

The Adventurers

By H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY HARPER & BROTHERS

Thrusting the lantern into Sheppard's hands, I sprang at the wall, and with a leap seated myself on the floor of the cupboard.

"The back is wooden," I said. My fingers ran swiftly across the oaken surface and presently stopped. "The lantern," I called to him.

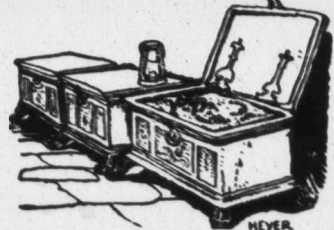
Sheppard let the lantern fall in his excitement, and in a moment we were plunged in darkness. At the same time there arose a sound on the grim silence of the corridor. I drew in my breath, and I think every one did the same. I felt rather than heard Montgomery fumbling with his revolver. Ten, twenty, thirty seconds passed, and then Sheppard struck a match.

"It's the infernal wind," he exclaimed.

The light flared in his face as he relit the lantern, and I noticed that it was wild and burning. With trembling fingers he handed me the lantern, and the light shone on a bit of steel I held under my thumb. I pressed, and with a jerk the oaken screen fell back. I put out a hand and encountered nothing.

"I'm going through," I said in a whisper. "Follow me. I'll leave the lantern here. Heaven knows what we shall find."

I let myself softly down below, and my feet struck the stone of the floor once more. Sheppard and Montgomery followed. We cast the light about us. We were in a dungeon closed with-



The treasure was there before our greedy faces.

In absolutely blank walls. In the corner some rags and paper lay heaped. I pushed them aside, and they crumbled at the touch of my foot.

"It's not here," said Sheppard. "Throw the light this way. Ah, I thought so!"

Ere he had finished he was halfway up a slight stone steps, and we followed pelluc. A door of heavy oak barred the way at the top.

"We wanted out after all," said Sheppard impatiently. Montgomery flung his weight against it, and with a crash it opened.

Montgomery, overbalanced by his effort, staggered and fell upon the threshold, but Sheppard, who was next to him, paid no attention and, turning, looked at me. The light made no way upon the great darkness.

"Do you know where we are?" whispered Sheppard. "This is below the keep. Shall we go in?"

"Certainly," I said, "get Montgomery up." He pulled the lad to his feet, and slowly we shoved back the huge creaking door.

The chamber into which we were now come was small and square and, like that below, barred by solid masonry and unrelieved by window or grating. I found later by calculation that this must be in the very heart of the keep itself and so wholly departed from the rest of the castle that the noise of ordinance would scarce have penetrated its deep and dismal recesses. My eyes were drawn as by a magnet to the farther corner of the barren cell, in which I could perceive some formidable shadows wavering beneath the dull, uncertain light of my lantern.

Sheppard also had desisted them and, plunging forward with a cry, flung himself upon his knees. "They are here right enough," he called. And at his words Montgomery and I approached him. I held the light above his head, throwing the faint beams across his shoulder. There were three large oaken cases standing upon legs and simply carved upon the face. The dust lay deep on them, as upon the floor of that interior dungeon. Sheppard brushed the dust away and seized the lock. The hinge fell back to his touch, and slowly he lifted the massive lid.

The light shone still upon dark shadows, but, stooping a little lower, I thrust it into the mouth of the aperture, and our noses hung over the sides of the box together.

The treasure was there for certain. There it lay spread before our greedy faces, the gold and the silver and the precious stones that had been destined to save one king from death and another from exile. I let the pieces slip through my fingers—guineas, moidores, circlets of gold and silver, amulets and all the material gems of the market.

"How much is there?" asked Montgomery.

Sheppard seemed to ponder, measuring rudely with his finger and computing the superficial area of the boxes.

"No one can say offhand," said he. "For there are the jewels, for one thing, among which are rubies. Now, rubies of that size—and he pounced upon one—'are worth little short of a thousand pounds.'"

Montgomery gaped and whistled.

"Let us make a rough shot and put the

box at £50,000. Come, I'll take a bet that it's under the mark."

"Then there are the other two," said I. "True," said Sheppard. We all looked at one another.

"Come, boys," I said, rising; "let us get out of this. We know our way, and the treasure cannot take itself wings."

Reluctantly they obeyed, and we retraced our steps through the cupboard into the corridor and thence upward through the courtyard and into the living rooms. The dawn was brightening the eastern skies. I pulled out my watch.

