

THE AMBUSH

Satisfied that I had done him no serious damage, I rapidly explored his pockets. They contained a pair of handcuffs, just as I had expected; and now occurred to me a very good use to which they could be put.

I glanced swiftly about me, and in a moment found the thing that would answer my purpose; a root to an oak tree, looping up out of the ground, and then descending into it again. I tugged at it and satisfied myself that it would hold.

"Carry him over there," I ordered the second guard. He was still half dazed and wholly cowed, and did as I said.

"Now," said I sharply, "stand still and you won't be hurt."

I snapped one half of the manacle on the wrist of the fallen man, slid the other one under the root, and before he quite realized what had happened, the second guard was fast on the other side.

"Now," said I, in a tone of satisfaction, "you will be comfortable there for ever so long. Have you any money? If you have, I want it. Will you get it out yourself, or shall I search you?"

He blustered a little, but presently, with his free hand, pulled out of his trousers pocket what I am convinced was all he had, three dirty one-dollar bills and some small change.

"What's your name?" I asked.