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The SPIDER OF TRUXILLO

RICHARD HENRY SAVAGE
AUTHOR OF
"MY OFFICIAL WIFE"



EXCITING
ADVENTURES
ON LAND
AND SEA

F. TENNYSON NEELY

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THE SPIDER OF TRUXILLO

The Spider of Truxillo

(THE PASSING SHOW)

EXCITING ADVENTURES ON LAND
AND SEA

BY

Richard

Henry

Savage

AUTHOR OF

"My Official Wife."
"In the Old Chateau."
"A Daughter of Judas."
"The Little Lady of Lagunitas."
"The Flying Halcyon."
"For Life and Love."
"The Anarchist."
"The Masked Venus."
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"Miss Devereux of the Mariquita."
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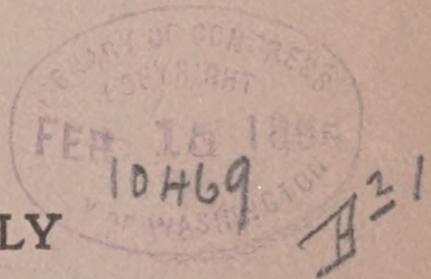


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AGAINST ODDS.

A NIGHT AT THE CHORRERA RANCHO.

SPANISH HONDURAS

1890.

PART I.

THE LA HAGUA MINE.

IT was only the fear of just punishment which drove Adrian Hope, after serving as a subordinate officer in the Northern army during the war of the Rebellion, to that refuge of the escaped villains of all countries, Spanish Honduras.

When the volunteers were paid off in 1865, Hope quickly betook himself to Truxillo, with a long roll of unpunished crimes blackening his twenty-two years. Of respectable birth, he was carefully educated in New York, by the clergy of the Mother Church which he disgraced. This renegade American was an accomplished classic scholar, a modern linguist, and possessed of a keen and crafty cunning dangerous to all. Smooth, plausible, inured to every fatigue, a liar

and thief, he had innate courage, sly wit, and a devilish ingenuity in evil.

The thousand expedients of actual service were added to his mental stock in trade, and with a black heart he laughed at futile pursuit, and vowed himself to a career of crime. Too lazy and dishonest for any useful calling, he steadily added worse actions to his long roll of foul deeds. Among the legions discharged at the close of the war, were many men who richly deserved the gallows or the yard arm. By sheer weight of numbers these villains broke through the net of justice. No greater villain than Adrian Hope ever skulked under the flag he dishonored.

An accomplished scribe, a practical scientist, and an omnivorous reader, he possessed every arm which education and precocious experience could give to the wicked. Hypocrite, voluptuary, traitor and "vaurien," his career of fraud and dissimulation spread from the Pacific ocean to Europe, in the twenty-five years succeeding the war. In 1865 he might have vaguely dreamed of an honest career among the simple peasants of Honduras, but his usefulness to the pirates, smugglers, corrupt officials, and black-

faced "bravos" of Honduras, led him onward through endless villainies.

Humbug projects, visionary colonies, governmental swindles, personal frauds, and other dark schemes tossed him to and fro, on the wildest waves of the barbaric life of Spanish Honduras. Appearing in Paris, after deluding an Irish colony to the grim poisoned jungles of Honduras, he quickly wasted in foul riot in the gay capital, his ill gotten gains. After the starved and fever stricken Irish, cajoled from their land, were lying in silent graves, Adrian Hope returned to Honduras, chased back by villainies for which the iron hand of European justice would have branded him for life as an unpitied felon.

Most of his victims were dead, the rest were scattered and to the foul scum of the worst land on earth, he returned. Useful with pen, tongue and education, to the cabals of the tumble-down Honduran towns, he slowly gravitated into the self abasement of drink and half-caste life. At forty-seven, in the year 1890, Adrian Hope was as dangerous a scoundrel as even Honduras could produce among its many refugees from the criminal classes of the world. Strangely enough,

his mental vigor never failed him. An "indigene" in his knowledge of the mixed local tribes and their dialects, he was skilled in every trick and artifice of the wild people he lived with.

His dirty "cuartel" in Truxillo, contained a few hundred books. Lazy and unkempt, lolling in his hammock, a few bananas, a crock of water, or the easily obtained fish and tropic fruits, gave him a meagre subsistence. When a steamer arrived from the United States, or the West Indies, Hope, clad in motley semi-civilized garb, would lurk around the old stone hotel, the saloons and stores, and prey on the different passengers who needed the services of a general valet-de place. Pander, spy and swindler, he was not even thankful for the brandy and cigars lavished on him, nor the ill gotten gains robbed from the unsuspecting "innocents" drawn to the "Paradise" of Honduras.

Driven out of the interior of this wild, dangerous and yet beautiful land, for his varied crimes, he hovered around Truxillo. Schoolmaster, scribe, petty lawyer, occasional surveyor, lacquey and go-between, his record embraced occurrences which beggared belief. Coward by choice, not

by nature, he had now learned to guard his own safety, by skillfully inciting others to crime. Yet several mysterious disappearances of travelling foreigners, some tragic events in local families, and a number of villainous deeds of lust, fraud and violence, forced him to lurk near the port of Truxillo, from whence he could easily escape to any one of the hundred hiding places of the West Indies.

While lying in his hammock, in his bestial abode, lazily watching some low browed native woman drudge, hardly out of her "teens," slaving for him, Adrian Hope devoured every odd American newspaper to be had. Petty thefts and small frauds closed many doors to him, yet the so-called "merchants" were fain to use his pen and many useful accomplishments in their polyglot correspondence. Shunned and feared, detested and despised, a twenty dollar roll of silver would be thrown him when his work was over. With this and a box of cigars, (supplemented with a couple of bottles of brandy), he would debauch until some new call for his services opened a reluctant door to him again.

Lazily recovering from his excesses, his spare

time, (when no fresh schemes were busying his devilish nature), was devoted to conning his Horace, poring over Faust, dreaming with sublime Shakespeare, or turning the pages of Dante. These diverse works, (in their original tongues) with his other still treasured books, were either relics of his college days, or the casual finds of a book worm adventurer. Hope fell heir by "hook or crook," to all the odd volumes tossed around this lazy, dreamy, fever haunted tropic seaport, by the ignorant. The only line of demarcation between Hope and the beast was his satanic intelligence, his perverted gifts, his wasted education, and the curse to mankind that he could not travel on "all fours."

A living semblance of the "serving man," so vividly painted by Edgar in "King Lear;" he was an educated modern Ishmael. From this fertile and vicious brain, in the year 1889 was evolved the singular plot of decoying some inexperienced stranger into the interior of Honduras, under pretense of the secret purchase of a gold mine of enormous value, supposed to have been discovered by faithful and ignorant Indians, whose traditional religious faith had caused them to

acquaint Hope alone with its existence. The object was the murder and robbery of the innocent messenger.

A chance copy of a leading American paper, recalling old acquaintances, falling in his way, Hope, with plausible and guarded letters painted this great "Treasure Trove," to several persons connected with a leading American capitalist, whom he had distantly known in his boyhood. On account of the lack of banking facilities, the persons addressed were urged to send a large sum of American gold in care of a trusted agent, who must arrive "secretly." The most minute directions, and a glowing description of the "bonanza," accompanied these plausible epistles.

It is not strange that the chase of the "Yellow Curse of the World" and the tempting mystery of the project, caused several northern millionaires, senators and capitalists, to dispatch a trusty agent to Truxillo to meet Adrian Hope, after some delay, due to a necessarily slow correspondence.

The artful wiles of the schemer were so overlaid with minute directions, that they finally excited some little suspicion. Too much stress

was laid on "coming *alone*;" "come with no servant," "I will guide your agent to the hidden treasure," "*be* absolutely silent as to all," "The money must be brought in *ready gold*," Hope cautiously urged, "as banks are almost unknown here." "Let but one person come," the tempter continued, and "let him bring only a *light fowling piece*, as pistols and rifles are not permitted in this country."

The coterie of northern capitalists addressed were accustomed to send trusty men over the whole globe on their vast projects. They finally agreed with one of their number, a western millionaire miner, then a Senator of the United States. "Gentlemen!" said he, "we can send a ship load of money quickly over from New Orleans to Truxillo, if it proves necessary. I'll pick you out a man to go down, who will not be deceived in this mine. I don't like to send a fortune in the gold we *have* in exchange for what we *are to get*, until I know that the mine is *there*, and the purchase money will be safely guarded. I don't care to risk this venture on the judgment of any one man, either; will *you* select a couple more to go over there? Three heads are better than one. Three

Americans together in case of sickness or trouble can aid each other. There is yellow fever, a rough wilderness, and many unknown dangers to meet. I have travelled over Mexico. I am not a "literary man," but I know that Cortez buried the flower of his army on his disastrous trip to the trackless interior of this same Honduras. I know also that several generations of the helpless natives died under the lash during the Spanish occupation, vainly dredging for gold in the gorges and streams of this tropic country. Now, I am a practical man. I have searched all records fruitlessly for any great harvest of gold, past or present, which has been reaped down there.

"Of twenty different modern mining enterprises attempted in Honduras, I know that only one has paid anything, and that there have been many disastrous failures. Let us proceed cautiously. I am a *bad* Senator, but I am a pretty *good* miner."

A volley of compliments attested the general disbelief of the millionaire's verdict as to his Senatorial usefulness. His sensible business suggestions were at once adopted unanimously.

In three weeks, while Adrian Hope smiled in

glee at the apparent success of his diabolical plan, three resolute men left New Orleans quietly to meet the guardian of the "Treasure Vault" of the mountain gnomes, in the terrific gorges of the summit range of Honduras. Well outfitted and heavily armed, provided with the best letters and credentials, they were ready to plunge into that great quadrangle four hundred miles square, which on the eastern slopes of Spanish Honduras, encloses a region as wild to-day as darkest Africa.

Gloomy forests, sluggish rivers and wastes, rocky jaguar haunted mountains, and unexplored tropical jungles, lay between the dreamy old Spanish seaport of Truxillo, and this fabulous hidden mine.

An ominous farewell at New Orleans put the party on their guard. "Look out for yourselves! Gentlemen!" said an old merchant of the Spanish main. "Many go, but few return!" A cipher telegram preceded them, as follows: "Agent Coming." The spider of Truxillo rejoiced! He hoped soon to slip away to Europe by the west coast, enriched by the robbery of the murdered agent.

It was with undisguised astonishment that Adrian Hope met on the strand at Truxillo the party of *three*. One was an old frontier railroad engineer, who had faced the Sioux and Cheyennes on the Union Pacific Railroad in the days of '65 to '68; another, a resolute young New Yorker; the third, a western man accustomed to the ways of the frontier and the Spanish-American people of the baser sort. His army experience had given him a knowledge of the worst, as well as the better classes of Spanish-American citizens.

Hope's uneasy welcome, and evident surprise at the arrival of *three* experienced persons, instead of *one* helpless agent, caused him to drop the suspicious remark: "Why, I thought only one would come! It is now so much more difficult!" The splendid outfit of the party astonished him, but the presence of a number of heavy iron-bound boxes, excited him. Therein was probably the long coveted gold; his ultimate plunder. They really contained cartridges, medicines and valuable small supplies.

To delay, to weary out, and to separate the party; to get one (the most patient and untiring) *alone* in the interior, with that supposed treasure,

was his second plan. Force was useless! Treachery must win the prize! The sequel was to be, a man murdered; killed by cowardly treachery, and lying silent in some thicket, to be devoured by the forest beasts. Hope, with the gold, pushing further into the interior, guided by a few scoundrels selected by him, would reach the Pacific, and thence gain Europe by Panama from the west. A plausible letter as to a sudden death by fever, or accident, written later, would delay immediate pursuit; as the party well knew that letters could not reach them for several months, if they pierced the interior. As for American diplomatic inquiry, it is a mere farce at best!

Walter Seymour (the western man), and his two companions received from one or two discouraged American wanderers, several grave expressions of remonstrance and discouragement as to going into the dangerous interior alone under the guidance of Adrian Hope. Yet, loyal to their orders, they kept silence, and two weeks after their arrival with several villainous looking natives and a muleteer, they left Truxillo for the far towering summits of the great Cordillera ridges.

Fifteen days plunging through forests, and dragging over rocky range piled on range, swimming or rafting dangerous rivers, and toiling on diminutive mules over arid wastes, brought the party to a remote Indian village in a terrific gorge of the Mangalile river. This was the end; beyond this there was "No Thoroughfare."

In these gloomy morasses and trackless jungles the American party lost faith in the whole enterprise, and worn and harassed, rested dejectedly in a mud hovel in the lonely hills.

Hope, silent, morose, and plotting, was busied daily with his budding scheme to separate the three suspicious explorers, for he really had no mine to show!

At Arinal, (a straggling town), some hundred miles from the dismal eyrie which Hope announced as the end of the journey, much of the valuable heavy baggage had been left in charge of a so-called Alcalde; a secret confederate of the villainous Hope.

The heavy boxes (really containing reserve cartridges for the various arms of the expedition) were left in a clumsily barred and locked store room, with other rare and costly goods; a rich

future plunder for the two scoundrels who quietly conspired, while the now distrustful Americans watched night and day for any overt treachery; sleeping with their arms belted on. Their excuse for this caution, was the thousand varied forms of birds and beasts, the huge serpents and manifest dangers of the horrid path. This was sufficient for their active armed neutrality.

Hope, (with secret dismay) noted the unerring aim of the Americans in their daily hunting exploits, and realized that stratagem, not force, must be used to finally secure the plunder of their persons, as well as the presumed money in the boxes. He would naturally be the first victim of an open fight. He did not realize yet that a prudential silence had been agreed on between the three now doubtful travelers.

His mind was busied with a scheme for some surprise or massacre, where the razor edged machete, wielded by creeping, cowardly, bare footed, desperate ruffians might easily dispatch the disgusted explorers, while sleeping, or unarmed.

In two weeks after the arrival at the dirty Indian village in Mangalile, the fearful chasm of

the river was thoroughly traversed. The famed mine, located on the summit of a terrific peak, almost perpendicular in its steepness, was finally reached. He had now no further excuse for delay.

Notwithstanding every effort to divide or involve the party up to this time, Hope, with the three resolute Americans, now irritated beyond patience, was forced to finally exhibit a trivial hole, sunk only a few feet, and evidently scratched in the red quartz hillside, *after* the arrival of the party. If it was dug *before*, it was only intended to be the grave of *one* agent lured into the lonely nest of mountain villains. It was located twelve miles from the town, on a peak towering in a sort of "Wolf's Glen."

Hope little realized that the party of explorers, had keenly studied every chance word and listened to much gossip. They had conferred with members of all classes, only to find that not a hundred dollars worth of gold had been found in the vicinity in fifty years. There was no gold, ore, ledge or sign of metal in sight. No sign of any. Seymour, listening to all chatter, concealed his knowledge of Spanish.

Standing two thousand feet above the almost impassible gorge of the dangerous river cut up with enormous granite ledges, the three strangers realized that they had been swindled and duped. They were on a fool's chase. The "faithful Indians" had not been found. The ore, or gold bearing quartz was *not* forthcoming. Even the brutal peasants of the little barbaric hamlet laughed to scorn the idea of "Gold," and pointed significantly to their foreheads. These rude signs indicated "Fool," or "Lunatic."

It was near daylight the next day when the party, threading the dangerous trail arrived exhausted at their mud hovel; worn and fever wearied, tired and disgusted, they were all embittered. Life, temper, and mutual confidence were sorely tried by a sudden quarrel between the three Americans, fomented and aided by Hope. A portion of the prospecting outfit was abandoned at the town, there being no further use, or value in it. Dragged over the beetling precipices of Honduras, these now useless articles represented their weight in silver.

Three days later, in mistrust and mutual accusation, the Americans unwisely separated. Two

of them determined to reach the coast by a route supposed to avoid some of the awful miseries of the dreaded fifteen days backward march. On the exact lines where fearless Hernando Cortez dug the lonely graves of three hundred matchless veterans, Walter Seymour moodily prepared to return *alone* with Hope. Sick, desperate, and worn out he only dreamed of reaching the sea, even if yellow-fever haunted Truxillo was the only goal.

To stay alone was to fall a prey to violence or sickness. To retrace his steps with Hope, was to face possible treachery and a hardship threatening journey. Pride kept him silent!

Hope, silently revolving his now *easier* plan of plunder or murder, added to his concealed resentment against Seymour, the bitterness due to Seymour's indignant verdict that the mine was a "fraud and a swindle." Hope well knew that to Seymour was entrusted by the others the duty of removing to Truxillo the valuable deposit left at Arinal. For prudential reason, Seymour (thrown on his own resources), decided not to quarrel openly with Hope, after the departure of his companions, who cut loose for the "Sea," eager to save their lives.

It was a "Sauve qui peut!" Hope, acclimated and used to the life of a human beast, a fugitive and world wanderer, by pushing on to the west could now easily gain the Pacific ocean. He had some hundreds of dollars of "advances." He had friendly fellow scoundrels everywhere on the way. Seymour, who had successfully dissembled his very fair knowledge of Spanish allowed Hope to be the daily interpreter.

Almost in open rupture, Seymour and Hope rode out of Mangalile towards the sea. Seymour (girding on his cartridge belt, with its heavy knife and a Texas Lone Star revolver) swore to himself that either he would return to wife and friends, or that Adrian Hope should never live a moment after the first overt act. Hope, (plotting for the robbery of the deposit at Arinal) mentally decided to permit Seymour to pass *that* point unharmed, towards the sea. This was necessary in order to gain quiet possession of the valuables. A quasi official report that Seymour had obtained the goods and safely gone on towards Truxillo, would smother or delay any later inquiry after his death by his American friends.

If Walter Seymour should be lost or die on

the last two-thirds of the road, Hope, (by a skillful quarrel) leaving there apparently to pursue his march alone, could prove an easy "Honduras alibi." The fearful sufferings of the party, alone would explain the death of Seymour. Hope knew well that the others would probably leave the hated land at the nearest little seaport they could reach, trusting to Seymour to close up the affairs of the disastrous expedition, and make his own way out northward to the United States with the last news of the failure.

There was a convulsion in Hope's nerves, however, when he realized on the first day's return march, that Seymour rode always *behind* him, and only allowed four or five paces between them. On one or two occasions, the single muleteer, (armed with his four foot naked heavy broadsword) bareheaded, and clad only in a single garment and rawhide sandals, tried to drop *behind* Seymour! In vain! The veteran traveler quietly halted and calmly pointed to the front. That frontier pistol seemed to grow larger in Hope's eyes, and he noticed that Seymour had lashed it around his neck and shoulder with a heavy cord.

This useful hint was not lost on the renegade. Five days after the sullen parting in the hills, Seymour rode into Arinal behind Hope. At night in their little hammocks (swung side by side) the soldier and the scoundrel dozed from time to time. Both were on guard. No word of quarrel had yet been uttered, though cold aversion reigned between them, while toiling under a blinding tropic sun, or dragging the almost falling mules over stony ridges.

Hope, (cowed by the fact that Seymour never left him beyond a five pace distance) silently resolved: "I must wait for more help! After Arinal, he is mine!" Even this crafty scoundrel did *not* find the gold he had hoped for. Seymour's possessions were however ample to temporarily enrich his slayer, and enable him to leave the land. Adrian Hope realized that his sly schemes had all failed, and that he might even be bitterly pursued by powerful enemies, who would resent this cold blooded and useless swindle.

In the old mud adobe hovel, where the Alcalde of Arinal lived, Seymour threw himself on a hammock, determined to rest, yet watch. For

two months he had had no letter from friend or wife. His valuable time was lost and his health was now shattered by the terrible sun "Guarro," or incipient fever of Honduras. Seymour was now coldly desperate.

The natives who accompanied the party to the interior, had all been artfully scattered. Ramon Padilla, (thief and spy) had been selected by Hope to guide the two on their return. Walter Seymour,—resting thankfully once more under the poor shade of even a thatched roof—revolved two points in his favor. One was, his concealed knowledge of Spanish, and the other, Hope's evident personal fear. For Seymour knew that Hope felt that (unless victorious by surprise) he must join his victim on a trip "over the dark river." Open attack was too dangerous.

"If I could only get one or two decent men here," thought Seymour. Alas! There was not an American, or a respectable foreigner within two hundred miles.

"I will have to rest by day, watch by night, and get a wink now and then in the saddle. Can I last it out for ten days?" Seymour was very gloomy. The presence of some decent

humble villagers at Arinal would probably prevent any open violence at that place.

Lazy Hope objected not to a rest of a day and a half. Seymour quietly ate with the dirty circle of mestizos, drinking only water from the earthen crock common to all. Hope, fearing some overt act which might cause Seymour to throw himself openly on the official protection of the Alcalde, guarded a watchful silence. Seymour checked off the various articles left in store, including the fateful coveted boxes. All the "prohibited goods" had been "passed" into the country unopened, to avoid custom house confiscation. A few dollars effected that.

"We will have to have more mules for those goods," sullenly said Hope, as the first afternoon darkened to a night of danger.

"All right!" said Seymour, "you get them!" "But we must have money," Hope urged. Seymour, whose depleted saddle-bags now contained only forty-seven Mexican silver dollars, said sharply: "All right! I'll pay you at Truxillo!" His drafts were there!

Hope was nonplussed. Seymour lay smiling, watching through clouds of pipe smoke.

Hope and the Alcalde conferred and wondered what the outcome would be. Even the Honduran has a pride in being faithful while in the employ of the stranger. "If I can get two or three decent muleteers here they may wish to see the ocean town of Truxillo, and stimulated by reward, guide me safely there," the American concluded. Seymour sauntered out to cogitate alone in the blazing sunlight.

Keeping his eye fixed on the doubtful Alcalde, and the known rogue, he was careful to let no one approach him too closely. He waited until Hope shambled out after a twenty minutes' conference with his comrade.

"I can get the goods taken on a half day's march toward Olanchito, and I have a letter from the Alcalde for fresh mules at 'Chorrera Rancho,' between here and Olanchito," said he. "The Alcalde's mules must come back from Chorrera."

"Then we only make half a day's march tomorrow?" Seymour rejoined.

"That's it!" said Hope.

"It's not satisfactory!" Seymour remarked, decidedly. "I will not leave here!"

"All right!" said Hope, "I will then take my own riding mule and push on alone."

They parted without a word. Seymour moodily re-entered the now darkened house. The shades of evening were gathering outside and he dared not longer linger there. He might be surprised. "I will keep *near* Hope where I can fix *him* anyway!" resolved the refreshed and desperate man.

If ever Walter Seymour prayed for his wits, it was when he entered the low door of that adobe. "I suppose they'll try it on *here*. Well! I'll get Hope anyway. It's my last chance." Around the table, he moodily munched a little jerked beef, black coffee, and cassava, which wooden fibred bread served as a meal. The Alcalde with voluble Castilian politeness, explained the necessity of the scheme proposed by Hope. Hope guarded a stubborn silence.

"All right!" said Seymour in English, "Tell him I'll go on in the morning!" Hope interpreted the remark. Several frowsy women and babes of all ages crowded the room where five or six hammocks hung on the walls, ready for slinging.

The centipede, snake, and tarantula were thus

foiled, temporarily, by a Mahomet like suspension between ceiling and floor. Seymour—busied with his pipe—dozed while the motley throng filled the one room with open doors, which was the whole house, save two small chambers at one end; where in one an old woman, sick to death, lay wheezing in the last gasps. In the other, an assortment of babes and children of both sexes lay around on mangy rawhides spread on the floor. The stifling heat choked friend and foe.

“Wake me at dawn!” said Seymour. Hope merely nodded. In an hour all was silent. One light in the sick woman’s mud walled chamber, cast a faint gleam through the room, where wild hogs, and wilder dogs, roamed at will.

Tied to the rough table leg, two game Spanish cocks kept up a volunteered battle late into the night. Hope in his hammock lay fully dressed, counterfeiting sleep. Seymour, weapons at hand, kept a discreet silence, praying that he might not fall asleep before dawn.

In two or three hours, several dark, shrouded forms, quietly slipped out of the back rooms. Seymour lay quietly.

It was the women leaving.

“Ah! it’s coming—to-night!” the soldier wearily said to himself. His fighting blood was up.

“There’s no better time than when a man is half mad, to battle for his life—yet—my wife!” He dozed on, until a sudden movement of Hope in his hammock awoke him.

In the two open doors of the hovel were standing four half-naked men, each with a machete girded on.

“What’s wanted?” said Seymour, springing up pistol in hand.

“Be quiet!” grumbled Hope, “this is their way.” “All right!” cheerfully remarked Seymour, as he swung out of his hammock and seated himself against the solid wall, lighting his pipe.

“What’s the matter?” Hope queried. “This is a custom of the country. No one locks a door. The climate is too hot.”

“Very bad custom! Very impolite!” Seymour remarked.

In a moment the Alcalde—rolling out of his hammock—was whispering in his mongrel Spanish to Hope.

"What does he say?" sternly said Seymour.

"Those men were only some men going out to hunt for stray cattle. Don't make a row here!" Hope retorted with insolence.

"It's half past three now," said Seymour, "in an hour and a half, we'll be on our way. I don't care to sleep any more."

"Then I'll get up too!" said the lazy villain.

"Suit yourself!" replied Seymour.

The Alcalde and Hope, with a bottle of native rum, made merry at the little wooden table, while the four or five other hammock denizens snored in unison. The Alcalde offered the generous and fiery fluid.

"Thanks! No!" said Seymour. "I'm on duty," he thought. Neither of the unarmed scoundrels dared leave the room. Seymour—now thoroughly awake—watched the precious pair.

At last a clear thought, born of Apache dodging and the strange lore of the Plains, flashed over Seymour's brain. There is a self-protective action of mind, nerve, and body in deadly peril. His nerves were thrilling!

"They have sent these fellows on ahead to

waylay me; for when the goods are loaded, and I am *officially* gone, they can act at once."

In Seymour's baggage left behind at Arinal, was a magnificent English gun, packed in an oblong case. The right barrel was a twelve-bore shot gun, and the left a half-inch rifle, good at five hundred yards. Carelessly unlocking this case, Seymour put it together and loaded it; slipping a dozen ball cartridges for the left, and buckshot for the right bore, in his canvas shooting coat. He blessed the London lock, which had defied everything but open destruction. Placing the loaded gun behind him, Seymour deliberately began to count numbers to keep from sleeping. Twice did he turn one thousand before the pair of rogues had finished their work. Hope was inscribing a letter.

At nine hundred, of the third thousand, a sleazy cotton-gowned thing—in the semblance of woman,—placed solemnly some "frijoles," stewed meat and coffee on the table.

Seymour rubbed his eyes. There was coarse bread on the table. The woman had returned; yet no one had left the room. Swallowing a cup of coffee, and thrusting four or five rolls in

his shooting coat, Seymour calmly said, "I am ready!" For the faint flush of day was peeping in the east.

"I think I'll linger till it's light enough to shoot—anyway," thought Seymour. Refreshed with rest, he stood in front of the Alcalde and Hope, and with florid compliment, interpreted by Hope, paid a Hotel de Meurice price for the squalid entertainment. Strangely enough, the goods were blithely packed on several mules, and Seymour delaying till Hope was mounted, walked out of the hotel and, forty yards from any one, mounted his animal. In a moment he saw that the *weakest and poorest* mule had been saddled for him. Hope was on the *best*.

"See here, Hope!" said Seymour, "You have got my mule! This one can't carry me!" After a few words Seymour dismounted. "Get off that mule and have these saddles changed!" Hope caught the flash of Seymour's eye. Strolling artlessly around, Seymour caught the expression, (in Spanish) from the Alcalde: "That's all right; they'll fix him at the river! Send José back and I will come to you. Be careful! He is dangerous!"

Neither villain knew that Seymour had taken quiet notes by compass and aneroid of the road; which he had measured the ten days between Arinal and Truxillo, and that he was an amateur astronomer of some practical experience.

With a wave of the hand, Seymour, waiting till Hope and his myrmidons were well in advance, rode fifty paces behind the train, leaving the Alcalde, hat in hand.

For an hour the train plodded through a jungle where the huge orioles flashed from tree to tree; and enormous crimson and green macaws darted and wheeled around the highest kings of the forest. The armadillo scuttled away in scaly armor across the path, and, as morning dawned, the parrots, monkeys and wild turkeys mingled their screams and chatter with the snort of the wild boar.

Several suspicious halts to arrange baggage gave Seymour a chance, twenty yards in rear, to drop a huge bird from a tree top with his rifle barrel, to the amazement of the train of villains. Quickly re-loading, Seymour watched the throng before him. The four night visitors had joined the cortege!

"We must be near the "Aguan," Seymour mused; watching with cat-like eye, the knot before him. He had dropped all semblance of conversation with Hope. Soon the mighty, lonely tropic river was reached, and to Seymour's delight, a long oblique, gravelly ford was seen, and clear banks, with room for a race and free movement.

At five hundred yards from the ford, one of the leading foot-men, a tall, impudent, half naked wretch, brandishing a heavy machete sword, with which he had been idly lopping off stray branches, whooped loudly. From several hiding places on the bank, three or four similar scoundrels emerged.

Quick as thought Seymour spurred his fresh mule alongside of Hope's jaded animal.

"What's all this?" said he, sharply.

"These men will help us over the ford!" sneakingly remarked Hope.

"Sweethearts and wives!" thought Seymour, "I must keep out of these fellows' grasp. Here's the appointed place!"

Swinging round his revolver belt to the front, he said to Hope: "Look out for *yourself*! I'll get over! Where's the ford?"

"There!" said Hope, with a curious smile, as several of the natives began to force the laden mules in, and dragged them over. Seymour was near enough to Hope to see the yellow gleam of his dirty tiger-eyes.

"Go in!" said Hope, as there was no excuse to linger.

"After you!" politely remarked Seymour. "They can't shoot unless they hurt us both," Seymour thought, and resolved to see Hope first in the river.

With judgment, Seymour noted a bar quartering the river below. When Hope was half way in, Seymour, pushing his well rested mule into the current, and balancing his gun across the saddle, straggled over to the other side, two hundred yards below the party. Frantic yells attested his change of plan. Seymour guiding easily his mule down stream, was on the strand, laughing and shaking his wet clothes, as the insolent wretch watching for him, brandishing a naked sword, ran down the beach. When within twenty yards, out came the Texas Lone Star revolver with an ominous click.

"Halt!" rang out, as Seymour drew a bead on

the would be assassin. The machete dropped, and the yellow tiger slunk away.

"What's the matter?" howled Hope, as he forced his tired mule along the pebbly beach.

"It means," said Seymour, "that I can take care of myself!—You take this riffraff ahead in the road! I don't know the way I don't wish them to speak to me!"

And Adrian Hope, with an ugly twitching between his shoulders, knew that five yards behind him, on a fresh animal, a desperate man rode, who had selected the spot where a forty-five calibre ball would do the most good. And onward the motley crew toiled under the growing daylight. Murder for once had missed its mark.



PART II.

AT BAY AT THE CHORRERA RANCH.

THE MIDNIGHT FOREST.

THE trail led away from the rocky shores of the broad Aguan River, and lost itself in a tangled steaming forest of logwood and cactus. Far beyond the low hills rose the mighty scarped summits of the Sierras of Honduras. Their gashed and seamed rocky sides were patched here and there with straggling stone-pines. The screaming parrots soon ceased their discordant cries. The sun, a great flaming yellow disk, leaped over the far mountain ridge, and the breath of morning fluttered faint and low. Dry and dusty was the path, and even the mailed lizards crawled beneath the poisonous vines, and panted idly in the shade.

Wearily crawled on the little caravan. Padilla,—villain and spy—muttered a curse now and then, as he replaced a lost sandal. The pack mules nodded and swayed under the heavy loads. At Padilla's side marched the "mozos" from Arinal, one, the murderous bearer of the fateful letter, now and then flicking off the head of a weed with his naked machete, and scowling at the tall form of Seymour, riding behind. Hope—ignorant of Seymour's knowledge of the full design—loll'd upon his mule in sullen silence. What dreams of future villainy, what memories of past deeds, lurked in the tangled brain warp of that wicked bullet head.

Now and then, without a word, he extended a water canteen to his silent companion, who kept two or three yards in Hope's rear. Seymour's mind reverted to his old jaunts over the plains of Arizona, to the lonely rides on the yellow sands of the Sahara, and weary dragging marches over the Bad Lands of Texas. The flaming, scorching sunbeams parched the ground, and rose in shimmering reflection from the powdery sand. It was with the utmost exertion that Seymour kept awake. Even the knowledge of

imminent danger failed to drive away the deadly fatigue born of excitement and a sleepless night. Pipe in mouth—with the trusty Lone Star revolver still slipped well to the front—he noted every bend of the trail, now almost forest hidden, every land mark, and mentally revolved a plan of escape if suddenly attacked. Bitterly, bitterly did he rue the separation from his angry comrades. To reach Olanchito twenty-five miles away, if pursued by numbers, seemed to offer superhuman obstacles. No water attainable, and an unknown road, with a riding animal not able to pass a walk. The jaded mule had made great exertions in swimming the river, and already showed signs of fatigue. Every half hour the black browed rogues in front had to re-make the packs of the baggage animals. Seymour kept steadily in the rear, with his eye on the rounded shoulders of Hope, wondering if some present crisis would make that villain's back a target.

In the brief halts from hour to hour a few sullen words were interchanged. The tropical morning wore on. Suspicion brooded. Every member of the party seemed to be on the alert. The silence was unbroken, and the blinding heat

waves skimmed over the far mountain tops. Not a lurking animal darted across the path. Here and there the whitening skeletons of cattle—dead of drouth, or killed by the jaguars—lay near the path. The mental results of Seymour's road watching seemed to develop that the party had gone north-east of the telegraph road to Coyole's Station, on the Olanchito road, at least six or eight miles. The undergrowth grew heavier and denser, closing all from sight. Here and there a green tree showed the near approach to water somewhere, and blind cattle trails intersected the main path.

Seymour noted the trend of the mountain range, when occasional openings gave a glimpse, and fixed in his mind a far distant peak at whose foot lay Olanchito, the city of refuge, a telegraph station and military post being there. It flashed over his mind that the local Indian Catholic Priest, Cura Sanchez, *might* be honest and then, that a letter from good Father Raymond of New Orleans,—the well known Jesuit—was in the little leathern case around his neck. Its brief Latin phrases, spoke to every priest in the world!

Deeper and gloomier grew the tangle of vines,

and greener yet the trees, while a few straggling cattle showed the near approach to some ranch station.

“It’s all up!” said Seymour to himself. “I’ll never get out of this death trap;” but with bitterness, he thought, “I’m good for Hope, and one or two more.” His eye fastened with cold determination on the form of Adrian Hope, jogging along, dull and inert in the lead. “I’m all right when awake! But God knows, if I can hold out till I reach Olanchito without sleep?” sadly thought Seymour. It was clear that as noon was approaching, the jaded animals could not be pushed on to Olanchito that night; equally clear, that if attacked by men on horseback, the wearied mule could not make any headway, and he would fall an easy victim to the lasso! One desperate thought came to the tired man,—“I’ll keep quiet, and if I can get into that jungle and stand them off at bay, I am as good as any of them with my old frontier six shooter, and forty cartridges in the belt.

But how, when, where, to make a slip away? Any moment might bring on a sudden quarrel—any turn of the path show a deadly ambush!

Seymour thought long and tenderly of those dear eyes far away, looking for his return, and deep down in his heart arose the anglo saxon protest against cowardice, and a burning wish for fair play for a few moments.

Even roads to the Chorrera Ranch come to an end, and near noon an abrupt turn of the trail led to an opening in the bushes of about a hundred yards in diameter. A long adobe single story hut, heavily thatched, was in the clearing, with a broad porch around its two sides. In the front was a corral and a small cow pen near the thick timber with its tangled poisonous undergrowth only opened by cattle trails. A welcome crystal spring moistened the roots of half a dozen willows, and served to slake the thirst of the lank cattle and scruffy horses standing near. In the rear a few straw huts were scattered, and behind the main house was an adobe kitchen and a rude dome of clay, serving as a primitive bake oven.

"There's Chorrera!" said Hope, gruffly, not even turning his head. Seymour made no reply, as the mules hastened up to the door, eager to be relieved of their burdens animate or inanim-

ate. Seymour mentally took his bearings as follows:—"Arinal distant eighteen miles due South West,—Olanchito, distant say twenty to twenty-five miles South East,—Coyoles, abreast, on the other side of the telegraph road, which was from six to eight miles South,—through the pathless forest, here almost impassable." Seymour thanked God mentally for the knowledge of the road gained in the rough survey coming up, and as he swung himself out of the saddle, made a vow to keep away from all the party, and control the emotions raging in his breast.

Heat, fatigue, thirst and hunger had done their work. He staggered as he strode under the shade of the porch. Two or three half naked children were playing with some mangy dogs on the clay floor of the hovel. Pigs and chickens wandered in and out, and a few cattle and horses were in the corrals. In sullen silence the muleteers unsaddled the pack mule and as usual, placed the whole gear and load in a corner of the hacienda building. Hope had gone into an inner room of the hut, and low murmurs in Spanish showed that a conversation was "en train." Crouching in a corner was an old hag

with beaming malicious eyes, who glared at the "Yankee," and grunted hoarsely in response to the usual "Buenas Dias! Señora!" The guide, Padilla, unsaddled Hope's mule, and after slaking his own thirst, lay down on an outspread hide in front of the house on the ground, pulling his hat over his eyes.