"After 3," I said. "You'd better go to bed. There will be nothing happen now."

"Three o'clock," echoed Sheppard indignantly. "Why, it is the very time for attacks and surprises. No; I'll see it out now."

"Very well," I assented. "We've got to arrange our defense, and as you are all determined not to go to bed, we may as well hold a council of war."

"Agreed," said they, and we sat down to the job without further ado. We were agreed to consider 5 in the morning as the break of day for our purposes, and we were hardly exposed to an assault before 8 in the evening.

The sky was still luminous at that hour. It was therefore plain that we must set a guard upon those intermediate and nocturnal hours. From 8 till 5 was a space of nine hours. That was to determine for us a watch of three. So far we settled the preliminaries of our defenses. But we had now to consider further. The drum towers commanded the slopes of the valley like two tall sentinels, and from the embrasures of the windows a watch might be kept upon the nether parts of the Gwent. But from one so stationed the back of the park and the crown of the hill behind were quite concealed. In this connection it appeared that the keep would best serve us, more particularly as the upper chambers were readily gained from the inhabited wing of the castle, whereas the towers reared their formidable heads in isolation and led only to the corridors of the basement and to the battlements above. It was in the keep, then, that our sentinel must hold his silent watch. The highest chamber in the keep rose immediately above the level of the battlements and was pierced by narrow slits in the masonry. This was a convenient station, or, better still, the roof of the tower, with which a flight of stairs connected the chamber.

We explored the keep thoroughly ere we had settled this point, and by that time it was 4 o'clock.

"Now, you had better go and lie down," said I to the others; "otherwise you will be nodding on your watches tonight. For my part, there is an hour yet to the time of safety, and I take first watch."

Sheppard expostulated with me for what he termed unnecessary precaution, but I held to my point, and presently they left me.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN I descended into the house I had hit upon one line of defense at least, and I at once proceeded to realize it. As I walked from the drawbridge along the moat to the back of the castle I wondered if it was practicable; but, remembering what old Kesteven had said of his predecessor's experiment some forty years before, I had great hopes that the sluices would still work. The brook ran, as you will remember, behind the castle, at a little distance from it, and I found without difficulty the mouth of the conduit which had been formerly used to feed the fosse. I inserted my arm as far as possible, and the space seemed fairly clear, though the earth had crept in and lay along the bottom, grown with grass to the depth of some inches. Still I had no fear that the flow of water would not wash this sediment away, provided always I could get the sluices up. To find these sluices was my next thought. I moved along the turf in the direction in which it seemed that the culvert must run, scrutinizing very carefully every inch of the ground. About three feet from the stream was a noticeable elevation, a grass plot rising in a mound two feet high. Here was obviously what I wanted, and so, taking a spade, I dug with a will and soon had the turf removed and the floor of a stone erection laid bare. It was a good hour's work ere I had cleared the rubbish away sufficiently to free the sluices; then I laid hands on them and pulled vigorously, but fruitlessly. I must plainly have assistance, and accordingly, well enough content with my labors so far, I went back to the house. At breakfast I revealed my scheme, much to the delight of Sheppard, who roundly declared that he would give five years of his life for this adventure. Supported by two enthusiastic assistants, I returned to work, fetching with me a heavy iron bar for use as a lever.

"A little more beef, Montgomery," shouted Sheppard, and himself grew as red as a turkey cock with his efforts. Montgomery flung his heavy body upon the extremity of the bar, and with a crack something came up with a jerk. At the same time I heard

below a faint rumbling and rushing as of water.

"We've done it!" I shouted, and ere the words were out of my mouth Sheppard and the other were racing for the moat, whither they presently waved me with wild hands.

The water was pouring from the conduit in a strong stream fully one foot in thickness. That was enough. It would take some hours to fill the moat, but it might take all day so long as we were secured by the fall of night. We left the sluices up and went back.

"The next thing," said I, "is to attack the drawbridge. The portcullis wants oil, but that will do later."

"We'll have the castle a mediaeval fortress in a twinkling," said Sheppard.

The heavy chains of the drawbridge were intact, but the machinery was in a very bad way, and without more ado we set to work upon it. I called my man Williams into requisition, and I think it took the four of us till 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening ere we pronounced ourselves satisfied. After that we had a rehearsal with both portcullis and drawbridge. By this time the moat was swimming with water, which lapped under the shoulders of the bridge. There must have been fully twelve feet of water in the fosse.

