AT LOVE'S COMMAND.

By John A. Steuart.

This arrangement puzzled me, but I was soon enlightened. In a few minutes a thin column of smoke curled up through the after-hatch; then another rose farther forward, then another and another, till the several volumes spread and blended into a thick cloud.

I was sorry to see the brig's fate sealed in this way. We had been friends long, and she had saved me when there was no hope. But what could I do to save her?

When the fire had got a sufficient hold to insure its speedy victory, the incendiaries reappeared, and one of them, pointing with his sword to the West alongside, growled that I might get in. In an instant I was down and crouching meekly in the bows, where I was likeliest to be out of the way. The others followed quickly, and we rowed away, leaving the Bird of Paradise in a sheet of flame. Almost in the same moment my company of rats sprang into the water and struck out gallantly for the shore. In spite of fear I could not help giving them a hearty "well done," for farewell.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE PIRATES.

Immediately on boarding the Arab vessel we hove up anchor, set sails, and drew away to sea, with a smart breeze on our port quarter. The ship was a queer one, but it was soon proved that, however odd in appearance, she was an uncommonly swift and graceful sailor. She carried three masts, lateen sails, and a jib. The fore and mainmasts were without tops or topgallants, and of course without caps or crosstrees. The long, slender hull was jet black, and, what was strangest of all, the upper deck was sharply convex, with level gratings running round the sides. The convexity, as I afterward discovered, was meant to make a ready way for water to the scuppers, or in times of stress for blood, while the gratings, by obviating the slant, made the footing firm, a matter of importance in storm or action. She carried no colours, nor did any inscription, such as ships usually bear, give a hint of her port or nationality. Finally, though light, she was well armed. (The vessel was the dreaded Kebec, the terror of the high seas when Algerine corsairs flourished, and still of evil repute on the coasts of Arabia.)

Every stitch of her ocherous canvas was crowded on, and beautifully she swept along, keeling and dipping under the bellying sails, the bright green water swishing from her gleaming sides and the snowdrift flying from her fore foot in a way that would have made pleasure-seekers dance for joy. Even I felt the gladness of the rushing, arrowy motion, though, on the whole, the speed was more ominous than inspiring, seeing what a doubtful dance might end the trip.

The strain of dark uncertainty was somewhat relieved by the diversion of studying the crew, who were a living epitome of the fashions, past and current, of pretty nearly all the nations of the earth. Probably no company of equal size ever displayed a like variety of costumes. Assuredly none could be on more distant terms with tailor and laundress. It was impossible to say which gave the greater distinction—the diversity, the dirt, or the tatters.

There were Arab shirts reaching to the ankle, Indian turbans, Syrian combazes, European jerkins, top boots, jerseys, hats, and frock coats, Persian gowns, breeches of all known cuts and countries in every degree of foulness, in every stage of decay and raggedness—all jumbled together as if some malicious artist had tried what effects of incongruity and grotesqueness, what outrages on taste and decency, he was capable of achieving.

The captain, as the chief personage on board, was naturally the most conspicuous example of the ridiculous. He was elaborately arrayed in a steeple beaver, strongly suggestive of the defunct missionary in spite of its jaunty ostrich plume and tarnished silver band; a coarse woollen shirt, smeared like a hog in autumn; a leathern girdle, from which depended a sword, a brace of pistols and a crooked dagger full of significant purple stains; Turkish trousers that had originally been crimson, but were now of more hues than the maker of Joseph's coat ever dreamed of; a pair of red boots that must once have shed their splendour on State assemblies and gatherings of grandees, and washes enough of various colours to furnish a regiment of shelks.

The decorations were thickest in the rear. Indeed when the gallant captain turned his back it might seem he was clad in porous plasters patched with canvas steeped in pitch, so heavy were the incrustations of tar, grease, paint, and other adhesive substances. No sense of absurdity, however, disturbed his serene self-consequence. He paced the deck with as proud a step, as high and keen a look, as if he were an admiral of the fleet in faultless uniform and the evidence of a hundred victories blazing on his breast, seldom condescending to any familiarity with those about him, never with me, huddled in my corner.

We tore along at an incredible rate and were soon beyond sight of land, though for a good while the smoke of the burning brig showed our starting point. Whither we were bound I could not guess, and durst not ask. I was free to conjecture, if I pleased, that our course was for some happy haven not far off, though appearances rather suggested we were scouring the sea for prey.

By and by we hauled our wind and began to fetch in a backward direction. But we had not gone a league when we bounded off on another tack, and for the next hour or two we tacked and changed so frequently, running close-hauled as if for our lives and dropping off as if in sheer perversity, that I completely lost my reckoning.

