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fellow mescribing the child as it was fifteen years ago. Oh, here's a point or two!—'brown eyes, black hair'—oh, bully! here's the best thing yet!—'first joint of the left forefinger gone.'"

The sheriff snatched the light, and both men hastened to examine the pris-oner's hand. After a single glance their eyes met and each set of optics inquired of the other.

At length the sheriff remarked:
"He's your pris'ner."
The circuit-rider flushed and then turned pale. He took the lantern from the sheriff, turned the light full on the prisoner's face, and said:

"Prisoner, suppose you were to find that your father was alive?"

The horse-thief replied with a piercing glance, which was full of wonder, but said not a word. A moment or two passed, and the preacher said:

"Suppose you were to find that your father was alive, and had searched everywhere for you, and that he thought of nothing but you, and was grown old before his time, all because of his longing and sorrow for you." The thief dropped his eyes, then his face twitched; at last he burst out crying. "Your father is alive; he isn't far from this cabin; he's very sick; I've just left him. Nothing but the sight of you will do him any good; but I think so much of him that I'd rather kill you this instant than let him know what business you've been in."

"Them's my sentiments, too," remarked the sheriff.

"Let me see him!" exclaimed the prisoner, clasping and raising his manacled hands, while his face filled with an earnestness which was literally terrible —"let me see him, if it's only for a few minutes! You needn't be afraid that I'll tell him what I am, and you won't be mean enough to do it, if I don't try to run away. Have mercy on me! You don't know what it is to never have had anybody to love you, and then suddenly to find that there is some one that wants

The preacher turned to the officer and

"I'm a law-abiding citizen, sheriff."

And the sheriff replied:

"He's your pris'ner." "Then suppose I let him go on his promise to stick to his father for the rest of his life!"

He's your pris'ner," repeated the

"Suppose, then, I were to insist upon your taking him into custody."
"Why, then," said the sheriff, speaking like a man in the depths of meditation, "I would let him go myself, and—and I'd have to shoot you to save

my reputation as a faithful officer."

The preacher made a peculiar face.

The prisoner exclaimed: "Hurry, you brutes!"

The preacher said, at last:

miz'able one-I'll swap with you. himself.

You've got to make up some cock-andbull story now, for the old man'll want to know everything. You might say you'd been a sheriff down South somewhere since you got away from the feller that owned you."

The preacher paused over a knot in one of the cords on the prisoner's legs, and said:

"Say you were a circuit-rider—that's more near the literal truth."

The sheriff seemed to demur somewhat, and he said at length:

"Without meanin' any disrespect, parson, don't you think 'twould tickle the old man and the citizens more to think he'd been a sheriff? They wouldn't dare to ask so many questions then, either. And it might be onhandy for him if he was asked to preach, while a smart horse-thief has naturally got some of the p'ints of a real sheriff about

him."
"You insist upon it that he's my prisoner," said the preacher, tugging away at his knot, "and I insist upon the circuit-rider story. And," continued the young man, with one mighty put at the knot, "he's got to be a circuit-rider, and I'm going to make one of him. Do your hear that, young man? I'm the man that's setting you free, and giving you to your father."

"You can make anything you please out of me," said the prisoner.

"As you say, parson," remarked the sheriff, with admirable meekness; 'he's your prisoner, but I could make a splendid deputy out of him if you'd let him take my advice. And I'd agree to work for his nomination for my place when my term runs out.

Think of what he might get to bethere are sheriffs gone to the Lgislature, and I've heard of one that went to Congress.

"Circuit-riders get higher than that, sometimes," said the preacher, leading his prisoner toward old Wardelow's cabin: "they get as high

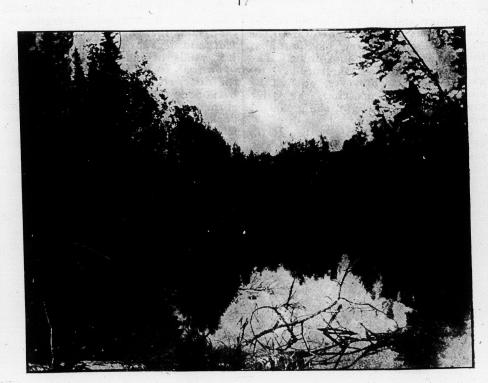
as heaven!"
"Oh!" remarked the sheriff, and gave up the contest.

Both men accompanied the prisoner toward his father's house. The preacher began to deliver some cautionary remarks, but the young man burst from him, threw open the door, and shouted:

"Father!" The old man started from his bed, shaded his eyes, and exclaimed: "Stevie!"

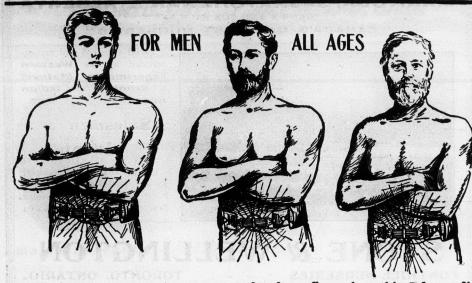
The father and son embraced, seeing which the sheriff proved that even sheriffs are human, by snatching the circuit-rider in his arms and giving him a mighty hug.

The father recovered and lived happily. The son and the preacher fulfilled their respective promises, and the sheriff, always on meeting either of them, so abound The sheriff removed the handcuffs, and effusive handshakings, that he nearly lost his next election by being "Fix yourself up a little. Your hat's suspected of having become religious



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