He feigned sleep, and lay like an alligator watching his prey. With wearied and trembling fingers, Seymour unsaddled his mule, and carefully deposited his saddle in a corner, turning the animal loose. Slipping his hunting knife in his capacious coat, and feeling the pistol well loose in the holster, he walked to the spring and drank of the clear cool water under the shade of the willows. He took his gun to pieces, locking it and abstracting all the cartridges. A brief survey of the whole ranch showed him he was in a trap. "No thoroughfare" was written on every wall. Beyond, rose the slopes of the grim Sierras,—west was the dense jungle infested with every lurking terror,—and the enemy at Arinal in garrison. South was the more than doubtful station of Coyoles, the outlying pickets of the Arinal detachment of bandits. The man

who *missed* death at Arinal, *met* it at Chorrera or Coyoles. A brooding silence haunted the den, and slowly Seymour sauntered into the house to face his doom, if there the Fates awaited him!

It is said we have a premonitory shiver when the unknown death reaches its grim hand out for us. It was with a feeling he could not shake off that the ex-officer crossed this fatal threshold. He had seen Hope arouse the sleeping guide, who had lazily swung the two hammocks in the main room, and Seymour noticed that his own was hung to the side beams of the house, in a direct line with the middle of the front and back open doors; while Hope's was on the other side of the room in the shade.

Seymour noted that his companion introduced him to the old gray haired master of the Chorrera, as "Don Gualtier," and did not give his *last* name. A middle aged woman and several children—all filthy and half naked—crowded out to have a look at "El Gringo." Gregorio Calvera, the ranchero, was a villainous looking man of sixty, who glowered at the tall American as he pointed to a rawhide covered seat.

Hope lay down in his hammock, without a word, and commenced a conversation with Calvera, who held an open letter in his hand. It was the fatal missive from Arinal, dooming the "Americano" to a death, either by stratagem or open violence.

Rage filled Seymour's heart at the thought of the dear ones far away beyond the sparkling sunlit waters of the Caribbean Sea. The old pirate haunt where murder ran riot for a hundred years, and every green island smiling under God's sunlight had its tales of blood and woe. Would he too leave his bones in this trackless forest? Oh! for one good old Irish sergeant of the Fifth cavalry and a half dozen troopers. Did any one ever come this way? No! Led away, betrayed, trapped, and buried in the wilds of a Honduran forest,—death stared him in the face. As the cards were dealt, but *one* last trick was at his disposal, and he mentally resolved not to lose Hope from sight, and that on the first sign of violence, the Lone Star revolver should end that smug villain's career. As Seymour looked around the squalid hut, he noted a small back room with no furniture. In the

main hut, a bed with curtains stood against the farther wall, and opposite, between his hammock and the mud wall, a square bedstead covered with a tightened rawhide. In a corner, a water jar, and a few benches around the room completed the simple household goods of the rich ranchero; while strange to say, a little picture of the Blessed Virgin smiled down from another corner, in a tawdry gilt frame.

As he surveyed the interior and noted a bevy of women chattering and lolling in the detached hut in rear, which was the kitchen, it flashed upon his quick perceptions that his hammock had been artfully swung in the open doors *apparently* to give air but *really* to allow a range for a shot from front to rear, or a quick rush from either door. He smiled grimly as he noted this, and quietly decided to occupy the rawhide couch at the side, out of the direct range. Pulling off his heavy cavalry boots,—companions of many a hunting trip,—he put on a light pair of shoes, carried in his saddlebags, as a reserve, and calmly lighting his pipe, took a drink from the calabash in the corner, sitting down carelessly on the couch.

Hope had ceased his low conversation, and the words "mules"—"American"—"journey," and other remarks indicated the general drift of the colloquy, which ended in old Calvera's wandering off alone to the corral, where the sword carrying scoundrel from Arinal, had a council with him. Seymour felt that Hope was keenly watching him from his half closed eyelids, and schooled his too expressive face to apparent indifference. The silence was broken at last by Hope:

"Don't you know it's an insult to a Spaniard to keep your *arms on* in his house?" said the crafty scoundrel. "All right!" muttered Seymour, as he unbuckled his frontier belt and laid his revolver—still in the sheath—and belt on the couch beside him. There was an ominous silence. Affecting an air of indifference he queried, "How about fresh mules?" "Well, I guess we can get them." "Can we get out of this place to-night?" Seymour anxiously said. A cold gleam lit up Hope's eye. "Are you in such a hurry? we might stay here for some time."

"I won't stay a minute beyond daylight to-

morrow morning," resolutely said the entrapped American, as he carelessly laid his hunting coat over the loaded revolver and cartridge belt, careful to place it so as to be able to snatch the friendly handle in a moment. His gun was now useless as he had taken away the stock joint and keys. A brooding silence was unbroken for a half an hour, save by the puffs of the pipe of Seymour, who was supplying the place of needed food by the traveler's best friend "Tobacco." How many weary hours of doubt, danger, and fatigue have been lightened by the King of Solace, the friendly weed!

Keenly conscious of being watched, Seymour felt every faculty alert and determined "to piece the lion's hide out with the fox's skin" if brought face to face with a shameful death!

"Do we eat to-day?" said he finally. Hope slowly arose and going out to the hovel in rear, came in with a few cold corn cakes and some boiled plantains on a plate. "There'll be coffee soon for you," said he, "I don't want any!" Seymour noticed the cold curtness of the remark. Without a word, he took a couple of the "tortillas" and a plantain, furtively watching

Hope, and ate them leisurely, as he saw Hope had eaten of both before he had half finished his own.

"Can it be I am to be *poisoned*," thought he. He did not dare decline, but when the old hag hobbled in with one cup of muddy black coffee, and a few dirty lumps of the native "dulce" sugar he thanked her, and placed the cup on the bed to cool. After a few moments he rose, and quietly turning his back towards the door, lifted the cup to his mouth, and slipping from his hands it fell and was shattered on the hard mud floor.

"There goes my coffee," said he as he noticed the slight start of Hope, while he vainly grasped for the falling vessel. "Don't mind any more," said Seymour. "It's too hot for coffee any way." He felt his own cheek burn as Hope's malevolent eye was fixed on his. Silence reigned again. Seymour—pipe in mouth—again revolved plans for escape. His brain worked like a trip-hammer. Calvera came in, and pulling out an old Spanish book entered into an apparent low conference with the plotting bandit. Carelessly sauntering up and down around the corral—

sword on hip—the letter bearer of the Arinal Alcalde, uneasily watched the openings of the little trails leading from the ranch into the jungle.

“What was in the Alcalde’s letter? Was it the directions for his murder?” Seymour’s keen eye caught the manoeuvre, and he decided that some re-inforcement was expected. Perhaps men armed with guns and revolvers, so rare in the interior. “If I could only find the trail to Olanchito,” said to himself the imprisoned traveler, “I would know the general way out of this death trap. The trail towards Coyoles might aid me out.” Knowing Hope to be without firearms, and able to see that the half naked scoundrel from Arinal, had only the sword, Seymour was relieved, as he knew Padilla, who was snoring among the dogs and hogs in front, had no formidable weapon.

“I’ll stand them *all off* in the daylight, any way, unless they try long range on me.” He reflected that Hope—coward at heart—would give no signal for long range attack while in point blank reach of the revolver in the hands of a man who had dropped a deer at one hun-

dred and twenty yards, with that trusty "old timer" lying under the coat. "I'll keep away from them and try and slip away, even if I have to hide in the forest! I may wander into Olanchito. But how to get away?" While thus ruminating, he saw a couple of swarthy Olancheros, well mounted, and on good horses, armed with naked machete swords only, ride in on the Arinal trail.

"Ah," said he, with a sinking heart, "this is Blucher, not Grouchy." His heart throbbed quickly. He saw them halt and chatter with the outside guards, and with malicious grins and laughter, ride up to the back door and dismount, only tying their horses. They came in, and a few salutations passed between them and Calvera, while Hope seemed to know them by a subtle free-masonry of his own. The usual "good day" passed between Seymour and the visitors, who after a barbarous too familiar hobnobbing with the frowsy squalid women in the back huts, squatted down under the rear porch to play with a greasy pack of Spanish monte cards.

Hope resumed his hammock, and Seymour endeavored to open a desultory talk—more

to avoid sleep than to keep up any appearance of friendship. From this inertness of Hope, she felt that the attack would be delayed till dark, or waited, for some apparent cause of quarrel.

Seymour's own hammock remained still empty, and Hope finally growled out: "Don't you *ever sleep?*" "I'm not tired," was the pious falsehood of the American, now keenly alive to the imminent dangers. It was clear to see that the men outside were "on guard." The two scoundrels on fresh horses were ready for action, and still Hope gave no menacing sign. The afternoon wore on; Seymour never quitted his position. About five o'clock as the flaming sun was sinking to the west, a clatter of hoofs from the east announced a horseman. Up to the front door rode a bright, handsome man of thirty or thirty-five years of age, and dismounted; being eagerly surrounded by the women of the family. Coming in and courteously saluting, Seymour discovered him to be Don Felipe Gonzales,—a peripatetic physician from the interior—who, accustomed to travel on professional calls from ranch to ranch, was on his way back

from "San Pedro Sula" where he had been summoned to assist some local Esculapius in an operation. He looked honest and kindly.

A scowling disappointment seemed to sit on Hope's face, and the self constituted sentinel outside had a long and whispered conference with the monte players. Seymour felt hope rise within his heart. Should the Doctor sleep there, he might at least get under way next day and have a fighting chance for a stand in the forest. The Doctor lay down on the bed across the room, and indulged in a siesta. In half an hour all were startled by sounds of pain and groans from the Doctor's bed. Seymour found the new comer, who had been rapidly riding in the hot sun, in the agonies of a sudden convulsion of the coast fever. Hope and Calvera took immediate charge, and, with the aid of the women, the sufferer was divested of his upper raiment, and water jars were emptied in scores, by pouring a continuous stream on the back of the sufferer's neck and spine.

The whole mongrel throng crowded into the room. As dusk approached, the sick man regained some little self control, and lay in pain

faintly moaning, with half closed eyes. Seymour profited by the general excitement to slip out of the front door, buckling on his belt and slipping on his coat. Walking cautiously around the house, he smoked his pipe and watched the gathering shadows. Calvera had told him the mules for the morning would be brought in, and fed when his boy returned from Coyoles, whither he had been sent on an errand, just after the party arrived. Pausing for a moment near the north-eastern corner of the house to light a match for his pipe, the prisoner of fortune heard low voices from around the corner under the shed.

"We could *do it now*," said one of the lounging scoundrels.

"No! wait till the Coyoles gang come in," was the answer. "Well, I am afraid the Doctor will see the business." Seymour blessed his knowledge of the tongue!—"Carajo! Juan! he's too sick to see anything." "Go ahead!" said another.

"No! He can still see; he has his eyes open; and the Americano may make a big noise and shoot. He has got that cursed big revolver."

"Pedro!" said one, "See the old man, and get some stuff given to the Señor Doctor to make *him* sleep good too." Silence reigned among the scoundrels for a moment. Pedro shuffled away.

"I have the way!" said one. Seymour listened with a wildly beating heart. "When the Coyoles gang come in, we'll just knock him on the back of the neck with a machete, and put him across a horse and take him to the Aguan River and throw him in. We can tell the Doctor he went along the road early, before day-break. He must soon sleep! He is tired! The rest can go over to Coyoles with all the stuff, and we divide it up there."

Seymour's blood froze. *Now* was the critical moment!—"Juan, let's go in and fix the Gringo now," said one bold scoundrel. "No, I won't! We want the other party, so as to get a horse to pack him over to the Aguan!" "I'm not going to walk there and back for any cursed Americano dead or alive." "All right. Wait till its dark." And the scoundrels calmly proceeded to talk over a division of the plunder. The watch, chain, jewelry, clothes, weapons, and whole outfit

were quietly parcelled out. They had noted all.

Seymour—who could hear perfectly through the open railed grating at the end of the back porch—crept back around the front into the house. The deepening shadows closed around the house. Missing travelers on this road were not accounted for!

Hope and Calvera still busied themselves around the sick man, and several lights had been brought in the room. Seymour keenly eyed Hope and seemed to see a nervous expectancy in his movements. After an hour, the stars were in the sky, and the haunting silence was still only broken by the groans of the sick man on the bed. The plan of attack seemed to be to await the arrival of the rest of the gang before coming to close quarters, as none of the gang seemed to have any fire arms. The women went in and out, and the news of the "Calentura" had reached the two or three thatched hovels behind. Seymour leaned against the head of the bedstead, and now and then revolved desperate schemes. All were vain. Streams of fire passed before his aching eyes, as he felt

the iron trap closing down on him. In a few moments a young native girl of singular beauty entered the room. Delicate, ripely beautiful in form was she, with a face almost Grecian in its outline. She was an apparition to startle any one.

A vision of loveliness in the wilds of barbarous Honduras! Passing out, she commenced to chatter with the three lurking wretches at the back door, who coarsely handled her as a plaything. With a sudden inspiration, Seymour stepped out on the front and regained his listening place. Horror! This was the counsel which fell from the lips of the beautiful girl, who had cast a long searching look at him as she passed through the room. "Why do you lug this big gringo over to the river when you get him fixed? Knock him on the head when he gets tired and sleeps and then throw him out to the wild hogs. Cut him up—they'll eat him up clean! We'll burn up the bones, and bury them. Go ahead!" The beauty was a wanton, and a fury!

With chattering teeth Seymour crept back, and his parched palate alone caused him to go to the water jug and drink a long draft to cool

the mad fever raging now in his veins. He remembered his past life—its scenes of varied joy and woe, storm and sunshine, battle and distant war trails on the Plains—a mother's fond love—a father's tenderness, all came back! Over his disordered fancy crowded glimpses of foreign travel—gay Paris, glittering Vienna, cool jaunts in lovely Switzerland, and dreamy starlit nights on the Nile. Was he again at the "Mess," and hearing the glasses clink, as the dear old boys "stood up in a row" and sang "Benny Havens, Oh!"

Present danger quickly drove away the visions. He dimly remembered some one had told him of a lovely girl used as a bait to lure wanderers to their death at some dangerous ranch on this mountain road. Many a well appearing traveller—even of native blood—had been led into the net, by lingering to flirt with the Wild Rose of Olanchito! But—quick—Great God! Action! *Now or never!* For home! For Life! For wife and the dear child far away over the ocean foam! The die was cast!

Moving carelessly to the front door from the corner where the water jar stood, Seymour lit

his pipe slowly at the door. Stepping out into the deepening gloom, he heard some one say quickly, "He is going way!"

Hope sat by the sick man's bedside, and Calvera watched with him the invalid moaning unceasingly, and shifting in the bed. "No! you fool! he's only going out for a moment, wait," said another. The wretches knew not how many weary months serving in Texas and Arizona had quickened a naturally keen aptness at Spanish; and if Hope heard at all, he was either too exhausted, or as a coward preferred the inevitable struggle to take place outside. Even with a villain, old and tried in many a ghastly scene, the irresolution of the moment tells. Seymour strode lazily towards the corrals. Turning his head for the last time, perhaps, to the friendly North Star, shining now high in the heavens, here and there patched with a dark cloud, he quickly ranged two or three stars in front, and noted the far distant lowering peak at whose foot lay his haven, Olanchito. There was a garrison and a telegraph. Some respectable people were residents. It would at least be open murder, *there*. Could he make that trip? "Yes!" he

swore with set teeth as he turned the corral corner and plunged swiftly into the tangled wild jungle, dense and dark, where root and vine, mudhole and decayed branch, fallen logs, and poisoned vines matted themselves into a confusion of snares.

Drawing his revolver, he cocked it and dashed away. Driven ahead by his mad thoughts—goaded by the wild hope of freedom, he strode swiftly on!

No outcry yet, no yells, all was silent. After two or three hundred yards, he came on a path and swiftly and mechanically followed it. Suddenly he ran against a horse, on whose back a dark form sat. Great God! It was the boy returning from Coyoles. All is lost! "Señor Americano!" exclaimed the lad, as he saw the tall form, and the white sun helmet told the story. "Where you go?" "Only for a little coolness!" "Ah! the river is three leagues away," said the boy as he put spurs to his horse and dashed off towards the ranch. The revolver was ready in Seymour's hands, but the left hand held it, and the trusty knife was ready in the right, had the boy attempted an outcry.

"I can't kill a boy!" said he, as he plunged forward. "Better for both!" Quick as a flash, Seymour turned at right angles—his old surveying knowledge being his main stay in the idea to make a right angled offset, and then go direct ahead.

Great heavens! his strength was now failing! Onward he drove. The close dry tropic night parched his lips. His throat was burning. A noise of frantic yells and calling, rose on the night. Dogs were barking in chorus, and confusion arose on the murky silent air. He must lie down. His heart beat like a trip hammer with the exertion. Down in the tangled bushes he dropped, and panting lay there prone. His brain, acting like lightning, was quickened by the intense nerve tension and heart pulsations. If not found by the dogs, he was safe for a time off the trail. The hubbub and yells soon died away. Suddenly the heavens obscured, and thanks to a merciful God, a rattling peal of thunder opened a terrific tropical storm.

The weary fugitive blessed God as he sheathed his revolver under his canvas hunting coat, and rising, fixed the direction which would in

six to nine miles take him to the telegraph road which was cut through the forest, thirty feet in width, and ran to the east about fourteen miles to Olanchito. It was six miles away. What mattered the storm? The pouring rain gave him strength, and water to drink. He deliberately filled his pith hat to cool his fevered lips, and set forward carefully, cutting a tall stick with his bowie knife. Now was the task before him at least defined. Cover and darkness had he, and he resolutely strode on, pushing aside the branches, and feeling before him for holes and gullies. Thankful for the darkness of that awful night, for the pouring storm, drenching yet refreshing him, and ever and again by the blue heat lightning flashes getting a glimpse of the woods in front. Accustomed to military marching, he knew he could not swerve very far from his course. The great point was to avoid reaching the robber nest at Coyoles by bearing to the right, and to leave the trail to Olanchito *from the ranch* well to the left; as this bent far away to the north-east, he felt safe. The two great problems then, were to husband his strength and divide his time so as to reach Olanchito before daylight.

There—if ever he arrived—he would make a stand, and at least have witnesses of any personal attack. It was eight o'clock when he entered the forest. His equipment, beyond knife and revolver was meagre. Canteen he had none; that was tied on Hope's saddle. He had not dared to try to get it. The water holes filled by the storm remedied the difficulty. Sleep had been frightened from his weary eyes. As he strode on Seymour investigated his hunting coat pocket. A pipe, some tobacco in twist, a box of matches, and luckily in one game pocket, several pieces of the old dry bread, caught up at Arinal; forgotten till now. Moistening the crusts in the rain, he ate them; and fearing to light, or trying to light a match, he chewed some of the twist tobacco to keep awake.

Onward, steadily onward he marched, careful not to lose breath,—an encounter with man or beast might come any moment,—keeping his revolver under his coat, and steadily moving on in the fearful storm, till he knew at last through long experience that he had placed at least four miles between him and the Ranch of Horrors.

The storm moderated a little; across his path

now and then slipped dusky forms of animals, small and large.

A band of cattle were scattered here and there, and their beaten paths made the walking a little easier. Gradually his self-command returned, and although falling now and then, being tied with vines, and tripped with logs and tree roots, the soldierly instinct of old, told him he was making a good march. Would he do it? Ah, yes! his heart bounded when he thought of a dear one calmly sleeping far away under friendly skies, who had closed her eyes that night—if alive—with a fond prayer for his safety.

The cool rain freshened his drooping pulses, and on, on, ever, he trod. By and by came on him a horrible fear. Suppose he should pass the telegraph road and wander into the other murder pen at Coyoles? He prayed to God as he went, that he might be spared that last crowning misfortune. The rain ceased slowly. The heat lightning flashes died away, and one by one the stars came out. He paused from time to time; his nerves were steadier. He found again his old friend the North Star, and once or twice in a

little opening could see, looming away to the east, the great peak over Olanchito.

And now began a weird fantasy, born of fatigue. Awful shapes seemed to form themselves and move across his path. Shadowy horrors would reach out and grasp at him. The nervous re-action was beginning to tell on him at last. Old scenes haunted him, and he found himself mechanically repeating treasured phrases, or talking to himself in a rambling way.

The night grew clearer. The great white stars hung like gleaming jewels in the sky, now cleared by the storm. Poe's strange lines came to him again and again:

“And then as the night was senescent,

“And the star dials pointed to morn.”

These words haunted his fevered brain.

Then again the horrid fear of being hounded down. Marching, still marching—no telegraph line yet! Had he passed the road? “No! Thank God! at last!” he cried, as he saw before his tired eyes the poles with the one feeble wire strung, which would guide him to Olanchito.

Fourteen miles of sodden road, and what ambush, or pursuit?

As the road was the *only* one cut in the whole region there was no possibility of mistake. Facing the south, and turning to the left, Olan-chito was dead ahead, in a nearly straight line, fourteen miles away. Seymour sat down by the road side on a fallen tree, and reviewed the situation. His flight of course gave no possibility of quarter, should he meet the bandits. If turned back on Arinal or Coyoles, a sure butchery awaited him. The bandits were now all alert. He knew he had been at once pursued; naturally on horseback. Perhaps the expected Coyoles contingent had joined in the chase. Had they dogs? Yes but curs only. What was the nearest danger? Only one. That on the road ahead he might be waylaid.

Seymour placed himself on the chase. What would he do were he the bandit chief? He would send a party quickly down the trail, and then divide it, and patrol the road back and forward. Then how to meet and baffle this new danger? Ah the old Indian trick: keep ahead on the road and lie down and listen. No one was behind him now probably. If they were deceived, thinking him still on the

oblique trail, they would ride on ahead to Olan-chito. Then he must watch for the returning pursuers. Suddenly a thought struck him. That white helmet, well, a little black mud cured that!

So striding along in an open road, Seymour toiled manfully on, with revolver ready at belt, and a set indignation at his heart. His tactics were clear. If any one was met, he would dart into the jungle, and there turn and sell his life, if brought to bay. The grand old stars swept on, and the steady military tramp of the practiced soldier on the open road, told finally on the distance. Weary, leg weary, but free, steadily onward he plodded. Were there any houses along the road? He could not remember. The excitement of the night had chased away all memory of his route sketches for the time.

Down, with strained ear in the muddy road, he dropped from time to time. Suddenly a sound of hoofs galloping behind in the splashy road.

Quickly he dashed into the bushes; and with cocked pistol in hand, behind a tree, Seymour saw a mounted man tear by on the dead run, and heard the clatter of a sheathed machete sword.

With beating heart he emerged, and followed on after the patrol. He determined on quick reflection, that only one man had probably followed on behind. Could they really think that he would try to make Olanchito? Did they know, or divine the old soldier's idea? "Quien sabe?"

Night began to fade, and the hill beyond Olanchito showed sharper and more distinct. Bravo! It was distant not more than six or eight miles now. As onward he plodded, the road, with but a few turns, was melting away under the determined pace. After a little creek crossing a deserted house was reached, with a collection of huts in rear. Did he remember it? Seymour racked his mind, and stalked along. Suddenly four or five huge dogs rushed down the path, and made a wild attack and a ringing outcry. His heart leaped up in his throat. He did not dare to shoot until the last extremity. Seizing a club, lying by the road, he fled a few yards, and turning dealt the foremost a blow, which sent the pack howling back. Onward, with quickened pulses he went, with new life, and the hints of morn commenced to be unmistakable. By star glimmer he found it was between 1:30 and 2 A. M.

Carefully and fearfully watching front and rear, he forced his leaden feet to carry him along the road. One or two old straw huts hinted of the town within a few miles. He had gone, driven by sheer desperation, faint and weary—like a machine, ever over driven. The heavy revolver and belt chafed his wet and rain chilled body. Still for home, friends, and country, onward to baffle the hounds. Strange and wonderful, no returning scouts were on the road. They must have wearied in the storm and returned. Besides, had he not left all his property in their clutches at the Chorrera? Bah! What was property? Could he not send out a detachment of troops from Olanchito and beat them up? Such were the thoughts chasing across his brain.

Suddenly, quick as a flash, across the road a horseman bore down on him machete in air. Shoving the pistol against the man as he stepped aside, Seymour pulled the trigger. With a wild yell, the man fell, as his frightened horse dashed madly into the forest, dragging the brute's body with him. Seymour ran madly on for half an hour, skirting the forest shades in the half

light of the hour before dawn. Had the pursuer heard the dogs? The fugitive dared not keep the road for fear of other ambush.

Leaving the road to the north, Seymour watched a chance, and bent his way around the low hills to the river bank on the east side of the village. With little difficulty he recognized the surroundings, and held his breath as he skirted along the silent river. He had no idea of the exact length of the path, but had now traveled seven hours, and at last the cut road was reached, and he crawled wearily up the river bank. He now stood behind the outer row of adobe houses, built around the Plaza of Olan-chito. A new dilemma awaited the wayfarer. Dared he enter the town? Should he try to awake some one? It was three o'clock; should he lurk in the outskirts till morn? Sleep and fatigue as well as !hunger now weighed him to the ground.

Desperation seized him. Forward! So onward he strode into the east of the silent Plaza where the great bulk of an old Church of the Conquistadores loomed up before him. Carefully he skirted the deserted Plaza; keeping in

rear of its surrounding streets. No sound—no one stirring, and now smaller objects were faintly discernible in the crepuscular light.

To the old church he hied for sanctuary and to hide himself therein. He was safe there, if only sleep could be guarded against. The lane was turned and out strode Seymour, halting, limping and bruised, with torn and bleeding hands, and sank down at the foot of the great wooden cross in front of the Olanchito Church at a quarter of four o'clock. Thank God for a present escape. Thanks for temporary freedom. Home and friends were thousands of miles away, yet here a refuge lay. A faint glimmer of light was in the church. Cautiously the fugitive approached the old carved mahogany door and peered through a chink.

Horror! He saw in the aisle a bier! It was black draped with a body in a catafalque. Some poor wretch ready for burial. Dim, oil fed tapers at its head and foot, shed a ghastly radiance; and the drowsy Indian sacristan had evidently deserted his charge and gone to sleep. A revulsion seized the tired man, who dragged his wearied bones into a recess behind the arches

of the old portal and sank down to sleep—pistol in hand—overcome with deadly fatigue and gnawing hunger. How long he slept he knew not. With a sudden sharp pain in his neck, he awoke. A huge soft form glided past his face, and the trickling red blood, proved that a giant blood sucking bat had fastened on his veins as he slept. He sprang up in mingled disgust and alarm!

The grisly horror of the attack roused all his latent forces, and binding his handkerchief on his wounded neck, he walked and hobbled around for an hour or so in the silent Plaza arcades, pistol in hand. Birds were now twittering, and the woods sent out a confused chattering of animal life.

Seymour could now discern the Padre Sanchez's house next the crumbling old church, built by the grim Spaniards two hundred years ago, when Olanchito was a wonder of that earlier day. Would any one ever awake? Would the night be an eternity? Such were the haunting questions of the now thoroughly shattered man. Did any of the guerillas lurk around the deserted streets? At last, a door opened on

the west side of the Plaza; a man came out and gazed around, lazily snuffing the morning air. Seymour hastily approached and was not astonished to hear the man say:

“Madre de Dios! Who are you; and where did you come from?” His face, covered with mud—his torn garments—his bruised and bleeding hands—his clothes in tatters made the wanderer look like a human wolf! Seymour explained he had lost the way from his “Camp.” “And where was that?” With greatest caution the reply was made that he did not know just where. “When will the shops open? I am hungry!” said Seymour. “In an hour,” replied the man, who proved to be the Assistant Alcalde.

“Señor Americano!” said he courteously, “I regret I can only give you a glass of aguadien-te.” The half famished traveller seized the glass, filled it to the brim, and drained it without ever tasting the fiery liquid, which coursed through his veins and gave him a new life.

“The estanco will be open over there in half an hour, *you* can get then all you wish to eat.”

Drowsily turning on his heel, the hospitable official went back to his slumbers.

"Saved!" cried Seymour. Plodding over the Plaza he reached the door of the little "tienda" and steadily beating thereon, aroused a frightened store-keeper. Quick explanations caused a homely repast to be set out. Hard-boiled eggs, bread, and some meat cooked the day before, were washed down with aguadiente.

With eager eyes, Seymour watched the Padre's door. At six o'clock the black robed Indian priest paced out to the church sacristy, and followed by a drowsy acolyte, read his brief mass to an audience of a few sleepy Indian women, and the thankful wanderer of the night. Waiting until the good Priest went out of the little side door to his house, with quick strides Seymour followed him, pushed open the half closed door, and throwing himself into a rude chair, before the astonished Padre, cried: "Safe at Last! Thank God!" He dropped his tired head upon his weary breast in the collapse of utter exhaustion.

"Jesus Maria! Panchita!" cried the honest old Priest. "Get the strange Americano to bed! He has the jungle fever."



FINDING AN AMERICAN.

SIBERIA.

1885.

One of the peculiar impressions, resulting from the ceaseless streams of humanity crowding the busy streets of great New York, and forcibly impressed upon the tone and minds of helpless passers by, is the seeming fact that there are *too many* Americans in some places, for general comfort. The thinning down of the great urban community would be a God-send, at times. From the maximum of crush, like that in our arterial thoroughfare Broadway, we, gaining distance, by travel approach the desired minimum, where the genus Yankee is reduced to the last possible limit of one; for we jump off the mathematical ladder into nether space, when we pass Zero.

To find a budding civilization, where the "total American census" is a unit, is an interesting primal fact. There is so much to build upon.

I suppose it was because I was destined to discover this irreducible community, that I wandered, in 1885, from San Francisco to Vladivostock, Siberia. Twenty-one days of ploughing the lovely Pacific, on the stout old "Oceanic," meeting neither a single sail, nor any mark of humanity, was lonesome to an exasperating degree. A terrific cyclone off the Japanese coast, thrilled all with awe, and caused us to hail snow-capped Fusi-yama as a blessed sight. Seven days spent afterward threading the lovely archipelago of the fairy Inland Sea, was a dream of delight. We revelled in the rarest vistas of sea, sky, and picturesque island-fringed shores. No fresher beauty varies around on God's footstool, than this land-locked voyage from Yokahama to Nagasaki will disclose. Beautiful Kobe, romantic Kioto, and the gallant, warlike heights of storied Simoneseki, are a panorama of Mother Earth's rarest pictures. The crested heights of Simoneseki straits were wet with heroic blood, that lovely day in the by-gone "sixties," when

the proud Prince of Satsuma, *alone* with his chivalric loyal retainers, battled a whole day with the allied fleet of four great, grasping, and insolent "Christian" nations. Poor Christianity indeed! replacing the meek, brotherly, pleading words of a blessed Savior, by hot shot, rifle shell, and every devil's missive, death laden. They poured these into the manly ranks of a simple, spirited people, bravely defending their native shores, in sight of their modest, peaceful homes.

Thus thought I, as we dipped the flag, in courtesy, passing the old battle ground. We were on the "Hiroshima-Maru"—formerly the "Golden Age," the last of the old American built side-wheelers, now in Eastern seas. So thought the dear one at my side, while we swept out into the starry night, as the glittering sun sank in glory under the purple horizon. We glided past the almost impregnable rocky gates of the old Japanese stronghold, leaving an earthly paradise behind us.

Gayly we ploughed over sparkling phosphorescent seas, lit up with hundreds of little lamps, borne by those frail fishing boats, mere shells, in which the brave Japanese toss the livelong

night on these all too-treacherous waters. The old sword bearers, the matchless warrior chivalry of Japan, have joined in death their martial ancestors. Rude practical progress, and the greed of the dollar, have swept away forever the legendary, time-honored, curiously beautiful feudal system of the "Land of the Rising Sun."

Old customs, picturesque dress, epic song, national festivals, and much of their unconquerable native spirit, were crushed by the advent of "Dollar Hunting," your only modern game, sir! The antique castles of the Daimios are crumbling away. The lithe, brown-eyed, two-sworded, knightly soldiers have vanished. Adieu to Honor and old-time Romance! Enter the "Man of Business," whose insatiable "trade" devours the slow ripened beauties of the hallowed, art-loving, hero-worshipping, days of old, everywhere.

Matchless sword and curious dagger, priceless vase, and peerless cabinet, fretted gold ornament, crystal curios, chiselled silver master pieces, and classic paintings, world famous gold and silver embroidery, and clear cut bronzes which put the triumphs of the outer world to shame, have been scattered over heedless utili-

tarian America and Europe. Greasy speculators, cranky collectors, and chaffering auctioneers, paw over the harvest of a thousand years of Japanese artistic skill, and deftly expressed beauty-worship.

Never, never was a land so rifled, in a few years, of all its time honored, expressive treasures. Silent temples yawn in their ghostly quietness. The ruined tower, deserted garden, and lonely hall, tell the sad story: "The old order changeth, giving place unto the new?" "Cui Bono?"

Ample time had I to muse over these and other dreamy thoughts, clinging like fresh vines to the tombs of a nation's great past. We skirted the bold and romantic shores, till our anchor was dropped in the beautiful land-locked harbor of Nagasaki. There, we were to take ship for Siberia,—a voyage of eight days more, to skirt the wild, rude, inhospitable shores of harsh, brutal Corea, with Siberia as an objective point,—the Korean peninsula being wildly misnamed "Land of the Morning Calm."

Forty-three days in all needed for the voyage from San Francisco to Vladivostock, caused me

to wonder if a slender, yet attractive business chance, would repay by final success, the dangers of three separate sea voyages. Braving typhoon, and the dreaded cholera, and passing through the absurd intricacies of Japanese, Co-rean, and Siberian, fantastic, autocratic, official red tape, we slowly moved on.

I was not *then* aware that I would have the crowning joy of "Finding an American," and putting him under the "Stars and Stripes" once more. No achievement of my chequered career fills me with more pride, than this remarkable feat. He was not found, an embryo man, like Moses, but in a high muscular state of development, fit for daily practical use and a considerable amount of assorted deviltry. In fact I have sometimes wondered if it were not better I had left my precious "find" to rot out the rest of his life (he was only twenty-four), in the coal mines of Saghalien, under the ready rifles of a not too humanitarian Russian guard, quite apt at the trigger. The reader shall judge! My bosom still thrills with the pride of finding him, and he is now a free agent. A *very free* agent! I disclaim further moral responsibility, as the flag of

his native land, covers and hides *his* delinquencies, with those of other lively fellow citizens. "To our mutttons!" as the witty Gaul, airily remarks.

Happy days were those spent in picturesque Nagasaki. Jolly friends were the warm-hearted members of the Consular Corps; whose luxurious official homes, nestle among the crags on the eastern shore. The flags of all civilized nations proudly float from the staffs, as Nagasaki is an "open port," and of enormous commerce. A great development of trade among the three thousand islands of the Japanese group, has called for every kind of steam craft, from the little launch of twenty feet, up to the stately steel liner of five thousand tons; all under the white flag, with the crimson ball in the center.

The cute Japs have wisely declined to sell land, or give away franchises to the grasping foreigner. Thousands of rough-built, wooden junks, brave the beautiful but uncertain waters of these classic shores. Myriads of fishing boats, with a single oblong sail,—parti-colored in three vertical stripes,—flit out silently to their never-ceasing fishing before the dawn. The day

break is made weird by the gliding out to sea of these harvesters of the ocean. All good anglers should love the Japanese. They are *born, live and die*, fishing. Hundreds, nay, thousands, of these junks, carry the whole family. Men, women, laughing boys, graceful girls, and wistful, brown-eyed babies, crowd these junks and live on ship; *all are born sailors!* Men and women alike swim like ducks. When the little "sampan" go over, the occupants frolic in the water, and paddle alongside, coolly, till picked up, or they gayly bail out and right the swamped craft.

Pretty dark-eyed, soft-voiced girls (with superb busts, and lithe, sinewy arms), make the light "sampan" boat fly through the water; sculling astern with a well poised twelve foot sweep. Their rounded youthful arms shine like polished bronze. An earthen pot of live coals serves as a fire on the junk, to boil the rice, to dress the fish, and heat the water for the delicate infusion of native tea; drank without milk or sugar.

Happy and gay, these daring simple fisher folk live in contentment. A lucky excess of their catch, furnishes them the few yards of blue or white prints needed, also their quaint straw

shoes, a few salads and vegetables, and their tea and rice. Their recreation is chattering and endless story telling. Their artless manners are graceful and kindly. Quite as happy are they, as if toiling in huge factories, or under the enforced task labor of civilized life. Some think even more so. I certainly envy their cheerful spirits. Graceful, genial pagans! Your memory is a gentle charm of the past!