"This won't do. We'll have an inundation," said Montgomery, and he let the sluices down. When all was done we surveyed our handiwork and were content. It was now close upon 8 o'clock.

Dinner had been ready for more than half an hour, so we were informed by Mrs. Main, who must have regarded us as lunatics. The clock in the hall struck 8 as we entered.

"Watch time," said I. "Who goes?" We looked at each other, laughing.

"It's my turn," said Sheppard, with a grimace, but I stopped him.

"No; let Montgomery," I said meaningly.

"Right you are," responded Montgomery cheerfully, and, taking his brace of pistols, he vanished along the corridor.

"How's this?" asked Sheppard. "I think the poor boy has earned his dinner."

"Bless you, he shall have his dinner," I answered. "Only the danger is going to be later, and I'd rather Montgomery were asleep in bed than asleep on the tower."

We had arranged that Williams should stay the night in the castle and, imbuing him with the fear of burglars, had armed him with a shotgun in case the Welshman's brains if he became suspicious, and if his garrulity should bring me the sympathetic assistance of the law I think we could be stupid enough and vague enough to confound his kindly efforts. Mrs. Main was by this time bound to us by iron ties through Sheppard's contrivance, nor do I know to this day exactly how he managed it or in what directions he used his amiable and soothing fictions. The household was Mrs. Main's hireling, and we need scarcely include her in our calculations.

We were now, as I conceived, adequately fortified against a surprise. From 8 o'clock until dawn upon the next morning we should be stretched upon the rack of suspense, but each of us was sturdily resolved to accomplish his duty at all hazards. That an attack would be delivered I had few doubts, but my anxiety lay rather as to the watch in which it would be delivered. I had sent Montgomery to his post early, as it seemed wiser for more responsible heads than his to take the deeper and darker hours of the night. From 8 till 11 his time ran, and yet they might be upon us ere that. He was fed with some sandwiches and cheered with a little wine, while below Sheppard and I waited in a condition of tension.

"Oh, hang it!" exclaimed Sheppard presently, after dinner. "I can't stand this. Let us go and join him."

"You would be much wiser," said I, "to get to an hour's sleep."

Sheppard shrugged his shoulders. "It's my turn next, you say, and I'm not used to be awakened in my beauty sleep. It's bad for me. No; I'll go to bed when you relieve me. But I recommend your own advice to yourself."

"And I will take it," I answered. "See that Montgomery gets his supper and goes to bed like a sensible person. I'll be with you at 2 punctually."

I cannot say that I enjoyed a peaceful sleep. Although I was dog tired, partly from the exertion of the day's work and partly because I had had no rest the previous night, I still slumbered very fitfully. Finally I awoke in a fever and, throwing the hot blankets from me, stepped to the open window. My bedroom faced the north, and the cool air that heralded the dawn was wafted over me, reducing the fume and fire of my nerves. Far away some roistering bird was calling, not in his spring notes, but raucous now with the somber beat of autumn. The curtain of the dawn was lifting. It was time for me to relieve Sheppard. My watch marked a quarter to 2. Having dressed, I went down to the great hall and, thrusting the western windows open, looked out. Trees, like great ghosts, invisible, whispered in the night together. The stars glimmered down below, and I recollected suddenly that I was peering into the water of the fosse. The stillness hung so deep that I was possessed of a sudden with a hundred fears. Was Sheppard murdered? And were the castle and its treasure now in the hands of those abominable assassins? I listened for a cry, but there was none, only the gentle wash of the waters against those ancient foundations and the swishing of the leafage on the neighboring trees. The park lay, as one might have fancied, under the imminent hand of death.

I stole upstairs, clambering with a lantern to the keep. Upon the tower a

To Cure a Cold in One Day
Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. E. H. Linn
Seven Million bottles sold in past 12 months. This signature, E. H. Linn
Cure Cops in Two Days. on every box 25c.

Royal Household Flour

Best for Bread & Pastry.

THE ROYAL FLOUR MILLS, LTD. MONTREAL.

The Best Is None too Good

The Best Is the Kind We Print

Take No Other

Anslo Brothers

Printers and Publishers

Newcastle, N. B.

IN choosing your Office Stationery you should take as much pains to get the latest style and pattern as if you were choosing a new suit of clothes. To your customers with whom you correspond, your Letter Paper and Envelopes count as much in your favor as good appearance does to the customers you come into personal contact with. First impressions are lasting, so be careful of the impression you create.

