the stockade! In spite of the fire from the tower, the Indians bore on. They let drive another straggling volley, and with a convulsive spring in air, the leading dog of the team dropped dead. In a trice the rest of the dogs, pulled up abruptly, were in a hopeless tangle. The sledge dashed into them, grated sidewise, and tipped over, sending its occupant sprawling on the snow.

I gave the poor fellow up for lost, but his pluck and wits were equal to the emergency. He sprang to his feet, and without looking behind him or stopping to pick up his musket, he struck out for the fort. On he sped, running in a zig-zag course, while the now halted Indians blazed away at him, and our men cheered and shouted.

"Watch sharp!" cried Griffith Hawke.

As he spoke the fugitive swerved a little, and ten strides brought him to the gates. He rushed safely past me, and staggered into the enclosure.

Already the baffled redskins had scattered in flight, but they were not to get off so easily. From the marksmen in the watchtower and at the stockade loopholes, from as many of our eager men as could line up outside the gates, a hot and deadly fire was poured. A way was cleared for the howitzer, and the roar that burst from its iron throat woke a hundred forest echoes.

A great cloud of bluish smoke hid the scene for a moment, and when it drifted and rolled upward, our short-lived opportunity was gone. With almost incredible speed the savages had melted away, and were safe in the shelter of the adjacent timber. They had taken some of their dead and wounded with them, as well as the dogs and sledge; but six or seven bodies lay sprinkled darkly here and there on the snow crust.

Nor were the casualties all on one side, as we now had time to observe. The last volley delivered by the Indians had killed one of our party and wounded two more. The men were for sallying out against the foe, but Griffith Hawke would have none of it.

"The devils are in ambush," he cried, "and would give us the worst of it. We'll need our powder and ball later, I'm thinking. Make all secure yonder, and be quick about it."

I helped to close and bar the gate, and then pushed into the thick of the clamorous crowd that surrounded the escaped traveler. I had fancied I recognized him when he shot by me, and now the first glimpse told me I was right, for the fugitive was none other than Captain Myles Rudstone.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

EDITORIAL CHAT

AND CORRESPONDENCE.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Number thirty-four of this publication (out next week) will be issued under a new title. This change is the result of the popular prize contest held some time ago, in which we requested suggestions from our readers as to the best stories, departments, etc. A large majority of the letters received indicated a desire on the part of our readers for a title more suited to the publication, they saying with truth that "Army and Navy" did not indicate the variety of contents. As it has ever been our aim to give our boys just what they wish, we have decided to call this publication "The Half-Holiday," commencing with number thirty-four. The birth of the new name will mean a complete betterment of the entire paper. In fact, "The Half-Holiday" will be a new magazine as regards appearance and general merit. The exceedingly fascinating cadet school stories by Ensign Clarke Fitch, U. S. N., and Lieutenant Frederick Garrison, U. S. A., will be continued, as well as the usual four serials and the popular departments. The new publication will be profusely illustrated by the best artists, and the cover, printed on extra heavy tinted paper, will have no equal in artistic effect. No expense will be spared by the publishers to make "The Half-Holiday" the largest and best boys' magazine in existence. The price will remain the same, five cents. Order your copies in advance from your regular newsdealer.

Another word with our boys in regard to the important announcement made above: We feel perfectly assured that our young readers firmly believe that this publication has been issued in their interests from the beginning. The mere fact that a prize contest was held requesting their views and suggestions is ample proof. Such a contest was unique in juvenile publications. Confidence—personal confidence—between publisher and reader had never before been deemed necessary. It was an experiment based on the fact that the boy of to-day has a mind and a will of his own. And the experiment has succeeded. If our readers could see the warm personal letters sent to the editor, letters in which the writers spoke with frankness and good fellowship, they would clearly understand the feeling of strong personal interest being taken in this publication.