The few days of our Nagasaki leisure glided away. Groves and temples, bazaars and tea houses, lovely gardens and quaint old castles, all were visited. Many a useless but "fetching" curio was collected from the smiling, dark eyed, eager tradesmen.

A pretty sailing pennant, one lovely day, fluttered at the mast head of the splendid steel "Hiogo Maru," bound for the Korean coast and Vladivostock, Siberia. The latter city of 15,000 to 25,000, is the gate of the Russian East,—the Pacific terminus of the great soon-to-be-constructed Russian Siberian railway. Already forty miles have been built toward the Amoor. While the English financial papers, growl: "You can't—you know—really you can't build it; you

Russians have no money!" the dogged Muscovite smiles in quiet satisfaction, as the rails go quickly down. The road will build itself, with paternal *hints* from the Czar!

With the patriarchal despotic power of Russia, (not *always* wielded for ill), whole brigades of hardy troops, vast communities of outlying people, will be moved bodily on the line. Making the road bed, will be only a gymnastic exercise for the easily controlled, peasant millions of the White Czar's vast domains.

Inexhaustible supplies of home-made steel rail and an excellent equipment, will be furnished by the Imperial government. The surplus revenues, and unused human energy, which a great war would exhaust in a useless bloody sacrifice to vanity, will build this grand road of the near future in five years. The already splendidly efficient telegraph from Petersburg across Siberia to the Pacific, will be an important help in this great construction. The roads, with post houses every ten or fifteen miles from Ekaterinburg, (four thousand miles to Vladivostock,) have followed the natural "easy path." For hundreds of miles, mere surface levelling and laying rail,

will be the whole work. The trains will run as easily in winter as on the "Canadian Pacific.

Off we glided, out of the narrow Nagasaki straits, in gay spirits. Ugly looking, well planted earthworks of enormous strength crowned the "Heads." The black muzzles of sundry hungry looking twelve inch Krupp rifles, alarmed me not, as I knew I was threading these silvery waters in "piping times of peace." "Piping times," indeed, they were, as I puffed my trusty briarwood, and chatted with spruce Captain Walker, (a game Scotchman), the ideal of a neat sailor. He, with his old-country engineers, represented the Caucasians and was in command of the crack vessel of the splendid principal Japanese fleet of fifty seagoing steamers.

We had indeed "found an American" at Nagasaki. Bright, genial, jolly Consul Birch, of West Virginia, at whose hospitable table we gathered at a merry dinner, honored thus the unfurling of his Consular flag on his assuming sway. May his shadow never grow less! He was a worthy representative of his country and a credit to his Department. Several local traders were also Americans; and snugly ensconced in a superb

semi-palace, a community of good American missionaries, were busied there "christianizing the heathen" at leisure, and not sourly disdainful of varied creature comforts.

I judged this from the quasi-royal manner in which they lived; also by their aristocratic avoidance of the "American globe-trotter." We disturbed not their pious "Nirvana,"—our wandering feet rested not under their mahogany. Secure in their princely mountain eyrie, the tinkle of the Steinway piano floated out on the fragrant night air, from their cheerful windows. It was popularly whispered in Nagasaki, that the choicest dainties, the cream of the market, and the very best cheroots, found their way up to that lovely home, where these pious men and women calmly immolate themselves on the altar of "self-denial." Even choice selections of "Spiritus frumenti," and carefully culled exemplars of the old brands of "Spiritus Vini Gallici," were known to have climbed that sculptured hill; It was "good for cramps;" "a rare preventative of cholera," and excellent to rub with, "on the inside."

I am told that careful "object lessons" in

housekeeping accompany the more strictly spiritual exercises. Trim stewards, with many neat handed maidens, improve their own *minds* and save their *souls* while humbly ministering to the temporal wants of the kindly saints who have "come so far to do good" to *themselves* and others.

They *do* do good! They do much good to *themselves*!—whatever is the general result of their spiritual labors. When double "rickshaw" riding jaunts to the hills, and pony exercise fail to revive their waning spirits, I am credibly told these good souls go home to the land of the "Stars and Stripes" to recruit, on frequent leaves of absence,—their pay ever running on. They loudly urge the pious goggle-eyed wondering Sabbath-School child of America on these return trips, to devote his stray nickels to the poor heathen! The unceasing rattle of this childish tribute in the "missionary slot" serves to keep these good souls in fine fettle. All of these apostles I have ever met with, in my world wanderings, have been wonderfully well-fed and prosperous looking. Their raiment is of price.

I approve their one item of self-denial: that

good standard silks and satins and Crépe-de-Chine, with *plain lawns* and *swiss muslins* are good enough for them; they disdain mere useless hidden embroidery. Sleek and fat are their handsome wives, who toil not, neither do they spin. Their budding daughters and spirited sons bear themselves with becoming pride as representatives of a great cause.

Alas! *these* were not the Americans I was destined to find. My treasure trove was to be of a different, far different type. I fear he was a rough diamond. I am veritably told that my discovered citizen had used bad words—gone fishing *safely* on Sunday—and was fond of the things of this world. I saw him, (after the finding), engulf the maddening “fire water” with no outward signs of compunction. Ah! he was only a sailor. I doubt even now if he is a “brand snatched from the burning.” His spiritual state might not delight my pious neighbors on that lovely Nagasaki hillside. His unfortunate choice of a profession, will hang over him the lively chance of being drowned, as a means of leaving a world of care and trial, and unless he takes to “tea and tracts” and abjures sailor Jack’s usual

happy-go-lucky code, he may go through water, to be gently or fiercely parboiled, or roasted in a later existence, at the will of Davy Jones! Yet he may some day meet a good missionary who will "grasp him on the brink." Ah! yes! I hope so! and complete his regeneration! I only saved him from a lingering prison life! May some energetic colporteur "rake in from the depth of sin" this wretched, wandering stranger. Yes! I should smile, *if he did!* So mote it be!

Away northward toward the treeless, gaunt, rocky shores of eastern Corea, sped the good steel steamer Hiogo-Maru. Sole occupants of her splendid cabins, we made a jolly mess of three—with the good Captain. His bachelor pets, a superb Corean tiger-cat, a royal Japanese macaw, and a great bronze colored Siberian blood-hound, (with sparkling eyes), furnished us amusement! They "*ran*" the cabins.

Chilly October blasts blew from the icy north, swelled high the waves, and the wailing seagulls wheeled and screamed over our heads at an ominous looking sunset. Midnight found us in a typhon, with slowed engines, snorting under the lee of Tchusima Island, an old paradise of the hardy

Tartar Mongolians. They pushed over there from Corea, thence easily to Japan, carrying the "warrior blood" a thousand years ago to the then peaceful islanders. Thirty hours did we toss in this foaming, raging whirlpool. Lo! white winged Peace breathed on the waters; on we glided, on an even keel! Next day, barren, rugged and deeply indented shores greeted us, with the first spurs of the terrific lonely Tiger Mountains, which hung over us menacingly to the west for five days, until we neared the Golden Horn, beautiful Vladivostock Bay.

Our first stop in Corea was at Fusan. Up to this, nothing but a few fires and scambly looking patches, cleared here and there, indicated the presence of man. Fusan, (in a lovely circular bay), is a collection of rude, mud-walled, thatched huts, with heating flues dug out in the ground below. The paucity of wood in an almost treeless and very cold country, causes the wretched, poverty-stricken natives to use chopped straw and animal refuse as fuel. A few thin rice fields, some fair cattle, the harvest of fishing, with poultry raising, give the precarious support the Coreans half starve under. They have

no roads, vehicles, and very few beasts of burden. Rough rolling craggy hills make up the coast for eight hundred miles, with little tillable land.

The mineral riches of the lonely land are undeveloped and lie far in the interior. Hundreds of the rough natives lounged on the hills looking ghostly in their blouses and baggy trousers of white cotton cloth, wadded with raw cotton, (a native product), to keep out the intense cold.

Frowsy, dirty, noisy, vulgar and given to lying, small thieving and rioting, the Koreans are a very unamiable people. Crowds of them will follow foreigners and mob or stone them. If by chance you enter a residence, a hut, or speak to their hideous looking women—who flee away at the sight of a white man—a row begins. Cholera and smallpox annually carry off great numbers of them. A continued fish diet brings about peculiar local diseases. The higher ranks wear green, as a typical color; and mourning is denoted by a yellow garb; all these social uniforms are of cotton,—absolute silence is enjoined on mourners!

It is pleasant to note that the “tyrant man”

habitually carries the babies around in a cloth pouch, slung on his back; but as usual with barbarians, the women do all the hard work, except boating and fishing, as well as loading and discharging vessels. Greedy, cruel, insolent, brutal and cowardly, the Corean character defies missionary effort, and seems devoid of any merit known to a civilized code. They do not seem to care for drink; they cannot get any strong beverages as they are too poor.

After a day's stoppage at Fusan, northward did we voyage; passing dangerous shoals, jagged, cruel looking stony islands, and many reefs. The cold, gray, rocky buttressed mountains grew taller; they towered from 7,000 to 9,000 feet over our heads to the west. Infested with immense tigers, these ranges are untrodden by man. They are useless and impassable.

Two days steaming into the teeth of icy gales, brought us to "Gensan," on a long wooded flat, with a pleasantish valley behind it. Here, a thousand mud huts are scattered along two or three miles of shore. A few bronze bowls, some horsehair hats, and a knife or two were the only treasures here to be had. Well armed and

with a reliable club, I landed with my wife, (assisted by the Captain), for a visit to the "lions" of Gensan. We watched long some tinsel decorated sly priests, pounding gongs and burning tapers over a moribund Corean, who was dying in "great style," surrounded by a lot of natives; with a horde of many hungry looking curs watching his agonies. After successfully "wafting the parting soul on its way," the priests "sold me" the fine bronze sacred gong, as a relic of Gensan.

Narrowly escaping mobbing here, (from our natural Yankee curiosity), we turned the prow still northward. Three days after, in the grip of the Winter King, we glided into the magnificent Golden Horn, of Vladivostock Bay. A splendid sheet of water it is, locked in by heavy headlands, veiling the growing city from sight and protecting it from the fire of hostile war vessels. Two long arms of the bay run inland. A beautiful river wanders by, flowing into the western arm.

Heavy grim forts, with tiers of huge rifled steel cannon, await that visit from the English fleet, which cannot be long delayed. The Rus-

sian Bear, and English Lion must grapple ye-
to the death. On land and sea, from India to
Khamschatka, by the Baltic and on the Pacific,
the old national grudges, studiously nursed, with
bitter aversion, will be some day settled in a
sad fashion. The only seaport in Siberia not
frozen up a large part of the year, is this. It
is a jewel in the Russian crown!

A grand array of magazines, workshops, naval
store sheds, and two fine iron docks, furnish
means for generally outfitting the Russian Pacific
fleet. Wooded hills, good farming lands, and
interior valleys, with great wheat crops, make
this coast province a valuable country to the
Czar. Fish, game and live stock are abundant.
Cattle and horses suffer only from the rapacious
tigers, who sway over the forests, and are es-
pecially ravenous for horseflesh. A magnificent
line of government subsidized steamers plies via
the Suez canal to Odessa. Many ships and steam-
ers run direct to Hamburg, with special free trade
rules, to assist the development of these distant
provinces. Goods and all European supplies
of use and luxury, are very cheap and abundant.
Navy and army officers throng the streets, and

eight to ten war vessels are always at hand. Abundant timber of good quality, good flour mills, fish in great variety, and a fur business of great extent, add to the importance of the growing place.

Railroad construction now employs hundreds of natives, Mongolians, soldiers, Chinese and Koreans. North to the Amoor the road will run, opening several rich valleys; thence west to Irkutsk and skirt the Chinese frontier, to join the Russian line now pushing rapidly to the Pacific Ocean.

The teas and silks of China and Japan, the rich goods of the East and South Seas, will go into Europe quickly, breaking no bulk, safely to the heart of Russia. England's mighty fleet will be then powerless against these torpedo closed, almost impregnable straits and forts.

Twenty-five thousand people of all grades, throng the busy Golden Horn. The city straggles along for miles on the shores of the Bay, looking to the south-east. Solid log houses, splendidly finished with the beautiful white cedar, are the types of dwellings. Some magnificent stone business houses, and many fine resi-

dences adorn a town under the despotic military control of a Russian Admiral of high rank. He commands the "Littoral," or sea-shore, from the Corean frontier to the mouth of the Amoor. Two hundred miles up the Amoor, safe from all hostile fleets, the Governor-general of Pacific Siberia, rules over a great empire. It consists of this coast province, the interior, and Khamschatka, as a separate governorship, under his general control. The great Island of Saghalien lies a few miles off the coast. There, thousands of felon convicts, banished for only the foulest personal crimes, are separated from all the state prisoners. They toil at the coal mines, for use of town and fleet, and are opening the interior of that splendidly rich isle. Coast steamers and fleet war vessels prowl along the shore, as far as Behring Straits, watching the nimble Japanese and Yankee predatory whalers, (so-called). They watch for the fleet Pacific coast schooners who steal seal skins and walrus hides and ivory, robbing the natives of these valuable furs, for poisonous rum, which kills them! These pirates also supply the "tabooed" gun, pistols, and ammunition!

An immense trade of an illicit character has been carried on in these for years. Numbers of Yankee vessels have been seized and confiscated for these buccaneering descents. Fraud, and even force, have often been used. Many a chase has been hotly followed up for hundreds of miles to sea, by the Russian gunboats.

The never-sleeping Russian overland telegraph, serves to direct an immense amount of important business in this far-off region.

No place in the world can show a more motley assembly on its streets than Vladivostock. Coreans, Mongols, Chinese laborers and mechanics, Tartars, Japanese, Khamschatkans, inland tribes of uncouth aspect, soldiers, sailors, and officials, are a queer medley. Prince and peasant, the convict en route to Saghalien for life, ticket-of-leave criminals, (with distinctive uniform), ex-felons, male and female, ragged sailors, and prosperous merchants, with many respectable families of the Government employees, give a polyglot character to these queer scenes.

The "Admiral Governor" reigns supreme, in a spacious old, so-called "Palace" whose plain exterior speaks not of the really easy luxury of

the interior. A "Naval Club" has its social attractions for the very large number of officers. Fine bands discourse music on pleasant days, on ship and in the garden, where "flirting" goes on merrily. No climate seems to be too rigorous for love-making! A good college and training school for naval cadets is a marked local feature. One can feel here how long the arm of the mighty Czar is.

Down went rattling our anchor. Soon a grim looking Colonel Chief of Police and his subordinates, came on board. Carefully prepared passports and friendly letters gave us the entree. In a few hours we were cosily dining at the "Golden Horn" hotel of the famous "Gel-etsky." The "Delmonico" of that northern burg is an ex-opera-bouffe French tenor, from Marseilles. Handsome, gay, and an admirable "chef de cuisine," his Siberian pheasants, stuffed with truffles, fine "filets," and good wines were cheer fit for a royal epicure.

Our sojourn of some weeks, was most agreeable. The little country trips, rare sights, and strange experiences, made time fly. Many hospitalities on the frigates, and at the military

headquarters, were pleasant features. The Admiral Governor and his consort were charming. Neat little black Siberian ponies, with good carriages trotted us briskly around, and life was jolly enough.

My mentor was a gay gallant old Russian Prince, who was the military commander of the Province. Distantly related to the Emperor, a General of high rank, he had led a division of cavalry in the Russo-Turkish war. Speaking all the languages, a keen sportsman, great horseman, bon camarade, and of patrician manners, he was a delightful cicerone.

Several Frenchmen, Italians, and all the agreeable well-educated attaches of two enormous local German business houses, made up our foreign society. These jolly Teutons lived in two domestic clubs, made up of the employes of the rival houses. The habits, diversions, songs and amusements of the Vaterland were kept up as if on the blue Rhine; so far away, but forgotten even here.

Not a single American flag greeted our eyes; no fellow citizen appeared. I bewailed greatly that singular fact. I was destined to discover

one under very queer circumstances, however.

After a stay of a month, I visited the principal German business house one day, to obtain our return tickets to Japan. We were at last turning our faces back to the Golden Gate. The necessary long formalities and official pow-wow with the stern Chief of Police, were over. My passports had been returned "en règle" and I was the proud possessor of a stamped paper, authorizing me to leave the Port and depart on the next steamer. Gallant Captain Walker's beautiful ship lay in the harbor; in two days she was to dip her colors to the Czar's flag, and then bear us back to the spicy shores of dreamy, delicately lovely Japan.

The next evening our indefatigable chef "Tessier," who *cooked* far better than he *sang*, tried to surpass himself in a good-bye dinner, at which our friend, the charming Prince, was to be our guest for the last time.

My accounts were being finished; I was ridding myself of sundry piles of unsubstantial looking paper "roubles," when the counting room door opened. Under escort of two heavily armed, brutal looking gens d'armes, a tall,

bronzed, stalwart young fellow strode in. Blonde, sinewy, with a snapping blue eye, he was the picture of superb strength; keen daring, and manly nerve showed in his every movement. A graceful nautical "roll" proved him a "toiler of the sea." His decidedly negligé costume showed that he was "no dude." Heavy sea boots, canvas trousers, and a leather belt—from which the knife had disappeared—and a coarse woolen shirt, was his outer garb. Coatless was he, and bare-headed. Such a costume ill-befitted the icy November day. I thought him a Swede or Finn, and supposed the military police had arrested him on some ship, for a trifling infraction.

I was electrified when he approached the courteous manager of the great house of Kunst & Albers, and asked with an unmistakable Yankee twang, if he could get a ticket to Japan. He was offering vainly to give a draft on a Yokohama shipping house. Datten, the manager, spoke English, and I remained silent. The sailor was shivering, and I was almost frozen even in my comfortable fur coat. I wondered what caused the plight of this fine, manly looking young fellow. While puffing my cheroot I listened to the

positive refusal of the agent to give him any ticket. Not alone was it on money grounds, but principally as he had no "Police Pass" to go. "You can never leave the country, sir, till you get a Police Pass to go." While listening to the sailor's pleading and begging, I bethought me that the harsh Police Colonel held autocratic court under the august rule of the Admiral Governor. The Admiral never bothers his head with these ordinary malefactors.

Several Coreans, Tartars and Mongolians had recently been neatly dispatched to a better world—it is hoped,—than this, by the keen sabre, or ready revolver of the Colonel himself. He had exercised his brawny sword arm only the week before on a stalwart Corean, whom he found on the sea beach endeavoring to batter in the head of a fellow countryman with a huge stone. I bethought me of the masterly execution of the Colonel. I also pitied the friendless sailor, who was evidently in the toils of that grim official. I gathered from the agent's talk with the two policemen, that the mariner was all unconscious of the gravity of his forlorn situation.

A final refusal caused the young giant to aud-

ibly express, in the vernacular the most forcible, uncomplimentary opinions of Siberian justice or "injustice." When the cautious merchant told him, he dared not think of helping him out of the country, the hardy sailor finally broke down. In his forcible tirade, he had announced that he was an American born citizen, and from the State of Maine. This touched my heart; for had I not shared my blankets at West Point with poor Jimmy Porter, (a gallant boy from Maine,) whose heart's blood dyed his blue cavalry jacket a ghastly crimson, when his eyes closed forever in that mad rush of Custer's doomed troopers at the Little Rose Bud massacre?

I walked up to the downcast youth, who had thrown himself on a chair, and sadly buried his face in his hands. "Look here! old man!" said I, "I am an American!" He gave a jump. I felt the bones of my hand almost crack under the convulsive grip of the young Colossus. I asked permission to have a private chat with him. Taking him into a side room, his dejected air caused me to prescribe a five finger dose of good brandy, also a handful of cheroots. I soon learned his pitiable condition.

Hatless, coatless, moneyless, with all his possessions on his back; friendless, "without a passport," half sick, and even half starved, his iron spirit was almost broken. He had given up only when the agent told him that far from going out of the country he would undoubtedly be brought before the coldly severe military police tribunal. He must stand by his trial before any idea of departure could be entertained. Unable to speak the language; without friends, or any advocate, his case looked desperate, for he had been taken red-handed in an illegal descent upon "Robben Island" eight hundred miles north. This is one of the two great fur seal rookeries, so prized by the Russian government. They are the only places where that valuable animal is found to any extent; save on the American group of islands of the same icy seas. My long-looked-for American had been found! He was in a hard fix, and firmly gripped in the sharp claws of the two headed Russian Eagle.

A rouble for their extra leg exercise, to the good-natured guards, gave me the permission to take my American over to the "Geletsky" and there refresh his "inner man." He had been

made wolfish by a thirty days' trip from Robben Island, in the prison brig of a little Russian corvette. Tossed in, like an animal, a little tea, black bread, and thin cabbage soup, were his meagre rations; a very hard pine plank was the sailor boy's bed.

After he had performed a very effective knife and fork solo, he did a "round unvarnished tale" deliver, as follows: with sundry embellishments learned on the salt sea waves.

Frederic Crocker—otherwise known as "Big Fred, the Hunter"—was born in Maine. From boyhood he had plunged into all the exciting scenes which the wild wayward life of a sailor, seal hunter, and Pacific adventurer could furnish. A dead shot, a good navigator, and an excellent first mate, he had made the round voyage of the world early. His remarkable rifle shooting, caused him to be made "first hunter" of a "sea-otter" schooner, while yet a boy. He sailed north and south from San Francisco, watching for that sly animal, whose small pelt brings hundreds of dollars, often. Many long nights had he tossed in his skiff off Santa Barbara, waiting the dawn, when the otter plays around the sea

weed banks, for the fish entangled there. While assistant hunters frightened the shy animal into diving and wearying himself, by shooting around him in a circle, it was reserved for the arch-professional, Fred, to dispatch the glossy prize by a neat head shot with a twenty-two calibre Winchester, in order not to tear or destroy the treasured skin.

Drifting north in search of dollars and adventures, Fred had become renowned as a fur seal killer. Leaving San Francisco in March and returning in November, the rich season's division of coin soon melted away under the blandishments of sailor-Jack's varied winter delights in "Frisco."

Every ship owner was glad to have such an all-round Admirable Crichton of the sea in his employ. A large "advance" would tide him over, till his unerring trigger finger had earned a new pile of shining "twenties." Hunting "on the lay" with a large percentage, his had been a jolly life. Far to the mystic north had he ranged, and often had been past Behring Straits. Then only are sailors the "swells" of the ocean,—past their thirty-third degree,—when they have sailed in the trackless Arctic!

Many a polar bear, huge, and white fleeced, scores of the wild ferocious brown land bears, hundreds of clumsy tusked walrus, had he dispatched. His deadly aim had been utilized to nail the priceless old "Bow Head" whale, with that one well directed bomb gun shot, which is the steam whaler's modern substitute for the old harpoon, now obsolete. Something of a rifle shot myself, I had often heard of the man's wonderful powers. Now I had him all to myself, as a sort of treasure trove, subject to a lien held by His Imperial Majesty, Alexander, III. the "dynamite dodger."

Several years of sailing on the smart steam whalers from San Francisco, had thoroughly posted Fred in the tactics of these thievish boats which are half traders, half pirates. With a strong crew, a hold full of smuggled whisky and shooting supplies, these boats slip over the Russian line, land on the Siberian shores, and fill up with furs, walrus, ivory, and the coveted whalebone. Whale oil is now of little value, but whalebone at four to six dollars a pound, means wealth.

The tribes of the Siberian coast secure many thousands of pounds of whalebone yearly from

the great "Bowheads" driven on their coast by gales, and killed in the shallow inlets by their daring native boat parties. This bone and their catch of walrus hides and tusks, as well as seals and otters, should furnish them with woolen necessaries and rye flour for winter use.

The Yankee raiders give them wretched rum and cheap trash, at two thousand per cent. profit, for their only property, the furs, ivory and bone. A grand debauch of months ends in the awful starvation scenes of Arctic midwinter.

The Russian government kindly sends ship loads of flour and provisions with other necessaries to those people, but many hundreds, even sometimes thousands starve yearly. A precaution, well judged, has been to patrol the coast with smart armed corvettes and chase away the predatory Americans. Force even has been used by these so-called whalers; really, pirates.

It was some daring exploit of a well known captain, (whose able "Ancient" was our friend Crocker), that caused the sly Fred to turn his errant steps to Yokohama. Several American vessels, (notwithstanding eager protestations of innocence), had been seized, and confiscated.

Some the Russians used for training ships for their Naval Cadet school; others they sold when dismantled; and the oldest were sunk in various places to keep the English out, in the war flurry of 1885. They turned the captured crews loose with a last warning.

It had been politely hinted by the Russian Consul General in San Francisco, that a "neck-tie" party would follow the catching of Fred's chief, who was the terror of the coast.

With all his cool recklessness in the face of imminent danger, Fred Crocker was no fool, and cared not to stretch Russian hemp. He hied him therefore to Yokohama, Japan, where he "fired the heart" of sundry Americans, engaged in speculation and outfitting. They entered into a well planned marine raid. A saucy, rakish schooner was purchased—as innocent a nautical "kid" as ever danced on the brine. Under the Japanese flag, she cleared for the Kurile Islands. Eighty tons of salt were a good ballast, and much rum and munitions were concealed in various ways known alone to the initiated. A full crew of hardy Japs, with six or eight desperate Americans manned her.

Her real purpose was to sail up to the head of the Kurile group, wait the time when the fur seals, swimming north, would announce their annual visit, then make a dash for Robben Island off the Siberian coast, their breeding place, and fill the boat with a hundred-thousand-dollar cargo.

The few laborers of the Russo-American Fur Co., (an offshoot of the great Alaska Fur Co.), would have their annual quota—twenty or thirty thousand seals—killed, and leave the bare rock, which is only a few miles long, by October 1st to 10th. To avoid the typhoon gales, they leave early, as the lonely rock is untenable in winter. The seals do not depart from the sandy spits around this strangely selected rookery till November 15th, every year, by some mysterious reckoning of their own.

Now, a few days with clubs and lively skinning knives, would fill the hold of the "Fleetwing" with from ten to fifteen thousand skins; and then gliding out into the gray mists with the current, a couple of days would place the pirate safe in the undisputed Japanese jurisdiction of the long Kurile Island chain. If overhauled

then, they would claim that the skins were traded for with the wild Kurile Islanders, who get many thousands of these strange "sea bears," for so they are really—as they swim north through the archipelago in search of a quiet "hauling out" sand bar.

In default of finding seals at Robben Island, the schooner was to spread her white wings and dodge along the Siberian coast, trading rum, guns, and cheap goods, for whalebone, ivory, sea-otter, sable, white wolf, and priceless blue-fox skins; even the salt ballast would sell well.

All this little programme showed the neat hand of the accomplished pirate, Fred Crocker. Stern historical truth, makes me admit that his smartness led him into a well deserved punishment. The "Fleetwing" had merrily threaded the straits of the dangerous Kuriles, and the industrious crew had by trading, and shooting stray swimming seals, captured twelve hundred skins, worth \$20,000, when plump they ran into the one little cove of Robben Island, their El Dorado.

Joy reigned on the rakish buccaneer, for the sand beaches were even yet covered with a vast

herd of barking, growling, wallowing fur seals. Hastily reconnoitering with his powerful field glass, Nimrod Fred, announced to the overjoyed skipper that there were "dead loads of seals" and no one in sight.

Under the captain's quick orders, the main boat was lowered from the stern davits, and Fred was sent with four Japanese sailors ashore to spy out the land; also to fill a couple of forty-gallon water butts from the spring, which was the only supply element of the islet.

Taking a stout club, to keep off any quarrelsome old "bachelor" seal—for that animal hates the noise of fire-arms, and is easily alarmed—with his glasses slung on his shoulder, away glided Frederick Crocker, Esq., First Mate of the dandy "Fleetwing" to thrust his hand into Czar Romanoff's capacious pocket. The landing was effected, and was watched with anxiety from the peerless schooner, gliding up and down in easy short courses, standing off and on. She only waited for the promised signal of a fire, to send "all hands" ashore to knock the unresisting prey in the heads by the hundreds.

Alas for human ingenuity—alas! for that dash-

ing pirate, Fred Crocker! Alas! for the poor affrighted Japs! From a gulley near the shore, rose up the gray overcoated forms of a Russian lieutenant and a dozen concealed riflemen! They pounced with fiendish glee on the five marauders. Landing is absolutely prohibited by the Russian government, both at Robben and Copper Islands, the fur seal treasuries. Only really shipwrecked sailors who may be cast away by the howling fall tempests, scourging Behring sea, are decently treated, and put on passing ships of their own nation, and sent home with valid Police Passports by the Russian officials.

Now, down the beach clattered a couple of the Japs, in mortal terror. A few high aimed rifle shots brought the Japs to their knees. Crocker was promptly knocked down with a musket butt, his knife and glass taken from him, his arms tied behind his back, and he was marched up to the one little hut on the island, as a prisoner of war. Gloomy were the reflections of this "fellow de sea," as he observed the "Fleetwing" rapidly standing out to the ocean, skimming the waves for safety. The skipper had seen the gleam of the bayonets, the puffs

of rifle smoke, and the hubbub on the beach told the story.

Wily indeed is your Muscovite! They had neatly concealed their detachment of guards; knowing that quite likely some ocean rovers would try and run in and take a cargo out of the excess of seals left for the breeding. Your "legal sealer" kills only the well developed "bachelor" seals. The robber kills mother and pup, old and young, having regard for no future interest of this most curious animal. They are destined to go where the giant elk, the grand bison, and nimble mustang have gone,—out of existence,—crushed out by the money-craving rapacity of man.

The wise Russian Governor Admiral, had ordered the detachment to stay this year till the beach was bare of seals; until their mysterious southern voyage was begun. No man knows from whence they come! None, whither they go! only that it is to, and from the south, and by sea. Frolicking along on the surface, they stream north in early May, to vanish in winter. Never seen on other islands, or the surface of the ocean, after leaving the vicinity of the north-

ern scattered rookeries, their movements for the rest of the year, are a sealed mystery of nature.

A saucy Russian corvette, poked her nose around the end of the island—a week or later our hero and the four Japs were put on board. The boat and its outfit were kept for the use of the detachment. Several weeks of patrol were over, and the corvette landed our sailor prisoner at Vladivostock, where he was turned over to the police. The chief had kept him a close prisoner. He sent him down at his request under guard, to the business house, where I met him. The well versed chief wished him to have an apparent conference with English speaking foreigners, so that Crocker could be the more easily tried, and condemned to ten years labor in chains, at the Saghalien mines, as a "pirate." The Japs were shoved contemptuously on a junk of their own nation, and allowed to go home; as not being responsible for the landing.

Crocker had not relished the chilly log crib he was confined in. A mud floor, no blanket, and scanty food, (not fit for a dog), had almost worn him out. No hat, coat, tobacco, no coffee was given him. He had no means of bathing, or

medical care. Well was it for him that his iron sinews had been braced by hardship and early toil. Only being a muscular giant in life's morning, had kept him alive.

Vehemently did he abuse the schooner captain for cowardice in tamely leaving him. I suggested that a successful fight was impossible. The heavy military muskets and discipline of the well armed detachment, made an attack impossible. I ventured to remind him that his share of the trip's profit was safe, if the boat got away; otherwise he would be penniless, even if he did finally secure a release.

This, somewhat mollified my young giant. It turned out later that the dare-devil "Fleetwing" ran up north, went into a lonely Siberian inlet, and got a full load of whalebone, walrus, and ivory, which with the stolen sealskins, made a profit for Crocker of several thousand bright Japanese "Yen" dollars.

Now came the all-important problem! How to transfer the legal guardianship of Fred Crocker—this "Jack Sheppard" of the Arctic, from his gracious Majesty Alexander III., to myself! I was willing to give him necessary money, and

to aid him. I had genially smiled on the two gens d' armes. Friend "Geletsky," at my modest request, had told them I was an "American Prince of very high degree." I left them discussing a bottle of "vodki" and some good tobacco in the back rooms, with various dainties from the well-stocked kitchen.

I was allowed to give my new-found American, some spare underwear, from my ample hunting outfit, a good rough coat, an old navy boat overcoat, a fur cap and thick gloves. A warm gray Russian army blanket, and cheap fur robe cost only a few shillings at a shop under the Golden Horn hotel. Plenty of tobacco, a pipe, some matches, a knife, a bottle of good brandy, and some old San Francisco papers, made him comfortable. I gave him a number of small one-rouble bills, which would gain him considerable comfort in the station, if "judiciously handled."

The guards had not bothered him much, except by rude but effective pantomimes, to indicate that any attempt to leave the log crib would bring an ounce ball crashing through his head. All the Siberian soldiers are deadly sharp shooters. Crocker had "caught on" to that idea.

Wisely did I call jolly little "Geletsky" into the "confab" with my newly discovered countrymen, of whose "exploitation" I was very proud. I was, so to speak, his Ward McAllister, launching him into Siberian society, under my wing: "My fellow citizen!" He was a "prominent citizen!" "So was I—" Alas there is no "Society journal" in Vladivostock. The jolly Russian eats more than he reads.

We decided after several bottles had been emptied, while "laying our heads together," that I should not personally call on the Admiral or Chief of Police. I feared complicating my own position. I might then even be an object of suspicion. A happy inspiration was it, to take my ocean bird down to the kind-hearted Prince Wittgenstein, frankly tell him the whole story, and keeping "mum" about seals, we decided to claim that my giant was sent ashore under orders, for *water*. As no arms were with the party, and no seals had been killed, this yarn might go!

Had the police authorities known that it was the redoubtable "pirate Fred Crocker," they had in their clutches, no influence could have saved him from at least ten years horrible penal

slavery at Saghalien. Disease, or a stray rifle ball would have soon brought the prisoner's sad release. Luckily, also, the northern cruisers were not yet down for the winter. On them might be some Khamschatkans, hunters, who knew the not wholly guileless Frederic. I had to take him, as he was, "with all his imperfections on his head." We artfully detached Geletsky to make the flinty heart of the Police Colonel soft by a good dinner. He promised to have the treatment relaxed in severity. A few kind words from my sympathetic wife, brought tears to the eyes of my grateful "pirate."

Away we sped in a "Khibitka," the two jolly guardsmen, and all the supplies with us, and trotted down the strand where my good Prince made his headquarters with a rich Russian ship owner.

The handsome debonair Prince welcomed me warmly. In his long gray coat, with its rich sable capes and cuffs, and the great white Army Commander's cross at his neck, he was the picture of a high-bred man. A personal friend of the Prince of Wales, a member of all the swell clubs of the gay European capitals, he kindly

took the poor American lad's cause to heart. After presenting my Colossus—who called him "Mr. Prince"—and nearly crushing the magnate's hand in the national "shake," we went over the ground. My noble friend's brow grew very grave. He finally said "Well I must go to the Admiral, and beg this only as a personal favor. If your young man is tried, he is "gone up" sure. The Prince offered us refreshment of a carefully selected spiritual character, and was, soldier-like, kind to the poor devil. He promised to see the Governor that night; and to meet me, at supper, later at the hotel. Thoughtfully he promised to send for the young man, next day, early, on his own account, and thus keep him out of jail "on his personal recognizance," if necessary.

I ventured to remind the good General that the mail ship, one of the last of the season, was to leave next day; at midnight after our good-bye dinner. I wanted to get Crocker's passport, ticket, and papers, and put him on the boat, under the protecting Japanese flag at once. Once there, I knew Captain Walker would protect him; yet I did not want the steamer detained, or her absent Japanese owners complicated.

With a hearty greeting we went out into the freezing night. My pirate, (now hopeful), to the comfort of a mud hovel but, thank God, not like a dog, as before, but with decent means of "fighting time." I could sleep easily under my warm Japanese raw-silk quilts, after that nice supper, knowing that my "new-found American" was refreshed and in better trim.

I felt sure I would not "lose him," as the grim Russian Colonel was a chaperon not to be mistrusted. I delivered my charge over to the military police sergeant, saying "Good-night! old fellow! To-morrow will see us all right, I hope!" A few minutes brought me back to my appropriate social duties.

About half past nine, the jolliest little supper imaginable was on the table. Our princely protector appeared with the joyous news that the Admiral had ultimately yielded. After a hard fight, he had presented the Prince with the "new-found American;" suggesting that it would be well he should shake the Siberian icicles quickly off his nautical boot heels. Our good mediator—who was as crafty withal as any Arctic fox—had the precaution to have an order

signed by the Admiral, (himself), both as a release and a "laissez passer." He had sent one of his own staff officers to the station to direct the release of my captive mariner, at day break.

The wandering sailor-boy was formally turned over to my ownership, by the Prince handing me the valuable paper, as we clinked glasses in goodnight. My wife joined in the glee, and we were at the pinnacle of satisfaction when the Colonel Chief of Police appeared. He was escorted by "mine host, Geletsky." He, with much saluting, and many military panjandrums, announced to the General, who wore the gold crown of an Imperial Major General Aide de Camp on his rich bullion shoulder knots, that he had been ordered to turn the "Amerikansky prisoner" over to him. Our august friend, presented the grim Colonel to us both. My kind-hearted wife shuddered as she touched his death-dealing hand. We gave him the inevitable cup of compliment. Russians are born, live and die—in champagne!