It was wonderful how that strangely-built ship behaved, how sensitive she was to the gentlest pressure of the helm, how clean, quick and graceful were all her movements, and how she rushed on her course when she got her head. In spite of rather rough seamanship, only once did she make a mistake. Through a too hasty luff she happened to come dead into the wind's eye, and for the space of a second she hung in irons with loose sails. She seemed to shake herself with vexation, like a highly spirited horse thrown on its haunches without reason, turned quickly half round, caught the wind again, and then, with her yellow wings spread to their utmost, went skimming along like a sea bird.

It was now well on in the afternoon. The sun, though scorchingly hot, was near our level, and the water was deepening in purple and crimson. I was beginning to think we were to have a night at sea, when the captain gave the order to put the helm hard down. We swung round and sped on a landward course, sailing free and very swift.

"We shall make land a good hour ere sundown," said the captain to his chief officer, giving me the first authentic information of the day.

By this time my faculty of curiosity had lost its edge, but at the mention of land I sat up to keep a lookout, and in less than an hour we sighted the shore. The general character resembled that of the part we had left earlier in the day, though I soon saw we were not returning to the death scene of the luckless Bird of Paradise. Instead of a shallow beach the water ran close to high rocks, penetrated by rugged gorges, into which the sea flowed. No port, town, or human habitation was to be seen. But that, all things considered, was not surprising.

We shot into a narrow opening under the darkening brows of lofty cliffs, and immediately the sails fell together with a flap. Almost before they ceased fluttering they were in and furled. Then a boat was lowered, half a dozen steel sinewed men got into it, and rowed, pulling the ship by a cable. Light and of small draught, she followed easily, and in half an hour or so, after manifold windings, we came to a rude jetty, hewn, as it appeared, out of the solid rock. Here we disembarked, the vessel being made fast to a rough stone pillar.

As we leaped from the bulwarks to the ledges of rock that formed the pier, my heart beat quickly with conjecture and apprehension, for it was plain that a crisis was at hand. To guess what it might be was enough to make the stoutest tremble. The black precipices, the yawning caverns, and hoarse roar of warring waters were of evil suggestion, but of far darker import than any menace or ugliness of nature were the lowering faces of my companions. These men had shown during the day, by a hundred expressive tokens, that they resented my presence among them, and now I fancied I caught them casting sidelong looks at one another, then at their weapons, then at me, as if settling by such glances of intelligence the manner of getting rid of me.

With quaking limbs and the worst forebodings, I fell into line at the bidding of the captain, and we struck, single file, into a craggy path, at its best no broader than a sheep run in the Highlands, and in places so narrow as scarcely to afford foothold for a weasel. Looking upward from the bottom one could not imagine how it scaled the darkening precipices that frowned upon us in vast swellings and juttings with the savage, solitary pride of the inaccessible. If the ascent did not prove utterly impossible, it was because every man of us had the feet of a goat and the sinews and agility of a monkey.

Our ribbon of a path wound in crazy collings and twistings, now rising vertically in steps higher than our heads, now dropping treacherously at a critical point, ceasing suddenly and again appearing beyond some perilous projection that a chamois would hardly have attempted to pass. Often we had to go on our hands and knees, scraping with toes and clutching with finger nails as we crawled over some slippery mass, like ants on the polished knob of a glacier, or scrambled up a jagged rock, the point of which cut and rent like sharpened flints, or slid down, face inward, twice our own length to a scarcely perceptible crevice, forming a fresh starting point.

I was a hunter and knew what it was to tread dizzy ways. I had followed the fox to his lair when the hounds had turned tail and robbed the eagle's eyrie when the hardiest of my companions stood holding his breath in awe. But the self-possession and free spirit of audacity which prompted to such hazards and gave them relish were utterly gone. To speak the truth I shivered like one suddenly take with an ague.

It was not the terror of the place alone that appalled me. To go leaping and scrambling on a hair line along the brink of a tumbling, hissing gulf that sent the spumes of its wrath high up in clouds, with no outlook or hope of escape, was indeed disconcerting enough, yet scarcely of itself sufficient to take the heart out of a born mountaineer. The tremours and shakings, the alternate spasms of heat and cold, were due—I trust it is not cowardly to confess it—not to the threatenings of cliff and chasm, but to the hostile weapons that gleamed in front and rear and might at any moment be dyed in my blood.

How easy it would be to prod me there and send me toppling mortally wounded into the abyss, to be ground as between millstones at the bottom! A sudden stab in the back, a push, a giddy, headlong fall, and the deed would be done, and no word of it need ever get to the outside world. More than once, as my mind dwelt on this, I clung to the rocks shuddering like a child in mortal fright. The gruesomeness of the situation was enhanced, too, by the eerie shadow of light. Here and there buttress and jutting promontory flushed into rose and shone in gold and amethyst, but these points of radiance only gave a hideous emphasis to the prevailing gloom of the gorge. They were like the ghastly mockeries of a world I had once known, but was never to know again.

