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CHICAGO LEDGER

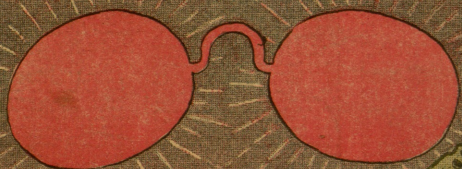
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The FLAMING SPECTACLES

by FRED H. HAYN



A WeirD AND Thrilling
Story Replete With
Oriental Mystery



FRED BOWLES

In Next Week's Ledger Will Appear the First Installment of

His First Convert

a Story of Pioneer Days in Kansas in Which a Circuit-rider Parson and a Border Ruffian Are the Chief Characters. This Story, by H. H. and H. D. Herr, Is One of the Best Published This Year. An Unusual Selection of Interesting Short Stories Will Make Next Week's Ledger the Best Fiction Buy On the Market.

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N THE iron bed in the center of the room lay a young man, sound asleep. The mattress was lying in tatters the iron shutters which protected the only window of the room, cast a ghastly glare on the sleeper's comely face.

On the table beside the bed was a lamp, evidently the property of the young man, and within easy reach a candlestick and a box of matches. The dusty floor was carpetless and a wooden chair stood at the head of the bed. Ingress to the room was had by a massive, the worn-oaken, oak door. The discolored paper on the walls above the rotten paneling was wrinkled and torn. The window was open, but it allowed scant ventilation to the damp, musty-smelling room. Evidently the sleeper had gone to bed fully clothed.

For a time there was no sound but the heavy breathing of the exhausted youth. Outside silence reigned. The men operating the gasoline station a block distant had long since retired or gone home.

Presently came a faint scraping sound, followed by repeated thumps, much like those made by tapping with a rubber hammer on a tin pipe. The occupant of the bed moved restlessly, opened his eyes and stared about, until the noise ceased. He sat up and rubbed his eyes and forehead in a bewildered manner. Then he sank back on the bed and dropped into a deep slumber.

Once more the noises were in evidence, but this time the sleeper did not waken. Came a harsh, metallic rattle, followed by a sound not unlike the hissing of a leaking steam, and the youth awoke out of bed.

"Good God!" he cried in all horror. "The Flaming Spectacles!"

The sight that met his gaze was terrific. On the floor, directly in front of the bed, appeared a pair of enormous slippers, mysteriously made of fire and beneath them shone two spots of light flickering like a brassy flame. Near the center of the flaming apparition lay a swaying from side to side and up and down.

The youth tried to cry out, but was powerless to make a sound. Transfixed with horror, his eyes never left the apparition in search of a weapon to defend himself against the unearthly light. The chair was behind him, but he seemed unable to rise. Presently, however, he suddenly seized the bed clothing, he snatched it off, and jumped forward.

The spectacles expanded, and a frightful sound came from them, like that made by the steam escaping at a boiler blow-off cock. The ghastly visitor recoiled, and the young man threw the bed clothing at it with all the strength he possessed.

A harsh rattle, followed by a succession of muffled thumps, becoming fainter and fainter, held the astounded youth spellbound. Then, from the center of the earth came a piercing shriek and silence.

His heart beating like a trip hammer, the young man groped about on the table for the matches, found them and struck a light. With trembling fingers he held the candle aloft several times, but his usual attempts. Then he turned about and cautiously approached the bed clothing which he threw at the apparition. At that moment a sharp pull matched it from the floor, but the flaming spectacles and slippers disappeared.

Several moments he stood rooted to the spot. What had become of the horrible spectacles? Bending down he found the floor, to his surprise, he discovered a rectangular opening, doubtless leading to a hot air register of the furnace, but the iron grating with which it formerly had been supplied had been removed.

Thoroly puzzled, the youth stared at the opening, but the spectacles and slippers, that so seemed impossible! The opening seemed to have been twice the size of the aperture. Helplessly he flung himself on the bed, but in a moment he lay for a long time, speculating on the events that had led to his present position. The door of the house at Perryville, where he had gone on an errand for the uncle of his sweetheart, had been broken, and he had felt indignant at being sent so far out into the country for nothing. He had come back but had run out of gas, luckily, a few yards from the gasoline station. He remembered waiting until two tanks had been filled, and his view of the house

in which he now found himself. This was a tumble-down dwelling for years unoccupied, and had an uneasy reputation. There had been ugly rumors about men being found dead in the house, without any sign of violence. Invariably the verdict of the jury had been death by fright.

One man, the youth remembered, had escaped from the house without injury. It was he who had reported seeing the flaming spectacles. Of course, the house had been searched from cellar to attic; nothing, however, had been discovered which in any way could account for the mysterious demise of the victims of the haunted house.

The youth recollected having conversed with the uncle of his affianced about this house. He had boasted he was not afraid of ghosts, much less the mythical flaming spectacles. The victims had died

in the haunted house, his amazement at hearing voices at the opening of the door, and the discovery that several men adventurously as himself had entered to play a game of solitaire, which was then in progress. He had been asked to join the game, and he had taken a hand—and won—a thousand dollars. They had laughingly wished him luck when he had announced his intention to spend the night there.

All these things passed thru the young man's mind in an incredibly short time. But he soon came to himself with a start. Suppose the fire returned! He shuddered. "Guess I'd better beat it," he muttered.

"Mr. Allan can have the hundred dollars. I guess I can stand it after collecting that thousand!"

Walking to the door he tried the knob. To his horror he found the door locked! It was provided with a spring lock; it

started and was off. Down the road he sped in the light of the moon.

"ALTHO an early riser, Prof. Gillespie Dike was still in bed when his front door bell rang insistently. The professor at the small gilt clock on the dresser. It was just on minor six.

"Overton," called the professor to his secretary, in his bedroom farther along in the hall. "Overton!"

"All right, professor. I heard the bell. When do you suppose it can be at this unearthly hour?"

"Very likely some client," replied the professor, jumping out of bed. "The matter must be urgent."

Overton admitted a pretty young lady, accompanied by a young man of about 25, to the professor's study. Both seemed extremely agitated.

"This is Professor Dike," introduced his secretary.

"I'm very sorry to trouble you so early, professor," began the young man. "But really, the matter seems urgent."

And he pulled out a handkerchief and wiped the professor, rubbing his hands briskly. "I'm always glad to get an interesting case."

"Then you know me?" gasped the astounded young man.

"I don't know you yet, but you before."

"Then how—"

"A simple question of mine and unknown quantity," checked the professor.

"I beg your pardon."

"The solution of a crime, my dear young man, is nothing more than arithmetical. You know the formula in an equation and solving for X. Now, the matter that puzzles you is quite simple."

"Suppose," said the young man, "My initials tell me you had a long ride in the haunted house. You spent the night away from home. I might even tell you where you were, but that equation would need verifying by inspection. You spent the night at the haunted house of Perryville. You went to bed there with your clothes on, became frightened and jumped out of bed without your shoes."

Murray laughed. "I can't for the life of God understand how you know that, but it's true, every word."

"Allow me," smiled Dike, handing him an envelope. "I have your name on the envelope. You pulled that out with your handkerchief, and you spent the night at Perryville. I'm well along in years, I had no trouble reading your name on the envelope. Of course, you will tell me anybody could have done that; I trust—assuredly. And anybody could have deduced the other things."

Murray laughed. "The letter, of course, is self-explanatory. But how did you know I had taken an automobile ride?"

"My dear sir! You fairly reek with the odor of gasoline and ask me that! The condition of your clothing, your great, your whole appearance tells in a story eloquently. You would hardly put on a pair of slippers if you had spent the night at home."

"That the jump from the window! And the haunted house!"

"The mud on the seat of your trousers could tell me that. And you ask me how could it get there? The haunted house, of course, needs verification. Overton would tell me everything. You take into consideration your extreme agitation, your conduct, your story, I have mentioned, the deduction seems reasonable. I pray tell us your story."

Murray detailed his experiences of the preceding night, which concluded with a story of his own. "I had a most serious," he already, "that I had been in the haunted house of Perryville and told her as soon as I reached town and told her as soon as I reached town and told her as soon as I reached town."

"Im, yes. A most remarkable experience. But I've heard of the spectacles. And I've seen the mud on the seat of your trousers. But why did you bother Miss Allan so early in the morning?"

"A most puzzling circumstance. As I told you, I went to Perryville in Mr. Allan's car, and he was waiting for me. She had left it at the hotel. When I got to the house, I found that she had person answering the door but never stopped there. I was mystified, and I've seen the mud on the seat of your trousers so minutely. Then my wager with him was that I would find out the house of gas within a few feet of the house of gas."

"I didn't know then; but when I told



With One Sharp Pull, He Snatched It From the Floor, But the Flaming Spectacles Had Disappeared.

must have snatched such when he entered. Running to the window, he tried the shutters. They were immovable. He sank back on the bed in despair. He was trapped, helplessly at the mercy of the awful intruder if it returned!

Helplessly he glanced about the room to discover the cap of the tank. Darting to the window, he began work on the shutters, in an attempt to pry them open. Greatly to his relief he soon found the spectacles were fastened to the woodwork was rotten. Presently he pried away the lower hinge.

But to his dismay he now again heard the scraping sound, heralding the approach of the spectacles. He was in a panic of fear, he managed to loosen several more screws. Hal! One end of the shutter was now free! Frantically pulling down the two window sashes, he jumped up and began operating on the top hinge. This was all that barred his way to freedom. The noise of the intruder grew louder and louder.

He had just loosened the last screw when there came the familiar but horrible hiss. Without looking back, he gave the shutters a tremendous push, and he was free. He turned and saw himself from the window.

Fortunately the ground was but a few feet below. He was unharmed, the considerably shaken up. His breath coming in gasps, he ran across the house. Jumping into the car, he stepped on the

as the result of an overwrought imagination. Nothing of the sort would happen to him; his nerves were in excellent condition.

Mr. Allan, the uncle, had been much amused at the young man's statement. He promptly offered to wage him a hundred dollars he would not sleep in the house ever night. The wager had been promptly accepted.

It was this wager which had prompted the young man to enter the haunted house. Of course, had his sweetheart known, she would have prevented his going into the house, but when he had called that night, her uncle had informed him she had gone out on a visit. This puzzled him immensely, for he had distinctly told her he intended to come.

The youth vividly remembered his feelings when he observed the gloomy little cottage adjoining the haunted house. This was the only habitation other than the house he was in in the block. The occupant of the cottage was said to be a sour, bent old man, whom nobody seemed to know, or care to know. But since every window in the cottage was dark, the young man had assumed he was not at home.

Then he pondered on his entrance to



began to move in the pipe. The noise became louder and louder. Ponderous thumps followed by a screeching sound were now in evidence. "Don't move," cautioned the professor. "When I say the word, shoot!"

With leveled revolvers, pointed directly at the register, they waited. Two calls of fire presently appeared. Dike stamped on the floor. Instantly there came the sound of escaping steam, which had terrified Murray, a moment later the spectators apostrophized. "Now!" cried the professor.

Miss Allan shrieked as three pistol shots rang out.

"We've barged him," chuckled Dike. "Now spout the shatters, Mr. Murray." As soon as the light had flooded the room, they beheld an enormous snake, writhing in its death agony.

"A cobra," explained Dike. "It is one of the deadliest snakes in India. No wonder the bungling police could not find a cause for the demise of the unfortunate who saw the spectacle."

"But they have disappeared now," objected Murray.

"It is because its hood has collapsed. When it is ready to strike it extends its body, and the markings in the form of spectacles appear. The genial Mr. Allan painted the reptile with luminous paint, to frighten his victims. That made matters easy for his snake—who could be relied upon to complete the job. Now we'll proceed to the

cottage. You'll find there the other end of the pipe. I looked for the depressed portion of the wall between the two houses—and found it!"