The gay Geletsky winked joyfully at me, as the Colonel promised to send my pirate to me at day break. For the Prince had presented me this wild youth cast up by the sea!

With a flourishing salute, the Colonel went off to his billiards and vodki; and we, after mutual congratulations, slept the sleep of the righteous. The ocean rover's fate was far happier than his uneasy dreams (conscience pictured) brought him!

I found on waking, my waif of the ocean, snugly installed in the café of the Golden Horn. He was wearing a grin as broad as a full moon. He had already tasted the sweets of notoriety, Geletsky, who was the crowning gossip of Vladivostock, had already spread the report of the night's doings. The "brave Crocker" was a friend of His Highness, Prince Ferdinand Wittgenstein, Major General Commanding, and an Aide de Camp to the Emperor of Russia, so ran the growing story.

This made him, at once, a man of mark. He was already "living up to his blue china." I dispatched a hearty breakfast, and we proudly drove over to the splendid headquarters of the millionaire house of Kunst & Albers. My production of the order, signed by the Admiral himself, created a genuine sensation. That venerable functionary was the "little tin god on wheels" of chilly Pacific Siberia.

Only Governor General Baron Korf at Habarofka, and the Prince General Commandant, were his associates in governing a land as large as the United States. From the decision of *two* of them, appeal to the Emperor personally, *alone*, could change the august fiat when officially blue stamped. I rapidly got the ticket. Good humored Manager Datten completed the personal outfit of my pirate. There is a bit of heart in your rotund Teuton! We drove to the hotel. Soon we emerged with all the poor belongings of Crocker, which we sent out to the steamer.

By this time the small social puddle of that Arctic burg was agitated. "Pirate Fred" was the hero of the hour. He was popularly supposed to have a "strong pull with St. Petersburg," and almost call the august Emperor, "Aleck" for short!

We drove up then to the kindly Prince's headquarters. Warmly eloquent, with honest tears in his piratical eyes, did my one new-found American thank the powerful friend who had performed this graceful act of mercy. We found him under the hands of his nimble valet. Dress-

ing gown and slippers, his coffee-table, and the inevitable gigantic, hand-rolled cigarette, indicated a most decided state of "taking it easy." Said the nobleman, (after the sailor boy's rude but heartfelt thanks were uttered), "Now, is there anything else?" "Well! *Mr. Prince*, I had a good pair of marine glasses, a San Francisco bowie-knife, and my old pistol on me when I was taken. I know they are on the ship. I would like them back, if you please!" They were the pirate's daily jewelry!

Instantly the General wrote a note to the Chief of Police and directed the instant return of the confiscated articles; this strangely followed at once. Usually, the Russians "return no money at the door!" The Prince was a Spartan of laconic ferocity.

We prepared to leave; the kindly old General rising, and showing us the door in person. Crocker caught his hand, remarking: "Mr. Prince! as long as I live, I shall say I have met one Russian gentleman, who is a square white man, you bet!" The courtly Wittgenstein laughed merrily, saying: "Keep away from Robben Island, my boy, after this, at any rate, don't get caught again, for I won't be here!"

Down to the landing we smartly moved. Soon a five minutes' trip in a sampan boat, placed Fred on the deck of the "Hiogo-Maru." Captain Walker kindly received him, and I gave that commander the official passport paper as his warrant. Strictly enjoining Crocker not to leave the boat, under any pretense till our sailing; I went ashore for our final greetings and the good-bye dinner.

It would be a long story to describe our royal "send off" by the many official and personal friends. I am not enough of a Brillat-Savarin to tell how chef "Tessier" surpassed himself in the famous dinner. I know the borrowed plate of the Naval Mess helped out the decorations. The fillets, game, oysters, pheasants, and all the dishes, "a la Francais," were worthy of the Emperor's own table. Choice wines furnished a stimulus to our natural gayety. Our gallant guest was inimitable in his stories of camp and court, of war and peace. Little glimpses of his wild Caucasus campaigns, bits of old court intrigue, and some early army scrapes, witty stories of the clubs; and peeps at the mysterious charming Russian society life, with its silken cur-

tains drawn, all these caused the happy hours to glide away quickly.

Chef "Tessier" with a cracked guitar, sang us snatches of the "Perichole" and other ancient Gallic works. He had failed superbly in that opera! His soft heart and voice were both attuned to "Love," always "Love!" A sentimental tenor, cook, and globe trotter! A gay and not unmanly Gaul!

Geletsky rubbed his hands in glee, as he received his pile of crisp roubles for our long stay. He sent us several thoughtful gifts of Russian wines, cordials, and sweetmeats. He capped this with some real choice "vodki," warranted "to bring the dead to life." I think it might raise the "moribund," as I know it skinned my throat!

Some of the Russian soldiers sang for us in chorus, their wild, plaintive, peculiar songs. With quite a little procession we departed, under the clear starlight, in a splendid barge, skimming over the dancing waves, for the swift "Hiogo Maru." Her funnels were already puffing great volumes of black smoke.

Game to the last, the Prince took us off in a splendid Russian navy boat, with the great blue

and white St. Andrew's cross war-flag, (due his rank), flying at the stern. We had seen all the lions of Vladivostock and vicinity. They had been briskly trotted out for us. Neither the official claw of the Russian Bear, nor the sharp nails of the forest tiger had worried us. It was with genuine feelings of regret at parting that we heard the screw begin to revolve. The last bottles of champagne were opened by our gallant Captain Walker. Our grim Police Colonel and his extremely business-like guard, saluted and disappeared, after the grim official had partaken of our cheer. Hugely did I enjoy the sight of the cold-blooded Tartar warmly shaking the mighty hand of my now famous American.

"Brother" Fred Crocker was calmly enjoying his cheroot by the gangway, and grinning at the rude soldiery, who had now no terrors for him. Fred waylaid the Prince and wrung the jeweled and gouty hand of the old warrior, who really had taken a warm fancy to my dashing young "pirate." A soldier's fondness for a brave man!

A few last salutations and the boats glided away. Their measured strokes threw up bright showers of diamond sparkles in the starlight.

Walker, (gold banded cap on head), had sprung with the pilot to the bridge. Sharply rang the bell "Go ahead!" and out we sped, past the grim steel warders of the heavy crested batteries, threaded the beautiful Golden Horn, and passed beyond the outer lights.

Soon we danced on the broad ocean, our good ship rising and sinking gracefully on the swell of the clear, crisp, salt main sea.

The good wife, tired out, was enjoying the rest of a splendid double cabin. I returned to the deck to smoke my last cigar before turning in. I found my fellow "American sovereign" waiting me.

Some years have elapsed, but it will need many more before I can forget the rude eloquence of the sailor boy's speech of thanks to me. Every breath of ozone laden salt air seemed to cause him to "swell visibly." He towered over me, as he professionally scanned the "outlook" for the night. He had made himself at home at once, with the adaptability of the jack tar, and was as happy as a bird let loose.

I sought that quiet seclusion "which the cabin grants," and broad daylight was streaming in

the port-holes when the grandiose Chinese head-steward spread his preliminary repast, before the breakfast in state. Happy was I to be homeward bound, glad of the pleasant experience in a strange land, and hugely proud of

“FINDING AN AMERICAN.”

Our voyage to Japan and through the Inland Sea to Yokohama was most agreeable. Stoppages at Possiette Bay, Siberia, and several in Corea, enabled me to have some hunting jaunts. I was accompanied by the sportsman Captain, and that mighty Nimrod, “Crocker.” I had fitted him out with a spare gun and accessories, and many head of game went down before his keen eye and never failing aim.

Long tales of the wild Arctic life, yarns “of the land and sea,” did my protégé spin to me. Unconscious of any peculiar experience, (taking the world as it came), his stories were of deep interest. It is pleasant to relate that on our arrival in Yokohama, he gratefully discharged all pecuniary obligation to me. He also testified in many other ways his gratitude.

The unholy venture of the “Fleetwing” was

after all very successful! Before I caught the homeward bound "Oceanic," Fred had fingered a goody pile of bank notes and dollars. He loyally came down to see me off, and departed on his mysterious cruise of life.

In a return visit to Japan the next year, I recognized the very fine finger and neat wit of Fred-eric in the taking out of the midst of an American fleet of five war vessels, of a very distinguished officer, who was undergoing a court martial trial, as a close prisoner. By means of a little boat, the fleeing culprit was received from a port hole, when he dropped out apparently into the sea. He got away to the northern wild islands, and it took a whole United States fleet to re-capture him; after his supposed "suicide" was found to be only a neat trick.

I heard the name of "Fred Crocker" coupled with this new dare-devil exploit. It made "our navy" a laughing stock for some time, at that port. Fifteen hundred dollars was the "liberal honorarium," I believe, in this case. Had Fred gone "north" with him, the fugitive officer never would have been caught. Our hero's contract was only to get him away, past the

forts, and to put him on a north bound schooner outside the bay.

I saw the "guileless Crocker," sipping his pale ale, the next evening at the International Hotel; with the cherubic innocence of a Sunday-School boy, and he sat broadly smiling when he heard that the American Navy officers were dragging the bay for the "corpse" of the supposed suicide!

A couple of years later, the lively schooner "Mary Ellen" of Victoria—British Columbia,—put in to San Francisco, "for water." She was said to be empty, and returning from a hunting-cruise. I was not appalled when afterward I was told that she had landed many tons of smuggled opium at Drake's Bay, a few miles north. She had thus victimized Uncle Sam's revenue to the extent of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I was rather taken aback when I did find out that her first officer was "the mighty Crocker." He had engineered this neat little descent.

Alas! I fear I may have some moral responsibility for extending the untrammelled career of my spirited, active sailor. He has done much good to himself, and earned many a pretty penny

for his San Francisco backers. It is to be hoped, when his eye is dimmer and his joints stiffer, he may retire. I hope he will spend the evening of his life in "pious works," and set a good example to the young Crockers who may appear, when some bright eyed lass ensnares the affections of the rollicking freebooter, whom I saved from the lingering horrors of Saghalien.

It will be useless "to point a moral," or fire judicious "kindergarten tales," and "Sunday-School lectures," at the coming young brood. They will take to blue water, and go away like the young of the wild fowl, winging their wild path over the trackless deep. Strange, wonderful restlessness handed down from father to son. At the bow of the whale boat, in the wildly tossed life-saving cutter, laying out on icy yard-arms, or standing by the guns of our navy in future battles for the flag, these young "Mother Cary's Chickens" will always be heard from; first in the flight, and farthest from home. So it will ever be! So may it be!

And now the last few words for our gallant Prince! Afterward in San Francisco, and at St. Petersburg, did we renew the pleasing assur-

ances of a warm friendship. Inexorable Time, and the pallid touch of the grim warder Death did their work. The martial, courteous, gay and winning old nobleman, sleeps with his fathers. Never more will he rein his black Circassian down the Nevsky. Never more delight with his wit a circle of pretty Maids of Honor at the Winter Palace court receptions. His favorite seat is filled by another at the clubs. His wild division of mad Circassian cavalry will never see him, (sword in hand), ride at their head over the enemy's works again!

He has fought the good fight. The deep blue Russian violets never blossomed over a kinder, more gracefully amiable old hero, than the General. *Requiescat in pace!*

In all the many characteristic acts of courtesy, marking his chequered and romantic life, none shines out more brightly than his unselfish and powerful efforts in behalf of the castaway American. The wanderer was to him only a mere cipher in the Book of Life!

So I leave my dear old friend, with the stainless sword by his side, the great white cross resting on his gallant breast. I shall not again go

to Siberia! I therefore suppose I shall never again have the good luck of, single handed, "Finding an American."



EXIT DICK FISHER.

A CALIFORNIA PROSE DRAMA FROM
LIFE.

IN TWO ACTS.

ACT I. THE BALL.

It was undeniable that pretty Kitty Zaph was the belle of Nevada County, California, in 1852. Girls were not as plenty in the Golden State then as to-day. The more staid members of the Argonauts were beginning to bring their families, and Lares and Penates, into the embryonic community, just beginning to crystallize into civilization, on the golden shores of the Pacific. The tedious trip, around the Horn, of the gold hunters was impossible for women and children. A brisk steamer opposition between the Panama and the Nicaraguan routes was pour-

ing into the Golden Gate from New York and New Orleans, a tide of settlers of all ranks, abilities and degrees of previous experience. Young, aspiring, educated men, splendidly endowed youths from North and South, hardy mechanics, and laborers came, as well as the miscellaneous masculine and feminine riff-raff of the human race, with shady antecedents, eager for prey. Even Europe was sending us detachments of adventurous souls, glad to plunge into the whirling eddies of that strange River of Life. The first peopling of the new El Dorado, Nevada County, California, was in the banner region for the gold hunter. The rich bars of the Feather, Yuba, and Bear Rivers, were covered with crowds of miners of all colors and classes. Nevada City, Grass Valley, Red Dog, Little York, Lowell Hill, Waloupa, Remington Hill, Liberty Hill, and other quaintly named little towns, boasted their log cabins, framed houses, tents and huts. These settlements were dignified with hotels, saloons, express offices, general stores, and the inevitable blacksmith, and butcher shop. The tall pines swayed ominously over these little clearings on flat and hillside. Mule trails were

the only avenues of travel, thronged with pedestrians, pack on back, or long lines of loaded animals, whose long-eared leaders lazily answered the frantic yells of "Hip! Hip! Mula!"

Far down in the cañons, the flashing diamond rivers were fast losing their pristine color, with the thousands of tons of soil, cement, and gravel sent down after the pan, rocker, cradle and flume had done their work in saving the golden lumps, dull grains, or bright dust-like scales of the varied forms of the great last good of this seething human hive, the magic gold! Many times the lonely pines sang a requiem over young and old. The crack of the revolver, a thrust of a knife, death by accident, sudden disease, and unwonted hardships, all these varying determinants in Death's hands increased the general mortality.

Every settlement had its rude Potter's Field, whose unmarked mounds of red clay were only ornamented here and there with a rude cross, a shingle with a pencilled name, or a pile of stones "In Memoriam" which marked the miner's or adventurer's last resting place. Hundreds of these dead men were buried literally in gold

or richest ores; and in later years their bones have gone where the grand hills of my boyhood went. They were sluiced down toward the ever hungry sea!

Already the pine clad Sierras showed great gaps, where powder and hydraulic pipe hose, were gnawing steadily at the tough coverings of the mountain gnome's treasures. The first Californian stamp mill was pounding out its golden grains, the forerunners of many scores of harvested millions. Nevada County, California, alone, has given to our metallic wealth a countless treasure. The rude miner's records of the simple justice's courts, and the skeleton higher legal machinery, were now emerging from the first chaos; still as a rule, every man's life was held in his ready hand. Knife and pistol were still the best arguments! Preachers were not yet in the vineyard laboring. The physician was principally occupied with interesting cases of violence or accident. The lawyer usually was in some queer occupation, foreign to his oily trade. Private quarrel settled itself rapidly for process was useless. Titles there were none, but possession was defended always by

life. The murderer, horse-thief, or marauder, was summarily lynched, or given the Mosaic forty stripes, and told to "go forth" and that in "double-quick style."

Notwithstanding this, a few families had already settled in this wild country. Amusement—a first necessity—was provided by the open gambling saloons, where crowds of painted cosmopolitan sirens presided over the tables; and scores of wandering German "Hurdy-Gurdy" girls, so-called, with dance and song enlivened the long winter evenings. Euphonic titles, the "Blue Wing," "Arcade," "Magnolia," and "Bella Union," were strangely reminiscent of gay New Orleans; for the "sports" and "gamblers" of that luxurious city of the old slavery days, were the first adventurers on the ground. Other recreation on Sundays, were visits from Little York; (my boyhood's home at the mature age of nine), to the other mining villages a few miles away.

To the east, the terrific gorge of Bear River showed across its pine-clad slopes the few straggling houses of Dutch Flat, in Placer County. Westwardly, the wild crags of Steep Hollow with its sheer descent, separated us from Red

Dog, the more pretentious hamlet of the three. It was here that Ernest Zaph, a respectable and kindly German, with a bustling, buxom, middle-aged "frau", had established a nondescript place of entertainment for man and beast. Hotel, bakery, restaurant, stable, and an "incipient brewery," were hailed as features of a dazzling enterprise. Neat "Frau Zaph" bustled around, the queen bee of the hive, with watchful eye; while good man Zaph, with sturdy sprightliness, and solid German "horse sense," was liked by all and molested by none.

Even in the swaddling clothes of its infancy, "Red Dog" was proud of the foreign looking little arbored garden of "Father Zaph." He was ever putting in his Sunday leisure at imitating some of the "Volksgartens," the out-of-door features of his distant Vaterland! All indicated prosperity; and the sound of quarrel and the hand of violence were foreign to his hospitable doors.

The fairy sprite, and guardian angel of this place, was sweet "Katie Zaph," a brown eyed little Deutcher maiden of fifteen, whose wondering baby eyes had first opened on the distant Rhine. She was already a "Pioneer," as Zaph

had, (with rare foresight), posted at once to California from New York in 1849. German like, "Frau and Kind" went with him. She was not the placid type of "peasant girl, with deep blue eyes." No! Her dark brown hair, and tender dark eyes spoke of a dashing Hungarian type of beauty. Her rich lithe figure told a story of the ozone laden breathings of that crisp Sierra air, fragrant with its rustling pine needles.

Our only mountain flower of note, in Nevada, was this one sweet wild rose; and a wild rose indeed was "Katie," now blossoming out into delicate beauty alone, in that humble home nest on the "Ridge." There were several other families at Red Dog. A little roomful would gather in the evenings, while the Zaphs sang in unison, to their battered zither, a relic of home. Crowds of hardy miners essayed these "folk songs" with accordion and other picked up accompaniments.

I saw "Katie" in trips to Nevada at rare intervals, with my father. I had a saddle mule of unerring surety of foot, and even then, could ride like an incipient cowboy. I worshiped from

a distance the lovely, modest, and kindly "Kittie Zaph," the bright particular star whose name was known from Illinoistown to the Summit. Iowa Hill and Marysville hailed her as the "Pride of Nevada County." Many a nugget of value, and several octagonal slugs of dull yellow gold (each good for \$50. the world over), had been handed to the pretty child by admiring miners. They had nothing but gold to give. Good Mother Zaph kept this snug little nest egg of Kittie's presents laid away with true German prudence.

"Captain Bill" and "Captain Johnson," the respective chiefs of the then still numerous and powerful Yuba and Feather River Indians, supplied the little white maiden with berries, the rich, wild yellow plums, and live pets like the gray squirrel and the frisky stone rabbit. Many a knightly plumed mountain quail did they snare for her. These peace offerings were supplemented by strings of glistening trout, with an occasional fat buck for Father Zaph, who had tact enough to hand over a blanket now and then, with a toss of fire water to the red chiefs.

Well do I remember the pride with which old

Captain Johnson, (so nicknamed) would beat his breast, and describe how "Captain Johnson killum bear." Weirdly would he imitate the antics of the clumsy, ferocious grizzly. Alas for the kindly red men of the early days; they are all gone! So in this queer nest of self governed men, some wild and desperate in a land of untamed nature, and lonely beautiful mountain wilds, grew and thrived this sweet, modest girl, unharmed and unspoiled by these dangerous surroundings powerless as yet to soil her innocent budding womanhood.

As unconscious of her beauty as the old Spanish Padres were of the golden treasures under their feet, or the red Yuba Indian of the glittering gilded grains he unconsciously played with—she was a type of *the* Californian girl of those earlier days. Well did the good practical parents watch over their only nestling.

It cannot be wondered at, when it was noised through our four camps that "Long John Duffy of Waloupa" had a fiddle, and deftly could he play it;—that Nell Hicks of Little York also owned a flute, which was a trusty college friend, and realizing the fact that several Mexican

guitarists were available, there was "music in the air." It was proposed on Thanksgiving Day, 1852, to concentrate the youth, manhood, and all available womanhood of the neighboring camps, at Red Dog, where turkey shooting, racing, and various raffles, were to fill up the day's delight.

A grand ball and supper at Zaph's hotel, was to crush the inhabitants of Nevada and Grass Valley with harmless envy. It was hoped these inferior "burgs" would *never* after socially lift their diminished heads. As far as this deponent knoweth, they never have! Selah!

The agglomeration of the aforesaid musical talent, and much running to and fro, and sly planning, caused the trails to be covered early on that auspicious day with footmen and mounted cavaliers. Sundry most reliable mules, well known for their patient kindness, bore the treasures of our womanhood from the distant camps. Pretty Mrs. Sunderland from Remington Hill, an acknowledged star, sundry young women, and several hardy matrons were artfully gathered up. They produced various faded bits of antique finery; which showed that

woman's wit and power of pleasing can overcome an entire absence of "Worth" and "Pingat." Numbers of these ladies wisely arrived the day before! Hospitable Red Dog opened, metaphorically, its arms and embraced the "ladies" and the occasion.

Poor Ned Boland, a Trinity College man, was the Master of Ceremonies. Well did he acquit himself, for it was before the day of the "only Ward McAllister," and *our* four hundred, was a "select Forty." It's many a year Ned's bright blue Irish eyes are dim in death; his brown curls lie matted on his pallid brow, under the hillside gravel. By his lonely grave, the traveller's foot to-day would never stop! Forgotten and unmarked, it is where the distant ripple of Bear River, and the singing of the tall pines murmur the Celtic wanderer's weird requiem. Ned, (God rest his soul), was in his glory when this day's festivities were over. That ball was opened in a Chesterfieldian manner by our only acknowledged master of the "social arts." He was vaguely supposed to be a "gentleman." Even then and there, the fluctuating, invisible "social line" was drawn, excluding those who were "out of society."

The day's social excitements weeded away the most pronounced devotees of chance and drink to their distant haunts. No casual fracas of note occurred. Only those who assumed a certain decency, befitting a worthy woman's society, had the temerity to appear. With some artful manipulation, our "undesirable citizens" were excluded, or led off in the centrifugal paths of their favorite weaknesses. As one of the few lads near, and a member of a family circle, I had been tricked out in my very best, by the kind hands of a dear mother. I was proud as a king when I trotted my big Kentucky mule "Frank" over the little plaza of Red Dog.

Sure was I of a warm welcome from "Mother Zaph." I wondered how the handsome, dark-eyed little "Goddess of the Ridge" would look dressed for the great party. Wondrous was the exodus from "Little York," as we of that "burg" were sworn friends of the denizens of "Red Dog." Both camps jointly scorned the dwellers higher up the Ridge as out of the *swim*. Our *immense* local interests were the same, viz.—the improvement of the main trail from Nevada City across the county, via Red Dog and Little York, to

Iowa Hill, Dutch Flat and Downieville. I was not disappointed as to Kittie's appearance when I saw her, "in private view" after supper. Handsome Harry West, the pony expressman, had ravaged the slender supplies of Nevada and Grass Valley for "our Katie's" toilet. Bluff John Allinger, the rich German freighter, "spread himself" at Auburn in the selection of presents. Money had been used with no sparing hand. It was even rumored that Sacramento had been laid under contribution. Now, all of this was most delightful. "All was right as right should be."

Alas! Little York had two defiant delegates representing an "impending crisis," which came only too soon, as a result of this kindly meeting. It was most inopportune that Dick Fisher and Tom Galt should have both decided to attend this great social re-union. The absence of *either* might have prevented the culmination of a cold aversion, such as two men in high youth, health, and courage may silently take up for each other. These two black clouds lowering on our social horizon, had silently hovered long near each other, and that most ominously! They were sur-

charged with the pent up emotional electricity of opposite characters!

Sweet Katie Zaph's innocent eyes were fated to kindle the spark, drawing out the deadly bolts from the darkness. Fisher was a tall, dark, graceful New Yorker, a young milesian graduate of the then famous volunteer Fire Department. His red shirt, black trousers, and high topped boots with red fronts, sporting a gilt shield, were his well known Sunday uniform. This was touched off by a loosely knotted black silk handkerchief and a sombrero, which supplanted perforce the shiny "tile" of the old bloody "Sixth Ward." A trusty right bower and decorative article, was his tried navy five shooter, worn in a belt with a rich Spanish silver clasp. It was an open secret that several crosses on its stock were outward and visible memorials of gentlemen whom he had casually differed with, and of whom it might be said "They are not lost, but gone before."

Fisher was not a "bad lot" save when the excellent Pelvoisin cognac, which he quaffed irregularly to excess, loosened his gifted tongue. Then his Hibernian descent was manifest by an

unfortunate readiness in sudden quarrel. With all this, he was not too disreputable—something of a miner—not *professionally* a gambler—generous and quick—never overbearing when sober, and about as good as the average “boy of the Bowery.” He lived under conditions turning many a wiser man’s head. Kindly and cheery, he was a typical hero to me, then a callow boy. I had an immense admiration for his shining merits; for both faults and virtues were conspicuous in his strangely moulded character.

Quite another man was Tom Galt. A Tennessean of twenty-eight to thirty years of age; he was lithe, sandy, gray eyed, cool and quiet. Strangely self contained, he was a man of rare determination. Keeping his own counsel, he had acquired some good claims which he worked with native wit and judgment, and yet with an entire lack of the business grip and dash known to men farther north in birth. Too cold and cautious for habitual excess, when he took a hand at poker, he was *there*, till the last ounce of dust had been won or lost. Silent alike in winning or losing, his skill spoke of many trips on the old “Mississip.” He quaffed his fiery

bourbon in a deliberate manner, showing his baptism in "Kentucky's silver stream." He was not disliked; for no one avoided him. He was not *feared*; for men feared *nothing human* in those days. He cleft his way through our little social wilderness as he threaded the tangled bushes on his proverbial hunting jaunts; ever parting the crowd right and left, as he strode onward with his steadfast eye fixed on his game.

He came from a fairly decent family of middle rank Southern planters. His early education culminated in a perfect knowledge of cards, horses, and the rifle. His quiet code was "The South, right or wrong." It was in the early ante bellum days. The spirited and loquacious Fisher was as game a "Free Soiler" as the other man was bitterly "Pro-Slavery." Now, it was not astonishing that our wiseacres looked forward to some day when circumstances would throw these men of different types and equal courage against each other. Old hands predicted that Dick's impetuosity would be a fatal defect before the cold prudence of the other. His Irish wit alone favored him "on the first jump." They had passed each other tranquilly in a well known

but quiet aversion, for nearly a year, when this brisk early winter afternoon led them to the neighboring village—on pleasure bent.

When all was in readiness for the ball, the Grand March was sounded by the nondescript band. The cleared dining room of Zaph's Hotel was filled with a good humored throng led by Father Zaph. His good frau blazed conspicuous in garb strangely reminiscent of distant Germany. With the adaptability of frontier american assemblies, all proceeded to join in the unwonted pleasure of a real "Grand Ball" in those distant Nevada hills. It was known that a twelve o'clock supper was the culminating pride of the culinary genius of the good frau. Success was voted from the very first quadrille! "Squire" Cozzens, Doctor Lively of Missouri, his confrere Doctor Lefebre of Paris, familiarly known as "Frenchy," "Colonel" Howard, (late of Virginia), Ned Gaylord, the popular cashier of a large business, (and vaguely reported to be really "reading law") were the male stars.

All the local swells of rank, wealth and precedence were on hand. It would be invidious to name over the ladies who graced that yet un-

forgotten "ball." They were one and all eagerly welcomed. Partners were gallant and only too willing. Not a wall flower wilted in any corner. Dimity was at a premium. Many really presentable young men appeared. Ned Boland had diplomatically named a "Committee of Arrangements," which embraced cool and highly respected representatives of all the different camps. But it was sweet Kitty Zaph, the wild Rose of the Ridge, whose fresh and blooming loveliness created *the* sensation of that memorable evening. In white swiss muslin, with flowing ribbons and an amber necklace, real kid gloves, and dainty boots, the Pride of the Camp queened it graciously over many warm and loyal hearts. She moved with the "unworldly-wise" innocence and frank wonder of a young girl who dimly realizes for the first time that "she" is sought as a beauty,—a fact until then not fully realized by the child. "Child, child no more!" says the great Schiller; and Katie Zaph's brown eyes were never again filled with an untroubled girlish frankness; after this night when she was made to see that all men eagerly sought her smiles, and many fain would win her.

Tom Galt was in the room with his coterie of rough border friends. It was not long until he singled out the cynosure of all eyes. With his cool directness, he made his way at once to her, and in default of programme, secured a promised quadrille. He aspired not to the more ambitious Polka, Mazurka, Varsoviennne, or Hop Waltz. The days of the "Deux Temps, Lancers, and Boston," were far away in a dim future! The "York" was a maddening distant comet!

It could only have been a little snarl in the web spun by the Fates which brought Dick Fisher, radiant in superior beauty of person, and arrayed in "raiment of price," to the pleasant ball-room at this juncture. Richard had accepted the local hospitalities of some of his many chums. His heightened color, sparkling eye, and undisguised swagger told the tale of oft pledged bumpers. An adjoining ante-room and the hotel bar offered him at once temptation and excuse. His visits to the shrine of Bacchus had been frequent! It requires no power of divination to explain the ominous muddle in which himself, Tom Galt, and sweet Kitty Zaph were soon embroiled about that fatal quadrille *first* promised to Galt, and later claimed by Fisher.

As a lad I was wandering around the room, too young to dance, but petted by all. I had the usual fortune of a boy—always turning up, (like “our reporter”), on the spot. I roamed around and feasted my eyes upon darling “Cinderella Zaph.” For one bright lovely night she reigned a social queen, next day to be the useful little home bird and helpful daughter of a thrifty house. A few bitter words from Galt, whose gray eyes flashed yellow in his suppressed rage, some voluble epithets from Dick, and a frightened retreat of the timid girl, were the results of this fatal mischance. Was it growing womanly instinct, or her girlish second sight, which showed her an open grave between her and the quadrille, which she never was to dance with either of these enemies? Quick eyes were on this untoward rencontre. Several resolute members of the “Committee” at once quietly suggested to both men, (who were now angrily glowering at each other) a removal of their personal discussions to the outside. It was only a few minutes later that sounds of a scuffle, the crash of broken glass, and the dull noise of a falling body, told the story of grave troubles. The male guests,

with prophetic instinct, crowded thickly around the open doors leading to the wine room. But the frightened fairy princess fled away to the lower part of the ball-room. She was now securely moored under the protecting social presence of several matrons; like a dainty yacht resting under the guns of several frigates and a neat corvette or two. I darted out of a side door. I saw Fisher struggling wildly in the arms of several friends. His fine face was distorted with the maddest anger. Several slight cuts on his brow and clean chiselled features told of the shattered drinking glass thrown with wicked aim by Galt, which answered Fisher's rash verbal insult.

Galt was slowly rising to his feet, with his lips bleeding from a straight knock down blow. Anxious friends, ashamed of this disgraceful row were eagerly restraining both. Between them (pistol in hand) the tensely strung statuesque form of Sheriff Cleveland loomed up. His brief rest at the hotel for a meal, while pursuing some mexican horse thieves, had left him the only man "heeled" in the room. "Gentlemen!" said he, in ringing tone, "Not now! Not here!

The first man who lifts a finger is a dead man." No one was eager to set himself up as a target for the dauntless Sheriff. It was known that he could always pick every pip out of the five spot of spades at twenty paces. Moreover, it had been a general matter of "noblesse oblige," that no deadly weapons should be brought to the long looked for ball at Zaph's.

Quickly did Fisher's friends get him out into the darkness, and over to the other side of the Plaza. Little outcry was made, for all felt the shame of such an incident of the happy evening. In fifteen minutes Tom Galt, with one trusty friend, who would not let him go alone, his set face somewhat marred and swelled, strode through the bar-room. He passed out without a single word, then mounted his mule and rode away with his chum, silently under the bright sparkling stars. The two grim riders threaded the dark defiles of Steep Hollow, and regained their cabin on the Little York ridge. Silent though he was as he departed, Galt's cold cruel eyes blazed. His step was like the lithe panther threading the pathless woods ready for a spring!

No one noticed *me*, as the more staid portion

of the guests had not heard of this external trouble. The notes of the grand march for supper were now sounding merrily. Several wiseacres and "men of the code" calmly reasoned on the chances of the coming conflict. Not a soul doubted that at least one human life would be the penalty of this foolish quarrel. The bitter words, and mutual mad attacks loudly called for blood. The burning query was *who* would fill the next unmarked grave in Manzanita Row on the bleak hillside beyond Little York? Would the volunteer brethren of mercy have *one* or *two* graves to dig? Would old "Liverpool Jimmy" (the only town joiner and carpenter) have *one*, or *two* rude coffins to make in a hurry? For *all* men, save horse thieves and Joaquin Murieta's gang, got decent sepulture there, though from stranger, or even hostile hands. The exceptions (noted before) were left as food for the coyotes, or to dangle on an extra lariat from a convenient live oak. Said that fine old Virginia gentleman, Colonel Howard, (our general "all round" Solon), who practiced equally well at both of the local "bars," while he stirred his toddy: "Gentlemen, I think Jimmy better fix a *couple* of boxes, for

Tom Galt's a dead shot, and Fisher is mighty quick on the trigger."

Squire Cozzens, Doctor Lively, Harry West, and that olive-faced Louisiana gentleman, Andy Rutherford, (of large personal experience in such matters) supported this unchallenged dictum of our only "Colonel." They all stood up then amicably in a row and pledged the renewal of the same "old assurances" (in a stately way) before going in to join the ladies "at supper."

Merry was the party. Gayly the good cheer of Father Zaph disappeared. Little Kittie shone as "Queen of the Night," under the fostering care of handsome Ned Boland—who smoothly prevented any general dispersal of the news of the fracas.

The bright stars were sloping to the west—the ladies' light feet were now weary—the cool breeze of early morn was sweeping through the fragrant pine branches before that memorable party broke up. Warm hearted greetings were exchanged, as the men peaceably scattered to their rest. The ladies, happy, tired, and flushed with triumphs as real as those of Newport or Tuxedo, sought the hospitable repose of Frau

Zaph's upper floors. Our volunteer band alone remained in possession of the deserted supper room. They had received a general vote of thanks, and had settled down to a bounteous meal which might be either a late supper or an early breakfast. The robins were beginning to gayly twitter in the live oaks, when a couple of reserved baskets of unexceptionable champagne were discussed by the musicians. Father Zaph's appropriate liquid recognition of the band's artistic efforts was considered "the right thing at the right time."

Sweet Kitty Zaph was already sleeping the dreamless sleep of innocent girlhood, unthoughtful and ignorant that two human lives were put in bloody pawn for the sake of her bright eyes. She little thought that the shining silver waters of Bear River, tossing gayly from boulder to riffle, only separated by a couple of miles two desperate men, whose knotted brows and hands clenched in uneasy slumber, told of unconscious murder plots which were evolved even in sleep in their excited brains, heated with drink and inflamed by the deadliest human passions, jealousy and unslaked revenge.

Fearfully did I creep to a snug couch kindly reserved for me by the thoughtful Frau. The sun had climbed high in the blue heavens, and was sending splendid golden lances down deep through the blue haze far into the dim green reaches of the virgin forest before I ceased to dream of that great ball. I wandered yet with lovely Cinderella "Kitty" in her robes of state! My innocent boy heart was blithe and gay, as I woke to all the delicate beauty of that happy morning in the mountains. Even now when many long and weary years have passed, I sometimes fancy what could have been the feelings of the two star actors of the last night's prologue. They awoke, and coldly with fiendish deliberation swept away the peaceful dreams of night from maddened heart and busy brain, and prepared to hunt each other to the death.

Did no dark shadow of the wing of the Death Angel swooping near, hover over them a moment? Was it merely cold pride, or bitter self-deceiving vanity that put away the thought of the open graves yawning before them? It was in the flush of early manhood counselled by the arch-fiend, that these two self-elected young

gladiators sought to find each other on the old Plaza at Little York? It was reddened already with the heart's blood of a score of similar madmen! No one will ever know; for the lips of one are now sealed forever in death, and the aged survivor has never since referred to:

“That day after the Ball.”

ACT SECOND.

THE TRAGEDY.

Higher climbed the sun in the blue vaulted heavens. The great ball at Red Dog was a thing of the past. Before noon, the guests from outlying camps were all well on their way homeward. Our tired but happy looking detachment of ladies was threading the trails towards their distant abodes. They were chattering merrily over the social successes of the past memorable, (never to be forgotten), night! In truth, it *had* been a means of cementing *old* and beginning *new* friendships; for cut off in that distant land, woman leaned kindly on her sister woman. Men developed rapidly a comradeship true to the death, even if these pairings off were

sometimes ill assorted. The last farewells had been waved to good Frau Zaph, beside whom stood the rosy blushing Katie. Her last night's triumphs were still lingering in her shining eyes. The long dining-room was already given over to its pristine uses.

In the "spiritual department," Father Zaph was dispensing the "stirrup cup" to scores of departing argonauts. All was quiet and peace. Kitty had forgotten, with girlish carelessness, the brewing of last night's altercation. Only among the soberest denizens of the other side of the Plaza was the "Fisher-Galt" imbroglio discussed by calm judges. They were competent from personal knowledge, and made prophetic by long residence. This hovering war cloud was not made a leading topic at Zaph's. Etiquette and local pride forbade the dragging in of the only shade on the otherwise undimmed brightness of a unique social success. It was really the first of many merry after gatherings under that same homelike roof.