I am no judge of how long or how far we had struggled when upon turning a sharp angle we came upon an open space, or circular ledge, of the dimensions of a small room. Here we stopped, our sides heaving like the flanks of a spent hound, and the best of us glad to breathe himself.

Whether by accident or the unsuspected design of those about me, I stood on the outer rim, the very edge of the wall that fell fifty fathoms sheer, the surging, unsounded depths beneath. Under that unaccountable species of fascination which lures a man to gaze on the horrible and awful, I bent forward and looked into the black pit at my feet. With a swimming head I drew back, to feel myself seized roughly from behind. An icy sensation thrilled through me, I gave a great gasp, and my knees knocked violently together. The fearful moment I had been anticipating had come.

They bandaged my eyes, and bound my hands to my sides, and thus made helpless, left me standing. I shut my lips tight and my eyes also, although they were covered, and awaited the fatal thrust and giddy whirl into space. Not a word was spoken. I heard the rustle of garments and the rattle of arms, and away below the sullen, muffled voice of the sea, but other sound there was none. The ill-boding silence was more terrifying than the menacing tongues of a hundred enemies. It was the very extremity of torture to have my captors make their arrangements for disposing of me with such stealthy secrecy.

In the crowding fears and agitations the idea flashed upon me that they meant not only to slay but to torture me. I thought of all I had read about living men being flayed and cut into bits by savages, and my flesh crept and shrank as if at the touch of the knife. It was only by keeping teeth and lips clenched that I managed to hold from venting my agony in shrieks.

To my great astonishment and unutterable relief, the procession began to move on again, I being given the muzzle of a musket to direct my steps.

I was given the muzzle of a musket to direct my steps.

Bruised, cut, bleeding, and panting with fear and fatigue, I stumbled, often causing my guide to curse savagely and threaten to pitch me head foremost down the cliff. I could not help thinking that if he were blindfolded he might go just as clumsily, though I had to keep the opinion guardedly behind my teeth.

Presently there was another brief halt, and I could hear the Arabs in whispered consultation. Then I knew that part of the company went one way and part another, I sticking to my gun-barrel as if it were my sole hope of salvation. Another breathless clamber followed, doubly trying to me in my blinded condition, and in a little while I understood from the free play of the air at last we had reached the top.

I had hardly time to wonder what was coming next, when one of my guards spoke.

"We wish to be rid of thee," he said, bluntly. "Listen well to my words, for they concern thy very life. While we were yet far down the gulf, some said, 'Cut him in two and cast him to the fishes.' Others—and well for thee they prevailed—answered, 'No, rather let him live, if so be he go not to come back. If he return, then shall his blood be upon his own head.' Now we are merciful. We will lead thee to a place of safety some distance hence and there leave thee. Only if for the space of one hour thou triest to free thine eyes from their covering, then as surely as thou dost it thou shalt die ere thou hast time to look twice."

Without waiting for a word from me he gave the order, and we went on again. The ground was broken and uneven, but after the pit sides we had climbed it was like the Queen's highway.

We may have marched for an hour when we stopped. I was made to sit upon a stone. Then they untied my hands, admonishing me to remember the penalty for disobedience in respect to the bandage on my eyes, and having given me my pipes, which in a surprising spirit of generosity had been taken care of, they left me.

I sat there awhile with perfect loyalty, acutely mindful of the injunctions and admonitions I had received. I kept my hand tight on the green bag. In the stress of terror just gone through I had forgotten it, but now that it was returned its touch had for a moment something of the solace of an old friend's presence.

Partly to amuse myself, partly to compute the flight of time, I began to count the seconds, but it proved a weary process and was given up, only, however, to be begun again and again stopped, and yet again resumed, to be finally abandoned in despair. In the usual reckoning an hour is but 60 short minutes—that hour was an eternity. With stoical resolution, though anything but stoical indifference, I tried to sit stockstill, imagining the while a hundred levelled spears at my side ready to be plunged into me at my first movement. The ordeal kept every nerve quaver, every sense in a flutter of dread.

The disciples of Zeus have a pretty doctrine about arming "the obdurate beast with stubborn patience, as with triple steel." I hope they are able to do it in crucial emergencies. To me, seek it as I might, the stubborn patience would not come. In vain I pricked the will, in vain recalled lofty maxims about the duty of bearing pain heroically. It is glorious to shine as a hero, but at times exceedingly difficult. I cannot be of the godlike race, for the harder I strove for fortitude the faster my power of endurance ebbed.