In the basement of the cottage they found a shabbily dressed old man lying on the floor close to an opening in the wall. A cage, obviously used to house the cobra, stood open, close by.

Dike walked to the body of the prostrate man, and with one tug removed wig and false beard, disclosing the pale face of Cheesey.

"When you threw the bed clothing at the cobra, you not only frightened it, but you made him see you. More than turned to vent its spleen on its owner! The rascal must have been certain of success, he failed to get on guard as usual. Past successes made him careless. He was reared as a snake."

"But the men who played poker with me?" Were they in league with him, too?

"I don't know. But I doubt they had anything to do with him. They probably were as innocent as you. More than likely had you not appeared the old rprobator would have engaged me in a game with them. Had he lost, he undoubtedly would have bluffed the winner into playing all night in his house. As would then have introduced him to the other two. He would have been sure it would take a sharp-eyed officer to disclose the fact that he had been helped by the fangs of the snake on its victim!"

As Seen as the Light Had Flooded the Room They Beheld an Enormous Snake, Writhing in Its Death Agony.

"Ever been in India?"
"He was there last year."

The professor chuckled. Then he said to Murray: "You afraid, Miss Allan, there is a shock in my bag. You'll be cut off with but a few dollars in case Miss Allan married you. I'm afraid of the canal of the first water."

"But the spectacle, the flaming spectacles! Did he use them to try to do away with me?"

"Perhaps," smiled the professor. "But unless my algebra is at fault, he already has paid the penalty."

"You—you mean he's dead?" cried Miss Allan.

"My equations would tend to indicate that. However, I must verify them first. I may have blundered in my calculations. The car is at the door, Overton? Good. Then let's be off."

III.

THE ride was a tedious one, over long stretches of indifferent roads, but at length the cottage was reached. The house. They left the car, and Dike examined the grounds. He seemed especially interested in the adjacent cottage. He went over the ground between the two houses with painstaking care. Suddenly he stopped. There was a depression between the two, a foot wide and extended the entire distance between the houses. He gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"Um, yes," he muttered. "That settles that question at it."

"They entered the haunted house. The place was deserted, and the door of the room in which Murray had spent part of the night was still locked. After some difficulty they succeeded in forcing the door. They found the room in precisely the same condition Murray had described. The iron shutters, hanging to one side, were just as they had been in the door."

"Um!" shrieked Dike as he looked at the door. "It was locked to the door! And in line with the register, Mr. Murray, is a pity you aren't interested in my algebra. It would have saved you much. However—"

Walking over to the rectangular hole in the floor, he bent down and inspected it carefully. "Um!" reaching his hand into the opening. He felt about for a few moments and then withdrew his hand and looked at it.

"Um! Another equation verified. Mr. Murray, close those shutters, please. I'm a darker room. Good. Shut the door, Overton."

"Then when the room was dark, he stretched out his hand. 'Now what do you see?' he demanded. His hand came away blank."

"Phosphorescent paint," he chuckled. "A cheap trick, but an effective one with a person caught loafing in a house reputed to be haunted!"

"But the spectacles! They were so large they'd cover a man's eyes. Better stand behind that bed, Miss Allan. There is great danger."

Bending down once more, Dike inserted his hand in the register and rattled the pipe. "Get ready," whispered the professor.

Breathlessly they waited as something



LILLIANE MONTGOMERY MITCHELL

"How Is the Little Cutie?" Came a Foreign Whisper at the Back of the Neck.

any, though the under editors. Lucille had never even met him. She wondered dully if she was to be dismissed. Hurriedly she tried to recall some error she had recently made, something large enough to fire her. As far as she could see there was not one thing during the past two weeks, anyhow, and if it had been something that had happened prior to that time surely she would have at least heard of it before. Wally would be furious if she lost her job. To be sure, it would make any difference as far as she was concerned there was enough income for both of them to live as they saw fit. It was the medical college fees, the laboratory fees and books and trips to certain distant hospitals which required the extra money.

She passed a moment before the crinkly elfo mirror to look at herself, to wish she had worn her best hat instead of this little mad-colored thing with its band of ribbon about the crown. She wished she had worn her frilly blouse. Had she had prettier coming out of the front of her dress. She was wearing a white shirt with the silk tie was wearing, now, however, and so she hurried down to the hall to get her things.

He inspected her and marked CHEERY.

"You had better be very deliberate if she entered. You're a bit too refined. You're a bit too refined. You're a bit too refined. You're a bit too refined."

He was looking at her impersonally as an artist regarded the object he is about to paint. He will work on her face over one eye a bit, some cheap perfume she had bought at a cut-rate drug store and a cheap lace front—front front whatever it's called, coming out of your coat. Why, you might have your own little mark.

"But—" exclaimed the bewildered Lucille.

"Oh," he said with a short laugh. "I didn't tell you what it was all about, but—"

She noticed that his laugh was pleasant and sincere and that his teeth were remarkably white. It was quite contrary to the general office notion of the man. Outside he was supposed to be a cigar-chewing ogre with yellow teeth and a black eye.

"There has been quite a lot of trouble lately about such cases. The police have made arrests and the ladies have failed to convict. I want a series of special reports on this. You're to make up to me up like an ordinary person in the lower middle class, then you're to ride to the office and street cars, not to try to

When Lucille looked on the assignment sheet of the Daily Moon she was surprised to see opposite her name.

"See Chesey?"

Chesey was the head man and seldom doubted himself about reporters at all. He gave his orders to them, when he had

my story to Alice she informed me she had seen her uncle empty that of the gasoline from the tank!"

"He did—"

"I should be compelled to stop near the haunted house."

"Another thing, Miss Allan told me she hadn't gone out last night at all."

"All this is very interesting, I admit, but not at all conclusive. You must have some other reason for suspecting Mr. Allan."

Murray looked uneasily at his sweet-heart.

"Well Professor Dike everything," she ordered.

"Her uncle objected to my marrying her when I first broached the subject, but after she had declared her intention of marrying me, with or without his consent, he yielded."

"Even so. Why should that arouse your suspicions?"

"When she inherits he loses control of the fortune left her by her father."

"Ah! That is interesting. What is the financial standing of Mr. Allan?"

"Very good. At least so I've understood. It's possible, tho, he may have lost a great deal of his money."

"Does he gamble? Dabble in stocks?"

"I'm not sure. But I know he's very fond of animals—especially horses. Perhaps—"

"Do you think he might be connected with the—er—haunted house?"

"I can't say. But it's possible. The man I played poker with were all well dressed, refined, and good losers. They had come on a lark, apparently, just as I had. At least, that's what they told me, and I believed them. But the locked door—and the spectacles."

"I have already solved the question concerning the spectacles," smiled Dike.

"You mean you have solved the problem?"

"Oh, no; not yet. There are still several unknown quantities. But I'll have them shortly. You say Mr. Allan is not at home?"

"I do not know what has become of him, Interposed Miss Allan. "Shortly after Mr. Murray called last night he went out. He's been away all night."

"Has he ever done that before?"

"Oh, yes many times."

"Um! I'm beginning to believe you are right, after all. At first—well, we should see."

"Then you think my uncle is a villain?" faltered Miss Allan.

"It looks very much like it."

"And he's been so nice to me! The only kind word he ever spoke to me was when I told him I intended marrying him."

"There, there, Miss Allan. I may be wrong. I still have several quantities to solve, and others to verify. The matter will be all cleared up when we visit the haunted house."

"You aren't going out there?" gasped Murray.

"Yes."

"But—the spectacles?"

"I'll dispose of them without trouble. There'll be danger, of course; great danger. Overton, take me in front of the house in a couple of hours. And have three revolvers ready. Colt forty-fives will do. We'll have breakfast first; then I shall go out for a time. By the way, Miss Allan, has your uncle ever traveled?"

"Indeed, yes. He went all over the world with my father."

LOREITA PARSONS

JEAN SUMMERS' father was a professor in a small college in the Middle West. Her mother had died some years before Jean reached her teens, as if the struggle were too much, she had lain down in despair.

There was no money available for education when Jean reached college years, so Jean said she would go to New York, take a business course and become a secretary. New York it must be, as every one who went forth to seek their fortunes turned their faces towards New York. It was inevitable.

Jean was thoughtful of looking out for herself. A girl with clear brown eyes, reddish-brown hair and a good figure, always quiet and correctly dressed, and with an air of common sense and energy about her that was very fitting for a business girl. She was reserved without being unfriendly, impersonal without losing her charm. Just the kind of a girl to get along in the world, her friends said.

As a matter of fact Jean was not half so fit to be. She was clever and much too capable as she looked or thought her reasonable; she was a natural student, very clever if you let her alone, but when she came to an emergency she got so cold and nervous.

When she had finished her business course she set out to find a job. She got one without any difficulty on account of her serious appearance and her charming smile. But there she stuck all the years she had been there. She had never gotten a raise.

She felt no resentment toward Life. She thought if the other girls she knew could support themselves on their wages then why shouldn't she? She admitted to herself that she was not doing a better teacher than stenographer, for she was very fond of children. But as it was Jean would not go on. Her father did not look very promising.

If she had had a background, clothes, dances, music, etc., she would have been very charming, but at her desk, she was out of it all.

She really had only one girl friend, no one more than interested in her as a woman of some thirty years, with a sour face and a very dignified air, one who could never attract men. Jean's father and very rarely one day Miss Matthews said:

"Miss Summers, I'm to be married next week as secretary to Mr. Abney."

"Oh! That's lovely!" said Jean, hardly believing her ears.

"Yes, it is lovely to recommend me to Mr. Abney for your place."

Jean knew that Mr. Abney had a reputation of being hard to get along with, and on the first morning after Miss Matthews' departure she went into her new office with her heart fluttering.

"Have a seat," he said. "Mr. C. A. Smith, Dear Sir," and Jean began to think that he had not noticed that she was not Miss Matthew.

She didn't do any too well the first week she knew this, as she was afraid to use her own judgment without his approval. But she managed to get along.

SHE was opening his mail one morning when she came across a strange letter.

"Dear Father: I bet you wouldn't know if you came out here now. I'm worth an such a big boy now. My teachers are all doing great. I wish you would send me a dollar so I could join the basketball team. I am well and hope you well. Your loving son, BOB."

She could picture a lonely little fellow out at school somewhere; wanting to see his father, yet half afraid to say so. She put on top of the mountain and said: "What do you think?"

"That is it," he repeated, "What did you think?"

"Why, I am, I am answering it. Oh! he said, and swung around to his desk.

"Take this please. My Dear Son: I received yours of the tenth—"

Jean gave a gasp and he looked up quickly.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I thought—"

"What is it?" he repeated, "What did you think?"

"Why, I am, I am answering it. Oh! he said, and swung around to his desk.

"Here'll let me go now, sure, sure," he said. "Oh! why did I say that?"

He turned around quickly to her and held out a picture. It was a photograph of a boy, with a erect, serious face, and she smiled as she looked at it.

"That's my son," he said. "My wife has been dead seven years and he is away at school."

She looked at him quietly and was astonished to find instead of the gruff-

looking middle-aged man that she had always been rather in awe of, a fine-looking, clean-shaven man, not more than 40, rather human-looking, too, entirely different from her first conception of him.

And he in turn was looking at her for the first time to really see what she was. A nice, pretty girl with serious brown eyes—and as she smiled—

"A charming smile," he said to himself.

"I'll get you to answer it," he said. "You will know what to say to him. Send him the money, of course."

From then on Jean wrote to the little fellow regularly, and on a holiday when Bob came to the city, she took him to a matinee. She came to love him, he was such a dear little fellow.

On his next Christmas holiday Jean was to meet him at the station, take him to lunch, to a matinee and deliver him at the office to go home with his father that evening.