A few magnates, whom we have named, lingered for an hour, in due regard of maturer years and their local dignity. Over some excep-

tionally well built up "restorers" they exchanged with nod and significant glance diverse opinions on the coming event.

Many residents of Red Dog had found "business" at Little York on this day. After a pause Colonel Howard, (who had been "out" in Virginia, and pinked his man with punctilious ceremony) suggested, "Gentlemen! Let's make a move." Then the friendly cabal broke up. Our men of mark disappeared leisurely down the pine clad ridge towards Little York.

The sunlight streaming over the little Plaza of Red Dog showed to the listless observer only a few mexican muleteers loafing in their vacuity of aimlessness. Around the corners were loungers and four frowsy indians sat playing "California Jack," seated in the dust, with a greasy pack of cards, on a stolen saddle blanket.

Red Dog had taken to itself its day of rest after this mad social whirl. Following the general current of exodus, this young narrator safely defied the dangers of trail and canon, and duly arrived at Little York in the early afternoon. Merely vague curiosity filled my boyish mind when I delivered the reins of my trusty

"Frank" at the store door in Little York to laughing Tom Shade. He was our Irish head packer. With the easy adaptability of his witty race he had dropped the man of war's man in the lofty title of chief muleteer. He was the Mickey Free for J. E. Squires & Co.—the business house of which my father was the senior partner.

The town was strangely quiet. Many strangers and visitors were idling aimlessly on the Plaza. Before the open saloon doors were knots of stalwart bearded men. They were calmly putting in their usual hard work at killing time. The argonaut realized early like the indian, that he "had all the time there was." Why hurry? The golden harvest was under foot. A log cabin cost only a few days' labor. A convenient spring located the home. Timber and land were free to all. An axe, an auger, a few nails, a pair of hinges, were all the foreign articles needed. Credit was a matter of course everywhere. *All* bought; *some* paid. No one ever asked the price. Locks and keys were unknown, for the local code, even for ten years after, permitted the weary wayfarer to enter any

miner's lone cabin and freely cook a meal. Then one could rest, and go on unquestioned. I have heard a legend however that one recalcitrant was followed and shot in fair fight on the trail, for not washing the dishes, on leaving!

Long years of frontier and even army life, have taught me since that men will make fair cooks, good rough and ready tailors, and able general-utility jacks of all trades; but *yet* have I to meet a man who did not wildly "kick" at washing dishes!

Theft was unknown in those good old golden days. Only occasional awkward mistakes as to riding animals, left many a sly mexican, slinking indian, or reckless white man, swaying at the wind's will on a rope, with "Horse Thief" neatly pinned on his breast. Gold was everywhere, and easy to get. Riding animals were the "Koh-i-noors" of that olden time.

It seemed to be a generally accepted idea of the local sages that Fisher and Galt would use the morning for their return and personal preparations for the inevitable duel. Axiomatic was it also, that *each* would receive the brief yet pointed advice of devoted friends. Galt was

known by all to have made an *open* return to Little York. No one had seen Dick Fisher come back. However the twenty acre Plaza could be approached in any direction, from the long ridge. Dick *might* be preparing for battle in any friend's cabin. That he would "show up" was as certain as that the great white silver stars would swing up over the wooded crests to the East at their appointed time.

A slight shiver of anticipation, with the more peaceful, attested a general conviction that those gleaming stars would shine down on one or both of two spirited men, cold in death, before their blue pathway had been transversed. The final settlement of personal dispute, was quick in those by-gone days. It relieved the high strung nerves of a partisan public. Etiquette required all men to await the logic of events, and not to take sides. *Actions*, quick, not to be gainsaid, never to be undone, took the place of the absurd tom-foolery preparations for "affairs of honor" in other communities.

Rumor had it that Dick Fisher had finished his night at Red Dog in moody drinking with friends who endeavored vainly to dissuade him from a

fight. His hot celtic blood was up. No one dare restrain—none to molly coddle so determined a man. Galt's habitual prudence had tempered his behavior. First on the ground, it was accepted that he would take no chances against himself. He had not appeared on the Plaza up to my arrival. No doubt he had friends looking for Fisher's moves in this lawless game of chess for two human lives. But one indication marked the presence of Fisher in town. A friend had strolled in to our store and bought a new red overshirt, of Dick's peculiar affectation. Quick Ned Gaylord caught the idea that Richard's exterior might still show the blood signs of the heavy drinking tumbler smashed on his forehead in the affray at Red Dog.

I was bustling curiously around the old store as usual. It was strongly built of heavy squared logs pinned together, with a storehouse in rear, and a really commodious family residence. It (with its outlying sheds and stables) was the general headquarters of the business respectability of the town. An immense stock of all useful articles of every kind, filled its capacious interior. The demands of an outlying popula-

tion of some five thousand, were for any articles from a needle to a gold watch. Every reasonable want for use, comfort, or mining, could at once be supplied; save liquors or wines, which the firm declined to handle. Fifty pack mules with a score of attendants, distributed these goods on regular trips to outlying camps as far as twenty miles away. A regular freight train of these indispensable animals brought the stock from Illinoistown. The necessary evolution of California communication, has been the trail and pack mule,—the wagon road and prairie schooner,—then that last touch of daring genius, the mountain railroad. Shall it be the flying air ship? Who knows? “Esperons!”

Four o'clock arrived. Nothing disturbed the quiet of the golden afternoon hours. Only the soothing tinkling of distant mule bells from the straggling herd grazing on the flats beyond the town, floated on the air. The discordant chatter of a blue jay, curious and thievish, fluttering over the Plaza in search of the ripened pine nuts on the adjoining trees, alone broke the calm. Across the deserted square suddenly strode one of Tom Galt's nearest friends, with

a long rifle on his shoulder. He quietly entered our store. The circle around the great four foot stove made way for the new-comer; who leaned his gun against the wall in a convenient corner. He leisurely made some trifling purchases. I noticed with youthful curiosity the mottled yellow stock, and the silver mountings of the heavy muzzle loading "Mississippi" rifle. It was easy to see by the bright gleam of the copper Ely cap under the hammer, that it was freshly loaded. Such a thing as wonder at a man carrying arms, was then unknown. I wandered out on the broad six foot porch in front of the store. I childishly watched a band of the great californian vultures wheeling their airy graceful circles high above me in the thin clear air. They were far beyond the crested notches of the ridge six thousand feet over our heads. A few moments after, I noticed Tom Galt, his gaunt, lithe figure erect, coolly walking with energetic yet unhastened stride, along the north side of the square. Several little groups hastily opened, but he passed on silently, as usual. He was calm and unbending. Turning down the west side of the enclosure, he walked directly to our wide front

entrance. Its heavy iron studded doors were swung wide open. His face was calm, only a few cuts, and slightly swelled lips, showed the damage caused by the heavy blow received from Fisher the night before. The strong double arch of his clenched teeth had saved him. Never to the right or left did he turn his head, as he passed the Magnolia Saloon, next door. There a knot of curious loungers eyed him keenly as he entered the one respectable business emporium of our "burg." With the frontier experience of late years, I can appreciate the general public disappointment. True, it was a "show up," in style, and (from a technical stand point) he was the *first* to "shy his castor into the ring!"

Still, the etiquette of these delicate matters demanded of him before his victory might be styled complete, a carelessly appearing, yet studied, visit to every open place of resort in town. After *this* if his enemy did not appear, the "white feather" would be adjudged by all to the absentee.

It puzzled old Colonel Howard, who tugged at his gray mustache nervously, as he winked through the door to "Natchez Joe" an order for

a duplication of his favorite Tennessee toddy. "Strange! I don't 'sabe' this!" mused the old war horse, as he turned in, to put his favorite beverage, "where it would do the most good."

Galt had quietly taken the seat at the stove (first offered to his friend), who lingered still over his purchases. As he apparently wore no belt, or revolver, his attitude was that of peace. A loose dark sack coat hung on his spare frame. With his chair angled toward the door, he sat silently looking at the oblong patch of blue sky visible through that frame. Calm, and coldly silent, he watched like an indian on guard. The half dozen clerks busied themselves with the dozen or more customers at the long counters. There was no ominous sign to disturb the brooding peace. Yet, there was that forty calibre loaded rifle carelessly leaning in the corner behind the stove!

Tom's proximity to that gun, was only noticed by one experienced and observant loungeer. He, made wise by the past affrays, rose and bought a plug of Peach Brand best Virginia; quietly he then sauntered out, saying nothing to any one. He dispassionately remarked afterwards: "I

wasn't hunting no enmity with no one." The quiet refuge taken by Galt in the only place in town where quarrel was frowned down, or resolutely stopped, had disarmed apprehension. The great store doors were always quickly closed and barred, if quarrel was imminent; and only opened when the social atmosphere had cleared up.

Now, I had gone into the residence annex, and returned towards the front wareroom, when my quick eye caught the crimson flare of a red shirt at the door. Crash! Bang! followed like one! two! The lazy loungers dropped prone on the floor. The terrified clerks darted in fear behind bags and bales. There, Dick Fisher's tall form was looming full through the smoke floating in the room, as in a framed tableau! Galt sprang up, dropping the smoking rifle from his quick hands. He had jumped to his feet, and fired like a flash, the instant that he saw that crimson breast. Had his watchful friend made him a mute signal? No one will ever know. Was it that deadly gray eye whose lightning telegraph brought his overstrained nerves to instant action? BANG! like a cannon, came

the second shot from Dick's pistol at the door! Horror-struck, in boyish ignorance, I was rooted to the spot. I could see Fisher reel and stagger weakly, as Galt leaped, tiger-like, towards the door. His steady hand had jerked, with the speed of thought, a "sawed off" heavy Navy revolver from that innocent looking right hand coat pocket. Firing as he sprang, I could not hear the repeating shots, for they were too quick for my ear. All I remember was the only words spoken in this grim duel to the death. "You will have it! will you?" hissed by Galt, as he threw his left arm heavily against poor reeling Dick's breast. Shoving out his right hand, he fired directly into the heart of the wounded man, the last barrel of his weapon. Down like a tree fell poor Dick, his handsome head hanging helplessly over the edge of the porch. Galt sprang back, pistol in hand, and gazed calmly at the face of the dying man. I ran for the door in sudden panic! It was first blood for me! A horrid fascination seized me, for the outside saloon bystanders had caught Galt, now pale and limp, but unhurt. I gazed timidly on the dying man.

The affrighted clerks and inmates of the store raised Fisher, who was now gasping wildly. His glazing eyes rolled feebly. For the first time in my life, I saw the hot red heart's blood oozing from the torn mangled breast of a man in the agonies of a violent death. Alas! not to be the last time, though!

Ned Gaylord, (calmer than any one), bent over Fisher, who essayed a last word. Ned leaned over the dying fireman, who struggled to point, with stiffening finger at his stern faced enemy, now gazing vacantly on his bloody work. What that last message was, will never be known on earth; as a sudden drop of the handsome head told that the troubled spirit had fled! Those lingering words were carried to the great bar of the Almighty, if accusation was their burden. Still that stiffening finger feebly pointed at the man whose hand had dealt the fatal wounds. In long later years, I know that finger points still in the lonely silent night, at the miserable man whose hand will never again be free of the awful burden of a brother's blood. Sad victory, indeed! Sadder still poor Dick Fisher's untimely end!

"Gentlemen!" said the grave voice of Colonel Howard, "This is a bad business! Mr. Galt! You will consider yourself under arrest." The Colonel, (who had dignity and experience enough in himself, to supply the entire governmental machinery of a state), appointed, at once, four resolute men to guard Tom Galt. Galt mutely submitted to search. The criminal was placed in a heavy log, powder magazine crib. He was carefully guarded by two watchful men, armed with the ever present "navy." Not a word escaped his compressed lips. A mounted messenger, dashed hastily off for Sheriff Cleveland, towards Dutch Flat. This was a "cause celebre." The Sheriff was found on his return from his quest for the horse thieves he sought, as they had been opportunely caught and lynched on Bear River.

This murder was a notable case for the County Court at Nevada. To the keen eyed Sheriff, was Tom Galt delivered, leaving next day under strong escort for Nevada City. But two short days from the time when the merry music sounded in Zaph's dining-room elapsed, till Galt sat there again at a side table, under guard, tak-

ing a lonely meal, as a felon, in sorrow and bitterness. Kind Mrs. Zaph, (her apron at her eyes), bewailed with tears the duel following the ball. Fair frightened Katie stole a distant glance at the back room at the murderer, *then* she ran up to her own little nest, to cry as if her heart would break. She was a child no more! "The fatal gift of Beauty!"

All that was left of poor Dick Fisher, was lifted to a table in a side room. Several decent men, grave in the presence of sudden death, watched over the tenantless shell of the dauntless adventurer. It was a local pride that he had "died like a man, with his boots on." Strangely enough, his now useless pistol had disappeared! It was never dreamed that Dick would open hostilities in a crowded and peaceful room. No one seemed to have an accurate knowledge of the details of this bloody duel. The inmates were not looking at the open door. The outsiders could not know what went on within. Fisher's revengeful friends went as far as even to claim that he had never fired at all. It was found that he had the rifle ball wound, (the largest), in his heart. The two pistol

wounds were within two inches. The poor fellow had made a carefully studied toilet for this last public appearance. I was child enough to wonder *who* would get his neat boots, with those beautiful red morocco tops. I craved them for the gaudy gold shields printed on them.

All the local men of mark, passed quietly through the room, uncovered. No one disturbed the white handkerchief, laid by a gentle woman's hand over that handsome face, now so quiet and waxy in death. Decently composed were his limbs. The folds of the open shirt showed the cruel tearing wound of the heavy rifle, as well as the clean cut, round blue holes of the revolver balls. Dr. Lively, and his able French colleague, with professional gravity, probed the wounds, and exchanged a few truisms, making a brief "proces verbal" to be used before the trial court. By resolute action of the volunteer management, quiet was restored. A "Committee of Arrangements," regulated ingress and egress through a side door. The public thus verified by open inspection the deadly aim of Tom Galt. Characteristic was the decent gravity of the onlookers. There was an entire absence

of comment upon the affray. *There* lay the results, cold and stiffening. No one cared to trace the fatal quarrel back to fair Kitty Zaph's sunlit eyes. Dick was withal a general favorite. His mercurial, generous Irish disposition made him warm, friendly and sociable. His past participation in similar fatal occurrences, was old matter. Blood easily paid all debts in California then.

Quiet evening shades settled over ridge and Plaza; dark shadows crawled up from wooded gorge and craggy cañon. The soft sighing of the night breeze, and upborne murmur of Bear River, a thousand feet below, blended with the singing of the giant pines in a requiem for the dead miner.

The only audible sound was a passing footfall, or the hollow rapping of "Liverpool Jimmy's" hammer, as he nailed together the roughly improvised coffin, in his shed, across the Plaza. Squire Cozzens had impanelled a Miner's Jury. Their brief deliberations were recorded in the one bound book of the local Justice's scanty archives. An entry of a small mule trade "with copies of the brands" was followed by the official

statement that "Richard Fisher came to his death by gun shot wounds at the hands of Thomas Galt." Prudential it was that Sheriff Cleveland had safely lodged his prisoner in Nevada jail. A circle of experts in the Magnolia Saloon adjoining, having listened to the Virginia Colonel's dignified summing up, decided that Galt's assumed indifference was the result of the coldest calculation. It was speedily found that Fisher had imprudently continued his libations, and was thereby to a certain extent unmanned. This alone explained his missing his man twice, (if indeed he fired, as his friends denied).

The ruse of the sawed off navy revolver, concealed in the side blouse pocket, was considered decidedly unfair. It showed undue and most artful preparation for deceit. The trick by which Galt's friend conveyed the deadly rifle to its hiding place by the stove, was heartily condemned by all. It was now apparent that Galt had in reality laid in wait where he could see his doomed prey, clear cut against the blue sky background of the open door. He was *himself* almost veiled in obscurity. Loud were the mur-

murs from the queerly assorted assembly at these varied bits of sly trickery so skillfully employed. Galt's personal bravery in the struggle seemed to be forgotten in the scorn of the means adopted to make the issue "a dead thing." A "Dead Thing" it was; Lying cold and prone there on a table; covered now with a rough gray blanket; while the bright glittering stars swung to the west in silence over the blue mountain rimmed vault.

Nothing was known of Dick's immediate antecedents. No friend was able to kindly inform distant relatives, if any there were. Next day, the breast of the red hill side was opened. Manzanita Row had another fresh mound of clay. A goodly number of people attended the simple funeral services. Colonel Howard, the "Squire," the two physicians, and numbers of the better people made a small procession winding up the steep, lonely hillside. A few appropriate and touching words were spoken by the kindly old Squire. The rattle of shining shovels, wielded by brawny volunteers, alone broke the nerve straining silence when the cortege uneasily separated. The drama of a wild life was ended. The "Exit of Dick Fisher" was a thing of

the past, and the "Thin Curtain" veiled him from our gaze till Time shall give place to Eternity.

Other events in the life of this long-forgotten town, soon chased these occurrences, from public memory. This sad story was only revived by a bitter legal fight at Nevada City on the trial, finally resulting in Galt's acquittal. It was in this "cause celebre," that young Gaylord won his legal spurs, as he died many years afterwards a distinguished criminal lawyer of the Golden State.

The matter came back to old residents in 1859, when on tearing down the crumbling store, in a straw mattress (which was being emptied) was found Dick Fisher's faithless pistol. Three chambers were still loaded, and the other two were empty. Some friend, (thinking to get a quick advantage), had whipped it away, and slipped it inside the straw of the bed, afterwards sewing up the slit to prevent discovery. The ghastly relic was recognized by many eye witnesses.

To-day, all the idle stranger would see of the theater of so many exciting and tragic events, "old Little York," is the ragged naked skeleton

bed rock, where once was a populous town. Great mining operations caused that whole region to be washed off into the terrific gorge of Bear River. Manzanita Row went down with the rest, and the poor crumbling relics of mortality was borne away by the surging floods, down to the lonely cañons and out into the turbulent waters of Bear River, thousands of feet below.

The tall pines sigh no more on the old hills, all is devastation and change, and the passing traveller would little dream of the tragedies, and old time memories clinging around this "Lost Camp," whose very foundations have passed from sight away forever.

And what of sweet Katie Zaph? I saw her long afterwards, a happy wife. Currents of life swept her far away from me for years. The old people went home to Germany, with a competence, and have by this time, no doubt, wandered out into that Night which wraps old and young alike in its shadowy bosom.

It is strangely true that Tom Galt was lately alive in the Golden State, as cold, friendless as ever, craving no human affection; yet in his advanced years I know he can still see that pallid

pointing finger, raised in mute accusation signaling before God and man:

The Exit of Dick Fisher!



AN AMERICAN LADY'S NIGHT RIDE IN ST. PETERSBURG.

WE were a congenial circle of intimates gathered in Mrs. Montgomery's pretty haven of rest, bearing the suggestive title of the Rookery!

"I think nothing is pleasanter than a little chat to close the formality of a dinner," gaily remarked our hostess, as she took the place of honor at the pretty table with its dainty coffee service and a veritable Russian Samovar, hissing in readiness flanked with egg-shell china and an antique silver vase containing priceless overland tea.

"Choose now your favorite potions! I am equally loyal to these!" merrily demanded the Queen of Hearts, as we fondly termed her. The three daughters of Eve present were tempt-

ed by Lenore Montgomery's renowned tea, the gift of a courtly Siberian Governor General. Two of the three cavaliers chose the fragrant Mocha and Java compound. Our last convive Captain Arthur Dalrymple of Her Majesty's Dragoon Guards, quickly noted the old Russian tea glasses delicately engraved and set in antique shells of pre-Catherine hand chased silver.

The guardsman adjusted his monocle with that nameless air so exasperating to an American—so impossible to imitate.

"I think I'll go in for tea á la Russe," he murmured in his not unmusical service drawl. "I never thought to see these old things in New York!"

"Captain! The treasures of the world are at our beck and call!" laughed the merry hostess, as she deftly served the soldier, the fragrant amber tea with its slice of lemon.

"No end of a jolly place St. Petersburg," said Dalrymple. "I was stationed there two seasons as Military Attachè. Only one bother to me," the pleasant Briton reflectively said. "Of course I was all right in society, and in the clubs and at the principal shops and resorts. My French

and German helped me out everywhere. Nearly all Russians of rank speak English more or less well. But I am a great fellow to prowl around with the people of strange countries. In Russia, I found—the very interesting daily life of the peasants and common orders unreachable, as these members of the useful classes only speak Russian. I had to carry a parchment slip with my name and hotel address in Russian as a safeguard—when I wandered away in my lonely tours by day and night I was forced to take the first ‘isvostchik’ and exhibit my ‘sailing orders!’—Then, by Jove,” said the warrior, as he replaced his precious tea glass. “Half the beggars could not read their own language! I finally picked up enough Russian to find my way around!”

“I can fancy your varied embarrassments,” the vivacious hostess replied, “I myself had several strange adventures in my first Petersburg winter. Some of them were ludicrous and one I never will forget. Two winters spent in the Paris of the north in later seasons, made me “au fait” with the difficulties and even dangers of that first sojourn. I have always warned my country-

men going thither of the necessity of care and prudence in their off handed self confidence."

"You are very wise, I am sure," the ex-attachè replied. "But we dwellers in old Albion can't for the life of us understand how American ladies can run around alone, all over Europe by day and night, taking all sorts of risks—of course it's all pretty safe on the near continent, but in Russia, it's another thing. Even in the better known countries—it's rather bad form!" Dalyrymple's voice softened into a whisper, and he bowed his curly head under the frowns of three bright eyed American queens. Sweet Flossie Fairfax, the bride of a year shook a rosy finger warningly at him, and the young Rosebud nestling under Lenore Montgomery's outspread social wing cast reproving glances at her sworn knight, who contemplated (in his heart of hearts) an Anglo-American alliance.

"Why, we just go everywhere—Captain, here—we know how to travel," said the indignant Miss Juliet.

"Precisely," answered the immovable Briton. "I admit that you do know your own system, but abroad, especially in Russia, there are local

customs, and special dangers which need careful consideration."

"Nothing ever happened to Mrs. Montgomery, I'm sure!" the defiant little beauty retorted. "Am I not right?" she said appealing to the amused hostess. "There's no real danger, I am sure."

Judgment!" appealed the Guardsman. "I know Madame, you have been a world wanderer and that several of your foreign sojourns have been without your liege lord and master! Tell us your experience, pray!"

A chorus of entreaty seconded the soldier's plea. We were all in the mood. There could be no fairer Scheherazade than Lenore Montgomery enthroned upon her divan of state, with her fair face, lit up with deepest sapphire blue eyes and the wavy golden hair crowning her fine resolute beauty. A modern Venus of Milo, she was robed like a queen. On her beautiful neck, a superb necklace of four strands of matchless pearls gleamed in soft contrast to the sparkling diamonds flashing among the folds of a white gown of antique lace, the envy of her less favored sisters.

Toying with the favorite ivory fan, attached to her girdle, with a rich heavy twisted double cord of white floss silk, the fair chatelaine, replied:

“Our knights may prefer the Havana to a Duenna’s stories, but I happen strangely to wear the very costume I wore that night.”

“The story! The story!” was the unanimous vote of the “petite comité.”

“I will relate the amusing features before I give you the ‘bonne bouche,’ my pet ‘sensational’ episode, said Lenore Montgomery. “I fancy I must yield to superior force.

“In my first visit to St. Petersburg I was obliged to arrange some delicate personal matters involving the interests of a near and dear friend. My sojourn was delightful in the two earlier months of the season, as I was the guest of friends who were charmingly located, having an immense apartment, the entire second floor of one of the great granite palace-like structures which are characteristic of the metropolis on the Neva! Naturally, my circle extended, as I was warmly welcomed by the truly hospitable circle of the capital. Yet my stay was prolonged

by pleasure and business. I found the family system of Russian life to have its "desagremens." A very alert and most machiavellian tutor in charge of two fine boys about to enter the Corps des Pages, represented French, Spanish and Italian instruction. A cold merciless eyed blonde of a magpie disposition instructed the lads and a pretty girl of five, in English and German. We soon found that either from these, or the numerous domestics our business conferences, or thoughtless current remarks were reported and found their way to other and hostile circles.

"Therefore I took a pleasant suite of rooms at the Grand Hotel de l'Europe on the Nevsky.

"The bureau management was excellent, all the servants spoke French and I was mistress of the privacy of my daily life. My lawyer could confer in perfect freedom from chatter or spies and daily my friends equipage conveyed me to their residence for dinner. Our business was tabooed, as the Russian custom of tutor and governess dining with the family is awkward. It serves to improve the manners of the children and increase the respect of the aspiring young

patrician children who are spoiled from the cradle by the slavish adulation of the servants. The carefully selected intellectual staff of a noble Russian family must be held above the status of mere service to ensure any favorable results.

“My visits of ceremony and shopping excursions (for ladies shop even in the Czar’s land) were effected with the excellent carriages of the Hotel. I finally decided to engage for the three further months of my prolonged stay, an equipage of my own with a driver speaking French and German.

“The immediate cause of this, was the singular adventure of my attendance at a ball given by one of the queens of the Muscovite Four hundred. I was by this time very much at home, having made many friends and thanks to the gallantry of the Russian gentlemen, did not miss the wonted escort of my absent husband—at the almost daily fetes of the light-hearted golden ‘*elegantes*.’

“It was to be a superb affair and my friends were to meet me on my arrival. With my invitation, my former hostess enclosed a slip with the directions for the driver. Having finished

a brilliant toilette, I entered my hotel carriage in the court, closed from the whirling snow of winter with its great double glass doors, and burying myself in furs and wraps, sank back as the vehicle dashed out into the keen night air. The sharp searching breeze penetrated the frail elegant glass front coupè as if its sides were paper. I was drowsy as we entered a splendid interior court, a stone angle of the splendid palace I sought. In the outer anteroom my furs and heavy wraps were carefully removed by skilful attendants. I then gained an inner room of safety, merging from the second chrysalis enfolding, and the gorgeous 'swiss' ushered me into the spacious dressing-room for ladies. Deft maids in attendance were eager in my service and I was now ready, in my 'choicest plumage' to meet my friends who were to be the 'guardian angels.' Waiting and futile inquiry tired me. When at the doors I had the fortune to observe several gentlemen already well known as guests at my friend's house. A few words served to explain the dilemma. A courtly guard officer of the 'Preobajensky,' one of the 'Russian Cousins' of my friend's insisted on taking me in

charge. These family relatives are numerous as the 'Kentucky cousins' of our own dear land and fully as chivalric. Piloted through a splendid throng of dazzling beauties and superb men in their rich court, army and navy uniforms, with stars, orders and medals in the greatest profusion, it was like a fairy dream, this almost royal fete. 'I will present you,' laughed my stately body guard. 'Alixé is always late, and she and Boris will arrive soon anyway. Meanwhile, we will dance.' I recognized several of my friends. I was a little nonplussed on my ceremonial presentation to the host, a wonderful example of decorated manhood and the brilliant hostess, whose cordial welcome was tinged with just the faintest surprise.

"This I forgot as 'Cousin Alexis' waltzed charmingly and I did not miss the absent chaperon. I was soon surrounded by several gallant slaves all eager for the honor of dancing with the 'Amerikansky Barin,'" said the narrator, with a faint blush of pride, "but Cousin Alexis was most frequently 'on duty.' Entering heartily into the enjoyment of the hour, I was entirely at my ease. In a promenade, we were suddenly

interrupted by Major Lemacheffsky, a dashing hussar field officer, and my pet Russian. 'Well! Madame, wonders never cease,' said he, as he heartily greeted me. 'You have played a very neat game of hide and seek with Boris and Alixe! They have even sent to your hotel for you. They were even anxious, foolishly anxious,' he rattled on, 'but I must compliment Alexis Alexandrovitch! You will get a lecture from Alixe! I did not know you were friendly with the Tchemaiefs.' I managed to stop the rattle brain long enough for a query. 'And will they not be here soon? I have waited nearly two hours! It was embarrassing, and only Alexis saved me from the fearful fate of a 'wall-flower!'

"The Major's ringing laugh rose above the dreamy strains of 'Susser Veilchen.' Piloting us skilfully through the changing groups of merry dancers, the handsome Major greeted the charming dark eyed hostess. 'Madame la Princesse must excuse me if I deprive her temporarily of the presence of the Belle of the Ball.' I began to understand him. A few merry words in Russian completed his story and spared my blushes.

"With exquisite courtesy the laughing hostess said in her classic French, a winning smile on her rosy lips: 'Madame! I shall only permit the Major to deprive me of your society long enough for a visit to the *other ball*, at which you may meet your relatives, and I have his promise to bring the whole party here for supper. Your fete is in the diagonal corner, the other court entrance of this huge old barrack! I shall keep Alexis Alexandrovitch as a hostage,' with a merry nod, she floated away under the skilful guidance of the unrepentant Alexis!

"Twenty minutes later, I was the center of a joyous group at the other festival, to which I was rightly bidden! My hostess Alixe with sparkling eyes, dancing in glee, related to the fair queen of the hour, the adventure and finished with a threat of socially boycotting cousin Alexis, who had seen through the little misadventure and mischievously decided to keep me under his especial suzerainty, thereby giving many friends a theme of wild gossip."

"I can't say I blame him," murmured the Guardsman as he gazed on the loveliness of the fair historian.

Menacing the Captain with her fan, Lenore Montgomery related the pleasant hour, under guard of the teasing Major, and the final feast of the whole circle at Ball No. one. "It was four o'clock when we sought our homes," the chate-laine concluded. "I gained a delightful friendship, and Alexis was punished with a fine of taking us all to the 'Island' to hear the gypsies sing and mulcted in a supper for both hostesses. So the long hours from four in the afternoon till ten next day, are merrily passed on the Neva, in opera, or theatre, followed by dancing receptions and long suppers—as daylight in winter only lingers from 10 a. m. to 4. p. m.

"The Hotel Bureau set aside a driver for me who spoke French and his first exploit was a brilliant one.

"Invited a few days later, to an afternoon Bazaar, held by the Ladies of the Imperial Court for the orphans of the late war, I was anxious to attend. Several of the Grand Dukes, the Duchesses and even a possibility of the lovely Czarina's presence made it especially tempting. Alixe was in charge of one of the booths and, as her husband was a Chamberlain of the Czar,

I was promised a presentation to the members of the Imperial family present.

“Arrayed in my robes of state, suitable for such a function, I leaned back in my carriage and simply remarked to my coachman, proud of his French erudition: ‘Au bazaar!’ The bearded muscovite, in his long blue robes with silver bell buttons on all seams, and a royal golden beard flowing over his shoulders, tucked away his ample skirts, and bowed! ‘Oui! Madame!’ was his profound reply.

“Whirling away like the wind, the fleet black Orloffs, in the fragile spider web like harness of round Russian leather cords pattered merrily over the wood pavement, with its snow banks shovelled to right and left.

“It was three in the afternoon, and the gay throng were dashing along either in sleighs on the snow tracks left at either side of the carriage avenue, on the level streets, or speeding along in glass front coupès like my own. We drove into the court yard of a magnificent residence. Two gold banded ‘dvorniks’ sprang to open the door, as I prepared to descend. I was a little astonished at the absence of other carriages.

“Ushered into a splendid reception room. I found no guests into the preliminary disrobing of wraps. I began to be timorous. A brief effort exhausted my coachman’s French. He reiterated ‘Au Bazaar.’ With growing impatience I finally reached the end of my Russian, and with some indignation, sent my card, pencilling the name of my relative Alixe Trepoff.

“In ten minutes, cap in hand, the gorgeous ‘dvornik’ returned, with a mystified air.

“Placing his hands on his breast, he mournfully replied ‘Niet in domo.’

“Alas! I knew that meant, she was not there! With all a woman’s petulance, I regained back to the Hotel de l’Europe. The ceremonious clerk understood my dilemma, and most imperatively thundered some forcible directions in Russian. My erudite driver hung his head as he turned to his box and swiftly bore me to the ‘Salle de la Noblesse,’ where I was soon sheltered under the fair citadel of sweet Alixe. The man did not seem to know where he had been. I was naturally in the dark!

“I was a happy woman as I parted from my gentle guardian and having basked in imperial

smiles was glad to accept an invitation to spend the afternoon hours next day and review the day's pleasures with my relatives.

"In the midst of a little circle of friendly ladies, while gazing from the windows at the grand scene of the Neva, and the grim fortress with its lofty spires, rising above the gorgeous church where the dead Czars sleep, I observed a magnificent equipage draw up before the entrance of the Trepoff mansion.

"Within the splendid carriage sat a singularly handsome man in full court dress, blazing with stars, and wearing a brilliant crimson fez, its rich black silk tassel mingling with his dark hair.

"A similarly dressed eastern officer sat by his side, only a little less gorgeous as to stars, orders, richness of curved sabre and depth of gold embroidery.

"As they entered our court yard, and the great door clashed, Alixe cried gaily: 'This is a great event! The Turkish Ambassador.'

"A feminine flutter of dismantled plumage announced the general interest of the pretty companions of the afternoon. The solemn butler entered, bearing with dignity, two sets of *cartes*

de visite, which he presented to the wondering Alixe.

“‘Why! His call is also for you, Lenore,’ she murmured in open eyed astonishment. ‘Where did you meet him? He is the greatest lion of our diplomatic corps and really disdains every one save the Czar himself, and the English Ambassador.’

“My answer was prevented by the arrival of the handsome oriental, followed by his stately attachè. I gazed at the cards mechanically. The Ambassador not removing his fez, gazed admiringly at our circle of fair Frankish women, and pressing his gloved hand, with opened palm, to his forehead, then laid it solemnly on his heart. The same salutation was repeated to each of our little coterie.

“He finished with respectfully kissing the hand of the hostess à la Russe. I marvelled at the superb diamond clasps of his collar of the osmauli and the flashing gems accentuating the star of the Medjidje.

“His rich black eyes roved, with evident pleasure over the circle of unbelievers. In the most fluent French, he saluted Alixe—having courte-

ously awaited the seating of the ladies. His attachè, a type of the Turk á la mode de Paris, remained respectfully standing behind his chief.

“I hastened, Madame la Baronne, to acknowledge the esteemed honor of your visit and to place myself and my legation at your service.’ Such were the graceful words of the august diplomat. The unspeakable Turk ignored the evident surprise of Alixe, and continued in his well modulated flowing accents. ‘I beg that Madame la Baronne will also present me to Madame Montgomery who favored me also with a visit yesterday.’

“With burning blushes on my cheeks, I listened to these words, and failed not to note the significant glances of the spirited, dark eyed Russian beauties, who exchanged the most significant glances!

“In Petersburg, the boudoir cabals revel in gossip too dangerous for court or club circles.

“Your Excellency! I am sensible of the honor of your visit. Pardon me if I say, I am ignorant of having visited you personally. Allow me to present you to Madame Montgomery.’

“The ceremony was accomplished! I felt my

self-control giving way and finally succeeded in pleasantly disclaiming a similar visit on my part. The rich lustrous eyes of the Oriental took a melancholy tinge as he gazed from Alixe to myself in wonderment.

“Retaining his stately gravity, he uttered a few words in Turkish. The handsome attachè handed him a card. Bowing with his elaborate salute, the Ambassador presented the visiting card to Alixe with a faint smile. I could hear a subdued titter from some one of the vivacious Russians.

“As Alixe handed it to me, her expressive eyebrows also raised in query, I recognized the card of the day before, sent to the Bazaar. It was my own, and Alixe’s name and title was pencilled thereon. I frankly explained the apparent mistake. Alixe restrained her laughter with difficulty for the dignity of the Ambassador seemed wounded. With perfect self-possession, he asked me one or two questions.

“‘What did you tell your coachman, Madame? May I inquire?’ the Turk remarked with aplomb.

“‘I said ‘Au bazaar!’ Excellency! The stupid man must have made a mistake!’

"A faint wintry smile played around his features as he rose and said quietly:

"I understand thoroughly. I beg a thousand pardons. You said 'Au bazaar.' My name is 'Abezah Pasha,' and I presume your man fancied you said 'Abezah.' I only regret that I was really not the object of your visit. I now understand all. I have the honor of knowing the Baron, your husband,' said the courtly Turk to Alixe, 'I will leave our cards for him. I came in person to offer my services, as a visit from two such charming ladies would be the event of one's life in my own country.'

"His mournful air and perfect grace repressed the inward laughter of the dashing Russians whose eyes danced in glee.

"Alixe was equal to the emergency. 'My husband will personally visit you, your Excellency, and thank you for your cordial kindness. Meanwhile, pray allow me to present you to my friends.'

"The 'entente cordiale' was established and on a telegraphic signal from Alixe, an impromptu service of coffee, and the rarest cigarettes appeared. The distinguished attachè was speedily

at home with the muscovite ladies, and I could hear very merry allusions to the Harem life in the Bosphorus and other social topics. The attachè knew Paris and Vienna and was au fait with Frankish fin de siècle persiflage.