I started and fidgeted, listened, held my breath, shivered, shrank altogether and perspired; the air was full of ominous sounds, and horrible slimy things seemed to be crawling over me. At last the agony of blind suspense became insufferable. Come what might, I would have my eyes free.

With trembling hands and a caution that was amazing in such burning impatience, I raised the bandage and glanced from under its edge, first on one side, then on the other. Seeing no watcher, I tore the cloth off and got to my feet, looking round with more care and deliberation. Not a soul was about. I was alone.

There was just light enough to enable me to discern I was in the middle of a wild desolation of gorges and piled-up cliffs, rising in the dim distance to what appeared to be a range of mountains. More for variety's sake than from any definite object, I took up my pipes and began to walk forward from the sea. But some falls and frequent trippings with sudden glimpses of a yawning world of blackness at my very feet made it plain that to proceed in such a chaos of crags and clefts was to risk my neck at every step. Weary, faint, and in no heart to face unknown dangers, I sat down again, my back against a big stone, to reflect on the new turn affairs had taken.

Hunger fell upon me with the fierceness of a beast of prey. Most people I suppose have felt a sharp craving in their stomach, but mine was an acute pain that soon became a maddening anguish. You are to remember that I had eaten nothing that day, that I was active, and had the edged appetite that comes with a full recovery from sickness when nature is spurring to make up for lost time. Yet all I could do was to tighten my waistbelt and think yearningly of the hard tack of the Bird of Paradise, and dream ineffable dreams of the sumptuousness of home. Let me tell you that they who dine on such fare are not likely to die of repletion. The sting of the sword or the bullet is keen, but give it to me before the inappeasable pang of starvation.

The stars began to come out presently, very large and lustrous, I suppose, to the proper eye, full of poetry. By and by a silver lightness fell on the landscape, and a little later the white moon rose in a sapphire sky, revealing the haggard dreariness of the scene as clearly as if the time were noonday.

I got to my feet, and some strange birds that had their dwelling among the fastnesses of this desert flocked about me in evident curiosity, then flew away, screaming at my invasion of their retreat. No other living creature did I see or hear. Too weak and drowsy to make any effort for succour, I crawled into a shady spot beneath the ledge of a great rock, and in spite of trouble and pain, soon fell asleep.

I awoke near the dawn chilled to the marrow—for the dewy night air in these parts is sharp—and fallen together like an empty sack. The pain of my stomach was excruciating, being for all the world like a living, consuming flame in my inside. To the tortures of hunger, too, was now added that of thirst, and in all the black riven wilderness there was not a drop of water. Nor, what was equally disheartening, was sign of human abode or occupation anywhere to be seen. The temptation was strong to lie down and rest, but as that would be madness if I wanted to save my life, I staggered on once more, ignorant of my direction and in the last ebb of hope.

Weary hours passed—hours full of indescribable anguish of mind and body—without bringing cheer or solace. The sun came out, a huge white hot furnace enveloped in a pale haze of its own heat. The earth blistered and cracked under my eyes; the rocks were scorching it; it seemed as if fire and famine were blackening the land together. A slight wind blew, but it was the breath of the crater or sulphur pit let loose to destroy.

Gasping to suffocation and dreading sunstroke, I hid in a deep cleft. Here I lay awhile in shade, but very soon the sun smote in upon me till the walls were like glowing iron. Crawling out, I sought another refuge, which, in turn, became an oven, forcing me to change. And so for the best part of that day I went from place to place among the rocks, seeking shade, and all the while getting fainter and more parched from want of food and water. Late in the afternoon I resumed my march in sheer desperation. But it was woeful, heart-breaking work. I had got past the stage of acute pain from hunger, but the thirst was a worse agony than ever. Fortunately the hot, noxious wind had fallen about noon, so that I breathed more freely, but it was still the struggle of a dying man. And indeed if relief did not come quickly I should soon cease to be in need of it.

By degrees the country grew less barren and forbidding. Grass began to appear, at first in scanty brown patches, but gradually getting greener and more plentiful. This heartened me a bit, and ere long to my infinite joy I came upon a man herding a flock of goats in a little valley that nestled among the cliffs.

He was mightily astonished at seeing me, and his demeanour at first was none too friendly. But my wretched condition must have touched him, for when I came tottering and rolling down the slope to where he stood, he stepped forward to meet me with words of pity enquiry. I saluted briefly, and appealed to him in Heaven's name to let me have a drink or I should die. In an instant the Christian soul was vigorously milking his best goat. I watched till the pail was half full of the frothing, creamy milk; then, unable to forbear, I snatched it from him and drank till I choked. After slaking myself, I had some dates from his own wallet, and felt wondrously revived, and for his charity he had as grateful thanks as ever came from the heart of man.

