

bows to the Scalawag. 'And you, too,' he says, 'on the acquisition of two fine farms.'

"After Kline's gone, the Scalawag turns to Angelman an' asks him what does it mean. An' the Devil, he digs his fingers into the Scalawag's arm, an' he says, fierce: 'Scalawag,' he says, 'you hold this property as my trustee, you understand. As long as it was in her name—or even in my name, I couldn't sell it without she signed. Now she's signed, and you've got the title, and you hold it in trust for me, you see—'

"The Scalawag shakes his head. 'I don't see,' he says.

"Angelman pours him out another drink. 'I'll make you see,' he says, 'an' beside,' he says, 'you make good an' sure you don't steal this property from me like you did my fifty,' he remarks."

There was another pause. "Scalawag didn't, I assume," I said, to fill in.

"Just you wait," smiled my man, "not too fast. Only, what was the next thing that that there Devil did? Eh. Can you guess? No? Well, he got his wife to move out of that there farm—and he brought her down into town here—to the tavern. It was supposed to be the Scalawag who had done that—the Scalawag, it was understood wanted to move into the homestead. And so they came down here—and right there in the hotel, what happens?"

He asked me, as though I could answer.

"Give it up," I said.

"He deserts her," he exclaimed, as though astounded at the possibility of any human being leaving Evangeline Mitcheltree.

"O H, yes, he pretended to have cause and all that—said she made home a hell for him, and so on, and half the country was with him—is yet, for that matter, but I'm tellin' you God's own truth about him. See his game. He's married her for what she had—not her good looks, nor herself—but them two fine farms—and when he gets 'em, it's off with her. He's got the property and she gets the sack. Well, then for the first time, the Mitcheltree dander rises up in Evangeline. She finds out all about this here yellow blonde down in Donaldson, and she makes good and sure, an' she begins divorce suit, just what he wants, you understand, an' he goes on happy as a lark, an' waits for a decree to free him. Only, there's one thing the Devil didn't count upon. He thought he knew her, but he didn't. He didn't think she'd ask alimony—thought she'd slump off and live on her relatives or something, and shut her mouth—thought she was too sensitive. But he'd forgot that old Mitcheltree was the captain of a company in the war, and forgot the fightin' blood that was in her—she wasn't born till long after the old man was a hero. And she fought for her rights. An' the first thing she tackled was alimony."

"That ought to have been easy," I remarked.

"Wait till you hear," he said, "it was so easy for the Devil that it was like rollin' off a log. The hearing came on, an' the Devil, he just spirits Scalawag out of the way somewhere—an' he goes on the stand, and he shows as how—using Kline for the purpose, you see—Scalawag had bought the farms, and had paid for them, and how she'd given him the money—turned it over to him—that Scalawag paid, and how he'd—the Devil had—lost it all in the panic, buckin' the Wall Street game, an' didn't have a dollar left. The people in the courtroom says as how she was very quiet when she hears this. But suddenly she brushes her own lawyer to one side, and she says to her husband up there on the stand:

"'You swear you don't own them there Mitcheltree farms at all?'

"'No,' he answers, smiling at her question, 'I don't, and I ain't got a dollar's worth of interest in 'em.' An' he tells the court again that they're owned by the Scalawag, lock, stock an' barrel, an' that he, the Devil, financially, is a broken man. Well, she can't prove different—though she knows different, and half the people knows different; but the Devil certainly looks pretty shabby—he's been getting ready for this for some time—an' the judge don't give her a cent. So all she gets is a dry divorce—and all that that does is to release him the same time it releases her. And he goes off to New York with the yellow-haired blonde.

"What became of the Scalawag," I asked.

"That," said my informant, "is just what the Devil was wondering. The Scalawag didn't know about the alimony matter. It seemed he'd disappeared—of course the Devil had seen to that. But when the Devil sends for him—the Scalawag doesn't show up. And he's still missing when the Devil takes his New York trip—for the yellow hair is interested in New York, and ain't interested in the Scalawag. So they has to go. She keeps him there all winter—down in New York, and she manages to get most of the Devil's ready coin after she marries him. Only she knows and he knows that up here is two fine farms that's liable to fetch fifteen thousand and so the two of 'em traipse back here to see the Scalawag. They haven't heard from the Scalawag at all, though the Devil has written him—an' it worries the Devil some. But inside his inside pocket, where it'll keep warm, he's got the Scalawag's confession, that's never failed to bring the Scalawag to terms. So he says to his yellow-haired wife, when she wheedles him, 'Come on,' says the Devil, 'we'll go back an' sell them farms in dead earnest and then back to New York for ours'—or words to that effect. An' they comes back, sendin' the Scalawag telegrams and special deliveries an' 'phone messages, an' all of that. An' at the last minute, sure enough, the Scalawag answers 'em.

"'Come on,' wires the Scalawag, 'I'm ready for you.'

"And they jumps at that, an' comes. Well, when the Devil gets here with yellow hair, there's no Scalawag to be found. Only a few of the Devil's old friends scratch their heads and says: 'Scalawag,' they say, 'why, he must be somewhere up the mountain—he comes in here once in a while,' they says.