“When the evidently delighted Ambassador retired he said gaily: ‘I shall consult with the Baron and endeavor to have my revenge for my shattered romance. I shall give a little soirée and ask you both to receive the ladies for me. I can show you and your friends the finest shawls and embroideries in Russia!’ He spoke with some little pride. The representatives of the Sultan departed, in solemn grandeur and the really genial Turk was as good as his word. He gave a superb fete which only his modesty would be justified in designating as a soirée.”

“I should like to be a Moslem Ambassadors,” said merry Helène Orloff to me as we left that scene of pleasure, “if the official was as charming as Abezah Pasha—only,” said the spoiled beauty with a toss of her proud head, “I should wish to have my pet Turk all to myself! He would have to omit the Harem and the other wives! I fear that would spoil the romance!”

"Well, I can't say I see any horrors in this sort of thing," softly cooed Dalrymple.

The face of the winsome hostess became graver.

"I am going to give you a surprise," she said lightly as the servants appeared and turned down the lights to a mere flicker. In a moment a huge salver with a bowl of flaming Russian punch was borne in. After its served and by the dim light the fair story teller concluded her narrative.

"The day after the Ambassador's visit, I permanently engaged an excellent pair of horses, a carriage à la mode, and an experienced and reliable man who (though Russian) had driven for the American Minister.

"It was now the dead of winter and the nights were piercing in their arctic rigors. The keen blasts cut like swords. Great wood fires in the square of the Grand Opera and on sheltered corners enabled hundreds of shivering wretches to avoid freezing. I marvelled at the hardy Russian porters, sleeping rolled up in their sheepskin coats on the doorsteps of the shops. Ladies with trebled veils and hooded 'bashliks'

of camels hair were bundled in the thickest furs. Roll after roll of outer wraps enveloped the richness of the ball or opera robe beneath. I wondered at seeing so many denizens of the city going around with bandaged faces, attesting their tenderness to neuralgic and other facial pains. A sentimental pity grew up in my bosom for these sufferers of all grades. I was not aware that the hardy Russians are accustomed to these minor annoyances and in the main are not seriously affected. My visit approached its closing days. The Ice King took a firmer grip of the Winter City. Huge Krupp steel cannon in the river batteries, split open, though swathed in straw and housed. Mountains of the fragrant birch wood in billet filled all the courtyards. The Neva frozen solid was covered with the temporary winter town on the ice where temporary booths assembled all the floating adventurers of the Empire. Dancing, drinking, and gaming reigned in this great bivouac on the ice ten feet in thickness. Skating, sleigh racing and ice mountain sliding amused thousands.

The dangerous and desperate thronged into the city and in the enormous basement retreats

of even the Winter Palace, hundreds of unknown wretches huddled enjoying the waste warmth of the huge Imperial caravansera, and eking out the money by shovelling snow. Society took on a frantic gaiety! I was wearied of the dashing freedom of midnight suppers and friends calling for tea at two o'clock in the morning.

“By this time, I knew fairly well the principal features of the great imitation Paris. One last great ball, given by the famous Preobajensky Guard, alone remained to round out my experience. Attending it, was my last social outing. I looked forward to exchanging pleasant adieux with the many friends whom I had missed in the later whirl.”

“I happened to wear this very dress, and as it was a ‘grand fête,’ I ventured to wear my jewels—these pearls,” the heroine said, “and all my diamonds. They were as safe with me as at the Hotel and I had my bit of vanity.” The story teller smiled as she continued. “I might have spared the display for the priceless spoils of the East worn that night by the Russian dames of ‘la haute volée’ recalled to me the wisdom of the American arch-millionairess who

appeared without a jewel, at the Moscow coronation of the young Czar, in a white dress by Worth, after seeing the family jewels of the muscovite noble ladies at the preliminary f tes. Still, my jewels had a great value. They nearly cost me my life and gave me the keenest agony of suspense I ever suffered. I was now as foolhardy, as independent as the Americans whom the Captain chides. I was to meet Alixe and the Baron at eleven precisely in the grand anteroom. No two ladies could in full dress occupy the same carriage. My driver Dimitri was perfectly reliable.

“Buoyant with happiness, and arrayed in my bravest finery, I arrived at the splendid hall where the flower of Russia’s Household Guard was welcoming the circle of loveliness. The night was of the very coldest. As I descended from my carriage, awaited by a colossal young Apollo in a resplendent uniform, I noticed the driver Dimitri’s beard frozen into a solid mass of ice. My heart smote me!

“Could I enjoy myself with this faithful fellow suffering in the bitter night air for hours! Hastily with the mere impulse of a sudden pity, I said,

'Home! Dimitri! You need not wait. I shall not need you!' I had noticed dozens of the 'isvostchiks' or low wheeled one horse phaeton-like vehicles around the entrance, and several of them were in line containing gentlemen attending the grand ball alone. 'It is only a dozen blocks,' I thought! 'I can easily take a waiting carriage to return.'

"For three long hours I enjoyed the indescribably magnificent 'mise en scene' and at last saw the real Mazurka danced as only it can be danced under the northern lights. Alixe and her courtly husband quitted the ball an hour before the mazurka and I was bidden to a farewell breakfast by them in honor of my departure for the more familiar haunts of Paris and London. When the mazurka broke up, I waited not for the superb feast being served *à la Russe*, but after being bundled up by deft handed maids in the anteroom, I looked like a Laplander of uncertain sex in the entanglement of 'shuba,' furs, doubled veils and muffler. As the double glass doors swung behind me, a gust of icy wind swung the great doors of the court now almost empty. It must have disarranged my wraps and

exhibited the rich jewels and diamonds on my neck, arms and corsage. Clutching my furs closely, I stepped out into the withering blast. Several 'isvostchik' drivers darted forward, the first eagerly demanding my attention. Tired and weary, without a glance, I sharply cried 'Hotel de l'Europe,' as I settled myself in the little low carriage, with its slight hood, the only protection from the merciless night wind. It was so small that my knees almost touched the driver's back, on his single seat in front. Shock headed, with a sheepskin cap, and a beard white with the congealed breath, freezing instantly, he was the type of the Petersburg street drivers. As I closed my weary eyes in fatigue, I remember bitterly regretting my folly in sending home my comfortable closed coupè. 'He might just as well have come back for me,' I thought. 'Dimitri sleeps half the day! But I'll be at home in five minutes.'

"My tired head fell and I dozed. I know not how long. I was awakened by a swifter motion of the carriage now dashing along. My astonished glances fell on dark and mean buildings. The driver was lashing his horse along. A hor-

rible fear possessed me! I recognized no great granite palaces, no broad avenues, no electric lights at the crossings, with the four silent cossacks, seated lance in hand, carbine and revolver slung on, like bronze statues. It was a distant and squalid quarter of the town. I had been driving some time! I felt it! Disengaging one arm, I prodded the driver in the back and called 'Hotel de l'Europe;' he only grunted and and drove faster. I was now alarmed, for I recognized the features of the small shops, and houses of the working classes, a quarter I had crossed but once in going to the great porcelain and silk factories up the river!

"The horrible truth flashed over me! I was being abducted by this villainous brute! I used every means in my power to stop him. He only looked around and grinned. At the pace we were traveling, I would have killed myself to have tried to jump out! Then, too, the streets were dark! My heart froze with fear! I quickly saw he was deliberately driving in dirty alleys and inside streets. I was now frantic. I quickly resolved to scream if I met any carriage or saw an open shop. By the fresher breeze, I knew

we were approaching the river! The brute had thrown off all disguise and only urged his horse on. In this loneliness, a blow of his whip butt, or his brawny hands, at my throat, would silence me.

“The ‘Hotel de l’Europe’ was below the hall of the great Ball, toward the lower Nevsky. Here I was near the upper bank of the river in the dangerous quarter. Like an electric shock, old stories of people murdered and thrown in ice crevasses of the river, after robbery, came to my mind. The Neva gives up several scores of cadavers yearly in the ice break of May. While I was torn in agony we turned into a wider road. I saw a light and forms at a window peered at us. I screamed with my whole power! I heard a scornful laugh as we flashed into darkness. ‘Some one vodki crazed’ they thought! The big brute before me laughed! I can hear his devilish accents yet. A desperate thought came to me. I had this fan and its very heavy double silk cord around my waist securing it. I slipped the girdle off, and drawing the strong cord into a loop, determined to cast it over the devil’s neck and try and strangle him. Terrified, half frozen

and exhausted, I prayed to God for help, for strength. 'It can't last long—this horror'—I thought. And it did not, for now he dashed out on the river bank by the upper bridge. By the bridge head, an inclined plane of ice led down to the frozen river plateau. I recognized it. I had driven over to the ice mountains on the island here. The fiend's design was clear! Once out on that ice, he would not delay in violence! The fatal jewels had been seen by him through the glass doors, as I stood in the anteroom lobby.

"As we swung out of the side street, we almost ran into a double sleigh drawn by two horses. In the glimmering star light, I could dimly see two men behind the driver! Were they returning from a night on the island—a gypsy singer frolic, or a gay supper! I threw all my force into my voice and screamed, 'Help! Murder!' in English, French and German!

"Before the demon before me could dash aside, an active man sprang out of the sleigh followed by his eager companion. The last grasped the horse's head, while the first rescuer called sharply to me, in good round German, 'Who are you. What's the matter?'

"I was half dead with fright and fatigue and yet I managed to stammer a few words.

"Seizing the heavy butted whip from the hands of the brute before me, with one blow of its handle, the athletic young German knocked the scoundrel from his seat. With boot and thong he belabored the howling coward till he yelled again. A few sharp words from his friend caused him to desist.

"He sprang to my side, still holding the whip. 'Please come in my sleigh,' said my deliverer. I could hardly walk the two or three steps. 'Fritz,' he cried, 'your flask.' In a moment I had drained a generous draught of cognac. I was warmly muffled up, and I saw the other traveller spring in the 'isvostchik' and follow in our track.

"'What shall I do with this scoundrel! He should be punished! May I smoke,' he said. I bowed. I had noticed his companion light several matches and take a look at the 'isvostchik' and the now subdued villain.

"I reflected on the merry gossip of the exclusive circles as to my informal visit to the Turkish Ambassador!

"Sick and weary as I was, I had yet presence of mind to think of the chattering tongues of scandal!

"An American lady—keeping her own carriage, exposing herself at night in a common street 'droschky,' and she covered with jewels. A guest at an almost Imperial Ball in such a plight."

"You are right, Madame! I see,' We were now speeding up to the Hotel de l'Europe. 'Permit me to hand you my card. I am the Counselor of the German Embassy here.' A joyous exclamation escaped me. The Ambassador was a personal friend.

"May I call to-morrow and assure myself of your complete tranquillity?" the manly German asked.

"It is the least I could do, and I will thank you and your friend!' I said as both the cavaliers lifted their hats. Through the open door, I saw the crestfallen scoundrel driver cowering under the eye of the sleigh driver. In ten minutes, my frightened maid sat by me, as I fell into the deep sleep of exhaustion. When I awoke it was eleven o'clock, and with a violent effort, I essayed to robe myself for the parting déjeuner.

Sturdy Bertha handed me the mirror. I was ghastly in pallor, and the arts of the toilet failed me for once. I had selected Bertha, as a maid of long experience in Russian life and travel.

"I told the faithful girl of my wild night ride. Falling on her knees, the good border German crossed herself in thankfulness. 'You shall not leave me again till we are out of this dreadful land. I know of several such missing people in a few years past.'

"My business was all in order. The excuse of indisposition served to shorten my parting breakfast and adieux to the beloved Alixe and the gallant Baron. The minutes seemed to crawl until the hour for departure should arrive.

"Alixe ceased her merry railing about my sorrow at leaving 'Cousin Alexis' and the dashing Major.

"Woman-like, she read in my pale face and sunken eyes, the reaction of some sudden sorrow. Folding her loving arms around me, she promised a meeting in other scenes. Filled with nervous unrest, the slightest noise shocked me and I was on the verge of a severe illness. Still my tired brain buoyed me up with the

thought. 'To-night I will be on the way to home, friends and safety.'

"At my Hotel, I found Dr. Carl Peterman, and his friend Herr Max Waldorf awaiting me. With grim satisfaction, they told me of the excellently laid on lashing administered to the howling would-be assassin by two stout 'moujiks,' who well earned a bottle of vodki and a five rouble note each. They had conveyed the wretch to their stables and had given him the Mosaic law of stripes with a German additional sentence.

"Frank and loyal gentlemen, they kept my secret and I was spared publicity. Never can I forget the first breath of free air as I crossed the Russian frontier. It was some months before I recovered the command of my nerves and since then, I have adopted the conservative rule of always telegraphing for a responsible driver to await me, on changing hotels. I have also learned to never put myself in the power of strangers. So you see, Captain, you are right!" cried our hostess gaily, turning to Dalrymple.

"The beggar should have been roundly punished!" growled the Guardsman.

"Ah!" said Lenore Montgomery, as she passed

the silk strands of the fan cord through her jeweled hands. "I sent Dr. Peterman and his friend, some little memorials of their manly kindness. A pleasant correspondence followed. After my entire recovery, I learned from them, that a similar outrage was a local sensation later. Max Waldorf deemed it his duty to confide my adventure to the Chief of Police. 'Now! Herr Waldorf!' said the General in charge of the city police. 'All these scoundrels have cards and the vehicles are numbered. If I had either, they correspond, and I could catch this fiend. A week in the fortress would loosen his tongue,' said the stern official, with a grim scowl which made Waldorf shudder. He knew the underground cell tortures in the gloomy Pentagon.

"'Will this aid you?' said Waldorf, handing the chief a card. 'I lit a cigar and read off the number at once on the vehicle. The beast did not see me!'

"'Waldorf! you are a born detective!' shouted the general. 'Give me the exact date!' This done, the official bowed him out. 'I shall send for you in four days!'

"True to his word, before that period elapsed,

Waldorf saw a manacled villain cowering under the chief's cold relentless eye. The evidence of the two gentlemen led to a break down and a confession by the malefactor. The last victim, a worthy young north German girl, (the companion of a wealthy Russian lady of rank) had been murdered for some valuables of her mistress. To the ineffable delight of Peterman and Waldorf, the last view of the wretch was, as chained to his accomplices, he was dragged aboard a train to serve a life sentence in the Siberian salt mines.

"I can sometimes think I see again those gloomy streets, hear the merciless wintry winds, and gaze on the unpitying stars of that awful night. The nameless horrors of the mental agony and the revulsion of feeling even now unfit me to look back upon those Petersburg days with aught but fear and trembling.

"No! I will never forget my night ride in St. Petersburg!" said Lenore Montgomery, as she led the way to the drawing-room.

"I was under the shadow of the Death Angel's wing."



WHAT BROKE MAJOR CON- RAD'S HEART.

A LEGEND OF LONG ISLAND

IT was with open-eyed astonishment that I vainly sought, the other day, for any traces of the old pre-revolutionary mansion house on Long Island, where I spent two happy weeks of my "graduating furlough," twenty-five years ago. My grizzled beard and stiffened joints told me alas, only too plainly, of the lapse of time! I knew where my dear chum Killiaen Rysdyck rested in a far off stranger land! The last of his race! I was alone on the old ground!

Yet, as I climbed the well remembered knoll, I saw nothing familiar, for the stately mansion, with its noble portico of fluted pillars, its narrow windows, quaint dormer roof and massive walls,

built of materials brought from England had vanished!

Still, there was the same gleaming blue stretch of sea, now ploughed by giant liners, and flecked with white winged yachts. The ancient trees around the once famous garden close of Rysdyck Hall were represented by a few veterans tottering, in the last stages of decay. Fair meadows and green rolling knolls lay smiling there before me—but the smart imitation “Queen Anne” residence was merely a crystallization of modern sham and artistic ugliness. The grand old house, built by Killiaen’s ancestors when hearty Tories drank their toasts to Church and State under George the Second, was a headquarters of the “squirearchy” before Napoleon Bonaparte was born, and while Wellington lisped as a prating child. New York city boasted then an open slave market, and there was but one newspaper in the baby metropolis when the ample foundations of the vanished mansion were laid. The sharp wind blowing from the sea threw mocking tributes of withered leaves around me from the little branches of the last relics of the old woods. “Nothing but leaves!” All was sadly changed!

I could hear only

“the moaning of the sea of change”

in the chords of the wind harp!

Gone!—I was not deceived, and the merry riding parties of a “smart set,” dashing by on the new roads, or clustered in gay tennis battles, replaced the sturdy hard riding, three bottle-men of bygone days! and their bright eyed sweethearts of the old régime!

“Surely,” said I, “the old stone church, with its God’s acre, has escaped that arch fiend of these degenerate days ‘Modern Improvement!’”

I could not find for the straggling monuments, and mossy grave stones of the wild Rysdycks, once the haughty social tyrants of the old Hall, whose doors had swung before Sir William Howe and General George Washington, and opened to loyalist and rebel in the war of Independence as Victory hovered indecisively.

Even the low gray stone wall, closing around a massive block bearing a foreign coat of arms—a sculptured pair of crossed sabres, and the almost illegible letters L. v. C. had vanished. As I wandered away to return to the great Babel of Manhattan, with its restless human tides,

ebbing and flowing in frantic unrest, I could picture to myself old Peter Rysdyck, seated with pipe in hand, on the porch, as on the day when he told me of the man who rested almost forgotten beneath the mockery of the stately coat of arms and the deeply graven crossed sabres.

Gone! The old manor house, the hardy race of intermingled Tory and sturdy Dutch blood—even the graves of the haughty Rysdycks were effaced! Therefore, I marvelled not that the alien soldier's ashes had been rudely disturbed.

"Don't know!" said an old farmer whom I questioned as I wandered away. "Old family all gone! Speculator bought the place up and divided it. Lots of new roads and improvement now, sir. All the old things are sold or scattered over the island! Railroad runs through the old burying ground now!"

I bowed my head and departed in silence.

I fancied that night in the quiet of my den, in the peopled wastes of New York that I could see the manor house in its days of glory once more. The days of 1776 when Annette Rysdyck was the "Flower of Long Island," and the toast of Howe's gold laced officers brilliant in the

scarlet of King George III. came to me through dream and story. Merry wassail was held there in the old dining-hall, where aspiring loyalist beaux, joined with the courtly Hessian commanders in pledging Annette Rysdycks bright eyes. A few miles away in the eventful July and early August of '76, "Mr. George Washington" at New York, was planning to crush the gallant embattled host comfortable cantoned on Staten Island, supported by a strong English fleet and aided by the local enthusiastic loyalists. Old Hendrick Rysdyck and his haughty wife, secretly hated the victorious British as the quartering of troops bore heavily on them.

At their board, the roystering British military dandies were joined by Count Donop, Colonels Braun, Rahl, Baumgarten and a throng of the highbred continental veteran *militaires* who marshalled the twenty-two thousand soldiers sold, in block, by the Elector of Hesse-Cassel for the splendid bribe of three million pounds in ringing British gold.

In the days before the destruction of the manor, Peter Rysdyck, with pride, had shown me the curiosities of the venerable mansion.

They were familiar themes to my chum Killiaen. Its quaint mantels with rare Dutch scriptural tilings—its carved oaken beam—the walls, whereon still hung many faded pictures of the last of the old revolutionary incumbents, all spoke of the romance of the old. The oaken side-boards still were garnished with antique plate, and the great halls were still decked with ancient weapons, trophies of the French wars and quaint reminders of the earliest colonial days! Hanging in the drawing room were two portraits which fascinated me, and beneath them an old sabre, flanked by a pair of richly silver mounted flint lock pistols. Peter paused in answer to my query before the pictures. Almost the last of his race, he gazed with stern defiance upon the *second*, while my romantic mood chained me to the *first*.

The face beaming down on me was that of a girl in the May of womanhood, her exquisite bust and shoulders were those of a new world Diana, the speaking liquid brown eyes seemed to fix themselves with intensity upon me, and follow my changing positions. The crimson lips parted in the shadow of a blossoming smile gleamed

Venus like in their soft seduction, the ivory pillar of her neck gave her a stately dignity beyond her years. Life, love and the very spring time of beauty lingered around this charming face. A rose pressed to her bosom in a delicate hand, displayed the loveliness of one beautiful arm.

Yet, on the firm brows and in the poise of the strong face were sure indications of an imperious will—and all the pride of the haughty Rysdycks.

Old Peter stood facing the other portrait and as I glanced at him, I could read the bitterness of a feud carried beyond the grave! There was certainly a story here! The woman's face at which he gazed was evidently the same! Painted in later years, it was the royal flower of which my pictured *vis a vis*, was the brilliant opening bud.

"She was the curse of our race," said old Peter, "and on our doorstep brought the fatal stain of innocent blood shed for her, and shed in vain!"

"Ralph," said the old man to me softly. "Killiaen is the very last Rysdyck! I feel, I know that our race will disappear from the earth, and our familiar places shall know us no more! Killaen's a good boy—strange, dreamy and

doomed to suffer for her. Come with me! I will tell you that old story!"

So down through the hedge walled old rose garden, where the heavy laden bees were humming in the drowsy summer afternoon, the old man guided me, pointing with his crutch cane at distant points memorable in the unlucky battle of Long Island. It was while seated on the low stone around the alien soldier's grave, as I watched the long grass waving over the resting place of the forgotten warrior, I listened to the tale of Ludwig von Conrad's broken heart!

"My grandfather Hendrick was the highest in rank and consideration of any of the Rysdycks. Lord of broad acres, proud in his descent from a famous family of the Low Countries, he was hot-blooded and dashing in his youth. Secretly jealous of the English gentry who were overrunning the west end of Long Island, he, superior in education and hospitable as an Arab, mixed freely with the gallants of the British Governor's quasi-court at New York. Splendid steeds and deep mouthed hounds were adjuncts of Rysdyck Hall, and after ringing runs across country, starting the trooping deer, in chase of Master Rey-

nard, Hendrick Rysdyck in his red coat, led the 'Hunters chorus,' or solemnly gave the ceremonial toast 'His Majesty.'

"With a Dutchman's keenness to his own interest, it was not love alone which caused him to bring handsome Eleanor Carteret home to Rysdyck Hall as its 'chatelaine!' A niece of the all powerful British Governor, she brought him a rich dowry, in spade guineas and yellow Spanish doubloons. Moreover, extensive privileges of trade to the Spanish main, and local benefits of place and power, made Hendrick Rysdyck the leading squire of the neighborhood. Around his board, the Governor and his Council often gazed at high spirited Dame Eleanor queening it over the landed gentry of those yet romantic days. It was from the stern ambitious Englishwoman, that her only daughter Annette, (the lady of the two pictures) inherited her iron will, and indomitable pride as well as a conspicuous beauty. Calmly avoiding save as a ceremonial hostess, the old Dutch aristocracy, Eleanor Rysdyck recognized in her heart as equals only the powerful Seatons, the nearest manor people of her own nation.

Her husband clearly the most acceptable of her suitors, was blindly guided by her. On her only son Philip she lavished no endearments. Manly, free hearted and the pride of his father's heart, Philip Rysdyck was the local leader of his class and generation! A splendid sportsman, a daring rider and his father's pride, the young Squire at twenty-two knew every inch of Long Island, and had explored in his boating cruises every shoal and inlet of the coast! At this period the echoing guns of Lexington and Bunker Hill called the outraged colonists to arms."

"You may judge what Annette Rysdyck was from her picture," said the old man. "My father in his old age told me it did not fully mirror her splendid beauty."

"Annette was in the spring flush of her charms, barely eighteen, when the splendid army of Howe gathered on Staten Island. The family councils were gloomy and constrained. Hendrick Rysdyck sought to save his wealth and preserve his many valuable privileges by fox like cunning. Queenly Dame Eleanor gladly threw open the doors of the Hall to the higher officers of Lord Howe after the victory and the courtly Corn-

wallis was her own admirer. Annette was soon the reigning toast of the Commander's brilliant staff. The proud young beauty was carried away with the unwonted adulation of the showy military circle. But one member of the family had been gloomy and undecided as the August days brought war to their doors. Philip Rysdyck was his father's double in reticence. In secret, he resented the extinction of the old Dutch supremacy and ill brooked the scorn of the haughty English officers for the 'country beau,' as they termed him. A man with not spirit enough to wear the king's cloth in war! Philip, cold and mechanically dutiful to his mother, was his father's confidant and idolized his lovely sister. As far as her somewhat selfish nature would permit, Annette Rysdyck returned her brother's love. In woodland rides, in the companionship of his boat excursions and all the pleasures of the free and unchecked country amusements, Philip and Annette were more than brother and sister in friendship. They were daily companions.

"But one cloud hovered between them, it was the brother's indecision in the conflict daily

drawing nearer! Philip despised the thrifty Puritanical colonists of the eastern end, working gradually in from the New England colonies, but he did not at heart crave to serve King George. His personal feelings were with the gallant country gentlemen of Maryland and Virginia. Deaf even to the entreaties of his nearest friend, Fenwick Seaton, Philip resisted the joint arguments of his spirited sister and the only heir of the powerful Seatons.

“Come with us! You shall have a cornetcy at once,’ urged Seaton, already a volunteer aid to General Howe’s staff. The young aristocrat’s pride forbade a subordinate rank and the struggle in his bosom between family influence and an enthusiastic admiration of the stately colonial hero George Washington, was a bitter one. Philip cared little for the stern browed puritans of bluff old Israel Putnam, Sullivan, and Lord Sterling. He admired the high spirited Maryland line and the keen eyed Virginians.

“Hendrick Rysdyck cautiously veiled his loyalty to George III. as Washington and Lee concentrated their troops around New York and on Brooklyn heights. Keeping solitary state in

the grand Hall, he was deserted with his ambitious wife. When the British were forced to evacuate Boston, and Sir Peter Parker and General Clinton were roughly repulsed at Charleston harbor, sly old Hendrick waited his time to see the reunited forces of Howe, Cornwallis and Clinton drive into the ocean or scatter beyond the East River the swarming rebels whose foraging parties and patrols made havoc of his fields, and pillaged his granaries, liberally helping themselves to his live stock. Though grudgingly paid, he accepted the presence of the armed colonists as a necessary evil. In secret, he kept up a correspondence with the loyalists of New York, plotting and planning while Philip, his son and heir, roamed through the American camp, or passed the days of suspense in hunting and plowing sea and sound on the fishing boats of the tenants under his father's thrall. Lovely Annette, in her necessary home seclusion in these times, gave little heed to the occasional admiring glances of Washington's passing officers.

"The shadows lifted from tory Hendrick Rysdyck's eyes when the stately ships Phoenix, Rose, Greyhound, Thunder, Carcass and Roe-

buck, covered with their heavy guns the grand encampment of Howe and Cornwallis' veterans from Halifax, and the crowded transports of the splendidly disciplined Hessians, as well as the baffled veterans of Parker and Clinton, in their guarded camps on Staten Island. The old schemer was too sly to expose himself in person, but in anxious nights he plotted to give the British commanders every detail of the American camp.

"Whom could he trust? No one but the heir of this great domain, his only son. His tenants scattered around the inland camps of the Americans furtively stole into the Hall, as the early days of July brought the clash of arms nearer. Supported by their reserves on the New York shore, the rebels feared not the British ships, too heavy to enter the dangerous East River. Ignorant of Philip's wavering loyalty, Hendrick, as July wore on, sent him on secret excursions by sail-boat from the inlets of the south shore to the British fleet. Familiar with every foot-path, Philip conveyed at night, by glen and through the familiar woods, several mysterious visitors who were hurried back to the shore under cover

of night Fond of romantic exploits, and reasonably subservient, light-hearted Philip Rysdyck never realized that the laws of war might entangle him. An absolute silence, was imposed on the heir of Rysdyck! In early August, these excursions became more dangerous. The spirit of '76 had thrilled many hearts! In his inner soul, Philip hesitated between his father's anger, the loss of his inheritance, and the growing feelings of a patriot heart.

"The hum of preparation resounded on all sides. New York was in a ferment! And soon the rebel patrols scoured the shores of Long Island, and swift videttes carried to the camp of the colonists every movement reported.

"Sharing his father's risks, in personal peril, the young Squire's blood rose in anger at the thought of the garden island soon to be laid under the scourge of torch and sword!

"The free ocean breezes, the untrammelled waves, the night winds of the forest, sang for him only the wild song of Liberty!

"In the old library on August 18, of this immortal year, the handsome colonist waited to depart on a mission of peril.

“‘You may be gone a day or two, my son!’ said the Squire gravely. ‘I confide to you this letter. You will be conducted to the presence of His Majesty’s Generals. Remember that the safety of your family hangs upon your prudence! An officer will meet you with a boat at your old fishing cottage, and you will be safely returned there. I will have a trusty man waiting there with horses concealed in the woods for you. He will go out with you as soon as darkness comes!’

“Troubled at heart Philip secured the letter, and in his room, prepared for the journey. His trusty pistol belt, a double purse of guineas and a heavy horseman’s cloak, with some private articles in his saddle pouches completed his preparations. ‘No one can tell what may happen in these days,’ thought the young Squire. Warned by his father, Philip was taciturn at dinner, for neither his stately mother nor the sweet sister gazing across the old mahogany at him, knew of his adventurous trip. When the twinkling stars began to rise in the eastern skies, with a last word of admonition from his father, Philip strode through the old hall. He turned aside to embrace his sister, who was seated at her spinet.

“Annette! I am going away for a few days,’ he fondly said. ‘If anything happens, I shall confide in you alone! No! Dear! Don’t ask me questions. Keep mother quiet. If I want to see you alone, watch your own windows at night. Remember our old signal!’ The frightened girl laughed, for Philip in boyish frolic, when overstaying the closing of the old baronial hall, would cast handfuls of gravel at her diamonded windows and gain his rooms without alarming the querulous Squire or the butler with his bell mouthed blunderbuss. Lightly loosening her rounded arms, with a last kiss, Philip Rysdyck rode away from the Hall on his first great quest!

“For the King!’ his father whispered as he pressed Philip’s hand. ‘I’ll see you in the Governor’s council yet!’

“The young Squire dashed away, his splendid steed striking fire from the flinty stones. Behind him steadily rode the mute agent of his father’s will.

“By path and short cut, the youth pushed hard in the teeth of the cool sea breeze, toward the shore where the long urges tumbled lazily on the lonely beach. After an hour and

smart riding, from a ridge he had crowned, the dispatch bearer saw the flickering light in a fisher's hut. In ten minutes Philip Rysdyck drew rein at the squalid shelter. Here, his companion took the reins of his horse.

“Two hardy fishermen stepped out, and assisted to handle the steeds. ‘We are ready! The dory is in the inlet. Your boat lies outside! They wait for you!’ Six cable's length from the shore a stout shallop lay anchored beyond the outer surf. ‘I will have the horses ready in the woods a few rods off and will wait for you. On your return I will be at the hut,’ said the guide, who was a stranger to Philip.

“‘Where do you go now?’ curtly questioned the youth.

“‘I will send report of your safe departure—when I see it,’ curtly answered the stranger.

“Philip sprang in the dory and breasting the long rollers, the light boat drew alongside the shallop.

“One of the fishermen sprang on board. Rysdyck knew them as Tory secret agents in his former visits to the fleet.

“‘Now! Squire!’ he cried, as he leaped back,

and Philip Rysdyck seated himself in the stern sheets of the boat, whose grapnel was being lifted, and the sail was rapidly hoisted.

“The freshening night breeze filled the canvas and the foam flew as the stout boat dashed along toward the open Narrows. Beside him, a cloaked figure gave sharp commands, in good English tinged with the accent of the Vaterland. Driving spray and the chill night winds kept the young Squire silent. Two hours later, past the swinging lights of the anchored fleet, the shores of Long Island lost to view, the shallop glided into an inlet, under the scarped banks of Staten Island.

“Following his silent companion, Philip stepped on shore. ‘Is that you, Roemer?’ he cried, as a man led forward two horses. ‘Ja! Herr Major,’ was the response in German gutturals. Turning to him, the officer addressed Philip. ‘I am Major Ludwig von Conrad of the Commander’s staff. We have only a short ride.’

“In half an hour, Philip Rysdyck dismounted at the Major’s marquée. By the lights in the comfortable hut, Rysdyck saw a stalwart, handsome blue eyed man of twenty-six, with crisp

curly locks of fair hair. Winning and manly in address, Major Conrad looked every inch a soldier, in his dress-coat, golden epaulettes and high horseman's boots. Sword and pistols and the queer domed cap, with the Elector of Hesse Cassel's arms, set off the dashing young field officer.

“Squire Rysdyck, he said pleasantly, ‘Sergeant Boemer will give you refreshments while I report to the Commander in Chief.’ The Hessian Major sprang on his horse and galloped away. Refreshed and rested, Philip Rysdyck awaited the return of his conductor. The stout German sergeant never left the tent a moment. ‘Am I watched like a prisoner,’ thought Rysdyck with indignation. Clattering back in haste, Major Conrad, without dismounting called: ‘Roemer! The horses! Now, Squire,’ he signalled to Philip. Through the silent camp, its sleeping regiments awaiting the issue of battle in soldierly unconcern, Rysdyck rode. ‘You speak English well, Major!’ he remarked. ‘I was on the Elector’s staff and visited England in these negotiations as bearer of confidential despatches. I have always known the tongue.

But, here we are!' They dismounted at a mansion house, and through a throng of waiting officers, entered a hall where His Majesty's Generals sat around a table littered with maps and papers.

"Your letter, sir!' cried a commanding man on whose breast glittered a star. Philip bowed and presented his precious trust. 'Looks a likely fellow,' coolly observed red-faced Lord Cornwallis to Count Donop, a grizzled Hessian.

"For an hour, Philip Rysdyck was questioned, and over maps and plans forced to answer every rapid query of the three generals whose heads bowed anxiously over the mass of plans and itineraries.

"That will do,' finally said Howe with an air of satisfaction. 'Conrad,' measuredly said the Commander, 'Take care of this young gentleman. Keep him with you until the landing! I hold you responsible for him. His knowledge of the ground will be invaluable. His father writes me he knows every inch by day and night.'

"Philip Rysdyck's prudence alone cut off an indignant protest. His plan of action was instantly formed. Retiring in silence, he regained the hospitable Hessian's abode.

“Exhausted with fatigue he slept, aroused only by the occasional call of the sentinels changing guard.

“Dawn brought the wild singing bugles and rolling drums of reveillé. The young Squire found as the day progressed, that, though hospitably entertained, he was almost a guarded prisoner.

“Signs of mustering, packing, breaking camp and a feverish activity pervaded the host. Boats plied between the shore and the distant frigates and the scores of transports were peopled with active sailors. Courteous, full of bonhomie and winning, Major von Conrad yet refrained conversation on the subject of the landing. He frankly said: ‘It is the wish of General Howe that you remain here under my charge.’ Moody, with rising bitterness in his heart, Philip Rysdyck bided his time. On the second night, after the darkness of night had hidden the Long Island shores, the resentful young Squire was aroused from his light slumbers.

“Springing up, he saw Major Conrad in full equipment standing by his cot. ‘We embark at midnight, Squire!’ said Conrad. ‘It is nearly eleven! I will return you to your landing!’

With eager hands, Philip packed his light saddle bags, springing silently on the horse waiting, he rode at the Hessian's side to the strand. A stiff breeze was blowing fair for the homeward voyage. By the shore, long massed ranks of silent soldiery stood like embattled ghosts. A horrid dream of night! Major Conrad led the way to a large sloop crowded with a hundred of the stolid Hessian grenadiers. The sails filled and bearing ruin and war, the advance boat ran through a fleet of batteaux and men-of-wars' boats crowded to the gunwale. The Hessian soldiers herded like sheep, guarded an ominous silence. As the sloop sped swiftly along, Philip realized that the advance guard had been held back, till the heavier boats were well out in the channel. As the twinkling light of the fisher hut appeared, the young American felt his heart burn within him. Grim relentless war was to ravage his native shore and wet the soil with brothers' blood! And alien hired hands were to be steeped in innocent blood! Recalling Major Conrad's courtesy and friendly hospitality, he marvelled to see the stern young Major, with gleaming eyes, rapt in the excitement of the

landing with the picked rifles under his command. The heavy sloop towed several large boats. At the surf line, Philip recognized the fishermen's dory from which a lantern was waved three times. 'Come with me!' sternly said Major Conrad, as he stepped into the dory. Already the heavy Hessians, loaded down with huge clumsy swords and bungling equipment, as well as ponderous guns, were clambering into the boats astern. Every drop of blood in Philip's frame was bounding. As he lightly sprang on shore, the waiting messenger of his father greeted him. 'The horses are within two hundred yards.' 'Bring me your horse,' cried Major Conrad to the guide as he stood, sword in hand, watching for the heavy troop laden boats. 'You will ride with me, Squire!' 'I will get my horse!' said Philip. 'Very well,' Conrad answered. The first touch of his native soil made Philip Rysdyck a patriot! The scales had fallen from his eyes! Concealing a pistol in his left hand, a keen hunting knife in his right, he prayed for a chance of escape! 'Shall I kill him in the wood?' he thought, looking at his silent guide. 'No! I can not murder a defenceless man! Ah! I

have it!' He clenched his teeth to still the beating of his heart. 'Here we are. There's your horse!' 'I'll lead this one to the Major!' 'Wait till I fix my girths and these saddle bags,' said Philip carelessly. He lingered a few moments with the horse, knife in hand. A few dexterous passes in the dark, after his own steed was girthed and the bags placed, enabled him to cut the heavy saddle girths of the guide's horse in three places all but a few threads. 'Very well,' cried Philip as he settled himself in the saddle, and gazing at the stars, fixed the location of several forest paths. His spurs were buckled and his noble blood racer tossed his head impatiently.