* * * * *

Such feeling can only result in mutual benefit. It will encourage the publishers, the editor and the authors, and it will serve to give the reader a better publication, better editorial work and better stories. The logic of this statement is certainly plain. Don't you think so? The editor himself does not regard his readers as simply so many customers to whom papers can be sold. Far from it! He has a warm and hearty interest in all. He looks upon them as friends to whom friendly services should be rendered. He has been in close touch with them for years, through the medium of Good News and Army and Navy, and he will be in closer touch with them through the new publication, The Half-Holiday. It is a pleasure to him to talk with them, to be interested in their personal welfare and to advise them to the best of his ability on any subject. And furthermore he wishes them to understand that the latchstring of his office door is always hanging outside, and that a warm and hearty welcome awaits all who come.

The new name, The Half-Holiday, is peculiarly appropriate. To the boy who works and the boy who goes to school, it has a fascination. It means not only a vacation from the office and the desk, but sports and fun galore. The very words smack of pleasure and recreation. It calls up visions of the gridiron, the diamond, the river and the fields. It holds within its sound everything dear to the boyish heart. In speaking it one can almost hear the twang of the bat and the rush of the players' feet. There is a merry splash and gurgle in every letter, and a laugh in each vowel and consonant. It means a half-holiday in truth with all that the name implies, and our readers can rest well assured that the pages of the publication will bear out every meaning of the words.

* * * * *

Y. D. W. P. T., Pittsburg, Pa.—1. Men are enlisted for the navy when there are vacancies. The number is limited by law, and when the complement is filled enlistments are stopped. 2. The physical examination is severe; decayed teeth would certainly prove a cause for rejection. 3. Men without previous experience are shipped as landsmen. The pay is \$16 a month, with rations. They do the ordinary ship's work, cleaning, scrubbing decks, etc. 4. On board ship reveille is generally sounded at 5.30 A. M., and taps at 9.10 P. M. 5. The nearest recruiting station to your city is Philadelphia.

* * * * *

C. E. B., Durham, N. C.—The story to which you refer was published in the later numbers of Good News. It will not be reprinted in this publication.

Arthur Sewall

Amateur Journalism.

News Notes of Interest to the Young Publishers and Authors of America.

EDITOR'S TABLE.

The "Table" is in receipt of the following amateur publications: "The Mongo Clubite" for December; the November issue of the Butte (Montana) "High School Leader," and the first number of "Our Boys."

The December "Crescent" is a bright little sheet with a tinted cover. Its contents and makeup are both creditable to the editor and publisher, Harry L. Page. The Crescent is published in Chicago, and is in its second issue.

If the first number of "Our Boys" is any promise of its future excellence it is undoubtedly destined to occupy a high place in amateur journalism. It is thoroughly business-like in its make-up and savors strongly of the professional press. The table of contents include the following cleverly-written stories: "The Airship Boys," a complete story by Maurice Palmer; "Who Was Ironhand?" a serial by Jared R. Kingsley; "In Spite of Detectives," from the pen of Harry Vincent; and "Weston Payne," a short story, by Frederic Millen, Jr., a well-known amateur author. The departments are chatty and well edited. On the inside first-cover page is an announcement calling attention to a prize offer for stories. The publisher and editor, H. V. Van Demark, is to be congratulated on the merit of his new paper. "Our Boys" is published in Webster, Texas.

Don C. Wilson is represented in the November issue of "The On Time Monthly" (Fitzwilliam, N. H.), by a clever bicycle story entitled, "A Terrible Ride."

Sample copies of "The Bulletin," an amateur monthly replete with "good things," can be obtained by addressing the editor, H. M. Konwiser No. 36 Barbara street Newark N. J.

Harry L. Hutchens, Farmland, Ind., would like to receive sample copies of amateur papers with a view to subscribing, contributing and advertising.

All literary inclined persons residing in Greater New York or vicinity, and who are desirous of connecting themselves with an amateur press association should communicate with R. Gerald Ballard, secretary Amateur Press Club, of New York City.

Arthur P. McKenzie, 154 York street, Horace A. Stoneham, 29 Highland avenue, and James A. Clerkin, 563 Jersey avenue, Jersey City, N. J., would like to receive sample copies of amateur papers.