"An' the Devil goes up the mountain lookin' for Scalawag.

"Finally he reaches the Mitcheltree farms, and he rubs his eyes. For there's a mighty sight of life goin' on, farm utensils all around, and everything shipshape. He laughs to himself and yellow hair. 'Well,' he says, 'Scalawag is making this here farm look like ready money. We sure can sell it big.'

"So he gets out and ties—it's about meal-time, and kicks on the door. The door opens, and there, standin' in the doorway, neat as a pin an' prettier than ever, is Evangeline Mitcheltree, who divorced him. 'What're you doing here?' he asks. 'I'm lookin' for Scalawag.'

"Well, he gets what he's looking for, for right behind Evangeline stalks out Scalawag, as large as life. He's got a soul back into his body, an' he's beginning to look something like a man.

"'Scalawag,' cries out the Devil, Angelman, 'what's my wife doin' on this farm?'

"'She ain't your wife,' says Scalawag, quiet like,



"Scalawag," cries out the Devil, Angelman, "what's my wife doin' on this farm?" "She ain't your wife," says Scalawag, quiet like, "She's mine—that's what she is—Lord be thanked," he says.

'she's mine—that's what she is—Lord be thanked.'

"'I don't care whose wife she is,' said the Devil, 'I want to see you in private, if you please.'

"'I do please,' said Scalawag, and he leads the way into the parlor—cold and still as a church it is, too—an' he stands in the middle of the room an' looks at the Devil.

"'What is it, Angelman?' he asks.

"Angelman shuts the door. 'Scalawag,' he says, 'I want a deed to these farms. I'm going to sell 'em.'

"Scalawag laughs. 'A deed to these farms,' he says. 'How are you going to get it? These farms belong to me.'

"'Belong to you nothin',' cries the Devil, 'they belong to mee.'

The Scalawag takes out a flimsy book that he keeps underneath the Bible. 'Angelman,' he says, 'do you know what this book is?'

"'No, and I don't care,' returns the Devil.

"'But I do,' says the Scalawag, quiet like. 'It's the testimony on the alimony hearing—do you remember that? You said that I owned the farm, and you didn't have a dollar's worth of interest in 'em. Do you remember that?'

"The Devil turned white as a sheet—he hadn't quite expected that. 'Scalawag,' he says, 'you were trustee for me.'

"Scalawag blinked. 'I don't know whether I was or not,' he said, 'the farms were your wife's an' you stole 'em from her an' they came into my hands. Looks like I was trustee for the real owner—her.'

AND then the Devil recovered himself like. He grinned just like the Old Boy. 'So, you take that stand,' he said. He pulled out Scalawag's confession and pushed it under his nose. 'I'll send you up,' he screamed.

The Scalawag stepped to the door and opened it. 'Vangie,' he said, 'come in here a minute, if you please.' Vangie came in.

"'Vangie,' went on the Scalawag. 'Mr. Angelman's got in his hands a confession signed by me that I'm guilty of grand larceny. It's true, I stole fifty dollars of his. He wants me to sign over this farm to him—he says if I don't he'll send me up. I want you to hear what I've got to say to him.'

"The Devil stared at him—glared at him. But the Devil wondered too, for the Scalawag looked something like a martyr at the stake. The Scalawag held his hand up in the air.

"'My answer to you, Mr. Angelman,' he said, just like a man making a speech, 'is this—send me up if you can.'

"'By thunder and I will,' says the Devil.

"The Scalawag burst into a roar. 'By thunder, you won't,' he yelled, 'you won't send me up—the statute of limitation ain't a-goin' to let you do it. See?'

"See—the Devil looked at the date on the confession, turned white, then red, and backed out of that room as fast as he could. There was no doubt about it—it was too late to convict the Scalawag of crime—"

He stopped. It seemed as though he never would go on. "Well?" I ventured finally. He did not answer. For at that instant there was a shout from the hotel. Two men came running up to him.

"Scalawag," they exclaimed to my companion, addressing him. "Scalawag, the returns are in—you're elected sheriff for the next three years. Hooray for Scalawag!"

The cry was taken up by the little knots of men who had gathered in the darkness. Scalawag gripped the hand I gave him, and shaded his mouth with his hand. "Bill," he cried, "tell 'em to set up a keg of beer for you fellows, an' a couple of quarts of buttermilk for me."

As he moved off, a burly individual touched me on the arm. "Your old road louse is as good as new," said a voice in my ear. It was the blacksmith. There was joy in his tones.

"You go to thunder," I exclaimed, "I'm going over to the tavern to get some buttermilk. Come on." As we went, we three, with Scalawag in the lead, a single figure broke from a neighboring group and stalked off up the road.

"There goes the Devil," whispered the blacksmith to me, "with his tail between his legs."

"He goes back to his blonde wife?" I asked. The blacksmith gurgled. "Never," he returned; "she went back on him some time ago. She's vamoosed the ranch."

(Continued on page 23.)