"While the guide gained a few yards, leading the other horse toward the beach, Philip Rysdyck quickly wheeled his racer and dashed into the forest. A yell of rage told him that the baffled guide had vainly tried to mount the other horse with its disabled saddle. Before Major Ludwig von Conrad had ceased cursing the betrayed guide, Philip was a mile away and dashing toward General Putnam's camp. Three hours later wearied and exhausted, Philip Rysdyck

rode into the patriot picket lines, and though the shore swarmed with thousands of British and Hessian troops, the surprise was averted. In the early gray of dawn, Hendrick Rysdyck was awakened by the baffled guide. His son's flight confirmed the story and the message of Major von Conrad. The firing told the rest of the story!

“‘I am ruined in my military honor—your son is a rebel, and he will be hung forthwith when caught,’ were Conrad’s words.—Already the dropping shots told of the approach of the hosts of George III, and ere Hendrick Rysdyck ceased raving to his haughty wife and the frightened heiress, the ground shook for miles under the discharge of a hundred cannon. Over the fair domain of Rysdyck Manor, mad reeling combatants struggled in fury. When the awful day gave way to a night lit with watch fires, and blazing farms, surrounded by the groans of the wounded, Hendrick Rysdyck was a prisoner in his own home, and two companies of savage Hessians were in bivouac on his lawns. The manor outbuildings were filled with the wounded. Major Ludwig von Conrad

in disgrace, deprived of his selected command was in charge. General Sullivan and Lord Sterling were captives, with a thousand more of the patriots, and five hundred rebel dead lay staring scattered over the once smiling meadows. Though Putnam, daring and despairing, awaited Washington to lead off the broken army, the dear bought British victory cost five hundred men to King George. Ludwig von Conrad, his left arm bandaged, stung by his disgrace, answered Annette Rysdyck bitterly as the excited girl begged tidings of him. 'Our surprise would have been complete but for your brother, and he has cost me the lives of one hundred of my brave battalion!'

"The next day closed cold and foggy and at night every patriot soldier vanished, gaining New York, in friendly darkness, with their Generals lashed by Washington's anger. Sullen and smarting under his dismissal from the Commander's staff, Ludwig von Conrad ruled at Rysdyck Hall with a rod of iron. Haughty old Hendrick Rysdyck stalked silently around as days passed on. 'I have no son!' he cried gruffly in answer to Major Conrad's query. The prisoners were searched and no sight of Philip's face or news of his fate resulted.

“Major Conrad sent mounted men to scour the island. All in vain!—The days crawled away and two weeks later, the beautiful girl now frantic for tidings of her brother, saw the great host of Howe and Cornwallis pour over to defenseless New York, under cover of the formidable fleet. At the silent table, where Major Conrad was an enforced guest, the stern old Squire and his wife sat in mute sullenness. Philip Rysdyck had dropped from their ken, as if forever. The handsome Hessian, young, spirited and romantic, as the days rolled on fell into the gilded snare of Annette Rysdyck's beauty. Daily association drew them together, and before the victorious legions of Howe moved up with confidence against Washington's demoralized army at White Plains, the Hessian Commandant was her bond slave. Smarting yet under the sting of being left to guard a depot, care for the convalescents, and watch the territory near Rysdyck Hall—left without a chance to share the coming victories, Ludwig von Conrad, like a sleuth hound, followed every clue to effect the capture or trace the mystery of Philip Rysdyck.

“Before the middle of September, the Hall was in its olden quiet. The old Squire went his ways and never mentioned the absent heir. Heir no more, for Philip Rysdyck’s face was turned to the wall in the drawing-room!

“‘He must have been killed! Perhaps he has escaped,’ Major Conrad reasoned, in wolfish discontent. ‘How his sister loves him. She, alone, mourns him!’ It was even so, the girl daily plied every one with questions. ‘I will watch her—if he ever tries to communicate, she will be the chosen one.’

“As October approached, Major Conrad was aware of a change in Annette Rsydyck’s manner. She was cheerful, and at times her voice was raised in song. With careful punctilio he avoided intrusion. Yet the similarity of taste and feeling made the winning heiress brighten daily in his eyes. She was allowed to come and go at will.

“Ludwig von Conrad woke smartly from his day dreams when Sergeant Boemer told him one day, ‘Herr Major! I am a little curious about the young lady. Two or three times a week, she rides alone in the morning and when she

returns, her horse is always covered with foam! I wonder if she gets news of the young Herr!' The Major questioned his sergeant. After the recital, he laid aside his assumed carelessness. 'Keep my best horse ready, and have yours also. Watch the young lady. If her horse is brought round, let me know! Warn me at once!' The sergeant saluted and departed. Major Conrad noted the returning roses on Annette's cheeks. Two days later, sword and pistols by his side, Ludwig von Conrad furtively followed the morning ride of the Rose of Long Island. Keeping under the shade of the trees, followed directly by his orderly, with all the craft learned in the woods of his far off castle of Conradstein in the romantic Inselberg hills of Hesse, he traced the heiress of Rysdyck to a farm house nestled in a little glen, nine miles from Rysdyck. Cautiously keeping under cover, followed by the sergeant, armed with carbine, sabre and his pistols, the dashing soldier sprang in at the door of the little cottage. Annette's horse was tied in a clump of trees near by. With a scream, the lovely girl threw herself on her knees before a wasted form, lying on a rude couch! It was handsome Philip

Rysdyck, gaunt and worn, his eyes still burning with fever. The chivalric Hessian sheathed his sword. Satisfying himself there was no one in hiding, save an old woman who hobbled away at the sight of an armed enemy—the Major swiftly left the room! Signalling Boemer, he ordered him to stand guard over all three horses. Returning, he sat down in silence and gazed at the sufferer. Philip's eyes blazed defiantly. Conrad broke the silence. 'You know my duty! I must do it!' Philip essayed to speak. His head fell back in exhaustion. The fair girl, in impassioned pleadings, begged for her brother's life. A shot wound in his shoulder, a bayonet thrust in his ribs had brought him to the verge of the grave! Major Conrad paced the room in manly agony. 'It is more than life you ask me, it is my honor as a soldier! I am ruined now in standing. Discovery of this would forfeit my life! It is treason to the King!'

"Take my life and spare his,' cried Annette Rysdyck on her knees. 'Enough of this,' cried Major Conrad, in desperation. 'He must be moved from here! He will die as it is! He needs care, and his safety! If seen by a stranger,

his life is lost. You can confer with him. I will return in ten minutes.' Devise a plan to get him to the Westchester shore. 'I do not wish to know the details. I will see that you are aided.'

"An hour later, Major Conrad and Annette Rysdyck were riding towards the Hall, partners of a secret, in which a life was in gage for a life. A week later, borne in a heavy carriage escorted by the faithful Boemer and a half dozen troopers, Annette Rysdyck, accompanied by her maid, crossed to the Westchester shore in a sloop. The muffled maid was none other than Philip Rysdyck. Two faithful old hunting companions of the tenantry selected by Philip, now strengthened by cordials and nursing were charged with his transport to the Americans lines at Tarrytown. 'I ask but one reward, Annette,' said Major Conrad, as they communed over the secret in the library of the old Hall. 'For my sake, make Philip promise that he will seek the *southern* army of the rebels, if he joins them, for he will be tried by drumhead court and executed forthwith if ever caught by this command.' After the victorious cannon of White Plains had

thundered out a British victory and Fort Lee and Fort Washington were in the hands of the King's troops, Annette Rysdyck, in secret, gave her hand to the gallant nobleman who had given her a brother's life. A visit to New York, gave the heiress liberty and Major Conrad, obtaining a leave, grudgingly given, was married to the woman who held the secret of his generous disloyalty. Brief, sweet hours of stolen happiness were the married lover's only solace in the winter days of war. Hendrick Rysdyck, gloomy and harassed by the presence of the military, grew thinner daily. The loss of his son preyed on his mind. Philip was alone the confidant of the marriage and his safety in the Carolinas was the only bright spot in the gloom of winter. Before the snows of spring melted, the battles of Trenton and Princeton cut up the Hessian contingent and Major Ludwig von Conrad received at last his marching orders. With a heavy heart, he prepared to leave his unacknowledged wife, now the supposed sole heiress of Rysdyck Manor for old Hendrick lay under the winter snows. With unruffled brow haughty Dame Eleanor queened it at Rysdyck and did not hide her joy at the de-

parture of her enforced guest. The only visitor of note at the Hall was Fenwick Seaton, insolent in victory and, installed as the chief adviser of Dame Eleanor. He was a Colonel of Loyalists and daily Annette's beauty (under its ripening bloom) inspired him to more ardent wooing. For she was, the richest heiress on fair Long Island. In stolen confidences, Ludwig von Conrad, (who had prepared his will and given his girl-wife every paper needed to ensure her succession to his German estates) bade her delay and put off the pressing advances of Fenwick Seaton.

"The hour of parting came and Ludwig von Conrad, heavy hearted, drew his sword and marched away to join the great British host pressing toward Philadelphia. In agony of soul, the brave soldier lingered behind his troops and with glances of thrilling tenderness bade adieu to the woman whose love was now his idolatry. The spring blossoms came again to the trees and the field of the battle fought near Brooklyn was carpeted with the green grass, spangled with flowers waving over friend and foe. While Major Conrad, with heroic valor, gained fresh

laurels at Brandywine and Monmouth, Annette von Conrad—no longer Annette Rysdyck sat at home, under the cold unforgiving reproaches of her irate mother. For her little daughter was now smiling at the fair young mother, its soldier father fighting bravely for a king not his own. At rare intervals, letters reached Rysdyck Hall, a house whose glories had departed. The rage of Dame Eleanor at the discomfiture of Fenwick Seaton was merciless in its outpourings upon the young mother. As the summer passed on, the babe grew in health and beauty. Major Conrad, in the regained esteem of his Commander in Chief proposed to remove his wife and child to the splendid semi-vice regal military court at Philadelphia. Alas! The dreary days of October brought the lonely wife the tidings of the death of Count Donop, and the slaughter of his gallant Hessian mercenaries at Red Bank. Among the missing was Lieut. Colonel Ludwig von Conrad, who led one of the columns of assault. Exposed to the cold scorn of her mother, Annette von Conrad's whole soul was centred in her child. During the first winter of her widowhood, her only solace was a smuggled letter

reaching her after long delays in crossing the lines telling her of Philip's upward career in the patriot army. And as the months rolled away, the laughing prattling child Marguerite von Conrad became the angel of the house. Yet no smile ever lit up Dame Eleanor's face. No definite tidings of Colonel Conrad's death ever reached the handsome young widow whose life glided by in the security of Rysdyck Hall. Wealth and comfort there was, but a gloom hung over the old manor. The sole gleam of brightness was the growing and beautiful child. In desperate struggle the war dragged along and the proud day when the British marched out of New York forever, found Annette von Conrad as brilliant a beauty at twenty-six as the girl of eighteen. It was the royal flower of a matchless beauty. Time with its softening influence had folded up her sorrows in the dim memories of the stormy past. Dame Eleanor now gloomy and silent regarded with open hatred the lovely child now the light of the Hall. Annette von Conrad's heart bounded as Colonel Philip Rysdyck, in his blue and buff returned to sit at his father's seat and be the ruler of Rysdyck Hall. From the

moment when he crossed the threshold of his forefathers, Eleanor Rysdyck never left her room. 'I have no son in a rebel and a spy,' the stern old Tory hissed in answer to her daughter's pleadings. Back with the blessed days of peace came Fenwick Seaton; a man of marked and varied talents and honored even by the victorious colonists. With some feminine prevision that Philip might take to himself a wife, Annette von Conrad, with a sigh for the past gave her fair hand and handsome fortune to the man whose years of wooing had proved an honorable constancy. The destruction of Seaton Hall by fire caused the continued residence of the Seatons at Rysdyck, for in the disorganized times it was a matter of months, even years to rebuild the manor house. Within a year after the wedding, grim Dame Eleanor died without a word to her son, whose name even had been torn from her heart. As Annette Seaton watched her last hours, she rose half in her couch and cried, 'I have left you your reward for your disobedience! You will know—yes—you will know!'

"Six months later these ominous words were forgotten. Colonel Philip Rysdyck, happy in

his morning rides over the estate with pretty Marguerite Conrad by his side waited anxiously for letters from Germany. For he had, as a labor of love, made claim to the estates of Conradstein for his lovely niece, the pride of the veteran's heart. Seated on the porch one lovely autumn day he received a message which caused him to call for his horse and servant in hot haste. A messenger from Conradstein awaited Colonel Philip Rysdyck at the Washington Arms in Brooklyn., 'Throwing himself in the saddle, Colonel Rysdyck rode rapidly to the growing city. Ushered into an upper suite of rooms, seated at the table, a gray haired man rose and turned to him with-out a word.

"My God!" screamed Philip. 'Is it you!— Conrad! From the dead?'

"Ah! No!" said the gray haired tenant of the room. 'It is really Ludwig von Conrad!' A huge scar traversed his bronzed cheek. 'Tell me, Philip, of this devil's work! Who did it?' and the old soldier threw himself in Philip's arms. 'My wife, my child!'

"A light broke in on Philip's brain! The old warning of his relentless mother. 'Tell me why you are here?' he gasped.

“I was wounded and left for dead on the field at Red Bank! Mingled with our severely wounded, I was removed to the military hospital. My clothing and insignia of rank were removed or scattered. The wound in my head made me flighty and I was shipped off with others invalided to the continent and returned to Hesse Cassel. In time I was recognized and proceeded to my home. I wrote and wrote to my wife at Rysdyck, confident of a sure answer, as our people held New York. After long months, I received a reply from Dame Eleanor announcing the death of my wife in sudden illness. For years, I was the victim of an almost insane melancholy. I lived at Conradstein nursing my grief and shunning the wild orgies of Fredrick II's vicious court. Philip!’ cried the worn veteran, ‘A curse hung over the whole command. We, loyal subjects, were sold like dogs to fight a brave kindred anglo-saxon people in their own homes! The three million guineas were swallowed up by sycophants and painted sirens. The bones of the slaughtered Hessians lie exposed to wolf and raven on Long Island, at Bennington, at Trenton and Princeton and defeat and humiliating surren-

der dogged us. Donop, Baun, Rahl and others sleep in alien graves! I felt while forming my troops in the dark, after your escape, that our descent on your shores was a cruel butchery. Look at my disfigured face, my lost manhood, my years of sorrow and now, this agony! Your letter came like a thunderbolt. My wife alive, her heart turned against me, another's wife, and my child a stranger. All, all lost to me! It is the curse of the innocent slain on Long Island! Who worked the crowning woe? Who withheld my letters?' The once stately nobleman groaned in agony, his bosom heaving!

"It was my relentless mother!" replied Philip sadly, as he pressed Conrad's hands. 'A demon entered her soul. Pride and ambition with hatred of the colonists. She kept and destroyed all your letters! The postbag came to her! In resentment for her child's love of me, the rebel spy, she left her a legacy of sorrow and shame! And the doom of the intended surprise, followed my father and mother. Both dead, alienated from their children! I shall perhaps avoid the curse! But it rests on Annette. Now, Ludwig, I owe you my life! What shall we do?'

"In a long conference, Philip Rysdyck found his plan at last.

"Your coming must be kept a secret! Your very existence! I will consult advocates. I have a house opposite the park gates. A roomy den, built for my own use, and there I have my books and trophies. I meet there my associates of the patriot army. We are building up a community. I shall leave the ill fated old Hall to Annette as long as she needs it. I will send a closed carriage for you to-night! There you can remain in quiet! I have one or two tried men who followed me through the war! You shall see your child, your lovely girl! Be happy, Conrad, the second marriage is a childless one! Your daughter will have her birthright!"

"She will not lack," said Major Conrad, with pride. "Conradstein is the gem of the Inselburg! I have money—wealth even—My revenues were carefully hoarded in my absence and during these years of useless sorrow!"

"But Annette!--the soldier's frame was raked with a storm of grief. 'If she is her mother's child—what can I hope!'"

"Before midnight sounded from the old clock

in the great hall, Ludwig von Conrad, gazed, with wolfish eyes at the gleaming windows of Rysdyck Hall, where his wife queened it under another name, and his child slept the dreamless sleep of innocence, ignorant of a father's love!

"Sunlight sparkling among the trees brought life to the manor once more! With eager gaze, Ludwig von Conrad awaited the return of Colonel Philip, who came clattering down the park close on his old charger 'Yorktown,' with a rosy, blue eyed, golden haired maiden on a pony, pacing gaily by her uncle, the daily companion of her rides.

"With beating heart, the soldier descended the stairway and fondly clasped the shy child in his arms. All the discipline of his stern life was tried in the repression of the moment! The pretty child, shyly wondered at the stranger's tenderness and gazed timidly at the purple semi-circle of the slashing rebel swordsman.

"In loving mercy, Colonel Philip rode away and daily forgot not to bring the little lass back and linger where her hungry-hearted sire could gaze on her from his casement.

"Days drifted along. And yet no sign was

given to Annette Seaton. The placid semi-avoidance of Colonel Philip, left the Hall open to the haughty Tory country gentry who remained—for many had fled to Halifax and the British west Indies. Colonel Rysdyck's name was a protection to his sister, even though her husband was a Tory. Several visits to New York, and days spent with Colonel Philip's advocates brought about the discovery of obstacles. Ludwig von Conrad spoke but little. His eyes, weary and sorrow haunted, showed the fierce fire of an internal conflict. Though his lips were dumb, even to his friend, he had seen Annette, his wife—the mother of his child, in the ripe glory of a perfected beauty, riding proudly out, with the huntsmen, and dominating the aristocratic throng in her easy, insolent way. The fatal legacy of the Rysdyck pride was hers, and the leaven of Eleanor Carteret's heartless egoism was working. For Annette Seaton was the first Lady of the Island. Colonel Conrad saw her rolling by, in colonial glory, with footmen and outriders to the dinners and ceremonies of the rehabilitated squirearchy. Yet, his lips were sealed. The passionate devotion to his child seemed to

blot out a personal love, and all selfish thoughts in his joy at the existence of the graceful girl who was some day to pass the portals of proud Conradstein and stand under its trophied walls, hung with the faces of generations of knights and ladies as the Countess von Conrad. Colonel Conrad had gained the chiefship of his line by the failing of the elder branch.

“Many nights and days the two friends pondered and finally their labors finished, waited for a last opinion from the highest sources of the canon law. The verdict was against the rights of the new Count von Conrad. The secret marriage, performed by an army chaplain, who though in orders, was not the Anglican parish incumbent,—the lack of the publication of bans—the absence of registry and witnesses and the failure to show the consent of parents, and the full age of the bride, left it as a right of the Lady of Rysdyck Hall to recognize the marriage or ignore it, for a formal annulment was in her power. Bowed in grief, and silence, Colonel von Conrad pondered for days. With Philip Rysdyck, he roved at night over the shores of the sound and sought counsel of the waves and the silent forest.

“The snows of early winter fell before Ludwig von Conrad made his final choice. ‘Philip, you must see her! You must tell her all! In deference to Seaton (who is innocent) I ask a private interview here in your home! I must have the child! I hunger for the child! These stolen glimpses are simply maddening! Marguerite must have her rights as Countess von Conrad, even though her father’s heart breaks in silence!’ Philip Rysdyck had faced the batteries at Yorktown with less fear than he approached his worldly sister. He knew the meanness of her nature at last! ‘She loves *you*, if she loves anything in the world,’ said the Hessian noble! ‘Try and see what you can do!’ Philip waited for the absence of Seaton, on a trip to New York. With grave caution, he told the strange tale to Annette, as she sat, her rich beauty heightened by gleaming jewels, by her fireside in the great hall where her haughty parents’ faces looked down in crystallized arrogance. With a comrade’s love, Philip pleaded as for a man’s life. When he had finished, Annette Seaton bounded from her chair. ‘And you expect me to believe this fool’s tale!’

Ludwig von Conrad rests under the sward of Red Bank! This is some impostor who deludes you! My rank, my birthright belongs to me! I listen to no such tales! If he is the man he claims to be, where has he lingered these long years! Not a word, not a line!' The haughty aristocrat hardened her proud heart. Philip told the story of her mother's fiendish treachery. 'Away! This is a dream! I have examined every paper! Not a trace of such letters!' It was true. Eleanor Rysdyck's work was only too well done! 'I know more! I have had the whole matter examined. True, Conrad's body was not found. But Seaton probed the legal questions. The union was irregular! I gave up *my* freedom, to save *your* life! You can not reproach me!' Colonel Philip winced, and after battling long, was fain to retire defeated and saddened.

"His sister absolutely declined to continue the subject and refused to see the man returned from the dead!

"Colonel Rysdyck's face sadly told the story of defeat as he rejoined Count von Conrad. In desperation, the Hessian cried: 'I will have the child, if it costs my life!'

"The friends sought their pillows in silence for Rysdyck could not face poor Conrad's anguish. On the next evening, Colonel Rysdyck entered Conrad's rooms where he sat gloomily watching the leaden skies.

" 'My poor friend!' he said. 'Be brave at the last. I must tell you!' Philip's voice was broken.

" 'The child—the child,' Conrad faltered.

" 'Was taken away last night, the very moment that Seaton returned from New York. A double sleigh and several following with luggage and attendants took the whole party away at full speed. I have a trusty man following them.'

"Major Conrad threw himself on the couch and turned his face to the wall.

"Two weeks later, the Hall was lit up and the rulers of the fireside laughed merrily as they talked of the good packet 'Esperance,' already well on her way to London, where Seaton's high bred English relatives were ready to undertake the nurture and education of the lovely stranger heiress.

"The child was gone, beyond all hope and control, Ludwig von Conrad glided ghost-like

around the house. He passed his lonely days in hunting. His nights dragged away in revery. Even Philip was silent before the awful sadness brooding on the lonely soldier's face!

“‘Philip,’ said the nobleman, as the Christmas tide drew near, ‘I have remade my will! I have left all to Marguerite. In this sealed packet, addressed to her are my patents of nobility, and commissions. I have laid down every direction for my beloved child to gain her rights. To you, in this package, I leave a sealed envelope, with a letter to be given her on her eighteenth birthday. Be sure that your trust is fulfilled! In case accident should happen, you must delegate the powers to some trusted friends or authorities here. I have also written for my daughter the story of my life. I know you will be true to me!’ ‘I swear it,’ cried the gallant American.

“‘Then, I shall be happy in my lonely grave, for my sacred love will bless my darling child, even beyond the grave! I have placed my miniature therewith, so that Marguerite may look on my face, the face of her father as he was once, even in the years to come! But, silence on your

soul as to this, if her mother lives! It is a secret trust of honor!' 'I accept it,' cried Philip, clasping the failing man's thin hands.

"Christmas eve at the Hall this year was a feast of the grandest display! From far and near, the magnates gathered, and the banquet hall shone with crystal and plate. The grand drawing-rooms, wreathed with holly, and branched mistletoe, were filled with bright-hearted beauties and gallant gentlemen. Across the close, Colonel Rysdyck's modest lodge showed no signs of merriment. Philip had never crossed the threshold of the Hall since the night when his hard-hearted sister denied a last interview the father of her child! His lip curled as he gazed at the joyous riot around the old Hall where his callous sister revelled, in virtue of his forbearance, for he was the lawful head of the house. Turning away, he was startled as Count Ludwig von Conrad entered the room. The Hessian noble was in the full uniform of his rank as Lieutenant Colonel of the Elector's Guards. Even sword and pistols were not wanting. A strange animation beamed on his face, and his eyes shone with an unwonted fire. His gloved

hands, with rich lace ruffles spoke the courtier and on his arm a long cloak indicated departure! In his right hand, the gold laced chapeau was held!

“What means all this?” cried Colonel Philip.

“I am going to the Hall! I shall see her but once more,—*face to face!*” There was an iron firmness on the aristocratic features of the scarred veteran.

“Philip Rysdyck knew the proud noble too well to dissuade him. In mute astonishment, he followed him to the door. On the threshold, Conrad turned and grasped Philip in a manly embrace. ‘Never forget your trust! May God bless you, Philip, and your home!’ He passed out into the night.

“Colonel Rysdyck threw himself into a chair before the fire! Vague shadowy horrors haunted his mind! A duel! A tragedy! A wild *melée!* What would the issue be?

“In a pause of the minuet, Annette Seaton was approached by the aging butler, who had seen two generations of the Rysdycks carried out of the old oaken doors.

“My lady! Pray come into the corridor!

There waits at the door a foreign officer, in splendid costume who wishes to see you! I can not find the Squire!

“ ‘He asked for me?’ said Annette, her voice shaking.

“ ‘Yes! madame!’ the stately servitor answered. Cowardice had no place in the Carteret blood whose motto was ‘Fear naught,’ whose crest a mailed hand holding a brandished sword.

“Sweeping to the grand portals, as the old man swung them aside, the sound of the Christmas bells rang out on the frosty air. The snow stretched pure and white far away, tree and hedge gleaming silver in the starlight.

“The chivalric figure of Count Ludwig von Conrad at the open door was like an apparition! His noble head was bared, as stretching forth his arms he cried, ‘Annette, my wife, speak to me! Speak but once! Where is my child? Our child, Annette!’ Pale as a ghost, the marble hearted woman turned on her heel without a word! The rich court train had not swept its length toward the ball-room whence the merry music sounded, when a sharp report rang out! A scream, an

echo of woman's agony called the revellers! Lying across the threshold, his head resting on the knee of the frightened butler, the dying man moaned, 'Tell Philip—Marguerite'—and the brave soldier was at rest! His hand still clenched firmly the smoking pistol and the blood of the last of the von Conrads crimsoned the rich embroidery and glittering stars upon his lifeless breast!

"'Who was he?' cried a dozen voices, as the gallants crowded the hall. In their rear, timid women, in satins decked for the feast huddled behind their protectors!

"'The last Lord of Conradstein, and the rightful husband of your hostess. His head rests on the threshold of the home he was driven away from!" So rang out the stern accents of Colonel Philip Rysdyck!

"A cloak caught up, shrouded his martial form, and a silence as of the grave fell on the gay throng. The music stopped with a sudden crash! Dashing through the crowd, Fenwick Seaton cried: 'What is this! Explain!'

"'Silence! In this presence be dumb! Ask the woman who is your wife at last!'

"On his knees beside his dead friend, Philip Rysdyck felt the stilled heart!

“It is all over!’ He rose! An attendant darted away to the Colonel’s lodge!

“Touch him not! At your peril,’ cried the guardian of the dead. He took the pistol from the nerveless hand of the dead noble and drew the other from its place. Borne by his own men, the Master of Rysdyck, Colonel Philip took away the corpse of the gallant Hessian.

“Under the midnight stars, an instant hegira occurred. With scant ceremony, the Hall was abandoned by the merry makers and the untasted banquet stood mocking the empty room! That night the great doors of Rysdyck Hall were bolted forever, and no human foot ever pressed again the stone where the chivalric Conrad’s gray head lay in death!

“Before Colonel Rysdyck and his friends laid the alien soldier under the oaks of the God’s acre, Fenwick Seaton and his consort were ready to embark for England.

“Sternly declining any communication, Colonel Philip Rysdyck accepted the return of his ancestral home. The manor steward handed a letter from Fenwick Seaton to the rightful master which was received without a word. If idle

tongues babbled of the past, it was far from the presence of Philip Rysdyck, whose flint like face was set in an enforced composure. It was he who placed the monument you see above the turf beneath which his friend rested. Grave and yet silently unwearying Colonel Rysdyck went on and up to the highest honors of the growing community. The construction of Seaton Hall was suspended, and the gossip gallants mourned over the proposed permanent absence of the beautiful Annette and her husband. Time sped on and silver threads mingled with Colonel Philip's brown locks. It was no seven day wonder that he finally accepted a representation in the congress of the land he had fought for. The years rolled away with no sign of a return of the absent Seaton. Even with the aid of the American Minister, Colonel Rysdyck could gain no news of the bright eyed child he mourned, Marguerite—Countess von Conrad. In the long nights, he paced his rooms when at the lodge, and dreamed of Ludwig von Conrad's trust. There was a gust of the wildest local rumors as the second presidency of General Washington began, for scores of workmen were busied both at the

unfinished Seaton Hall, and at Rysdyck.

"There was no one to enlighten the eager dames and local gallants. Colonel Rysdyck, gravely courteous, lived in retired dignity and the steward of the Seaton estate was as silent as the same official at Rysdyck Hall.

"Returning citizens of note brought news of the appearance of Colonel Philip Rysdyck at the President's levees, with a lovely woman on his arm, still beautiful, though no longer in the first flush of womanhood. It was easy to conjure up a romance as to the early love of the patriot officer for the gentle lady now his wife. It was an episode of his Virginia campaigns. It was then for the bride that the old Hall was being decorated. At their home coming, beyond a single round of ceremonial visits, the grave Colonel abjured the hearty hospitalities of the time, though no stranger or sufferer passed his door unrelieved. A colony of old soldiers, fed on his bounty, spread stories far and wide of the prowess of their benefactor under the very eye of the great Virginian.

"The spring of seventeen hundred and ninety-five brought a cavalcade to Seaton Hall. It

was singular that few cared to ask or know of the well being of the haughty yet still handsome woman in widow's weeds who queened it at Seaton Hall! Colonel Rysdyck raised his hat in solemn courtesy as their carriages passed, for by the side of his implacable sister sat a beautiful girl, who wondered at her mother's silence when she asked who the distinguished looking officer was, with his delicate and graceful wife. The death of Fenwick Seaton in the far away hunting fields, of England left Annette, alone in the world, her childless second marriage making Marguerite the sole heiress of the Rysdyck estates.

"With a shudder, Annette Seaton, noted that a great window had been set in the old hall door of the house of her birth, and a stately entrance built opening into the main hall. She turned her head away from the reminder of that awful Christmas Eve Ball!

"The curse of the innocent blood had come home to her at last. The approaching close of Marguerite's last year of minority brought grave-faced lawyers to confer with Dame Annette Seaton. The formalities of the settlement of the Rysdyck estate were easily adjusted. Haughty

Annette yielded when Colonel Rysdyck requested a conference alone with the heiress on her eighteenth birthday. She knew well that her gallant brother would be just and faithful to the quick and the dead!

There was general surprise when the equipage of Colonel Rysdyck bore away the heiress from Seaton House for a sojourn at Rysdyck Hall. It was on the eve of her eighteenth birthday that the light foot of the beloved child passed over the threshold of the long forgotten house of her birth. Before the young beauty's eyes closed in sleep, she was drawn heart to heart to her soldierly uncle and his sweet voiced wife.

"On the morrow, Colonel Rysdyck claimed the girl for the execution of the trust of years. There were no festivities to interrupt, for Madame Annette, jealous of even her daughter's youth, and implacably embittered against the dead father of her only child, held no rejoicings at the new Seaton Hall. She coldly ignored the country side.

"It was in silence that Marguerite raised her beautiful eyes when Colonel Rysdyck finished his revelation. She kissed the time

stained seals of the package, and opened it with tears gemming her lashes. The handsome noble smiled on her from the miniature in the pride of his youth and vigor! Eagerly reading the pages, she handed them to her uncle who was intently watching her, rapt in admiration of her chastened loveliness.

“Pressing her father’s picture to her breast, she said at last: ‘And I am not Marguerite Seaton? It is all a dream!’

“‘You are Marguerite, the Countess von Conrad! my beloved child! You are the Lady of Conradstein!’

“‘Oh! Mother! Mother!’ cried the girl, with choking sobs, as she fixed her loving eyes on the picture of the man who blessed her from the grave. With reverent glance, she gazed on the stars and orders, the patents, and the sealed will of her dead sire. His graven crest on a superb family seal was the last legacy!

“‘My child!’ said Colonel Rysdyck, after a full examination had been made of all. ‘It is your duty now to decide. You have a noble name, a great estate, a birthright, and a trust from your dead father! You should go to Ger-

many and claim and obtain the possession of your princely house! You can then return!

“You are my *only* friend, dear uncle!” cried the loving girl. “I can no longer trust my mother. Take me to him!—Take me to my father’s grave!”

“In the warm afternoon sunlight, Marguerite von Conrad stood for the first time by the grassy mound covering her noble father. The path around it was worn by Colonel Rysdyck’s feet. The roses blooming there were trained by the hands of the gentle Virginian wife.

“Father! If you could only hear me!” cried the loving child of forgotten years, as she knelt and kissed the roses blooming over him! Philip Rysdyck turned away his feet and left the child at the new altar of an awakened love!

“In two weeks, Colonel Rysdyck made a pilgrimage to Philadelphia and the German Minister graciously forwarded with official courtesy the correspondence and legal papers touching Marguerite’s rights.

“A stormy interview between mother and daughter showed Annette that she had lost her child’s confidence forever. A letter from Col-

onel Philip Rysdyck turned the scale for all time!

“‘Mother,’ said the spirited girl who now recognized the cold deceit of years. ‘It is useless to talk to me! You have left it to others to tell me even who I am! Hence, as you know Uncle Philip is a spotless hero, the most honored citizen of Long Island, why should I not choose to be my real self, Marguerite, Countess von Conrad. You have not made me happy! You have not made yourself happy! You have left it to others to plant roses on my father’s lonely grave! You have never even seen it! But you *did* see him kill himself for one kind word from your lips!’

“In the month before the little Countess sailed from New York, under the care of a member of the German Ambassador’s family returning home, the whole past was revealed to Marguerite. Her favorite haunt, late and early, was the grassy enclosure where her father rested. With grave caution, Colonel Philip begged the ardent girl to avoid the dews and damp of morning and evening.

“When the packet ‘Orpheus’ sailed from New York bound for Hamburg, it was Colonel Philip

and his gentle wife who waved adieu to Marguerite von Conrad, standing leaning on the arm of the pleasant German lady from whose friendly lips she first learned of the glories of her castle at Conradstein.

“Alone, in the colonial magnificence of Seaton Hall, with a canker at her proud heart, unforgiving Annette Seaton passed her time in solitary bitterness!

“He has stolen my child from me, even from the other world, his vengeance follows me!’

“The childless widowed beauty turned from the windows gazing on Rysdyck Hall with a muttered curse.

“Another spring brought its breath of awakening life and the breezes wafted the fragrance of the roses over Count von Conrad’s tomb away in their frolic sport through woods and blossoming orchards. There was a small piping voice at Rysdyck Hall lifted up, the voice of Peter Rysdyck, of the Colonel’s welcome heir! Joy reigned in the Hall and it was afterwards known that only at Seaton Hall, a stony-hearted woman railed in bitter enmity at the news bringing joy to the whole countryside.

“There was peace, prosperity and happiness around the brother! The lonely sister ruled her domain with a rod of iron.

“With a shadowed brow, Colonel Philip handed his gentle wife a few months later, a huge letter covered with black seals. ‘My own darling! We shall never see our beloved Marguerite again!’ he softly said, as his wife laid her head sobbing on his breast!’

“Through her tears, the gentle Virginian read of the death of the little Countess. In her own proud home, surrounded with loving hearts and in the flower of young womanhood, the approach of disease was as silent as its course was rapid.

“It was no mitigation of the sorrow that to her beloved uncle, the gentle American born girl bequeathed her accumulated wealth for little Peter.

“In deference to the mother, Colonel Philip at once fitly communicated the tidings. No word of recognition ever came! If Annette Seaton ever had a heart, she showed it to no human being.”

The old man rose and led me away from the enclosure.

"And Annette Seaton? What of her last days?" I asked.

"I was quite a lad when she was found seated in her chair, silent and cold! Not a paper, not a memento was left. The estate went to the alien English heirs who sold it. Not a stone stands now of Seaton Hall.

"Full of years and honors my father and mother passed away," sighed the old man, "but the fates are against the line of the old Rysdycks. The mysterious resentment of the Gods has followed relentlessly the crime of the old days—the landing of the embattled foreign host thirsting for innocent blood."

"Truly," said the old squire, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord! I will repay!"

I have never revisited the despoiled manor, but even now, my heart turns fondly to the distant crags of Conradstein where the little Countess sleeps, in her father's stronghold, far away from the surge swept sands of Long Island.



“HOW BILLY HITCHINS WENT HOME.”

CALIFORNIA.

1857.

IT was undeniable that the big box stove in Dave Reavis' store was the most inviting rendezvous in Little York on a rainy afternoon in late October, 1857, for cold and cheerless was the wind whistling down the old emigrant trail, and the driving rain obscured the new sign of the Blue Wing saloon on the other side of the plaza.

Little rivers sought channels amidst the twisted roots of the giant pines swaying uneasily in the gusts which brought down green spray and dried branch in disagreeable confusion.