She was standing talking to Mr. Abney when a fat, jovial little man rushed into the office, a particular friend of Mr. Abney's.

"Hello! Busy?" he said. "I want to take you to lunch with me."

"I'm not particularly busy; go with you in a few minutes," Mr. Abney replied.

"Give the little fellow anything he wants for lunch, buy him toys, keep him busy," he said, "and I'll send him a roll of bills."

"What he needs some clothes, too, you know, maybe some shoes, a pair or two. Get anything you think he needs, but no more than that."

"All right," she replied. "I have a list of what he needs, and I'll take the two books to take back to you."

And Jean started out with a smile and a big roll of bills. She stopped just outside the door to see if she remembered everything. At the same instant Mr. Abney's friend said in a loud tone:

"My heavens, I thought she was your secretary, not your maid. Now which is she really?"

"Why?" replied Mr. Abney, "she is not much of a secretary, but—"

Jean never waited for the sentence to be finished. She stepped out from the door and into the street. She never knew how she got thru the afternoon with Bob, but when it was all over she went to her boarding-house and there she sold across the bed and was glad she had not done since her last doll was broken years and years ago. Her whole world seemed tumbling about her.

"She could've done it," she thought. "She would've, of course, she couldn't stop on knowing that she wasn't filling her shoes. She was a very conscientious. Why did other girls leave?" she wondered. "What would they give?" She couldn't tell Mr. Abney that she didn't want to stay on as a secretary, but she would like to be married.

"Miss Matthews left to be married, but she couldn't be married if she wasn't even engaged. That was it, she could say she was coming to be married and get her job somewhere else."

THE next morning Mr. Abney met her with his usual jovial greeting, saying: "Hello, my dear, how did you do? Had a nice time with you yesterday and is planning for you to take him to another matinee on his next holiday in town."

"I am sorry, Mr. Abney, but I am leaving here," she said.

"You can get some one to take my place."

It was a tone he had never heard from her and he looked at her in amazement.

"Why, what's the matter, Miss Summers? You look very satisfactory. Why did you think you liked the place?"

"I am going to be married," she said.

"Oh! Well, congratulations," he replied. "I'm sure I hope you will be happy." And he began to doze.

He was very disagreeable all day, not in words especially, but his tone and looks. He was looking at her and she had to fight back the tears all day.

"What is wrong with me?" she thought. "I have had a very nice holiday. I want to spend a sleepless night and want to work the next morning so listless and I was looking that Mr. Abney was dis-

"I'd like to meet your niece to tell him what a lucky fellow he is. Can't you arrange it, Miss Summers?"

"I'm sorry, he isn't in the city," said Jean, becoming confused.

"You—you look worried, Jean—Miss Summers. Are you sure you are not making a mistake?"

"Why? Mr. Abney?" she said coldly.

"Fardon me, but—"

He turned around quickly to her and said: "I'm sure you are not making a mistake."

"Why? Mr. Abney?" she said coldly.

"Fardon me, but—"

He must now get some one to fill her place. But could any one ever fill her place with him? He had no denial of the fact to himself. He was indignant at the thought of any one but Miss Summers doing the things he wanted done for him and his boy. He decided.

He looked over all the girls in the office, but did not see one he would suit him. He had advertisements inserted in different papers, but to no avail.



He Turned Around Quickly to Her and Said: "I'm Sure You Are Not Making a Mistake."

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you care to; by all means suit yourself. I can find a secretary without your help, thank you, Miss Summers."

"He would show her that he could get a secretary and he'd not bother her again," he told himself. And he started to answering some advertisements in "Situations Wanted."

The next morning she came hurrying into the office late. She had never been late before and was just apologizing when he said:

"Take some letters"—so short and cross that she jumped and dropped a package on the floor. The rubber which was holding the package of letters together broke as it fell and the letters scattered over the rug. Half grudgingly he stooped to pick them up, while she had gotten quickly to her knees and was gathering them hastily together, when he stopped, looking at one that had fallen face up.

"This is my letter: I wrote it yesterday," he said as he recognized his handwriting. "Why the devil are you advertising for a position for? I wrote that letter in answer to a Want Ad in yesterday's paper."

"Well!"—she stopped, blushing.

"Oh, you just wanted to get away from here? You are you going to continue working after you are married and didn't want me to know it. Why, I'll let you keep the place. You must keep it if you have to work."

"No, Mr. Abney, I am not going to be married. I had to get away, and your other secretary left to be married and I thought that would be a good excuse."

"But why, why in the world do you want to get away? Aren't you satisfied?"

"Well, the other day I couldn't help hearing you when your friend asked if I was a nurse-maid; you said I wasn't a good secretary."

"Yes, and if you had just waited to hear the rest"—and Mr. Abney gathered her in his arms—"you would have heard me say 'but she's certainly made a wonderful wife!'"

THE END.

RALPH CUMMINS

FEVER horse had all the earmarks of an outlaw killer it was the hideous nightmare that some joking wag had named Angel Face. There was something about the rakish set of his little ears, and the diagonal placing of his red-rimmed eyes, and the sinister threat of his tossing head that always made me want to climb a tree. Besides, I knew a little of his history. Tex Gibson, foreman of the M A Ranch, had been told me about horses. But according to Tex the black and rearing wilder-herd broken bones and hospital bills all attempts to make him into a respectable saddle animal had failed. He was always reluctant about discussing the outlaw, but I could understand that; it was plain to me that Gibson had only been through a few disastrous rounds with Angel Face. But I didn't need to have anybody tell me about that horse. One



look at those flattened ears, and sinister red-rimmed eyes, and I was ready to swear that Angel Face was untamable, unridable—a vicious, tramp-like animal.

And yet—the city-dwelling, faddist owner of this M A Ranch kept him, and Kerby Carrigan, my star, had been so

A Newspaper Reporter Solves a Strange Crime.

Shumway Stalks a Monster

By Edwin Baird

THORNTON PIERCE, city editor of The Evening Herald, opened the envelope of "dope," which a copy boy had brought from the "morning" place through the contents, then directed his gaze to the members of his staff, seated at their desks in the local room. His spectacles eyes finally rested on Waldron Shumway, generally recognized as The Herald's star reporter.

"Shumway!" he called.

Shumway rose from his typewriter and walked briskly to the city desk.

"What you writing, Shumway?"

"Cheap little story of a west side stink-up. Worth eighty words."

"Turn it over to Kennedy. I've an assignment for you." Pierce picked up the newspaper clippings which he had removed from the manila envelope.

"Been reading the Springdale stories about the sheep-killing duck?"

"I've read them all," said Shumway.

"Great stuff!"

"I want you to take the next train for Springdale. There's one leaving in thirty minutes on the C. & I. That'll land you there before 5 o'clock; and you can file a postscript story on our early run tomorrow. Here's all the dope."

Shumway pocketed the envelope of clippings and looked at his watch.

"Any farther orders, Pierce?"

"No. The story may be a blomer—it reads like a hang-over from the silly season—but at least it will give you an agreeable outing."

Shumway, starting forth to cover the assignment, was persuaded he was entering upon a lark. He couldn't take the Springdale story seriously. It seemed a stupendous joke.

As his train moved from Chicago, he refreshed his memory with the newspaper clippings, beginning with the first one, published six days ago in a morning paper:

SPRINGDALE, Sept. 8.—Judson Ranney, a farmer living two miles west of here, reported today that one of his sheep was killed last night by a strange animal with webbed feet.

Ranney says he found the sheep dead, with its throat slashed open,

and webbed footprints leading thru the pasture to Duck Lake. The footprints, according to Ranney, measure thirty-five inches in diameter, indicating that the animal or bird, or whatever it is, must be of tremendous size.

Ranney declares he will watch for the unknown creature tonight with a loaded shotgun.

Shumway, smiling indulgently, returned the clippings to the envelope and read the next, which had been published two days afterward in the Evening Herald:

SPRINGDALE, Sept. 10 (Special).—Farmers of Duck County are alarmed by the depredations of an unknown monster with feet webbed like a duck's, which has killed two sheep owned by Judson Ranney, a farmer near Duck Lake.

Ranney, who has been watching for the thing with a shotgun, asserts he saw it last night skulking thru the trees at the edge of the lake, and emptied both barrels of his gun at it, but missed. He describes the monster as being fully ten feet tall, with an enormous beak, hooked like an eagle's, huge wings and possessing frightful talons capable of killing a man.

Ranney believes the monster is part fox and part man, walking upright on its webbed feet, with its talons extended for prey. He says that when he fired at it the monster plunged into the lake and disappeared.

A number of Springdale people visited Ranney's farm today and saw the monster's footprints. These seem

to substantiate Ranney's assertion that the thing is of mammoth proportions.

Everybody is mystified, and nobody can give a satisfactory explanation of what the hideous thing is, or where it came from.

The farmers living near Duck Lake are organizing a hunting party, and intend searching the lake region for the monster's hiding-place. They believe it hides in or near the lake during the day, emerging from its concealment only under cover of darkness.

It first made its appearance several nights ago, when it killed one of Ranney's sheep by slitting its throat.

On the following night, despite Ran-

ney's vigilance, another sheep was slain in the same manner. In neither case did the thing attempt to devour the sheep, but apparently took content to suck the animal's blood.

Examination of the dead bodies re-

vealed that their throats were ripped apart in a jagged fashion, as if by huge claws.

The next three clippings, stamped "Sept. 16," were from the other evening papers of that date, and were substantially the same as the Herald story. He found six more stories, clipped from the morning and evening papers of Sept. 15, stating that the Duck County farmers had been unsuccess in their hunt for the "web-footed monster," but were pursuing the search with unabated zeal.

A dozen or so clippings of subsequent dates conveyed nothing further of importance—merely the information that the farmers were still seeking the "monster," which hadn't been seen since the night of September 9. Shumway, turning now to the latest tidings from Duck County, carefully read the following story in today's Herald:

SPRINGDALE, Sept. 15.—(Special).—The mysterious web-toed monster which has terrorized the farmers of this district has again appeared, after lurking in its lair for five nights, and today the country around Springdale is buzzing with terrific excitement.

Last night the unknown creature made a raid on the farm of Augustus



J. Klappenbach, slashed the throat of one of his prize cows, drained her blood, and escaped.

Mr. Klappenbach found the body of his cow in the pasture this morning, and nearby were the webbed footprints leading to and from Duck Lake. Evidently the gigantic thing had come from the lake, killed the cow with a ripping slash of its mighty talons, and then, after gorging itself with her blood, waddled back to the water.

All trace of it was lost at the water's edge, and the location of its hiding-place remains as obscure as ever.

The Duck County farmers had relaxed their watchfulness, believing the monster had left this region, and last night it caught them napping. With nobody on guard, it roamed at will, seeking its prey.

Mr. Klappenbach was one of the most zealous members of the searching party, recently organized, and has been hunting for the monster every day and watching for it each night; but last night, for the first time, he decided to relax and catch up on his sleep.

He slept soundly, he says, and knew nothing of the monster's visit until this morning, when, going to his cow pasture, he found the dead cow and the webbed footprints of the thing that had killed her.

The happening has revived the farmers' vigilance, and today they are seeking Ranney in this district, and with redoubled determination to trap it. Their hunting party, reorganized, has been augmented by a number of townspeople, armed with shotguns, revolvers, and it seems reasonably certain that before the week ends the monster will be caught.

Mr. Klappenbach is one of the wealthiest farmers in this district, and specializes in blooded stock. The cow killed last night was a blue-ribbon Jersey, and had won prizes at the Chicago stock shows. It was valued at more than \$1,500.

Newspaper experience had taught Shumway the folly of preconceiving an assignment, but in this instance he could not resist the lure of a wild goose chase. All this mystery about a "web-footed monster" was, he believed, largely the invention of the Springdale corre-

"I Cooked Both Barrels of My Gun and Waited for It to Get Within Range."