H. C. Johannes, 3603 South Halsted street, Chicago, Ill., wishes sample copies of amateur publications.

LETTERS FROM PRIZE WINNERS. CRITICISM CONTEST.

Philipsburg, Pa., Dec. 19, 1897.

Gentlemen: I received your favor of the 16th, with inclosed check, and to say I was surprised on finding I was one of the lucky five is putting it too mild. It is indeed a splendid Christmas gift, and in return accept my best wishes for the success of the Army and Navy Weekly. Hoping that it may have a long life, I remain yours truly,

J. Ira Thomas.

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 21, 1897.

Gentlemen: I beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 17th, inclosing check for \$5 in payment of one of the prizes offered in the "Criticism Contest" recently concluded. Please accept thanks for the check, the receipt of which was a great surprise to me. Wishing you every success and a Merry Christmas, I remain,

Yours very truly, Charles Raymond.

No. 4 Thompson place, East Liverpool, Ohio,
Dec. 23, 1897.

Dear Sirs: Your favor of the 17th inst., with the inclosed check, at hand. Its coming was quite a surprise, you may rest assured, and I wish to thank you for so favoring me.

The fact that your publication now leads the juveniles should make your further efforts to suit the tastes of your readers be all the more appreciated by them.

I also want to extend my hearty congratulations to the others lucky contestants who received those pink-tinted envelopes with their welcome contents. Yours thankfully, Philip F. McCord.

Fitzgerald, Ga., Dec. 27, 1897.

Gentlemen: It was with great pleasure and no little surprise that I received your check on the 24th inst., as one of the five prizes awarded in "Criticism Contest." I hardly felt that my poor little criticism deserved much attention. I simply wrote as I thought. I sincerely thank you for your kind appreciation.

Since writing the criticism I have removed from Mitchell, Indiana, to Fitzgerald, Ga.

Would say that I have taken Good News from the first number ever issued. In my opinion, it was the "King of Boys' Weeklies" without a single peer.

I was simply overcome with delight at "The Army and Navy," than which no grander publication exists the world over. It is simply impossible for me to find words to express the high regard in which I hold it.

Three cheers and a tiger for the best boys' paper in existence, which should be in the hands of every wide-awake American boy and girl.

S. O. Swafford.

Kinderhook, N. Y., Dec. 23, 1897.

Dear Sirs: I received your letter and check for \$5, and was very much surprised to receive it for I did not expect to win a prize. I congratulate you on the successful way that you conducted your contest, for it put the rich and poor on an even footing. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, hoping that Army and Navy has twice the number of subscribers in 1898 that it now has, I remain yours respectfully, William Avery.

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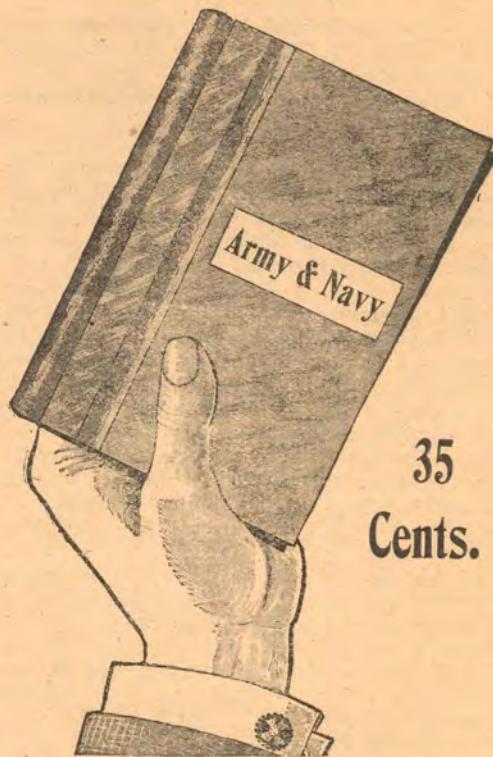
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