When we came to talk, I told him only such parts of my story as I thought he could understand. He was greatly amazed, breaking out into frequent ejaculations at the relation of Abram ben Aden's treachery and the pillaging of the pirates.

"And what is to become of thee?" he asked, suddenly.

"Only God knows that," I answered, "but if thou wilt add to thy goodness by directing me to the nearest town I may perhaps find a way of returning to my own country."

This he gladly did, but before he would consent to my departure I had to take some more milk and dates. Nothing loath, I feasted a second time, the goatherd joining me in token of goodwill. Then, with ceremonious embracings and many vows of amity, we parted.

Rekindled hope is the best of all cordials. I had drunk of it, and now pushed on, a new man, reanimated in body and spirit. In two hours I was climbing a range of hills beyond which lay the town that happened also to be the capital of the province; in an hour more I was on the top, and Moses beholding the promised land could not have gazed forward more wistfully. Pausing for a moment, my eyes shaded with my hand, I looked down upon a verdant plain, dotted here and there with dark palm groves, and the patriarchal flocks and herds of Arabia. Near the further side, half hid by the clustering trees, was the town I wanted to reach. With a fluttering breast I went on again, bounding down the slopes almost as joyously as if I were descending the steep braes above Kilgour.

CHAPTER XIV.

MANY TRYING VICISSITUDES OF FORTUNE.

I was soon swinging light-heartedly along in grateful shade, among the orchards and gardens and tinkling watercourses that skirted the town, a very Eden after the desert I had passed through. The people flocked about me as I went, some eyeing me with darkening brows, some regarding me with simple amazement, others of a deeper curiosity turning in their walk to follow me, and I could hear them debating what kind of outlandish barbarian this could be who had uncountably found his way among them.

I felt very much like a monster or exhibition for the entertainment of the vulgar and the idle. Yet, remembering the necessity of prudence, I was at great pains to be civil. Salaaming and saluting incessantly, I invoked peace and the best blessings of heaven on all and sundry, but the marhabas or welcomes, were disappointingly few. Had I known the full significance of an Arab's failure to return a salutation, I should probably have made more haste to get out of the town than I was now making to get into it. But ignorance is a wonderous preserver of men's spirits.

Judging it best to refrain from asking questions, I pursued my way at a venture through squalid alleys that writhed and twisted like endless snakes, turning upon themselves in eternal windings and circlings, with the sole object, as it seemed, of bewildering and distracting. They led anywhere and everywhere, but dodged a definite conclusion, and were thus no inapt emblem of the tortuous Asiatic mind. The scents were pungent and of that kinds that make one fain to hold one's nose. If these were the "Sabean odours from the spicy shores of Araby the blest," then let it be put on record that, in spite of the mighty authority of Milton, Sabean odours are a great deal pleasanter in imagination than in reality.

Packs of lean, hungry dogs too kept sniffing at my heels in a way that was sorely vexing. There are notoriously ill-conditioned dogs in Turkey and Greece. Constantinople swarms with them. They are worse than the brigands in the mountains of Attica. But of all the despicable, degenerate curs in existence the starving hounds that prowl about Arabian towns are the basest and most degraded. Without owners, greedy partakers of all that is vile and forbidden, "the filthiest beasts that banquet upon offal," despised and maltreated, marauders by inheritance and by necessity, they have long lost every vestige of canine morality.

In contemplating an assault they do not bark at you nor show their teeth. Such honesty might put you on your guard. They sidle up to you with the averted look of incurable depravity, pretending to take no notice of you, yet all the while carefully selecting the juiciest part of your leg. Even when they have selected their point of attack they will not fly at it, but wait patiently for their opportunity. When it comes, presto! their fangs are in your calf, and they are off with the mouthful before you have time to turn. These brutes kept me continually with one eye over my shoulder and the other down by my side, for I was ever afraid of the tooth of a dog. Sometimes the people made a pretence of remonstrating with them, but I think there would have been less sorrow than gladness had I been worried to the bone.

The squat, box-like shops and bazars were littered with a miscellany of goods exceedingly strange to European eyes. Variegated cloth, red and yellow slippers, saffron, sandal wood, glass beads, mirrors, swords, files, razors, ropes, bells, saddles, butter, and various nameless kinds of oil and grease used for anointing the head and body, waterskins, coffepots, brazen pans and kettles, and many other stuffs and trumpery were strewn about in hopeless confusion. Standing by the doors or sitting cross-legged on palmleaf mats in the midst of their wares, waiting with heavy eyes and languid mien for the customers who never appeared to come, were the merchants. One and all they stared hard at me, and most of them came into the street to look after me, with muttered guessings and comments. I have no doubt there were muttered curses as well.