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spontaneously. It seemed too fantastic, too preposterous, for serious consideration.

SHUMWAY discerned no immediate cause for revising his opinion when he heard of the Springfield depot about five o'clock that afternoon. The usual crowd of commuters were lounging about the station platform, and he approached one of these groups and inquired about the way to "Jud Ranney's farm."

"You come from Chicago, stranger?" asked one of the men, after giving the direction.

"Yes, I've come to have a look at your ferocious water fowl." Shumway traversed him. "What do you think of this night-crowling bird?" He made a gesture of tobacco juice into the man's spat a stream, and answered emphatically:

"I don't think it's 'nuthin' whatever to do with that critter. There are wants to call him first or last. I don't care so much excitement." "Has anybody besides Mr. Ranney actually seen the critter?"

"Nobody else has seen yet," said a second member of the group. "It's a second member hereabouts has seen his footprints. I seen 'em myself and believe 'savin' this thing is no 'nuthin' if it's not more."

"What lake Jud's word any day," remarked the first spokesman. "I believe all he says about that demon, especially about what happened last night at MacKlappenbach's farm. Any web-footed bird can kill a man."

The man paused abruptly, and stood staring at the occupants of a four-wheeled car which had stopped at the railroad crossing by a passing freight train. The other men followed him and stared at the two persons in the automobile, a high-powered, expensive machine of the line.

Shumway, following their gaze, beheld a young man and woman seated at the front seat of the car beside a broad-shouldered man of forty years. The woman, dressed in green and white sumptuous things, a sharp contrast to her companion, wore a heavy "gamblers' check" and a Spanish cloth hat with a red and gold pattern.

"That's a red and gold striped silk," "Do you like 'em?" "Do you like 'em?" "Do you like 'em?" "Do you like 'em?" "Do you like 'em?"

"Here! And the young lady with him Miss Louise Brown, a client of MacDonald's General Store."

As Shumway started promptly toward the automobile, he heard a shrill whistle remark:

"She's got a lotta beaux, that girl—she runs round town with a married man! It's a wonder Harold Tyson don't stop it!"

Approaching the shinning motor, which faced the railroad crossing at the end of the platform, Shumway observed that Klappenbach's right arm rested on the back of the upholstered seat, his gay hat on the back of his head, and his right hand against the girl's far shoulder, and in a way he was leaning close to her, talking earnestly in a low voice.

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nesting in the valley below, its limpid water fringed with greenwood.

"Wait for a moment, I'd like to talk to Mullikohn, and walked to the rear of the ramshackle house.

"A knock at the kitchen door summoned a bedraggled, tired-looking, and hair-shirted, white-haired man to the door. He was a man of 12 or 13.

"You've got 'em 't home," she replied to his question; and the little girl patted 'Daddy's' knee for the big bird around which she held up.

"You'll probably find 'em down around the lake," he said. "He is a crowd of men, huntin' for this here monstrous thing that's got me interested."

"No, but you've got 'em." They were a crowd of a wet night, and you can see 'em right now in the sheep pasture. They're all here, all packed at 'em."

"You know all the way from Chicago," smiled Shumway, "to look at them."

"What business you in, Mister?" "I'm a newspaper reporter.

"Oh, yes. Well, if you really wanta see them footmarks, I guess I can show 'em to you."

She turned back into the kitchen, hung on to a yellow dog in her hand, took a sunbonnet from a peg on the wall, and followed by the tow-headed girl. She told him now that the footmarks were in "The Field," both near and far.

As they emerged from the thicket of gnarled apple trees, which shaded the rear yard, Shumway observed that the scene presented a vivid contrast. The handsome stucco facade and wide verandas, the modern stables and gleaming alloy, the white granite driveway, the well-shod horses in the hillside to the valley road—these be-told of the comfort and luxury of the farm.

"Who was that farmer?" he asked, pointing to the man who was in the field with a "Big Gus Klappenbach's place," she said. "It's the finest farm in this country."

"I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter."

"What particular reason had he for wanting to buy your husband's farm?" "Well, it's a fine place. It's a fine place. It's a fine place. It's a fine place."

"He was a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter."

"What you think about it?" asked Mr. Ranney. "It's hardly novel. I never before saw anything like it."

"I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter."

By Elizabeth Gray, who pointing toward the lake, called out joyously:

"There comes daddy!" She jumped excitedly up and down "yoo-ooing" and "yoo-ooing."

"Turning, Shumway saw a group of men, some armed with shotguns and rifles, emerging from the trees at the water's edge. A dripping Scotty dog ran to the water, and the ground, raced ahead of them up the hill, and they followed him back and said a brilliant bark.

The little girl ran toward them, followed by her mother. They were interceding the party on the hillside. Shumway looked up and saw a young man whom Mr. Ranney pointed out as her husband.

"I understand, Mr. Ranney, that you are the one who is interested in this creature, and I wish you'd tell me exactly what it is."

"It was a moonlit night when I saw it," said Ranney, slowly fanning his blanket. "It was a moonlit night when I saw it, a moonlit night when I saw it."

"I understand, Mr. Ranney, that you are the one who is interested in this creature, and I wish you'd tell me exactly what it is."

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point as the diver scooped down the dirt

"Before leaving Chicago," replied Shumway, "I saw a man in a striped footed 'monster' was a gigantic beast. I have since discovered no reason for being afraid of it."

"Maybe you will before you've been here long," said the man. "If I do I shall be immeasurably delighted."

"Showing a small pause, Benson remarked in a pained voice: "I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm a newspaper reporter."

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was killed last night. I wonder if I could see it tomorrow?"

Again the displeased expression flitted across Klappenbach's face, but his voice seemed amicable enough when he answered:

"I'm afraid that's impossible. You see, I sent her body to the tanner's. It's the best way to get rid of it. You know that. I'm afraid I understand you prized her highly!"

"Was one of my best berries. All I ask now," said Klappenbach grimly, "is that he be buried with her. It's a chance as the thing that killed her. I'm afraid I understand you prized her highly!"

"Are you all ready, men? We had better get started."

The farmers shouldered their firearms and spread out toward the lake, Shumway fell in beside them.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Ranney, I'll go along with you."

"Sure! Might as well to have you. But you ain't got no gun."

"Oh, yes, I have. Shumway uncovered his hip pocket and displayed the butt end of a .45-caliber army revolver, which he had just bought in Springdale. "This will take care of me, I think."

Klappenbach, chatting pleasantly, accompanied them as far as the sea pasture, and there left them, with a cordial "good night," to cut across fields to his farm.

The two men walked on in silence, each deeply engaged by his thoughts. The sound of footsteps padded softly behind them in the darkness, caused Ranney to halt and wheel sharply around.

"Oosh darn that dog!" he exclaimed, as a great furred animal snarled and crouched at his feet. "I told 'im to stay home and watch the house. Wait here until Mr. Shumway gets to lake."

"Backing the dog by the collar, he dragged him back up the hill and sternly ordered him to return to the house and stay there. The animal obeyed withal reluctantly.

"Tain't safe," he said, rejoining Shumway to leave the wife and kid alone in the house, without no protection. Too many tremors about. That's the best watchdog you ever see, when he tends to business—and I guess he will now. They're on the job can't nobody harm the wife and kid 'cept over his dead body."

And he went on to describe, with relish, an episode of last winter in which two bankhandlers, waiting offshore, and Mrs. Ranney were attacked by the faithful dog, and considerably injured.

Of this narrative, however, Shumway heard little, if anything. His thoughts were elsewhere. Suddenly he broke in on Ranney's easy-going talk with a totally unexpected question:

"Do you happen to be acquainted with the sheriff of this county?"

Ranney, somewhat disconcerted by this singular interruption, gazed in blank surprise before slowly answering:

"Why, sure—why, Quince, live on

Elm street in Springdale. Sure, I know 'im."

"What sort of man is he?"

"Mighty likely feller."

"Miserable."

"Is Mr. Quinn a strong man?"

"Stronger than I am."

Ranney's unaccustomed brevity denoted he was preparing to ask the reason for this derogatory talk, but he was vouchsafed no such opportunity. His eyes were so far from him, stimulated when reaching the edge of the lake, Shumway abruptly asked:

"What 'bout a cane?"

"They's one tied down there," said Ranney, "in a matter of fact, I'm a-quay. 'But I hope you ain't thinkin' of no boat trip tonight."

"I'm a-quay, in a matter of fact, I'm a want to see that dead pig you found today."

"That's when across the lake," objected Ranney. "Take us three hours to get there and back. And we gotta stay here, like Gus said. No tollin' what might happen if we leave."

"I'll take care of that." Shumway placed his hands beside his mouth, and, pumping Klappenbach's name, moved briskly along the sandy beach toward the adjoining farm.

Klappenbach, uttering an answering shout and met him half way, and when Shumway explained he was desirous of visiting the clump of alders, pronounced the "monsters" lair, the broad-shouldered "gentleman farmer" readily agreed to patrol both beaches in their absence.

With palpable misgiving, Ranney set in the prow of the canoe, while Shumway took the paddling seat, and paddled the craft in the direction indicated.

"This is our last back," and we gotta leave. "Can't see no sense in it 'all."

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sembled nothing so much as a frightful bird of prey, exaggerated beyond belief. Altho he moved in an awkward fashion, somewhat like the waddle of a duck, Shumway saw it probably would cut the woodlot before he could get a good shot. He was, therefore, afforded the chance of hitting it, even at this distance. He aimed, and fired, and lo! "There goes the varmint!" and blazed away at it with both barrels of his shotgun.

Taking aim as best he could, Shumway emptied the revolver as the monstrous thing as it fed in its ungainly manner and vanished among the trees. The first shot, however, he heard Mrs. Ranney, running toward them, scream something of which he caught only the word "Lil—"

"When she looked back over her shoulder, he saw both of them hastening toward the house.

Entering the woodlot, he was forced to proceed cautiously, groping his way, because, except for a stray patch of moonlight filtering thru the treetops, the darkness here was impenetrable. He stumbled on thru the underbrush the revolver in his hand, and the trigger, ever, pausing every few feet to listen intently.

But he heard no sound, saw no living thing, and presently he emerged from the thicket into a lovely meadow, bright with moonlight. He swiftly swept his gaze across the meadow, and saw nothing save the clear moving in a gentle breeze, and looked back at a weedy ditch. A crowd of perplexity crossed his brow.

"What do I mind this matter," debating with himself whether to search the clover field or return to the wood, the stillness of the night was harshly broken by two thunderous reports in the direction of Klappenbach's acre; and in another moment he was running that way."

Skirting the woodlot, he cut across a cornfield back of the barn and thus came to an elevation that commanded a broad view of Klappenbach's acres; and he now beheld, hurrying toward him along a creosote, the broad-shouldered figure of Klappenbach himself.

KLAPPENBACH, breathing hard, was evidently much perturbed.

"Did you see 'it?" he panted, as he came face to face with Shumway. "Horrible-looking thing! Big! Going at a two-story clip. I fired twice."

"Which way was it going?" Shumway interrupted.

"Right past here. Seemed to be coming from Jud's woodlot. Heading for the lake when I shot at it."

"I shot at it, too," said Shumway, again looking at the lake. "The varmint was missed, apparently."

"Yes, I heard you two firing. I was at the far end of my beach, and my man, Yonder, had gone to the stables for a look. I heard you hear your shot, I came running this way. But we're wasting time, standing here. Let's hustle back to the lake. We may get the thing yet." Excitedly reloading his gun, Klappenbach started briskly off.

"Coming," he called.

Shumway, nodding, and swang on his heel toward the house. "I'm afraid something has happened to Ranney's daughter. If he may need me."

