disgraceful contribution with a gold double-eagle. The remaining nonlegal tenders were then converted into gold-dust, and the whole dispatched by express, with a grim note from Pentecost, to the society's treasurer at Boston. As the society was controlled by a denomination which does not understand how good can come out of evil, no detail of this contribution ever appeared in print. But a few months thereafter there did appear at Hanney's a thin-chested, large-headed youth, with a heavily loaded mule, who announced himself as duly accredited by the aforementioned society to preach the Gospel among the miners. The boys received him cordially, and Pentecost offered him the nightly hospitality of curling up to sleep in front of the bar-room fire-place. His mule's load proved to consist largely of tracts, which he vigorously distributed, and which the boys used to wrap up dust in. He nearly starved while trying to learn to cook his own food, so some of the boys took him in and fed him. He tried to persuade the boys to stop drinking, and they good-naturedly laughed; but when he attempted to break up the "little game." which was the only amusement of the camp—the only steady amusement, for fights were short and irregular-the camp rose in its wrath, and the young man hastily

rose and went for his mule.

But at the time of which this story

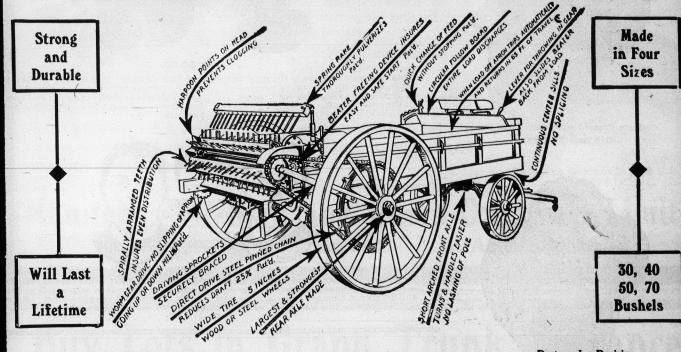
treats a missionary would have fared even worse, for the boys were wholly absorbed by a very unrighteous, but still very darling, pleasure. A pair of veteran kniieists, who had fought each other at sight for almost ten years every time they met, had again found themselves in the same settlement, and Hanney's had the honor to be that particular settlement. "Judge" Briggs, one of the heroes, had many years be-fore discussed with his neighbor, Billy Bent, the merits of two opposing brands of mining shovels. In the course of the chat they drank considerable villianous whisky, and naturally resorted to knives as final arguments. The matter might have ended here had either gained a decided advantage over the other; but both were skilful-each inflicted and received so near the same number of wounds that the wisest men in camp were unable to decide which whipped. Now, to average Californians in the mines, this is a most distressing state of affairs; the spectators and friends of the combatants waste a great deal of time, liquor and blood on the subject, while the combatants themselves feel unspeakably uneasy on the neutral ground between victory and defeat. noon by the entrance of Billy and his At Sonora, were Billy and the Judge had their first encounter, there was no verdict so the Judge indignantly shook the dust from his feet and went formed a ring, on the outer edge of elsewhere. Soon Billy happened in at the same place, and a set-to oc had been outside, and who came pour curred at sight, in which the average was not disarranged. Both men weit one squatted or hugged the wall, for about, for a month or so, in a patch-ed-up condition, and then Billy roam ed off, to be soon met by the Judge, tors were in a state of abject safety. with the usual result. Both men were known by reputation through the gold regions, and the advent of time his enemy. either at any "gulch" or "washin'," "Hello, Billy!" said he, pleasantly: was the best advertisement the "let's take a drink first." saloon-keeper could desire.

a week, for the Judge had arrived the week before, and his points had been carefully scrutinized and weighed time two determined enemies clinked their There seemed nothing unusual about social drinkers. him-he was of medium size, with long hair and beard, a not unpleasant expression and very dirty clothes; he never jumped a claim, always took his whisky straight, played as fair a game of poker as the average of the boys, and never stole a mule from any one of the next fight when the whole camp convulsed with the intelligence Billy Bent had also arrived. ork immediately ceased, except in immediate vicinity of the cham-

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adequate to the demand. 'straight bets" and "hedging" most of the gold dust in camp had been "put for a bet is the only Californian backing of an opinion As the men did not seem to seek each other, the boys had ample time to "grind things down to a pint." as the camp concisely expressed it, and the matter had given excuse for a dozen minor fights, when order was suddenly restored one afterneighbors just as the Judge and his neighbors were finishing a drink.

The boys immediately and silently which were massed all the men who ing in like flies before a shower. No it was understood that these two men fought only with knives, so the specta-The Judge after settling for the

drinks turned and saw for the first

Billy, who was a red-haired man Hanney's had been fairly excited for with a snapping turtle mouth, but not and again, by every man in the camp. glasses with the unconcern of mere

But, after this, they proceeded promptly to business: the Judge, who was rather slow in his guard, was the owner of a badly-cut arm within three minutes by the bar-keeper's watch.

There was a busy hum during the adjustment of bets on "first blood," whiter than a Mexican. The boys had and the combatants very considerably just about ascertained all this, and refrained from doing serious injury made their "blind" bets on the result during this temporary distraction, but within five minutes more they had exchanged chest wounds, but too slight to be dangerous.

Betting became furious-each man and the boys stuck close to the were wild with delight and enthusiasm. apel, that being the spot where the Bets were roared back and forth, and when Pentecost, by virtue of his universally conceded authority, commanded and nothing but a special manded silence, there was a great express saved the camp from deal of finger-telegraphy across the orror of Pentecost's bar being circle, and head shaking in return.

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