STATIONERY printed by us creates the right impression. Long experience with the large manufacturers enables us to choose what is latest in Stationery styles, and we have the plant and men to put up Stationery in the most striking manner. Do not be deceived by cheap prices. "Cheap John" work is dear at any price. Get our samples and quotations before ordering elsewhere.

Public Auction

or

BUILDING LOTS

I am authorized by George Watt and Jane Mitchell, the duly appointed Committee of the Estate of Blanche Gertrude Mitchell to offer for sale by Public Auction to be held in front of the Post Office, Newcastle, at 3 P. M. on Saturday the 30th, Aug. 1906, the following lots of land:
2 lots fronting on Jane Street adjoining lands of Wm. A. Bell, size 33x100 ft. each.
1 lot and dwelling thereon fronting on Willard Lane and adjoining I. G. R. lands. Size 98 ft. front and 120 ft. deep.
1 lot adjoining I. G. R. lands immediately in rear of last above mentioned lot. Size 220 ft. along Railway land x 120 ft.
1 lot known as the Marsh lot situate on River front adjoining land occupied by Clark Shilling & Company with water privileges connected therewith.
Terms Cash
Dated 7th day of August, 1906.
J. R. LAWLER, Auctioneer.
46-3w.

Interprovincial Navigation Company.

Baie Des Chaleux Route.

The service of this Company between Campbellton and Gaspe is unequalled for pleasure seekers or to those to whom time is the principle object, giving ample opportunity to view almost the entire coast and is performed by the new and palatial twin-screw steamship "LADY EILEEN" making the passage between Campbellton and Gaspe in 19 hours.

Sailing from Campbellton on Wednesday morning at 5 and Saturday mornings at 10 o'clock, returning leaves Gaspe Thursday mornings at 6.30 and Sunday evenings at 7 o'clock.

CHEAP SATURDAY EXCURSIONS.

Close Connections Made With the "Maritime" and "Ocean Limited."

For Illustrated Folders and further information address Campbellton, N.B. E. E. BLAIR, BLAIR & RICHARDS, G. F. & P. A. MANAGERS.



The Public Schools will re-open on Monday the 27th inst. The Secretary will issue the necessary Permits, at the Town Hall Office on the 24th and 25th inst. to those presenting Certificates of successful vaccination, as by order of the Board of Health.
P. F. MORRISSEY, Sec. to School Board.
45-3w.

silent figure turned and a low voice spoke.

"Is that you, Ned?" The sound almost startled me, occurring upon the stillness.

"Any news?" I asked. "Well, I have two things to communicate. Do you see that tree?" I peered into the darkness in the direction he had indicated.

"I hear it," I observed doubtfully. "Well, I've seen it," he retorted. "Your eyes are better than mine, then," I answered.

"Maybe," said Sheppard cheerfully, "maybe not. But I don't profess to see through a wall. That tree is fifty paces away, and it is an oak, very large and umbrageous."

"I believe you are right," I answered. "I think I recollect it."

"I didn't," he went on. "But I reckon to see by match light as well as any."

I was puzzled. "Match light?" I queried. "You haven't been?"

"Oh, dear, no!" he exclaimed. "My tower has been the central patch of She—"

She—"What name did you give your canoe?"

He—"I think I will call it 'The Chaparral.'"

She—"Why?"

He—"Well, you see, a fellow has to sit straight and quit his nonsense when he is between him and his company."

SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed "Tender for Oak Point Wharf," will be received at this office until Monday, September 10, 1906, inclusively, for the construction of a Wharf at Oak Point, Northumberland County, N. B.

Plans and specifications can be seen at this Department, at the offices of E. T. P. Shewen, Esq., Resident Engineer, St. John, N. B., Geoffrey Stead, Esq., Resident Engineer, Chatham, N. B., and on application to the Postmaster at The Willows, Oak Point, Northumberland County, N. B.

Tenders will not be considered unless made on the printed form supplied, and signed with the actual signatures of the tenderers.

An accepted cheque on a chartered bank, payable to the order of the Honorable the Minister of Public Works, for eight hundred dollars (\$800.00), must accompany each tender. The cheque will be forfeited if the party tendering declines the contract or fails to complete the work contracted for, and will be returned in case of non-acceptance of tender.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender.

By order, FRED. GELINAS, Secretary.

Department of Public Works, Ottawa, August 11, 1906.

Newspapers inserting this advertisement without authority from the Department, will not be paid for it.

(To be continued.)