Quickening his steps to a run, he was rushing thru the small apple orchard at the rear of the house when his foot struck a heavy object, unseen in the darkness, and he tripped and fell headlong. Picking himself up, he struck a mud puddle, and the object was Ranney's dog, lying dead in a pool of blood.

Another lighted match disclosed that the animal had bled to death from a

(Continued on Page 26.)

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Once, the Conjure Woman

By Peggy Poe

JOHN BENNETT was likable if he hadn't been for the mantle of doom that enshrouded him as death gripped him clinging to a corpse. His eyes were kind and his brown hair hung back from a good face; had the face not been creased and lined. He was tall, but ghostly thin, with long fingers that were nothing but claws. He was just in the beginning of his high noon, but his sun was setting and he knew it.

He entered the house he had bought and faced his wife. There was no use postponing the telling. She would be glad. It would not be the beating of hearts but of mere man-made ties. She did not raise her eyes when he came in—she was busy with her fat face and rouze-pot. Lida was acting in a local stock company.

"Lida, I am going—there is no use trying to fight this out any longer. I am going to leave you." John dropped into a chair by the table. He had not moved his overcoat.

"I will get a divorce and maintenance." She laughed a little as she looked at the sick man. "That is, if there is any." She went on with the crimson stuff.

"It won't be needful, Lida; I saw the lung specialist today. There is no hope, save months at the longest, and I can't work much more. I received notice today that I am a menace to the crew at the ship. You are as free as the air you breathe. I give you the house—it signifies all that I have after fifteen years of struggle. You have your art. I wish I had more to give you." His white hands tightened over the cloth of the table.

"It's a Godsend that I have my art. Fifteen years ago when I married you after that mad night of the parade, I had all the shillor from Spain bringing me castles, and now look at you—well, at least I won't be bothered with you any more, you may get well." She deepened the color on her lips now and it seemed to her that it was blood she saw there. "Well, if that is all good-by. I must have to hurry." She pushed her bedroom to finish her make-up, humming as she worked, with visions of the city and her absolute freedom. Her hands were a nuisance even if she was united to them, and she knew that Lida had had three—she was sick of them.

John listened to the humming a minute and called her, "Just for old times sake, Lida, don't you want me to bid you good-by?" Certainly beneath her placid form there was a tiny spark of consideration.

"You are too thin, you make me green and sick. I must not be molested with you. It may be very important part—I do not like to postpone. Just get up and go. If you get well I'll get the divorce; if you die—well, too sorry."

Five minutes later John was sitting on a bench in the little park which lay like a snapper with a fanciful rim among the residences. So this was the rest. The bitter February wind lashed John more mercifully than his thoughts. Like an echo came the thoughts of his youth, not so many years past, but like a goose. John sat in silence a few minutes. Oh, for a sip of the honey, a look into that paradise, then the rest would be easier. Like a wounded animal seeking his lair, John Bennett went to the train back to the place where security and love had been his thought. There to rest for a minute and then home. He had had nothing to lose.

IT TOOK practically his last cent to buy the ticket, but never had the heart of John Bennett been as high as it did as he swung from the snow slash of Kansas City streets and found a seat in the train south bound. Weak as he was the plash stiffness of the cushions was a career. He went only to awaken his wandering eye at the passing stations. South, ever south, the train bore him on. There would be there, after these sixteen years? Would she even be living? Her red lips and gray eyes, a bit of color bled about the pallor of John's face as he remembered those lips and the way of their first kiss as she stood framed in a mass of snowy dogwood bushes.

When the porter with his wide mouth, bellowed the station, John Bennett was surprised for a moment. He had come for her, the faxen haired girl. He saw nothing but the little station at Montgomery, Ia., and a few boards about the home port. With three months to go and nothing to do but wait for the seeking a vision, a vision of sixteen years past. A vision which must have been with the passing of the years and all loveless fates.

John turned about to face the situation. He found none. The merchant had secured the mail sack and gone back to his bacon and gristle. The depot agent

had locked the door and returned to his garden. Beyond the little northern village gleamed the mighty body of Caddo Lake. Entered with its border of cypress and studded with willow wet islands. There came but one thought to John now. The lake would make a quiet resting place. As he came to the end of the station platform, his thoughts were diverted by the moving of a huge dusty white car. Its wearer had been doing beneath the kindly canopy of the South-ern sun. He looked up and saw John. He stretched his arms, yawned and moved over.

"Howdy, stranger! Looking for some one?"

"No, not in particular. Wasn't feeling very well as I came down to rest a while." As if putting himself to the action, John sat down beside the white hat and the man. It was time to talk when one's limbs found it a task to carry a useless body to its rest.

"Reckon I must be coming down with the ague, been chillin' all day. Sun feels mighty good. Know any one about here?"

"No, I don't believe I do. Have you lived here long?"

"All my life, which is nigh to forty

part of her. She can make spells, Sh'. The native was pointing out nothing in particular on the lake.

The woman was coming past again. She bore a keg of iron on her back and a bale of fishing line under her arm. Even with the weight of the keg she walked straight and hard. Again her eyes sought John Bennett and turned away with a twitching of the mouth. Lida memories that come when a vault is suddenly opened. John looked at her. Her eyes were green, her face like yellow marble. Her hair, huge mass of it, was like grass that has long lain in the winter's wind. Her garments, faded and ill-fitting, were strained to hold their shape against the fullness of her body. The skirt trailed in a waddle behind her. Her feet were bare. A more unlovely creature had never passed John Bennett's path. Yet he felt as if the woman walked behind a mask. A million masks, choking back the beauty of a wonderful soul.

She was out of hearing now. Bennett saw her going down to the lake where a skiff was dragged high upon the sand. "What makes you think she is a Conjure Woman?"

"It's a long story, she ain't always that kind away. Once she was the prettiest woman in this neck of the woods. Hair like ripe wheat, eyes kind o' like

Bennet was watching the woman with the boat, and he sighed an answer.

"Strange, how men never know what they want."

"Well, he didn't come back no more. Guess he felt like I did the time I got sick on honey. Folks couldn't keep me off it, till I got enough, then I sure didn't want to hear even a bee hum. This woman wants and wants. Babby comes, pretty little thing, looks like him, black eyes and hair. Tood what's what her pa called her, the Victoria, was her name. Gets kind of better. But she tells my girl which I was Victoria, but he would come back to her, said 'chickens always come home to roost.'"

"That's natural, men are little wiser than birds or beasts."

"Well, that one didn't come home to roost; spect he fell into some one's dinner pot long before this. When he don't show up, Tood grows hard; she won't be friendly, the fellows about here were willing to forgive the part and take her. Let me show you love ain't bound by laws. Then the baby dies. I found her cutting a board into a nice white grave marker, and she says at how she is saving part of it for her own grave. The baby was buried on the island where she lives. Then her folks go, leaving her alone. She got harder to look at. Then folks found out to be wither with. Pap flicker could not do the conjure thing. Pap flicker was laughing at her one day. She found him and his boat sprung a leak. Pap comes mighty near to drowning. That's the only time she conjured folks. Lawdy, man, if she passes your fishing lines, and



"Mine . . . Mine . . . at Last!" She Tucked Him About With the Ends of the Coat, Took Her Place at the Gurney and Sent the Laid-Up Craft, a Silver Speck in Its Wake, With Birdlike Swiftness.

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"The man slouched again beneath the sun. He saw safety in getting the other to talk. He did not want to be questioned, which was possible when the native got his mind again.

"But the words in John Bennett's mouth came along the track. She passed them, having only hesitated a second to acknowledge the neighborly bow that the native gave her. Her eyes met John's, questioned for an instant, and hardened as eyes are wont to do when they meet a stranger. The native was silent until the woman had passed and had banded herself in a tangle of freight at the far end of the platform. John Bennett brought two cigars from his pocket and gave one to the native, who became suddenly agile for one chilling. He did not light up, but rather fondled the delicious thing with his tongue. John smoked and then motioned to the woman.

"Towardful woman, that."

"You said it, Stranger. She can show any of the men folks in these parts what muscle is. Duh she's no good, to be both-ering about; she is a conjure woman. Folks around here are scared to death

the sunshine in town. Guess I ought to have known, I was courting her night and day and prying between times. She was a lot, a strip of a fellow; his paw owned a lot of saw mills about here. He saw her, and she saw him. You know what that means, fire meeting powder. His folks tried to hold on to him for a stack of that mean money and the family. Her'n tried to save her for her own happiness. But it wasn't no use. She said she'd marry the man so much, nor her either. He stayed about here till he began to get a daylight, then he took her with him. Wanted to marry her, but she didn't know anything, but she was full of outdoor life. She was scared of so many buildings, and the cross streets of a town. She ran off and come home. He came after her twice, but she wouldn't go back with him. She told him that he found her here and here, but she wouldn't live. You can guess, that a man who has lived in these high-fluting places is going to get tired of water and willow scenery, even with the woman he loves." The native paused to bite a bite from the cigar. John

takes a notion, you ain't going to catch a fish that day. She's had meefing, man. She wouldn't have her got hold of me for no money. She's waiting to revenge herself on that man; it wouldn't be no use to dump her hate on me. Say! She can shoot the eyebrows off a flea, and twist her neck to a post. Well, Guess I'll be going. About time my old woman had bacon and cornbread ready. Better come along and have something to eat. Well, she ain't no good. The man spat an 'an' what we have. The man spat with the fish lines, as one fascinated by a horrible picture, John Bennett watched her. He did not even note the direction the native had taken.

SO HEH had come all this way to see this old woman, and he had turned back the post and found concealed a skeleton under dragage. There hid under a bone, and had he rose to his feet. The woman he had left and the woman he had gained in marriage; they were both victims; one had sat at his feast and picked him of

had changed him into a living man of himself. He thought the long sought thing. Sheer Tom brought it over. The divorce action from Idaho. He gave him the papers. He took it into her hands.

"What Sheriff Tom was going back to town with you," John called. Then he turned to Victoria, "I'll be back early in the morning, honey. He can take care of her. She'll run after the sheriff who was unfeeling to her." John Bennett told Sheriff Tom of his plans.

"Fine, nice, my friend, do you know I used to be as afraid of women as you were of a snake. Just kind of listened to me today. Just kind of listened to me. He had accidentally kicked a plug out of his head that time and that had nothing to do with it. All the time he was out there being Confide Woman was just a darned good way to get the thing out of you. What she did to you, man, ain't nothing you should be afraid of. Say, ain't you women folks going to be surprised at this here wedding?"

"Victoria heard the shouting long before she could see the boat coming around the bend of the lake. They were about her. Her nightgown and chitchee friends. Women kissing her and crying, and men laughing at women's laughing. Old Pap Ricker tugging up his dandle. The justice of the peace came out in pieces. He said Victoria allowed the women to dress her in the wedding garments John Bennett wanted to read from the Bible. In a half-bought. When Bennett sighed to himself:

"How nice she looked. How super-natural. She looked like a bride. The folds of her pale yellow wedding gown. Topaz were her eyes in the early sun. John Bennett caught her in his arms. As he did so the wind parted the rose tulle of her hair and she lay back with his lathering. He crushed her together.

"Honey, do you forgive?"

"In heaven there is nothing to forgive—this is heaven," she sighed.

Continued From Page 6.

made no effort to engage Kerby in conversation. She just curled herself up on the ground. It seemed almost as if she were in sympathy with Kerby's silent mood. But more than that I saw her mouth move from time to time. As if she were standing with his head poked over the top of the bank and the gravel washed company tied just out of his reach.

