

THE LITTLE SCISSORS.

"Pretty well," I replied brusquely, and he walked away.

I found no more nuggets on that occasion; and at five o'clock I knocked off and made my way to my tent, where, after a good wash, I pulled an old gin case outside, sat down on it, lighted my pipe, and coolly awaited the arrival of my visitors.

I had not to wait long. I presently observed two strongly framed men strolling leisurely in my direction, as though merely sauntering at random through the diggings. As they came opposite to me, one of them started, and, addressing me, exclaimed: "Hello, Ted; how long have you been at Ophir? and where did you hail from last?" and stepping up he grasped me warmly by the hand.

Seeing what was expected of me, I heartily returned the pressure, saying, in a loud tone, "Why about three weeks. But when did you leave Sydney? Come in man, and bring your friend with you. Old friends like you and me should liquor up before questions are asked and answered," and inside we all three of us went.

One of the two men that we wanted to catch was an eye and ear witness of all this scene, but it was so naturally enacted that no suspicions that my two acquaintances were detectives could have entered his head.

I found that each of my visitors was armed with a revolver and a pair of hand-cuffs. They were both strong, powerful men, and more than a match for the others in every way. The plan, however, to make all things certain, and to prevent any unnecessary spilling of blood, was to wait until the ruffians were in their beds and asleep, when we were to steal in, and try and handcuff them before they could wake up.

We had to wait many weary hours for this time to arrive, but at last the snoring commenced in earnest, and this was our signal. Handcuffs in hand, the detectives crept into the adjoining tent. I followed them with my revolver levelled, in case that one or both of the rascals should wake up and be too quick for them. They did not wake up, and the irons were clasped around and locked on their wrists without their even twinkling an eye-lid.

But now they were roughly awakened, and the senior officer said, "Tom Jackson and Bill Wilton, I arrest you for wilful murder. You must both of you get up and come along with us. I am Detective Sinclair, of the New South Wales Police."

I never saw two men so struck with consternation and surprise as were these two worthies. At last one of them gasped out, "Murder! Wilful murder! Detective Sinclair! Why, you must all be mad."

"The evidences of their crime are in this tent, remember," I said to Sinclair, nudging him with my elbow. "Let us search for the limbs of their last slaughtered victim."

The hint was promptly acted upon. We seized spades and picks, and in ten minutes every inch of the ground covered by the tent was turned over to a yard in depth.

No old man's legs were to be found; but we were not daunted, and proceeded to ransack the tent all over, still without any old man's legs turning up, though we spied two fine hind legs of a kangaroo hanging up in an obscure corner.

"Well, are you satisfied?" asked one of the prisoners. "Are you convinced that you are on some wild goose chase? If so take these cursed irons off and be gone."

"No, we are not so convinced," answered Sinclair, with some asperity. "This worthy gentle-

man," pointing to me, "heard you confess last night to having murdered no less than eight old men, and such crimes will have to be accounted for. He heard you confess, too, to having hid the legs of your last victim in this tent; but doubtless you have this day removed them to some more secure hiding place."

"He told you that, did he? the young donkey," screamed one of the accused, with a hyena-like laugh. "And so we have, too—old men kangaroos—and there are the legs we spoke of hanging up in that corner ready for to-morrow's pie. Ah! ha! ha! he has brought you on a fool's errand, sure enough," and the roars of laughter the two men indulged in fairly shook the tent.

Both detectives looked fearfully annoyed, and yet they could not help laughing. Without a word to me they took the handcuffs off the men and returned them to their pockets. Then Sinclair said: "What will you take to keep this matter a secret? You see, through this unfortunate new chum's blunder, we shall get laughed off the diggings, unless you choose to be merciful. I'll give you a £5 note out of my own pocket if you will keep this unfortunate affair dark."

"I will supplement Sinclair's offer with the largest of the nuggets I dug up to-day, I said, feeling that if being laughed at was the general dread, I stood in the worst position of the trio.

"Hang your bribes!" was the retort. "I would not give up the chance of circulating so glorious a yarn for ten times the value of what you offer. However, I will tell it as leniently as possible. And as for this new chum," turning to me, "when I first came to the colony, I and my mate here were both of us green enough to have made just as stupid a blunder; so I can't blame him. Come, let us sit down and have a drink all round of real old Jamaica rum, of which we have an unbroached keg in stock."