To my surprise the orchards and gardens ran almost continuously into the centre of the town, and who would was apparently free to enter. In variety and richness they surpassed anything I had ever seen, and indeed seemed rather like the concentrated luxuriance of a whole country than the natural growth of a single spot. There were clumps of feathery date trees, Indian palms, pomegranates, orange, apple, apricot, peach, and fig trees. Another tree there was, too, more famous in Arabian song and story than any of these—the balm tree. Like so much that is good and famous, it is not beautiful—in fact, it is ugly and scraggy, and were the eye the sole judge, contemptible, but those who know its virtues think little of its mean appearance.

In striking contrast to the dark olive foliage were the blazing tropical flowers, many of them of inexpressible glory and brilliancy. But what touched me beyond anything else were some clusters of magnificent roses, that flung their fragrance on the air, unmindful of the general noisomeness at times, indeed, making one forget it. The sight of that common English flower, so familiar and so lovely, stirred the emotions as not all the splendours of the Orient could stir them. It was like the greeting of an old friend in a strange land.

In some of the gardens people were drawing water from deep wells with leathern buckets, others scooping it up from slender stone-rimmed watercourses. At sight of such plenty I began to get hungry and thirsty again, and so tempting was the fruit that presently I found myself meditating a robbery. But at every gate I decided to wait till I reached the next, and in this way, a thief at heart, an honest man from fear, I went along, feasting my eyes, but grievously vexing the stomach, which protested ever more and more vigorously. It is an ill experience to be famishing among plenty.

On turning one of the many street corners, full of the thought which most engages a hungry man, I entered a square in which was assembled a great crowd. A glance made it plain that they were holiday-makers. In the midst was a man wearing over the usual shirt a gaudy parti-coloured mantel and a scarlet vest, with wide sleeves like a bishop's gown. His head was fantastically enfolded in a flaming handkerchief, in the voluminous twists of which there were stuck three bobbing peacock feathers. He was seated on a camel as gorgeously caparisoned as himself, and was shouting and gesticulating with many wild grimaces, the people responding to his sallies of wit and distortions of countenance with resounding bursts of merriment.

"A professional story-teller," I said to myself, and it proved I was right.

The fellow seemed master of his business, for all were eager and excited, save only the gaunt, sorrowful camel, which was sunk in a gloom no mirth could brighten. Perhaps, like Harlequin, it was too familiar with jests to be much cheered by them. I had not watched the performance more than a minute when the clown noticed me. He stared for a second in amazement, but quickly recovering the professional insolence he pointed a leering finger at me, calling upon the assemblage to look at the rare curiosity that had opportunely appeared for their entertainment. Like one man they wheeled about and fastened their eyes upon me.

At this I turned quickly on my heel to walk off, considering it the safest policy to get out of the way with as much speed and as little fuss as possible. But the story-teller hurling a stinging gibe at me about my courage (a quality I would let no man make a jest of with impunity), I turned again and faced the throng, my heart already beginning to bristle in my breast. There was a moment's silence, then the buffoon on the camel began a running commentary on my looks, my dress and spirit, enlivening his remarks with witticism that made very free with my feelings and sent the listeners (all save one) into convulsions of laughter. He capped his insults and insolences by inviting his audience to step forward and examine me for themselves.

The next minute the had formed a ring about me, taking care, however, to keep some distance off, as if I might be an animal of uncertain temper. But a perky youth, in rich cloak and many coloured sashes, eager to set an example in temerity and make sport for his fellows, ran up and prodded me in the ribs with his riring-stick. It was wonderful how the old fiery spirit of retaliation came back on me. Quicker than thought I whipped out my pistol and covered the fellow's head. He ducked, dodged and disappeared like magic. Disappointed at his celerity in getting out of sight, I took aim at the clown. He, too, had an antipathy to such target practice, and like a flash was off his camel and hiding among the crowd. A thrilling pause followed as the people, fallen silent, stared in wonder at me, then at one another, then at the camel standing as saturnine and stupid looking as ever, quite unconscious of its master's sudden desertion.

To be Continued.

Assessors' Notice

Town of Chatham,

The Assessors for the Town of Chatham having been duly appointed hereby give notice that any person or body corporate liable to be assessed, or his or their agent, may furnish the assessors with a detailed statement of the real and personal estate and income of such person or body corporate, and every such statement shall be subscribed and sworn to before some Justice of the Peace for the county by the person or agent making the same.

Blank forms of statements may be procured from the assessors.

Dated at Chatham, 2nd of March 1898.

GEORGE STOTHART
SAMUEL WADDLETON } Assessors.
MICHAEL HALEY

Miramichi Foundry,

STEAM ENGINE AND BOILER WORKS,
CHATHAM, N. B.