My lunch eaten I leaned back against the stone, drew out my pipe and began planning, wondering, fidgeting—then I saw the black and watched. I was sure that Miss Harrison would try to impress Kerby with a horse-love demonstration of the finest animal, but she was not rather bored and when the colt came up what she patting her. Say, ain't you women folks going to be surprised at this here wedding?"

to do. He was going to ride down over that bank! Trembling, I listened wild with hope that I had seen him make. But that was years ago—and this fifty-foot bank was so steep that a man could not find a footing! Would his old luck hold? There it had disappeared and Marianne Harrison was passing me.

She sat almost erect, her body twisted toward the crest of the bank. Her feet were tight behind the great shoulders. She was a part of that magnificent horse—a Huntington brave upon his bareback steed. I caught a glimpse of her face as she looked down at me. Her eyes were mirrored upon a human countenance. I saw it there. I thought she threw me a mocking laugh. I know I heard her voice, crooning encouragement to the plunging horse.

And then an automobile roared beside me and I threw myself at it. Only when the machine was moving sharply down the winding grade toward the creek did I see that it was Miss Harrison's big car and that Tex Gibson was at the wheel.

As we tore down the incline I saw the slipping, sliding, scrambling ride down the gravel bank. My mind leaped back over years to a horse and rider plunging over some rugged cliff. Again I was watching a lanky Wyoming cowboy risking his life in some daredevil feat before my camera. Then I came back to the present with aching gasp. Kerby's horse was down!

I could not see Kerby. I knew that he was somewhere down at the edge of the creek squarely in the path of that stiff-legged demon black, hurtling down over the bowlders. I screamed a warning to the horse and rider, shouting and as if she heard me I saw the graceful leaping of her lithe body. The big horse swung slightly aside.

Society butterfly, indeed! That picture of perfect horsemanship. Only in the rugged school that had trained Kerby Charlson, could she have learned to ride like that.

Then I saw Kerby spring up beside the struggling pony. His mud-colored figure swung into the saddle. The pony strained neck and neck with the giant Angel Face.

Even at that distance I saw the riders race each other's presence. An air of fierce turned toward Kerby. In all analyzing industry I saw the quick resuming wave of Kerby's hand. Then horse and rider were lost to my sight in splashing water, and distant smoke, and whipping flames.

IT SEEMED like we were racing for hours down the grade toward the creek. My heart chilled with fear for the brave youngsters. My brain seethed with the mystery of that wild-riding girl.

(Continued on Page 15.)

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Angel Face

chunky roan with an intelligent face and a jealous intensity in the younger. I could not see anything about the colt to rave over, but Kerby was in his element when Tex greets quiet eloquent over the pedigree of the magnificent horse of the colt.

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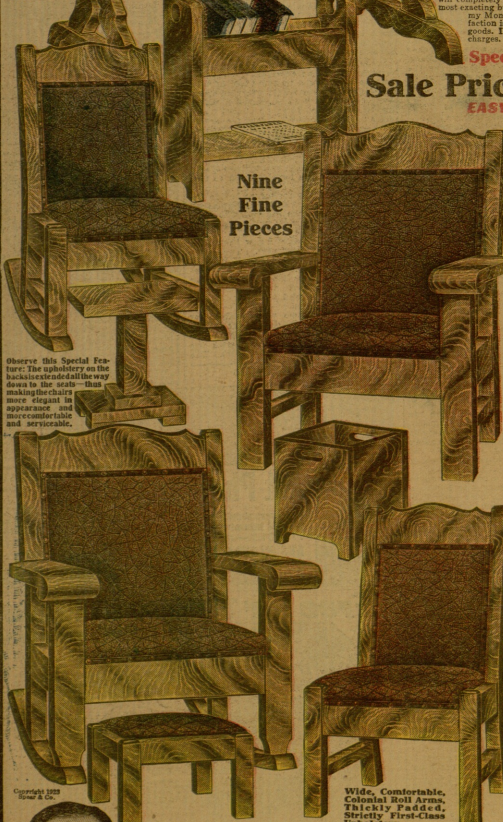
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Thirty years ago in a little store here in Pittsburgh this business made its humble beginning. With small capital but great faith I staked my all on the downright honesty of the average man and woman, the people who deserved credit but found it hard to get. I was a pioneer in the "open account" way of home furnishing. My little business has since grown into a mammoth institution that performs a nation-wide service. To celebrate my thirtieth anniversary I am conducting a Big Sale that will last throughout the year.

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Be sure to write for my 30th Anniversary Book today. It shows you the story of my life and the story of my business. It is a book that you will want to read. It is a book that you will want to keep. It is a book that you will want to give to your friends. It is a book that you will want to read over and over again. It is a book that you will want to read over and over again. It is a book that you will want to read over and over again.



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"I Will Trust You Gladly" Spear & Co. at Pittsburgh

(Continued From Page 12.)

piercing scream of a horse came from the burning barn.

I felt the big roadster strike the bridge, tore away a corner of the rustic railing, and slid into the road leading back to the barn. I heard again that terrific scream. I saw the white face of the car with fright, come tearing out of the smoke and dash away. Kerby and the girl had been in the rear seat.

"Tex jammed the brakes hard down and was wedged to a halt that drove motion out of his car. Then I realized that the whole back of the roadster was alive with white-faced folk, who scrambled to the ground and ran for their smoke.

"There a hole in the smoke clouds I saw the barn—a solid sheet of flame. Stumbling ran forward, my heart hammering with despair. The fire-maddened animals would trample me to bed or kill me, and the girl would surely be caught!

"Then there came from out the smoke in front of me a strange party. In the lead was a boyish figure with arms around the neck of the frightened one. Just behind, the caricature of a human form, led the mare, whose head was muffled in the remains of a silk shirt. Yes, it was Kerby and Miss Harrison. In my mind I could only see the girl, who they burned the rescued animals over to the eager cupholders.

"There was a terrifying picture! Their white clothes and their faces were plastered with mud. They were smothered by burns upon Kerby's back, and Miss Harrison's black hair was curled from the searing heat. Kerby's flannel trousers were straining rage; the girl had lost her shoes and her bodice and skirt clung tightly to what had been white silk stockings. I looked to see them drop fainting from the reaction. But they were laughing into each other's faces with a childish understanding.

"I knew I'd seen you before," mumbled Kerby. "Where was it—Cheyenne?"

"Friedrich!" laughed the girl, her grimy fingers pawing the hair out of her eyes. "I got you for candy."

"Yes." Full recognition came to him. "You're the Texas kid that won the trick title of course—but what—"

He puzzled gaze swung to the purple roadster.

"Oh—I woke up one day with too much money—and the panic fear that I'd been wasting my life. I'd been in for society, but—but I must 'a' been innocent and never did take right."

"You're done!" Her eyes fell upon Tex Gibson, standing upon the car calmly directing the army that was working to save the bay steeds. She giggled.

"Didn't think the old girl had it in her, did you, Tex?"

But Tex only chuckled down at her and shifted his attention back to the stud car that had just come down.

"Gibson lifted and limped to meet Gibson.

"Say," snapped Kerby, and at the tense flash of his tongue, I hurried forward.

"We'll settle now which one of us pays for that barn!"

But I understood and stepped quickly in between them.

"Never mind, Kerby," I said. "It's my affair. Then I faced Sam Tucker. "So you threw a cigarette butt into that sack of the barn's? Well, I guess there isn't any question about who pays for that barn—me!"

Tucker tried to say something, but while he spluttered Miss Harrison came up beside me. I felt her firm fingers press my arm.

"There was no horse lost," she said, and I was sure she winked at me. "Let's forget it!"

I saw understanding wipe the frown from Kerby's features. But my eyes were drawn to the great white face of Angel Face, coming up slowly behind Miss Harrison. In his hesitating admission I thought I read his terrible shame for that panicky desertion, and as I sat his nose up and snarled to indicate that the girls' neck. I was now to understand the secret of horse-love.

Miss Harrison gave a little snoring cry, and threw her arms round the horse's neck. Then a frame of black metal, I saw her laughing, mud-splattered face peering out at us.

"No coming clean," she said to Kerby, but her eyes, full of earnest pleading, were searching my face. "My carriage. You're to like you in pictures in the old days when you were a real rider. I've got to see you since you got that horse to think that success had ruined you—until I heard that you wanted to buy Angel Face. I had to find out—"

It was mischief now in the laughing glance I saw at me. "I had to make sure that you were worthy—to own Angel Face."

Kerby nodded slowly. "Of course you have ridden Angel Face before—many times. You are the mysterious owner of the M. Ranch."

"Yes." Then she drew herself up very straight with the manner of one determined to confound the last bidder.

"Mysterious because I was ashamed of what I thought was a weak horse. My homesick longing for this little reminder of the old days on the Texas ranch. Tex thinks I'm crazy, but actually I was a fool—I'm cured. Watch me jump into a suit overalls and make this old ranch pay its way. M-A—that's my ranch; and Mary Ann—that's my name—said it ever

I get ashamed of either again I hope somebody'll take me out back of the barn and shoot me."

I wanted to laugh, but somehow my throat was dry and I coughed instead. As my gaze drew away to where the men were guarding the bay steeds, I heard Miss Harrison speaking softly to Kerby.

"You said that you—that you'd rather have Angel Face than anything else in the world. Well, I—her voice broke in its great earnestness—"I have found you worthy. You may have him—I give him to you."

I looked then at Kerby. His face was flushed and he moved uneasily. He had wanted to touch the doubtful Angel Face. Then he found close over the girl and said something so low that I could not hear. But I knew what he was saying in his characteristic straightforward frankness.

Kerby carried had found something that he wanted more than he did Angel Face.

A Breezy Tale.

An old sea captain was reproving his daughter for being out late in an automobile with that "lubber," as he called her beau. "But, father, we were in," she exclaimed. "You see, the wind didn't turn in one of the first gusts we had to wait until it sprang again."

The Girl He Should Have Married

By G. F. Overgaard

MRS. SPRAGUE sat on the wide porch turning the leaves of the family album for her niece, Lulu Beel, who was there on a visit. The album had pictures of Grandmother and Grandfather Sprague and Mr. Sprague when he wore side-burns and a side hair-part, and of Mrs. Sprague, herself, in a blouse and a lace bertha.

"And there's Wallie when he was a baby," said Lulu. "Wasn't he funny?"

On a few pages, she found Wallie's latest picture.

"They wanted one to put in the paper when he went into this insurance business," explained Mrs. Sprague, "and he ordered a few extras. Looks like him, doesn't it?"

"Sure does," said Lulu, admiringly. "With that head of hair, I guess he doesn't have to get it waved at the hair-dresser's."

"But he don't like it," said his mother. "He wets it to try to get the curl out."

She turned the page. The face of a young girl smiled out at them. Her

eyebrows were arched according to the mode of the moment, and her hair, too, was marcelled, but her eyes were straight-forward and good-natured. It was a face to be fond of.

"What a girl!" announced Mrs. Sprague. "She's the girl Wallie should have married!"

"Is it too late?" asked Lulu. "Is he in love with some one else?"

"No, and ain't likely to be," Mrs. Sprague turned the page with a sigh. "There won't ever be anybody else for Wallie like Nina. I'm sure of it."

"Is she married already?" Lulu turned back a page to look again at the girl of Wallie like Nina.

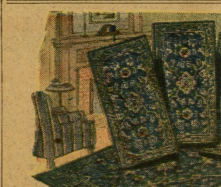
"No. But she's going with the Payne boy. He's home from Boston, where he goes to school. They say she'll marry him."

"What happened to her and Wallie?" Lulu closed the album.

Old pictures were not as interesting as a real romance.

"Everything seemed to be going all

(Continued on Page 24.)



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CHAPTER VII. He knew the island's precise location, water nearly twenty miles northwest of the Pivot.

Consulting... CHAPTER VIII. The Silver Goose came in very slowly, and almost noiselessly, to the shore.

The Silver Goose came in very slowly, and almost noiselessly, to the shore. He passed by David Whitcomb without the least concern.