The invitation was readily accepted, and we kept it up until daybreak with grog, songs and toasts.

So ended the tragedy of "killing an old man," which I now learnt was a name universally bestowed on a large male kangaroo. These animals, when attacked, are very ferocious, and if they cannot get away, and are engaged at close quarters, will clasp you with their short fore legs, and pressing you tightly against their chest will raise one of their strong hind legs, which is armed with a terribly long, strong and knife-shaped spur, and rip you right down with it, causing almost instant death. When hunted with dogs, the "old man" will generally, when once at bay, disembowel two or three of his canine adversaries before he is dragged down and despatched, and the human foe is sometimes served in the same manner.

These two terrible murderers, as I thought them, turned out to be two right good fellows; one had been a cornet in a crack cavalry regiment at home, the other a curate in the Church of England. We soon became fast friends and partners in what turned out afterwards to be a well-paying claim, and in the year 1857 we all returned to old England rich men.

Last Sunday in one of the Sabbath schools of our city, says a Burlington paper, a juvenile class was questioned by its teacher in regard to the parable of the shepherd and his flock: "Who is our shepherd?" "Jesus," "who are Christ's lambs?" "We are." To test the reasoning capacity of the young urchins: "If the children are the lambs, what are the grown folks?" Said a bright-eyed little shaver: "They are the old bucks."

Is the garment of religion to be judged by the length of its nap during service?

When a dog insists upon lying on the 'mat,' would you consider him dogmatically inclined?

A lazy boy was put to learn the alphabet, but he could only learn the first five letters. He liked his E's so well he couldn't be made to go any further.

There are more editors unmarried than any other class of professional men, because, we suppose, the majority of them are of fine sentiments and do not wish to starve anybody's sister.

WHY A SHIP IS "SHE."—A ship is called "she" because a man knows not the expense until he gets one; because they look best when well rigged; because their value depends upon their age; because they bring news from abroad, and carry news from home.

An old Scotchman of Boston used to say; "I'm open to conviction, but I'd like to see the man that can convince me." Old Minister Wells, the predecessor of the Rev. Dr. Storrs of Braintree, Mass., himself a Scotchman, used to say; "It behooveth a Scotchman to be right; for if he was wrong he will be forever and eternally wrong."

An old lady on a steambot observed two men pumping up water to wash the deck, and the Captain being near her, she accosted him as follows: "Well, captain, got a well aboard, eh?" "Yes, ma'am, always carry one," said the polite captain. "Well, that's clever," said she, "I always dislike this nasty river water."

A lazy boy makes a lazy man, just as sure as a crooked sapling makes a crooked tree. Who ever saw a boy grow up in idleness that did not make a shiftless vagabond when he became a man, unless he has a fortune left him to keep up appearances? The great mass of thieves, criminals and paupers have come to what they are by being brought up in idleness. Those who constitute the business part of the community—those who make our great and useful men, were taught in their boyhood to be industrious.

A LEARNED SECOND WIFE.—An honest farmer married a miss from a fashionable boarding-school, for his second wife. He was struck dumb with her eloquence, and gaped with wonder at his wife's learning. "You may," said he, "bore a hole through the solid airth, and chuck in a millstone, and she'll tell you to a shavin' how long the stone will be going clean through! She has learnt kemistry and cocknevology, and talks a heap oxhides and comical affinities. I used for to think it was the air I sucked in every time that I expired; howsomedever, she tell me that she knowed better—she telled me that I had baen sucking in two kinds of gin; ox gin and high gin. Dearme! I'm a tumble down teetotal man, and yet have been drinking ox gin and high gin all my life.

"Any thing in this store for a dollar?" inquired a would-be customer as he entered a Philadelphia "dollar store."

"Yes, for one dollar you can take your choice. Of course, I do not include in this my young lady attendants.

So replied the storekeeper, his ending off being probably intended as a joke, for he smiled grimly as he said it, and seemed to enjoy it himself immensely.

"Well, I'll take that," said the customer, pointing to a stove which, almost red hot, stood in a corner of the room. The customer clearly had the best of the dollar-store man.