JOSEPH M. RUDDOCK, - - - PROPRIETOR

Steam Engines and Boilers, Mill Machinery of all kinds; Steamers of any size constructed & furnished, complete.

GANG EDGERS, SHINGLE AND LATH MACHINES, CASTINGS OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS.

CAN DIES.

IRON PIPE VALVES AND FITTINGS OF ALL KINDS.

DESIGNS, PLANS AND ESTIMATES FURNISHED ON APPLICATION

Established 1866.

Dunlap Bros. & Co.,
AMHERST, N. S.

Dunlap, McKim & Downs,
WALLACE, N. S.

DUNLAP, COOKE & CO.,
AMHERST, N. S.

DUNLAP COOKE & CO
MERCHANT TAILORS,
—AND—
GENTLEMEN'S OUTFITTERS
AMHERST.
N. S.

This firm carries one of the finest selections of Cloths including all the different makes suitable for fine trade. Their cutters and staff of workmen employed are the best obtainable, and the clothing from this establishment has a superior tone and finish. An inspection of the samples will convince you that the prices are right.

PAINTS, OILS, VARNISHES AND HARDWARE.

Ready-Mixed Paints, all shades, including the Celebrated
WEATHER AND WATERPROOF,
THE BEST EVER MADE.

School Blackboard Paint.
Gloss Carriage Paint, requires no Varnishing.
Graining Colors, all kinds.
Graining Combs, Dry Colors, all shades.
Gold Leaf, Gold Bronze, Gold Paint.
Stains, Walnut, Oak Cherry, Mahogany, Rose wood, Floor Paints Weather and Waterproof.
Kalsomine all shades.
7 bbls. English Boiled and Raw Oil, Pure
1 " Turpentine.
100 Kegs English White Lead and Colored Paints.
1 bbl. Machine Oil, Extra Good, Neats Foot Harness Oil.
Ready Mixed Metalic Roofing, 92 per cent Iron.
10 Kegs, 100 lbs. each Dry Metalic Roofing, 92 per cent Iron.
Paint and White Wash Brushes.
VARNISHES, Elastic Oak, Carriage, Copal, Demar, Furniture Hard Oil Finish, Pure Shelac, Driers.
Joiners' and Machinists' Tools, a specialty.
Special attention to Builders' Materials in Locks, Knobs, Hinges etc
Sheet Lead and Zinc, Lead Pipe, Pumps.
75 Rolls Dry and Tarred Sheathing Paper.
75 Kegs Wire Nails, $2.45 per Keg.
30 Boxes Window Glass.
20 Kegs Horse Shoes, $3.90 per Keg 15 Boxes Horse Nails $3.00 box.
10 Tons Refined Iron $2.50 per 100 lbs.
Cast Steel, Bellows, Chain, Nuts, Bolts, Washers Grindstones Grindstone Fixtures.
WHITE MOUNTAIN ICE CREAM FREEZERS $1.90, CLOTHES WRINGERS $2.50, DAISY CHURNS $3.75.

Cart and Waggon Axles, Cow Bells, Wire Screen Doors, Window Screens, Green Wove Wire 14c. yd., Barbed Wire Fencing, Counter Scales, Weigh Beams, Steelyards, Carpet Sweepers, Blasting Powder and Fuse, Sporting Powder, Guns, Revolvers. To arrive from Belgium 35 Single and Double Barrel Breech Loading Guns.

Barber's Toilet Clippers, Horse Clippers, Lawn Shears, Accordeons Violins, Bows and Fixings.

FARMING TOOLS, ALL KINDS.

Mower Sections, 70c. doz. Heads, 40c. each, Knife Heads. $3.00.
" " Guards, 35c. each, Rivets, Oilers.

My Stock of General Hardware is complete in every branch and too numerous to mention.

All persons requiring goods in my line will save money by calling on me, as they will find my prices away down below the lowest; prove this by calling.

J. R. GOGGIN.

JUST OPENING.

JUST OPENING

BOOT AND SHOES IN GREAT VARIETY,

SCOTCH AND CANADIAN TWEEDS,

NEWEST MAKES IN DRESS GOODS,

OILCLOTHS, HEARTH RUGS & DOORMATS,

WOOL, BRUSSELS & TAPESTRY CARPETS,

BLACK & COLORED CASHMERES & MERINOS,

ART MUSLINS, CRETONNES & REPPS,

LACE CURTAINS & COUNTERPANES,

LACES, RIBBONS & HAMBURGS,

SILKS IN BLACK, COLORED, SURAH, &

Worsted Coatings,
Black and Blue Serge Suitings,
White and Regatta Shirts,
Ties, Collars, Hosiery
Silk and Linen Handk'fs,
Hats, & Caps, Etc

ALSO A FULL & COMPLETE LINE OF

GROCERIES & PROVISIONS.