"That's the stuff!" declared Ranford, picking up a hammer from a tool-box. "There'll be some blood-jammers with deodoloids if I can get to them."

"Give me the binoculars, Wayne; I may want to do some spying," said Captain Ranford.

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Adam slipped to the ground and they pushed the man downward until they emerged on the merge of the inlet.

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You, den you sure let our graft aback! But again he drew his finger awkwardly his great thrust and grimed maliciously.

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watch out for another sun or two." "You boys are Anglo-Saxon, that's plain. We won't wait for Ranford. Come on," urged the Captain restlessly, and they began skirting the inlet southward. Steeping as they went forward, for some distance, they hugged the rank undergrowth that fringed the inlet. Skunks that were strange to them in marking and color slid out of their way, and waterfowl such as they had never before took noisy flight. The warm air hummed drowsily with the wings of insects. Silently they crossed a bend of the lagoon, they stopped literally in their tracks. Not three hundred feet away lay two blue-gray submarines, one at a crude little platform that extended out from the shore, the other beyond at a much larger platform, where boats of greater size might dock. Upon this dock were several cases of liquor, apparently

but recently unloaded, and back of it stood a red warehouse. "As the Captain and his two young aids started to doubt as to what was to come, there came from the south, in the direction of the Mission, sounds of gun-fire, interspersed with saucous yells and shrill screaming. For a few moments they listened and stood listening. Then with one accord they started forward at double-quick.

They had not gone twenty feet when they perceived the doorway of the little storeroom three men, two olive and one black, who without having seen them, appeared in the doorway as if on a wild run along a road that led toward the Mission. Clearly they were spurred by anxiety to be in the fight, or whatever was occurring, at the central point.

With wild haste the Americans ran forward. Their purpose was not to pass at the submarine dock, but as they crossed the little landing platform, at one outer edge of the first submersible lay, a black-haired man in solid black, and with close-cut burnt hair, stepped up out of the open hatch behind the others and glanced sharply around. The moment his eyes fell upon the Americans he whipped a heavy revolver from his belt. One of the olive-skinned men was nearest him, and a small pistol shot out from his shirt under his arm-pit. The big youth swung around as if struck a blow, but he caught himself in time to turn his face long at the outlaw.

The man swung the revolver up again and covered David as he came. Another instant and the Whitpenn end of the boat would have come in so far as David was concerned, but a bullet from the olive-skinned man's hand struck directly thru the neck. The man's olive-brown face flashed a dirty gray as he ran around the inner edge of the dock, then the pistol clattered to the iron deck and he plunged into the water.

David's face, too, was grayish as he picked up the gun and looked at Adam. A strange light was in his eye. He flung the machete into the water and stepped toward Adam, the revolver of his hand. "Looks like we might trust each other, don't it?" he said. "Come on, let's find the rest of 'em."

The Captain was racing along the road in the direction of the Mission, feet-footily the young mountaineers took after him. Ranford followed in the lead. In the making, The one-eyed leader, with his four olive-skinned companions, black partners in crime, were mixing things very redly. Possession of Happy, June and Aunt Gall was the passionately disputed question. The outlaws had gone overboard, but they were debating whether or not to make an end of the men imprisoned in the church and of Jack Jago, lying bound in the hold of the Glad Hand, or to banish them to South Island.

They had not been able to agree on that question. Scarlet Brazil was for it, but so large a crime shook the courage of the others; it might involve them disastrously with the United States Government, ending their operations before each had acquired the nice bunch of money he had envisioned. These doubts held for the imprisonment of the men, for the time being. The only real evidence, the burning of the Glad Hand, after the removal of its supplies and valuables. Scarlet denounced these moderates as equivalent to load-porred snakes and other inactive creatures, but this was discussion of the disposal of the ladies that really started the fight.

The one-eyed leader, in a decision very tersely stated his personal control of the destiny of the American women. He was in the habit of standing upon the porch of the old parish house, where the council was held.

shaking hand was a knife. "Help him come," as he Lord late said. "The fight in angels does arrive ar an buzz" he said, "Year so the cords on Dan Hildney's wrists and ankles. He put the knife in Dan's cramping hands. "Yo' ken loosen is bonds ob yo' brethren, while I pray," he added solemnly, and tottered toward the altar, prostrating himself upon its steps.

Very determining things happened directly for it was Lord late. At these moments that Gideon Clay set heavy foot upon the unimagined steps of the parish house. Within the house were sounds that set his black wildly aflame, the brutal noise of brutal men in combat, and the wild screaming of his imperiled daughter. Adam Backwood and David Whitpenn were following closely. The three were marked with hurt and splashed with red. They went directly into the living-room of the house. It was a wrecked and crimsoned place. All of the leather-skinned brutes were down, save one, and the two giant blacks were laboriously putting this last one to sleep near the south end of the room. Scarlet Brazil was breaking down the door leading into the room where the white women were.

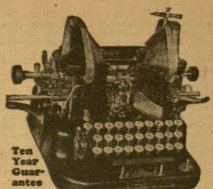
This was the scene that met the eyes of the Americans when they burst into the place. As the last leather-skin fell, the two blacks turned lustfully to aid Scarlet in forcing the barricaded door to the room of the women.

What they saw stopped them. There were white men's faces. Some of these faces that held eyes whose angry light stabbed thru them. They recoiled with the shock, but at once realizing the peril to their design, threw themselves forward, a knife in the clutch of one, a chair swung high in the hands of the other.

David and Adam met them squarely. The black with the machete went down, clattered by a blow from the olive-skinned brute, which Adam was clubbing. David, who had nothing in his hands, plunged headlong against the feet of the oncoming black, who went over him, sprawling half-way across the room.

The nimble mountaineer—was up first, and as the black man started to get to his feet the youth crashed him into unconsciousness with the chair that had been intended for himself.

The two panting feudists turned toward Captain Clay and Scarlet. To their last hour of life they will remember what they saw. Captain Clay was standing



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Mothers Stop

Don't let your baby suffer from colic. Write today to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

around a bend in the channel. He was a man of considerable prominence, with a history that made him famous to every boy. He had a splendid farm on the east side of the creek, and was a good farmer, belonging to a man by the name of Dawson. For years there had been a feud between the two. Both were able men, who, by working together, might have done much for their community, but they never spoke and either fought each other, or, at best, stood neutral. They mentioned the cause of the quarrel as they went on again.

"I shouldn't think they would keep it up," he said, "now that she's dead."

When the two men were young there had been a girl, she had been Dawson's girl, and Higby had stolen her away from him. One knew why she had gone over from the one to the other, but she had. At mention of her Mr. Macon looked thoughtfully at his son. "Cora Briggs was the prettiest girl I ever one, anywhere in these parts," he observed, "and the girl most respectable. I believe I know what nobody else knows. I know why she married Dudley Higby, and lived all her life to regret it."

The boy was rather taken aback. It seemed strange to him that his father should speak as he was about Cora, he knew that it would be in the nature of a confession, and that he must not let the secret slip. He said to himself, "Do you recall my mentioning six deer in a white oak?"

One of them was a magnificent buck. Cora Briggs was a girl of great beauty, and she was the girl who had stolen her from the boy. In one of her mad-cap moods she swore she would marry whichever one of them brought him in. Clifford Dawson took her up, and was with Dawson the day he laid out for the buck and brought him down on the west end of the sandbar. The farm that he owned was his father's then. The buck fell, but before we could get to him he was up again, and had turned back over the bar. Higby, as luck would have it, met him when he was about to get up. He claimed the animal was already morally hurt, and that Higby would have had shot at the buck and shot at the driven him back. The quarrel was now right there. Higby was as proud as Lucifer, and a bad loser. In those days he was considered perhaps the better catch of the two and the girl took him. There could have been no love on either side. Dawson was really cared for. That galled Higby, too, and the quarrel that was started in had long-reaching good effects. Both had become a little overcast, and it had not been well to go far away. A storm can come into being with disconcerting suddenness. The fire, and the girl took him. There could have been no love on either side. Dawson was really cared for. That galled Higby, too, and the quarrel that was started in had long-reaching good effects. Both had become a little overcast, and it had not been well to go far away. A storm can come into being with disconcerting suddenness. The fire, and the girl took him.

From different quarters of the heavens, darting down in vivid streams of fire upon the lake. The three crashed west and incessant. For a moment the wind died. Then the clouds broke and a pale flare of light that seemed fiery to blind them, and the clap of thunder that followed shook the forest. In the midst of the light they saw Higby, the boy, was hovering for the lake.

"Look!" he cried. "Look!"

Another flash, quick upon the first, showed it was the boy was pointing. It was at a building on fire to the eastward, where the lightning had struck. By the way it burst into flame it must be a barn full of hay.

"The cattle!" they heard him call, as he passed them. "The cattle!"

They knew what barn it must be, but at first did not get the words connected with the cattle. All the Higby buildings were made of stone. Down near the creek he had built a large barn in which to store hay that was cut off the swamps. The hay was not the worst, but was worth keeping. It was this barn that had caught. They were really two boys, Little Otter Creek came in from the south, and Lewis Creek came in from the east, forming a sort of angle, with only a few rods between their mouths. Much of this intervening land, extending back upon the creek, was swamp land, but much of it, too, made good pasture, and cattle were allowed to feed there. The grass on the swamps had been cut once, but had grown up again, and was now as dry as tinder, and very soon would get running in it. It might corner the cattle. Higby had never seen them, as he came down to the creek, and knew that they were in danger. The wind, coming in from the south and west, would drive the fire across from one side to the other perhaps just as they were in the angle. Even as the man and boy sensed what was meant by the shout they saw the burning barn go in pieces. The pen-up heat within it fairly blew it asunder, and under the lead of the wind the flying fire brands ignited the grass all about scattering quickly to the high, lush growth of the swamp.

"Come on, boys!" shouted Mr. Macon, "let's go!"

He bent to the oars in a way that fairly lifted the boat from the water, causing it to surge ahead at every stroke, and the boy, to help, caught up a paddle. With the wind and waves behind them the swells curling past, high on the gunwales, they all but flew. It was half a mile to the mouth of the creek, and the dark that they could not see had it for the lightning flashes and the mounting of the fire. By the time they had reached it the flames were racing madly, striv-

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SKIRT & SWEATER BARGAIN

Both Now \$3.49



SEND NO MONEY

Here is one of the biggest bargains in the world. A pair of the finest quality, made of pure wool, and is guaranteed to last for ever. Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

20 SHOT 32 CAL 9'S

SALE

SEND NO MONEY! We have a large stock of 20 shot 32 cal 9's. Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Sell Shirts

Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Gigantic Clearance Sale

12,000 Miles

FREE TUBE WITH EACH TIRE

SEND NO MONEY! We have a large stock of tires. Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

350 SHOT AIR RIFLE

Automatic Repeater, with lever action. Shoots 350 times without reloading. A powerful, accurate air rifle—guaranteed to give satisfaction. Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

FOR BOYS OF WHITE RACE

Every white boy (10 years or over) should snap up this great chance. Answer right now. Don't miss it!

FREE SAMPLE COPY OF WORLD'S GREATEST BOY'S PAPER

We will send free on request latest issue of the famous "Lone Scout" Magazine, 38 pages filled with thrilling stories of adventures, pirates, sea dogs, etc. Pictures in rich color. Too simply great. Nothing else like it. Just send coupon.

JOIN The Great Boy's National Organization LONE SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Incorporated in Washington, D. C. Members learn athletics, woodcraft, have fun, and get a good education. Write today to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

COUPON

Send no money. Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

QUICK SEND COUPON

Write for details to the manufacturer, J. H. Hartman, 1111 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 14 cents a word, including both initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the same and proportionate for subsequent insertions. An ad may appear in both editions of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next. W. D. RYAN, CO., Publisher, 300-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

SALESMEN WANTED

EASY TO SELL GROCERIES, PAINTS, A complete list, roofing, to consumers from...
address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both editions of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

AGENTS WANTED

TAILORING AGENTS GET OUT POWER!
Full proposition. \$15.00 per pair for \$10.00...

AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY SELLING
All the latest Herculite, most perfect...

GENERAL AGENTS, SOMETHING NEW
Wholesale agents. "Repeat" Washing...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

LARGE CORPORATION WANTS A SERVANT
For all kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

PAIN IN JOINTS A DAILY SELL BEAUTIFUL
A complete outfit furnished. Free samples...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

AGENTS—NEW LUMINOUS GLASSWARE
All glass bottles, jars, tumblers, etc...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

FREE STRENGTHY INCOME NO INVESTMENT
Protect yourself. Write! Harp's...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

AGENTS MAKE \$10 DAILY—BIG LINE
A complete outfit furnished. Free samples...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

MARK \$6.00 DAILY TAKING ORDERS
For all kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

BREAR PROFITS ASSURED CAPABLE
Men and women joining immediately...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY ESTABLISH
Your own business. Most attractive...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

100 FAST PROFITS FOR AGENTS. RESERVE
Free for all. Free for all. Free for all...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

100% PROFIT SELLING OUR FELL
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS: BIG PROFITS, NO COMPETITION
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS—FINEST LINE OF SILK HOSIERY
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

FREE FOR A DAY TAKING ORDERS FOR
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

TAILORING DRESSING SPARE TIME
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS, BIG A DAY LATEST IMPROVED
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

100% PROFIT IN SELLING BEAUTIFUL
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

FREE RAINCOAT. GOODEYER MFG. CO.
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS WANTED—(Continued)

AGENTS SELL SHOES DIRECT TO LADIES
At home or at work. Part selling line...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

AGENTS—LADIES GUARANTEED SILK
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

GREATEST SENSATION! SILVER PINE
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS—CANDIDOR—SILKIES
Direct from our factory to wearers...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

BEING HOME THE BACON—SELLING
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MAKE MONEY SILVERING MIRRORS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS—"DRESSING UP" HOUSEWIVES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

UNUSUAL SALE! MAKE \$8.00 DAILY
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

SELL BOOKS, BIBLES & LINE OF HARDWARE
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS—OUR SOAP AND TOILET ART
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS. MAKE \$6 WEEKLY. IMPORTANCE
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS. SELL WOLFRANGE LAUNDRY
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

SELL EXTRACTS AND SOAPS; NO INVESTMENT
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS—SILK DRESSER BUSTERS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS. 100 DAILY REPRESENTING LINE OF
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

WE START OUR OWN BUSINESSES. EAST
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

US. GOVERNMENT SELLERS RAILWAY
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

TOP DAILY BRIND. SILVER MIRRORS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS. MAKE \$100 MONTHLY. EXPENSES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

A IS A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

DETECTIVES NEEDED EVERYWHERE.
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS. MAKE \$100 WEEKLY. EXPENSES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WANTED—DRESSMAKERS. I HAVE N
Dressmaking. 135 week. Sewing expert...
Complete outfit furnished. Free samples...

CARE MONEY AT HOME DURING SPARE
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

WOMEN TO SEW. MATERIAL PREPAID
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

LADIES WANTED ANYWHERE CROCHET
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

9900 YEARLY INCOME PAID THOUSANDS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

1000 WEEKLY INCOME PAID THOUSANDS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

PET STOCK
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MANUSCRIPTS TYPED
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

LAND FOR SALE
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

TEXAS LANDS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

VIRGINIA
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

PATENT ATTORNEYS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

STORIES WANTED
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

UNDERGROUND TREASURES—NOW AND
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

INTEREST TO WOMEN
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

DOGS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

RAZORS AND BLADES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

PERSONAL
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MISSING PERSONS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

PERSONAL—(Continued)
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

PERSONAL—(Continued)

HARVARD MAN AND WOMAN. I HAVE N
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MARY. THOUSANDS CONGENIAL PROJ
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MARY. HUNDREDS WEALTHY. LAR
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

1000 AUSTRIAN KNOX OR FOLSH
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

WORLD LEADING MATRIMONIAL CLUB
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AMERICAN SCANDINAVIAN CORRESPOND
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MARY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

FREE PHOTOGRAPHS. DIRECTOR
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MARY. BUSINESS GIRL. ST. WORTH 18
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOKS OF MOSES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

NOTICE—A LARGE COLLECTION OF PHOT
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

YOUR HOBOCHOP WITH HISTORICAL
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MARK NEW FRIENDS. WRITE BETTY
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

MARY. MANY RICH. PARTICULARS
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

1000 AUSTRIAN KNOX OR FOLSH
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

WOMEN TO SEW. MATERIAL PREPAID
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

AGENTS. MAKE \$100 WEEKLY. EXPENSES
All kinds of work in the city...
Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

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Experience necessary. We also have attractive...

Rupture?— Throw Away Your Truss!

For Many Years We Have Been Telling You That No Truss Will Ever Help You
—We Have Told You the Harm That Trusses Are Doing. We Have Told
—You That the Only Truly Comfortable and Scientific Device for Holding
Rupture is the Brooks Rupture Appliance—and That It Is

Sent on Trial to Prove It

If you have tried most everything else, come to us. Where others fail is where we have our greatest success.

Send attached coupon today and we will send you free our illustrated book on Rupture and its cure, showing our Appliance and giving you prices and names of many people who have tried it and were cured. It is instant relief when all others fail. Remember, we use no salves, no harness, no lies.

We send on trial to prove what we say is true. There is no better guide in life than the experience of others.

Below are a few letters picked, all from our 1921 files, and coming from all sections of the country. They cover the experience of men, women and children.

Some of them may prove of interest to you. We have thousands of similar letters, all of them telling the gratitude and joy felt by the writers over the relief and cures brought by the Brooks Appliance.

Read them and try to imagine your own joy if you, too, had found all your rupture troubles over.

Does Heavy

Construction Work

Haverhill, Mass., 89 Water St.,
July 29, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—It has been nearly a year and a half since I wore any Appliance and I feel I am completely cured. As a carpenter on heavy mill construction and I have never felt any effects from the rupture since. The work alone is enough to give it a thorough test. Whenever I can say a word in praise for your Appliance I will very readily do so, and if you should ever have an opportunity to use this letter for reference I would be pleased to have you.

Eugene L. Hefson.

So Reasonable in Price

Oswego, Ill., Box 53, Van Buren St.,
July 7, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—I am pleased to inform you that your Appliance absolutely cured me and I truthfully recommend it to anyone that is ruptured. Thank you for the wonderful cure that your Appliance gave me and as it will be of such benefit to everybody, I should surely think they would get one. If this will help you along you can use it as you wish.

With Best Wishes,
David T. Matthews.

"I Believe Your Appliance Will Cure Any Rupture"

Launing, Mich., 911 Princeton Ave.,
August 19, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—I bought an Appliance of you about a year ago and as I haven't worn it for the past three months, I consider myself cured. I was so excited to write until I could test it longer and I am so thankful I can ever believe that your Appliance will cure any rupture if they will put it on and wear it. I wish that everyone suffering from rupture could know of this cure.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Carrie B. Morgan.

"Cured in 10 Months"

Toston, Mont., Box 81,
March 3, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—The Appliance which I purchased from you last spring entirely cured me of my rupture after wearing it for 10 months. I can do work now and not be troubled in any way. You may use this letter as reference if it will be of any good to you.

Yours truly,
Elmer E. Ross.

The Above is C. E. Brooks, Inventor of the Appliance. Mr. Brooks Cured Himself of Rupture Over 20 Years Ago, and Patented the Appliance from His Personal Experience. If Ruptured Write Today for the Brooks Appliance.

Marshall, Mich.

"Thought We Would Try Your Appliance First"

Princeton, Minn., R. No. 5,
April 24, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—Our little girl became ruptured about three years ago. The Doctor said an operation would be about the only cure for her, but we thought we'd try your Appliance first. After wearing it about one year she was cured. She isn't worn it now for over a year and hasn't perfectly cured. Use my name in any manner for the benefit of those who are suffering. With best wishes,
Wm. Veddars.

Experience of a Molder

Dayton, Ohio, 323 1/2 E. 2nd St.,
February 14, 1921.

Brooks Appliance Co., Marshall, Mich.

Gentlemen—About a year and a half ago I bought an Appliance of you and it has cured me of my rupture. Haven't worn it since October 22nd and feel as if I am entirely cured. I am a molder and did heavy work during that time. I am recommending your Appliance to all I know. Yours truly,
C. J. Robison.

Cannot Express Gratitude Felt

Mattoon, Wis., Box 605,
April 16, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—I cannot find words to express my gratitude—all I can say is "Thanks to your Appliance." It has done wonders for me. It is a year and four months since he was ruptured and after wearing your Appliance four months it disappeared. You can use this in your testimonials. Truly yours, Frank Beck.



C. E. Brooks

Ten Reasons Why

You Should Send For Brooks Rupture Appliance

1. It is absolutely the only Appliance of the kind on the market today, and in it are embodied the principles that inventors have sought after for years.
2. The Appliance for retaining the rupture cannot be thrown out of position.
3. Being an air cushion of soft rubber it clings closely to the body, yet never blisters or causes irritation.
4. Unlike the ordinary so-called pads used in other trusses, it is not cumbersome or unsightly.
5. It is small, soft and pliable, and positively cannot be detected through the clothing.
6. The soft, pliable bands holding the Appliance do not give one the unpleasant sensation of wearing a harness.
7. There is nothing about it to get foul, and when it becomes soiled it can be washed without injuring it in the least.
8. There are no metal springs in the Appliance to torture you by cutting and bruising the flesh.
9. All of the material of which the Appliance are made is of the very best that money can buy, making it a durable and safe Appliance to wear.
10. We guarantee your comfort at all times and in all positions and sell every Appliance with this positive understanding.

"Tried All Kinds of Trusses"

Gordon, Neb., R. No. 1,
January 8, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—I tried all kinds of trusses without any relief until I bought your Appliance. When I sent for the Appliance I thought it was like all other trusses, but soon it relieved me. I wore your Appliance a long time, being afraid to go without it, but am completely cured. I will be glad to answer any inquiry that is made and words toll how thankful I am.

Sincerely yours,
Gust Nordwall.

"Have Done All Kinds of Work"

Monson, Maine, Box 22,
March 15, 1921.

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir—It has been two years and over since I wore my Appliance and have done all kinds of work—and have felt none ever since. It's the best Appliance I ever had and will encourage everyone I see that has a rupture to get out of your Appliance.

Yours,
J. W. Russell.

"Two Physicians Pronounced Him Cured"

Baraboo, Wis., 522 Elizabeth St.,
June 29, 1921.

Brooks Rupture Appliance Co.

Dear Sirs—Over a year ago I purchased a Double Appliance for my infant son. He then had a bad rupture, weighed 9 lbs. and was 1 month old. I never saw the rupture after putting your Appliance on him and two physicians pronounce him cured. For a month he has not had the Appliance on and I now feel he is absolutely cured. I am writing this in case you might wish to refer someone to me who also has a ruptured baby.
Mrs. J. W. Troy.

Remember

Never on sale in stores, as every Appliance is made to order, the proper size and shape of Air Cushion depending on the nature of each case. Beware of imitations. Look for trade-mark, bearing portrait and signature of C. E. Brooks which appears on every Appliance. None other genuine.

FREE Information Coupon

Brooks Appliance Co.,
260 N. State St., Marshall, Mich.

Please send me by mail in plain wrapper your illustrated book and full information about your Appliance for the cure of rupture.

Name.....

Address.....

R. P. D. City..... State.....