The lonely plaza tilted on one breast of a red

clay hill was deserted, save by two villainous-looking Mexicans, swathed in serapes, serenely and with discrimination pushing two stolen steeds out of town, after purchasing cartridges and "aguadiente" and asking for the Hornitos trail, which, it is needless to remark, they did not mean to follow.

Closed was the livery stable, butcher shop and blacksmith forge to the east; to the south two private residences showed closed doors and veiled windows; to the west the hotel, "Blue Wing" and gambling shop made a gallant struggle against the peculiar depression of the day, while on the north, the stores, stables and warehouses of the controlling commercial magnate, were open to such necessary attempts at trade as the purchase of gold dust, (for cash), or the exchange of bacon, flour and good whisky for bad accounts on a series of already overloaded books.

The crowd of miners and loafers, calmly watching with lazy satisfaction the combustion of a quarter of a cord of fat pine wood in a giant stove, regaled itself from time to time with stories more or less veracious or decent, and in

a warm corner, Tennessee Jack, the Judge, Long Harry West, (the expressman), and Handsome Dick, (a gentleman who left New York City by request), were engaged in financially sustaining their private ideas of classic poker.

It was a day of idleness. Steep Hollow could not be forded. Bear River, which roared a thousand feet below in its rocky gorges, was impassable, and the Illinoistown trail was invisible in the driving storm. For these sufficient reasons, as no one could go to Nevada, Dutch Flat, or Auburn, the whole idle population lingered in this "first-class camp."

The only other exit was direct over the Sierra to St. Joe, Mo.—past the undiscovered hundreds of millions lying deeply hidden in the Comstock and over thousands of miles unspanned yet by the iron rail, and where the buffalo and Sioux yet outnumbered the tenderfeet of these later and degenerate days.

The lazy clerks watched their motley customers and saw them furtively disappear in the adobe warehouse to try the merits of a certain old Pelvoisin brandy, lurking brown and oily in French case with a tin cup attached, for it

was in the good old time when James Buchanan reigned over us, and before the hot, red breath of war had cleared the rusty throats of our antiquated cannon.

The judiciously distributed profanity of the poker quartette alone broke a general silence to which warmth, whisky and weariness had all contributed, when the door opened and the beaming though dripping face of Billy Hitchins appeared.

General social movement of chairs and proffer of three fingers of free whisky and a seat. A prompt acceptance of both was given by the wet and wearied miner who had done his two miles and a half up the winding trail from Bear River, breasting the storm with the sturdy pluck of a Briton, for Billy was a bright Cornish lad of twenty-seven, whose quiet cheerful ways had made him a general favorite.

He cabined alone in a little nook near Bear River, where he had a bank claim and toiled, in solitude save the chattering companionship of a few Chinese, who were already cleaning up the abandoned river claims, skimmed by the restless and unthrifty whites. With them "Pill

Hitchin" was a "belly good man," and so cheerfully he toiled on, thinking of a dear old mother away in far England, and of the fast-growing deposits in Birdseye's Bank at Nevada, which were to make him welcome in his home coming.

Sundry sealed oyster cans hidden in his cabin were filled with shining gold dust, to provide the means to travel, and it was to settle his account and give notice of departure that the lonely lad appeared at the store on this dreary afternoon.

It was soon noised about that Billy had sold his bank claim to the sly, good-natured Chinese who marked his steady returns and was to give up possession on the morrow, only reserving the right to clear up his ground sluice and leave a clean set of boxes and riffles for the Mongolian partners, who were already weighing up the purchase price in dust, and with reed stylus and Chinese yellow paper slips were figuring up with keen eyes the deposit due from Ah Sam, Hop Kee, SunWe and the other wanderers from the Flowery Land, who now ornamented Bear River crossing.

"Going home." Magic words. "Made his

pile"—A general chorus:—"Lucky dog." It was vaguely understood the pile was about \$27,000 with the addition of the price of the bank, of which Billy had been the managing partner at the end of a long-handled shovel, and the sly nest egg concealed in the lonely cabin.

Sailor Bill, an old man-o'-war's man, suggested "as how Billy 'ud do the harnsome thing" before leaving, and after settling some preliminaries, Billy departed, as the storm was already lessening, having engaged several pack mules to bring on the morrow, his few personal effects up to the "Burg," as it was proudly called.

Men envied the honest lad, who had not turned the golden tide of fortune down his throat, or obstinately expended it in supporting peculiar notions as to the relative order of exit of the last three cards from the faro cases presided over by the handsome French woman who ornamented the "Arcade."

The cold rain ceased splashing, forgot to patter, and the bright laughing stars sparkled in the clearest skies on earth. The swaying pines seemed to swell their generous breasts and gently murmur, "Going home: Yes! Going home!"

In many a straggling cabin, that night, were little parcels made up for "Billy" to leave at the Bay, or in New York, and Sailor Bill borrowed a beautiful specimen to send to "The girl he left behind him!" the buxom lass who presided over the bar of the "Foul Anchor," at Portsmouth.

By the flickering candle light, here and there, roughened hands wrote words of cheer to absent ones at home, for this was the first friendly chance in two years. Joaquin Murieta, the robber, (he of the velvet eyes and ready revolver), had a habit, more or less annoying, of lighting his camp fire with miners' letters extracted from the captured express box without the consent of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Directors, and frequently torn from the saddle pouches of the dying messenger, whose glazing eye mutely protested against such non-Castilian impropriety.

Morning in the mountains! Far reaches of blue distance touched with liquid gold, down the pine-clad cañons poured the sparkling shafts of light, and dark gorges gave up their shadows, prisoners to these bright lancers of the growing day.

Little York shook itself up,—assumed its respective burdens of toil or laziness, blinking vice was sleeping off its last night's drunk—the ringing sound of the blacksmith's hammer was musically breaking the sweet silence, and the rattle of the dice box was hushed in the Arcade, where no sound was audible, save the buzzing of the half-inebriate flies and the tinkle of the bar-keeper's spoon as he mixed "the same" for old Colonel Howard of Virginia. The Colonel was on his way to Sacramento to try the celebrated case of the "Five-Spot Company" against the "Natchez Belle." Higher climbed the golden sun and passed the meridian!

It was two o'clock when shouts broke the drowsy stillness of the camp. A breathless bare-headed Chinaman shuffling up from Bear River, fell exhausted in front of the store and panted out, "Pilly Hitchin, Pilly Hitchin! Him bank cave in!" "Billy killed! Great God, boys! Billy's under the bank!" yelled Lazy Jones, the idlest loungeur in town, as he led off a motley procession of the bystanders, at an unprecedented speed.

Deserted was shop, forge and saloon, as the

whole town streamed along the narrow trail. Long, indeed, were the two and a half miles, albeit down hill, and many a good heart fell out in that heroic race for another's life! As the spot where the high red bank gaped its ugly jaws was neared, the chattering cries of the excited Mongolians were heard.

The gurgling ripples of Bear River seemed to cry "Hurry! Hurry!" while the tall forest trees sadly whispered, with rustling lips: "Gone home! Gone home!" "Turn on the sluice, boys, we'll wash him out!" cried handsome Nell Hicks, who now sleeps, far from home, on the same red hillside. It was the work of a moment!

The frightened Chinese had brought all their picks and shovels, and as our friends madly hastened down the trail, a hundred stout arms were working with frenzy, in hopes the thirty feet of soft red surface earth might yield up its prey alive.

At last, at last, the sickening sound of a shovel striking a soft, yielding body, was heard, and poor Billy lay before us, pale yet warm. A professional opinion was calmly given by handsome Ned Boland, who left the doctor's scalpel in Dublin, for the shovel in California.

"Gentlemen! No hope!" said Ned, as he brushed the chestnut curls away from his forehead, and, I think, a tear from his honest Irish eye. The frightened Chinese clustered around us, and the declining day began to throw a soft pall of shadows over the scene of death. The rushing river sang shrilly over its rocks "Too late! Too late!" While the great swell of the forest organ moaned "Gone home! Gone home!"

A litter of poles was constructed, the poor bruised face veiled with a cloth, and slowly up the trail, borne by the willing arms of his rough friends, "Billy Hitchins" came *for the last time* to the camp! A committee was appointed by the Justice to take charge of his cabin, and when the cortege, swelled by all the male inhabitants of the ridge, reached the plaza, the darkness of night was upon us. The Justice's office was considered the fittest place for temporary rest, and there the poor lad's last night above ground was passed.

It was noticed as an evidence of nice discrimination, that the Blue Wing had closed its doors, and decent whispers conveyed to the less guileless portion of the community, that the Arcade

would deal no faro game for the first time in five years.

The absence of Jack Featherbridge, the dealer, would have necessitated this suspension, as it was already known that Jack was five miles away on his ride to Nevada after Parson Cleveland; remarking that "If coin would fetch the preacher, he'd have him on the first deal." The time made by "Kicking Kate," Jack's mare, on this occasion stands yet unequalled, and is explained by his calm desire "to do poor Bil'y proud."

At the mass meeting, presided over by Colonel Howard, a series of resolutions passed *nem. con.*, were prepared and neatly engrossed by Ned Gaylord, for transmission to the absent and aged mother whose only boy had "cleaned up his last ground sluice."

It was unanimously resolved "to do the square thing by Billy," and "a committee of three, with full power," was designated to take charge of the considerable effects, and prepare to send the glittering grains, for which he gave his life, to the dear old mother he toiled for.

There was much decent emulation as to the

preparations for the funeral. It was decided the best that the camp could do, was not good enough for Billy. Already on the hillside, where the manzanitas were the handsomest, and a few live-oaks clustered in simple grace, near a giant sugar-pine, a spot was selected for his grave, as remote as possible from all contingency of further auriferous research.

A guard of sobered men watched with decent gravity, by the fast stiffening frame of the peaceful and lonely English lad who had silently made so many friends. The infrequency of death, other than by the agency of the Colt, or the flashing Bowie, gave to this untimely taking off a solemnity not usual. Already across the plaza could be heard the peculiar hollow tapping of the hammers on the coffin.

It was understood, in default of funeral outfit, that the married women of the camp, three in number, had already agreed to provide a decent shroud and dressings at the expense of their long unused finery.

It was not considered presumptuous when at the last, Mme. Celeste, (the handsome Parisian divinity of the table of fortune) silently offered

a pillow made from a great square cut out of a satin ball dress, and perhaps overtrimmed with real lace, which had once risen and fallen on her bosom. This resulted in a quiet invitation to the funeral from the committee, who decided "that the Madame had done the clean, square thing, particularly as Billy never tried his luck at the game!" Ah! well was it for you, honest miners of the olden days, not to roughly turn away the offering of a passionate and impulsive heart.

The delicate question of writing to his parent, was unanimously left to the three mothers resident at the camp, and I am sure that tender tears fell that night over the little bundle of the English woman's letters and family relics handed, which were with his best Virginia bow and a slight clearing of the throat, to them, by Colonel Howard.

Poor old Colonel! It is to be hoped that some kindly woman cheered the last hours of your gallant boy, Chandler Howard, who tried to get inside of Hancock's lines at Gettysburg in the later, then unborn, years. With the remnant of Pickett's division he did not go back, but lay desperately wounded on the stricken field, re-

remembering his old Virginia motto, "Not to go back on anything."

Morning broke again,—calm and still, and up the wooded hill wound the little procession. By the open grave stood the entire population of the camp. The solemn words of Parson Cleveland fell cold and distinct as rifle shots, on the stillness of that bright mountain day. The wild miners listened, moved strangely by the unfamiliar utterances and lingered shyly with uncovered heads!

At the head of the grave the three sobbing mothers gave evidence of womanly sympathy and modesty. At the outskirts of the crowd Mme. Celestine leaned on the arm of Jack Featherbridge, who calmly reasoned on this new discovery of feeling in his fair charge, whose silent tears attested her womanhood in common with her more virtuous sisters of the openly acknowledged world.

Poor Jack! He was just as calm three months later, when he lay on the floor of the Magnolia Saloon at Grass Valley, with five ball holes in his breast, and faintly murmured, pointing to his shapely feet, "Boots!" They were taken

off, and poor Jack slept far away from his fathers!

The mournful ceremony achieved, the procession was slowly withdrawn, and a few brawny Cornish lads filled up the grave, which was shortly inclosed with a stone wall. The parson was solemnly dined by the three families, Colonel Howard lending also his stately presence.

Little knots of men discussed all the details of these obsequies with local pride, and it was agreed that Red Dog, Liberty Hill, and Dutch Flat could not have approached this eminently satisfactory handling of a sudden and saddening event by the people of the camp.

The action of the committee in donating Billy's cabin and loose tools to the kind-hearted Chinese who assisted so handsomely in the ineffectual attempt at rescue, was approved Hop Wo, (the running messenger), was made an especial favorite, and voted free from Caucasian violence forever. The committee of three was discharged upon the acknowledgment of the English Consul at San Francisco, of the receipts of the estate, and his stiff but hearty complimentary letter was long a local pride to the old-timers,

Jack Featherbridge escorted the parson home to Nevada in knightly style, and the current of life in the camp ran its even way, only broken in several months by the receipt of a tender letter from the bereaved, waiting mother in far-off England, who begged to thank the "*three kind ladies*" and all the camp for their unexpected kindness.

Sailor Bill remarked "as how Billy's been well done by," and I have reason to know that the words of the thankful letter were also communicated to Mme. Celestine, who was strangely moved thereat, being then darkened in sorrow for the unreturning "Jack."

To-day the camp is lost. Yawning chasms show where hill and gorge have been moved away bodily by the giant search for gold, by great companies. There is no town of the name; the dwellers therein are scattered, and the familiar places know the old times no more. Nothing left but the memory of the quaint old days, gone forever. Nothing speaks of the flush times! The plaza has gone bodily into Bear River, and only the main rock structure of the cleft gorge remains.

Far on the heights the lofty pines sway and sing at night, and the rustling leaves whisper sadly of the past! You could not find to-day "Poor Billy Hitchins'" grave, and many of the actors in the little scene have learned the bright secrets hid beyond the shining stars.

As I passed the ridge, on the railway, this old story came to me, and tears rose to my eyes as I thought of how poor Billy went home! Home! Home! Where we all go!—Whether with tottering step, or bounding foot, we are all going there—and yet my memory lingers fondly around the old, lost, deserted camp—"Little York."



THE LOST BLUE JACKET.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE AMERICAN
CONSULATE AT MARSEILLES.

BITTERLY severe was the winter of 1871 in Marseilles. The close of "l'année terrible," left France, wounded, bleeding and exhausted under the foot of a pitiless enemy. Bereft of territory, struggling to raise five milliards to effect the release of other provinces, France had its suffering soldiers, returning prisoners, and exiled frontier population to relieve and protect. I had voyaged over the beautiful valleys of Alsace and Lorraine, verifying the grim handiwork of war. An appointment at the important United States Consulate at Marseilles, afforded me an official character, very useful to a traveller in those troubled times. All the recent battle-fields were visited, for in July and early August, France was yet in a state of chaos. A German divi-

sion proudly marching in full pancply of war over the roads in the conquered territory, was a sight never to be forgotten by me. The heart broken peasants gazed with streaming eyes.

Paris itself was a confused wreck. Smoking ruins marked the work of the "pétroleuse." Streets and houses were scourged with shot marks and "mitraille." In the lovely Bois de Boulogne a full siege operation could be seen (as an object lesson) in the recently abandoned batteries. Père-la-Chaise and Montmartre were yet strewed with the debris of the last stand of the Communists. The gates of Auteuil and Point du Jour, showed the accuracy of the Versaillesist artillerists directing a murderous fire on their crazed brethren. St. Cloud and Versailles were in armed occupation, and still sixty thousand desperate, defeated French troops, were huddled around the heights, from which William was proclaimed the Imperator of the most successful invading army of modern times.

Thousands of poor wretches were still confined as communists in the "Orangery" at Versailles; where the royal children of France had often sported in glee. Near enough to almost hear

the volleys which ended the lives of those incarnate fiends Ferrè and Lullier at Satory, with poor gallant Rossell, a sacrifice to citizen revenge. I sadly retraced the road to Paris.

What processions, gay and grim, frenzied with blood or wine, drunk with gratified vanity, or humbled in defeat, have passed over these historic paths. A captive Louis, and his heart-broken Queen, moved once over that road, with the head of lovely Princess Lamballe, carried on a pike as a ghastly ensign. Citizen Kings, Bourbonists, Presidents of France, the Napoleons, from the Great to the Little, all France's rulers have followed these roads in victory's intoxication, or fled in shame's abasement from gay Lutetia. Heights of Paris! From here, many a sovereign had breathed the last sigh over ruined greatness. "El Ultimo Sospiro!"

I turned my steps away from the scenes where the Eagles of France were lowered to the dust, before the German conqueror. Over a disorganized railway, past fiery Lyons, down to the shores of the Mediterranean, I passed through excited communities, ablaze with impotent rage and wounded pride. Marseilles, queen of

the blue Mediterranean, proud heirloom of the old Phœnicians was reached at last. A few days found me comfortably installed, under a hideously emblazoned oval coat of arms of the United States of America, in the most important Consulate we have in the south of Europe. The Rue Sylvabelle was a pleasant quarter, and I was soon engrossed in my official duties.

Marseilles was in a ferment. It needed the strong hand of the military Prefect, Count de Kèratry, a most gallant cavalry general, to curb the lawless dwellers by the B uches du Rhone. The streets were thronged with the homeless poor, wounded and discharged soldiers, and all the human flotsam and jetsam of an unsuccessful war.

As the fall wore on and winter advanced, a season of unusual severity added to the sufferings. A plentiful garrison hardly overawed the people, who elbowed the soldiers into the gutters, and openly insulting them, jeered them with pusillanimous defeat. Arrest was useless. The poor canaille were glad to have shelter and food, even at the price of libert

Reactionary tumults in the theatres, an in-

flamed press, and the shooting of Cremieux and other ex-communists, kept up the popular excitement. Trade was disorganized, credit impaired, and only the sea traffic was lively; as from Marseilles, the varied productions of many of the rich internal French districts, must seek the markets of the world. By day and by night the less frequented streets were dangerous. Sailors, refugees, deserters, and discharged men of the foreign legion, swarmed around. They were a dangerous crew. Your French ruffian is the equal of any in the world. Our American Consul, a veteran Colonel, young in years, but old in experience, advised me to carry a revolver; which I did, with the addition of a good club, perhaps after all, the very best weapon.

The American Consuls in France, were acting German Consuls, as yet, by Minister E. B. Washburne's courtesy. Able and manly, he did much to assist in restoring internal order in France. He was the pride of all Americans, who noted his superb personal influence in all works of charity, mercy and justice. Our German relations made the American official staff very unpopular. The most romantic duties, often deli-

cate, and even dangerous, were forced upon us. An intense desire to sacrifice any straggling German reaching Marseilles, was only restrained by fear. The floating American Flag covered many a poor devil, as an absolute physical refuge from mob violence, or even assassination. The exhibition of considerable money, or valuables, any where in Marseilles, was at the risk of life.

We had our own careless child-like stranded sailors to protect. Mutinous crews, cruel captains, and wandering adventurers were cast on our hands. Our official intercourse was bitter and disagreeable, save with the personal headquarters of the gallant Kératry and the noble old Russian Consul General, Prince Troubetskoi, whose purse was open, ever, to the starving stranger poor.

Among other singular duties entrusted to me, was the relief and safe forwarding to Germany of a beautiful young German prima donna, who had been cooped up during the latter part of the war in Marseilles. Rumor assigned her a very high lineage in blood, (if not in law) and the abundant pecuniary relief given her, came from the cabinet of a very exalted personage in Berlin;

as well as secret orders from the splendid and fearless German ambassador at Paris, Count von Arnim. She was forwarded under safeguard to the nearest German lines at Belfort. She went literally singing on her way. Her last words were "Auf Wiederschen" with a very tender expression of her blue eyes. Alas! I have never seen the lovely Fraulein since.

The discharged German soldiers of the French Legion 'Etrangère from Africa, we also relieved and sent along under a rattling skirmish fire of attack and insult. It seemed as if the French had gone mad. Always excitable, the Marseillaise were simply beside themselves. The superb Hotel de Ville, parks and public buildings were despoiled of all their statues and Napoleonic ornaments. Frightful vandalism attended the destruction of every symbol of the dethroned Emperor.

By day and night we all worked at our many duties, usual and unusual, our only relaxation being visits to the Opera, Theatre, or the Café Chantants, and the gorgeous "bals de minuit" at the Alcazar and El Dorado. There the revelers of a cosmopolitan sea-port, met the local

beauties of the easy going city. All the thousand places of amusement, high and low, were in prosperous career. Life was a mere wild fever!

Crowds of still defiant Communists howled with frantic joy when Suzanne Lazier would sing her famous song "Jacques Bonhomme apprend à lire." Lazy French sous officers of the defeated army applauded military lyrics of the late Opera-bouffe Empire, neglecting their half starved men and famishing horses. Life was hardly safe among these disorganized bravos, and violence was rife. The minor streets and lonely docks of the great port, were scenes of many tragedies. Every contrivance to entrap, rob, and delude, was in uninterrupted practice. The marine gendarmerie alone kept up the high character held by the French sailors during the entire unhappy war, and preserved order, as the civil authorities were about at their wits ends. Mysteries of the street and morgue were frequent, and my little sad romance came to me!

Several months after my official debut, we received an official communication from the United States Department of State, informing us that a young American sailor, named Harry

Morton, would be discharged from our fleet, then wintering at Ville Franche, and sent up by train to our Consulate. He had been released by the Secretary of the Navy, as being under age, having enlisted under misrepresentation. We were directed to receive him, furnish him with funds to any reasonable amount, and provide him with a first class through ticket, via. England to New York. He was referred to as young and inexperienced, of good family, and we were directed to effect his immediate return.

Such cases were not unusual. The document was laid away for immediate reference on his arrival. Some letters were furnished from the Department to be delivered to him on his arrival; they had a formidable, legal appearance.

"Probably some young fellow of good family, who ran away to sea and has fallen into a fortune," said the good-humored Colonel, as he handed me back the letter, and resumed *his* official toil of glancing at the homelike columns of the New "York Herald," and consuming as good a cigar as the enormous French taxes would permit us to indulge in. "Mark that 'Impor-

tant' and put it on your 'Immediate' file," resumed the Colonel. "When Morton comes, treat him decently, and let me see him. They evidently want him home at once; I suppose he is a careless youngster."

In a few days I received an official letter from the Secretary of Rear Admiral Alden, (commanding our Mediterranean fleet) at Ville Franche, that "Harry Morton had been duly discharged by the order of the Secretary of the Navy." He was ordered to report to the American Consul at Marseilles for immediate transportation to America. He had been furnished with a ticket to Marseilles, via Nice and Toulon. The same afternoon, a bright, splendid, manly looking young fellow in the uniform of an American blue jacket, walked into the Chancellor's office of the Consulate. He presented his discharge from the "Wachusett," and was the bearer of a regular official letter to us. His frank sailor manner, and trim bearing, were tempered with that air of breeding which always indicates careful nurture in youth. I had all his papers and letters, and was directed to make a preliminary examination of matters, by the

Consul. The clerk brought Morton in to my room. I made him comfortable while he perused the letters I handed him.

But a few days before, a common sailor, and forced to touch his hat to every one, he was now an American citizen "at large," and the peer of any visitor from Columbia. I watched his handsome face, in a play of varying emotions, as he read the correspondence. He finished his task. I asked him a few questions. He seemed embarrassed and shy. I learned from him that he had only a year and a half of his enlistment to serve out, when the order came discharging him. He had served in the Atlantic squadron, and then in European waters. He described the life in the Mediterranean as "a pleasant yachting" cruise for the officers. He said he had been well treated in the main, in his service. "It's a little rough on a man used to better things, sir," said he, and then stopped suddenly. He described his sailings from the Pillars of Hercules to the Golden Horn, and said he had learned a great deal of life. I was young myself, and sympathetic. I had but recently taken off the epaulette. I wondered what made a youth (evidently well

born) take up the simple restricted life of a blue jacket.

"How did you come to enter the Navy, Morton?" I asked. "Were you in love with reefing topsails? You could not share any of the junkets at Monte Carlo, Naples and Malta; or join in the festivities of the officers." He looked grave. "It was family trouble, Sir; I ran away and joined the Navy *to be safe*." I laughed in spite of my interest. It was a satire on our dangerous maritime branch of the service. "Well, you are big enough to take care of yourself now!" I said. It was his turn to laugh. "I'm nearly twenty-one," said he. "It's all right."

Bethinking myself of the Consul's orders, I showed the young man into the inner sanctum. He remained some time with the Colonel. I could hear their voices in earnest conversation. After half an hour he came out. I asked him to take a seat, and went in for the orders of my superior. "That's a queer young fellow," said the Consul. "He keeps his own counsel pretty well. Now I want you to take charge of him while he is here. Send for 'Squires' and have him treated well. To-morrow we'll give him

five hundred dollars, on his receipt, and a through ticket home to America. Take receipts in triplicate in the name of 'Harry Morton.' He won't give any other. He seems very sensitive, and has had some worry in his boyhood; but he is a gentleman's son. You might show him some little personal attentions, if you care to."

I promised to be kind to the lad, and when the Consul strolled away for his evening drive on the beautiful "Prado," I asked Morton to dine with me. He was evidently pleased, but said "You see this rig, Sir?" "Never be ashamed of your country's uniform," said I, "while you wear it in honor. Many a brave heart has honored a blue jacket. We'll fix that soon." He accepted. When my overloaded desk was cleared, Squires arrived. He was the general Figaro of the Consulate and Naval agency. Ex-soldier, sailor, filibuster, and jack of all trades, he was boarding master of the Consulate; a sort of purchasing agent of the fleet, and kept run of all the Americans (high and low) who visited the city of Monte Cristo. Sharp and reliable, he was a match for any one, and had seen his vicissitudes. In the service of Buenos Ayres, he had once

been rescued by a foreign officer, after the firing party had been told off to shoot him! His energetic profanity proved him a past master of the most emphatic English.

Taking a carriage, we all drove to an establishment where a neat suit, overcoat, hat, and small outfit, made my protégé quite another man. Save his rolling gait, he was the young American *à la mode*, on his travels. Squires drove down to his headquarters, bearing away the naval habiliments and Morton's modest kit, which he had brought to the Consulate. The rest of the change of a couple of hundred franc notes, was in his pocket. We sauntered up and down the Prado, waiting the hour for dinner. Squires promised to give him the best accommodations at his hotel; where the American ship captains delighted to enjoy every comfort. Tall, handsome, with a pair of winning brown eyes, and chestnut curls, the boy was really a fine fellow. The muscles developed by straining rope and oar, clothed his well knit form in symmetry. Beyond the lack of cotemporary polish, (due to his interrupted education) he was a remarkably fine fellow.

Over the claret and filets of a little dinner "dans un cabinet particulier" he told me some details of his life. "I was born not far from New York," said he. "I would rather not say where, or give you my real name, just now. My father was a wealthy shipping merchant, and much older than my mother. She is an angel; and my only sorrow has been that I have not heard from her since I ran away. I did not dare to let her know where I was, and I don't know how they ever found me out. When I was fourteen, my father died, leaving my mother a still beautiful woman, thirty-four years of age. He was insanely jealous, and I think my mother was urged into the advantageous marriage by her needy family. He left a will, made some years before his death, giving the entire property to my mother *on condition of her remaining single*. I was the only child, and (to do him justice) he was kind to me. In case of her remarriage, she was to have only a life interest in one fifth of the property—the rest to be mine at twenty-one. On my mother's death, the property was to revert to me. On my twenty-first birthday, the three trustees, or their sur-

vivors, were to file a certificate before the Court of the fulfillment of the will. The trustees were absolutely enjoined from permitting her to hold or handle any of the principal. The property was very large. How large it is now, I don't know." He sighed.

"Father wished thus to *bribe* my poor mother to remain single. I fear such restrictions only provoked fretting and discontent. While I was being prepared for college, the schemer who married my mother two years after my father's death, appeared. He was near her own age, and it was fate, I suppose! In a few months she was like wax in his hands. I hated and distrusted him from the first. I was alone in the world, when they went away for a time. He was a cold, handsome, gray-eyed lawyer of thirty-eight or forty. I soon found on their return (as month after month passed away) that my mother had no will to oppose to this stony-hearted stranger. I was sent away to an Academy to prepare for college, and on my return home on my second vacation, I had positive proofs that he looked forward eagerly to getting rid of me in some way.

"I did not wish to break my mother's heart, even if estranged from me. I decided therefore to run away from the Academy on my return. I did so; destroying all my private matters, save a few papers, I left with a friend of mine, now in the senior class at Harvard. I was large and manly. I had no trouble in getting into the Navy. I felt I would not live till I was twenty-one, with his plotting dooming me to an early death. I have only written twice a year to my chum to let him know I was alive, and I know they are going on just the same. I don't know how I was found out, or if it was the trustees, or my mother guided by him; but I am not going home. I don't wish to risk a battle with him till I have all my rights, and I will not break my mother's heart."

"What do you intend to do, Morton?" I asked, as I filled his glass. "I shall go to my old chum, and stay near him till I am twenty-one; then I will find some way to prevent the *official* proof of the marriage before the court. I will settle half the income on my mother, as they have no children; that will keep her from his schemes and wiles, as it will be *to his interest* to treat

her well, the property finally reverting to me. I know that he maltreats her now, and I can't leave her helpless. He is a cold scoundrel. I shall have good legal advice." Morton pledged my health.

I noticed a peculiar ring on his finger as he raised his glass. It was a black onyx seal, cut edgewise, with a white line in the middle. "You kept one heirloom," I remarked. He smiled. "That's the only thing I have left from home. I could not part with it." He became taciturn. "Morton!" said I, "Our chief in here, is a good lawyer and an experienced man of the world. You had better talk things over with him, and let him know all your affairs. At any rate, leave your papers *sealed* in our safe. You can surely trust the United States Government!" He said, "I will think it over."

We went to the theatre and I saw him afterwards safely installed at "Squire's." The Consul and I became very fond of him. He lingered at Marseilles. He drew the money, five hundred dollars, and also sent a dispatch to America. We retained his through passage money. While waiting for his answers, we became greatly

attached to him. The consul and his family received the handsome young sailor in their lovely home circle. He was still reticent. I had learned no more. No answer came to his cablegram, and he finally decided to leave Marseilles for Liverpool in two days. It was Saturday afternoon when he prepared to go. He came in bright and happy, and asked me to dine with him, and to go to the El Dorado Ball. He said he would have a talk with the Consul next day, and leave him some sealed papers. "Something might happen," he thoughtfully said.

Our dinner was most jolly. We drank "Home Sweet Home." He promised to write me and gave me an agreed on address in Boston, where I was to write him under the name of "Harry Morton." Cigars lit, we strolled out into the brilliant streets of gay Marseilles. We visited café and casino. At half past eleven, the dazzling ball of the El Dorado was at its full height. We strolled around gazing on the wonderful human menagerie exhibited there. Meeting Squires, I moved along chatting with him over some consular business. Morton became separated from us in the crowd. When we had made

a turn of the hall once or twice I sat down with the shipping master to enjoy a glass of Bière de Strasbourg, and watch the grand quadrille of "Minuit exact," the opening of the mad revelry. Minutes dragged away; no Morton. An hour passed on, I became uneasy, then alarmed. Squires looked serious. The waltz music dreamily floated on the air. Lovely women whirled by in eager pursuit of the pleasure of the moment. They were the bright, wild eyed daughters of France! Shouts of revelry rose on the perfumed air. Squires said, "I will send you in an agent de Sûreté here in plain clothes. I'll just take a coupé and run down to the house. Wait here!" The mad gayety now revolted me. In an hour Squires returned. No Morton! He was very grave now. "Morton left three hundred dollars in French gold in my safe," said he, "but no papers. His things are scattered around. Something may have happened to him!"

We continued the search, till a ghastly gray flicker of dawn saw the last drunken revellers homeward bent. The Police headquarters obtained reports from all the local stations in three hours. I slept for an hour or two at Squires'

and the Consul joined me there. Every facility was placed at our disposal by Count de Kèratry. Morton's laughing face, (as he looked back) when he left me a moment (through courtesy) as I first spoke to Squires, is now a mere memory. He had promised to give me his picture. It was never taken. All the resources of the successors of Vidocq failed. He was completely lost. Was he an impostor? Had he ran away?

We instantly notified the State Department; and the Navy Department, as well as our "Foreign Office" informed us that his discharge had been asked for, to oblige a Pennsylvania Senator, at the request of a Bank Director of a great financial institution. He had deposited one thousand dollars to cover the official advances and expenses. This gentleman had unfortunately lately died suddenly. The Department directed us to make a full report, and send all Morton's effects home. A month and a half rolled away. Squires, the Consul, and our whole force were still on the alert. But Harry Morton came no more! I had described the ring to the Police from its peculiar appearance, and drawn

a picture of him from memory. All the authorities were still searching. It was as if the earth had swallowed him up silently. He drank but little, and a two years cruise in the Mediterranean must have familiarized him with all the pitfalls of seaports.

One day, Squires burst into my office at the Consulate. "Come with me," he said. I followed gloomily. Seated in the coupè, Squires called out: "To the Morgue." A few minutes brought us there. I followed him into a private rear room. On a table lay the remains of a man's arm, severed at the shoulder. It had been in the water a long time. A grave French inspector led me to the other side of the table. There, upon the clenched and stiffened swollen fingers was a ring (which had been cleared to view) as it clung on the bone. It was the black onyx ring, with the white dividing line. Harry Morton's poor mutilated arm, a mute witness of a terrible crime, lay before us.

A fisherman, dredging for crabs in the Basin Napolèon of the great docks, had drawn up this object, and Squires was at once summoned. A renewal of interest was brought to the mysteri-

ous case by this ghastly discovery. Two theories were entertained. *One*, that poor Morton was skillfully lured to his death for the money in his pockets; this was quite probable. The *other*, was that he was sacrificed to some secret enmity. Then, he must have been dogged. But by whom, and why? A full publication and description of his person, as well as the ring, in the journals led to the voluntary statement of one of the queens of the midnight ball, that she had seen him in converse with a man, as late as two o'clock, at a private restaurant of doubtful character near the El Dorado. She had noticed the fresh "brave, jeune Monsieur" and had observed the peculiar ring he wore. This she clearly identified. She said he looked dull and sleepy, but had been earnestly conversing with his companion, a man of the appearance of an ordinary American traveler. Was he an assassin dogging the lonely boy?

Morton spoke but one language, so it must have been English. After a time they rose and left together, his companion paying the bill. This was corroborated by the waiter and cashier of the restaurant. It was then clear that Mor-

ton had gone out unarmed into that midnight darkness, which was for him soon to be the blackness of death. How had he been lured away from our company? We never knew! The papers on his person were never found, although we offered heavy rewards. I wrote to the Boston address. No answer. The Department gradually ceased its inquiries.

In due time I left Marseilles on a promotion, and forgot my lost "Blue Jacket." The officers and men of the "Wachusett" knew nothing of him, save that he was always silent, and known as "Gentleman Harry." The Consul agreed with me that his retreat must have been discovered, by working on his chum, (perhaps by bribing him) and that a secret agent had been dispatched who had obtained details at Ville Franche, and dogged him. The French Police believed that he was drugged, and in some low den was cut to pieces, and the remains thrown in a sack, and tossed over the long sea wall. The returning tide had carried, by chance, the arm into the opening of the artificial harbor, the rest having gone out to sea.

Ten years after, at Long Branch one after-

noon, I was watching the carriages roll by, from the porch of the "West End." Two gentlemen were smoking and chatting. "Yes, there goes 'Lucky Stimson' and his new wife!" said one. I saw a well preserved man of about fifty, with a young woman of extraordinary beauty by his side, seated in an exquisitely appointed carriage. "He is worth many millions now. That boy's death was a windfall to him." I flicked the ashes off my cigar, and gazed after the retreating Cræsus. "When did that boy die? Wasn't there a story about that?" continued the speaker. My blood ran cold, as the other carelessly said: "Why, yes! He married old Howard's widow (the big ship owner, you know.) Howard tied her all up in case of re-marriage. Property all to go to boy. Boy ran away, joined Navy, and got drowned or killed at Marseilles. Boy died under age. She inherited all property, d'ye see? Her boy's only heiress, as he died a minor. She mourned herself to death. But she left that cold blooded devil Stimson everything! Now there's his young wife. Such is life! Let's have a glass of wine!"

As they sauntered away, the plot came to me

like a flash! Stimson had discovered this loop-hole in the father's will, and, I believe, was the author of the poor boy's murder. I investigated and could only find that one of the trustees was a Philadelphia banker (now dead) and that the trust was declared void by reason of the death of the beneficiary. Inquiry at the Navy Department elicited nothing. The gloomy darkness of that night at Marseilles will never be lifted in this world. If a cowardly murderer struck the innocent victim, under plans so deep and far reaching, then the millionaire retired lawyer with his new wife, may yet see in his own death vigil, the pale accusing face of The Lost Blue Jacket.

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