J. B. SNOWBALL.

MILLERS' FOUNDRY AND MACHINE WORKS.

RITCHIE WHARF, CHATHAM, N. B.

Successors to Gillespie Foundry.

Established 1852.

Mill, Railway, and Machine Work, Marine Engines, Boiler repairing. Our Brass and Composition Castings are worthy a trial, being noted throughout the country.
All work personally supervised. Satisfaction guaranteed.
Send for estimates before ordering elsewhere.
Mill Supplies, Fittings, Pipe, etc in stock and to order.

JAS. G. MILLER.

ASK FOR

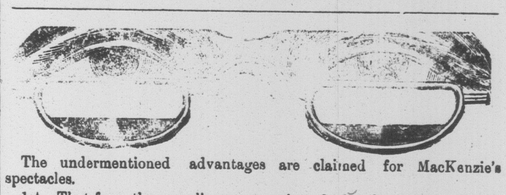
MONARCH
Steel Wire Nails,

THEY NEVER LET GO,
AND TAKE NO OTHERS.

Orders filled at Factory Price, and a Freight Allowance made on lots of 10 kegs and upwards at one shipment.

KERR & ROBERTSON,
SAINT JOHN, N. B.

N. B.—IN STOCK AND TO ARRIVE 100 DOZEN K. & R. AXES.



The undermentioned advantages are claimed for MacKenzie's spectacles.

1st—That from the peculiar construction of the glasses they ASSIST and PRESERVE the sight, rendering frequent changes unnecessary.

2nd—That they confer a brilliancy and distinctness of vision, with an amount of EASE and COMFORT not hitherto enjoyed by spectacle wearers.

3rd—That the material from which the Lenses are ground is manufactured especially for optic purposes, by DR. CHARLES BARDOU'S improved patent method, and is PURE, HARD AND BRILLIANT and not liable to become scratched.

4th—That the frames in which they are set, whether in Gold, Silver or Steel, are of the finest quality and finish, and guaranteed perfect in every respect.

The long evenings are here and you will want a pair of good glassi so come to the Medical Hall and be properly fitted or no charge.

J. D. B. F. MACKENZIE.

Chatham N. B., Sept. 24, 1895.

Miramichi Advance,

CHATHAM. N. B

THE LEADING NORTH SHOR NEWSPAPER. PRINTED EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING.

TERMS ONE DOLLAR A YEAR PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

D. G. SMITH. EDITOR & PROPRIETOR

JOB PRINTING

AT LOW PRICES AND THE SHORTEST NOTICE

ALWAYS ON HAND:—

RAILWAY BILLS, CUSTOM HOUSE FORMS,
FISH INVOICES, BILLS OF EXCHANGE,
MAGISTRATES' BLANKS, NOTES OF HAND,
MORTGAGES & DEEDS, JOINT NOTES,
BILLS OF SALE DRAFTS,
SCHOOL DISTRICT SECRETBRYS BILLS FOR RATEPAYERS,
TEACHERS' AGREEMENTS WITH TRUSTEES,
DISTRICT ASSESSMENT LISTS.

THREE MACHINE PRESSES

and other requisite plant constantly running Equipment equal to that of any Job-Printing office in the Province.

The only Job-Printing office outside of St. John that was awarded both

MEDAL AND DIPLOMA
—AT THE—
DOMINION AND CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION
AT ST JOHN IN 1883

Orders by Mail promptly filled & Satisfaction Guaranteed

CHATHAM
STEAM LAUNDRY AND DYE WORKS.

Following are our Prices for Dyeing. Orders Promptly Attended too. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

PRICE LIST.

DYED		CLEANSED	
SUITS,	$1.25	SUITS,	$1.50
PANTS,	75	PANTS,	50
VESTS,	50	VESTS,	25
OVERCOATS	1.50	COATS,	75
UNDERCOATS,	1.00	OVERCOATS,	1.25

LADIES' WEAR.

DRESSES DYED, WHOLE,		$1.50
DRESSES DYED, RIPPED,		1.25
SKIRTS DYED, WHOLE,		1.00
SKIRTS DYED, RIPPED,		75
WAISTS DYED WHOLE,		50
WAISTS DYED, RIPPED,		25
SHAWLS		50c. to 1.00
CLOUDS,		25c. to 40
SHAWLS, (Berlin,)		40c. to 60
SILK DRESSES,		$1.00 to 2.00
SACQUES,		50c. to 1.00
DRESS GOODS, per yard,		10
WINDOW CURTAINS, per yard		20
FEATHERS DYED		25 to 75
FEATHERS, CLEANSED		10 to 4

GOODS - CALLED FOR - AND - DELIVERED