POOR DOCUMENT

MC2034

TO 'FRISCO WITH AN ICEBERG

By Otto B. Senga

(Copyright, 1907, by Homer Sprague.)

The Overland Limited was already moving. Carlton sprang aboard, waving aside the attentive porter, and balanced his way down the aisle of the Pullman.

The day had been one made rush since early morning, and he was nervous and irritable.

That the pertinacity of a garrulous friend at the station had nearly made him miss his train did not tend to lessen his mental vision or to soothe his irritability.

Looking upward for his number, he almost spoke aloud the words, "Ah, here it is!" before he noticed that the section was already occupied, and by quite the prettiest girl he had ever seen.

She glanced up at him with calm, impersonal eyes, and resumed her reading with what seemed to Carlton inhospitable frigidity.

He felt foolish. He wished now that he had waited for the porter. He held his ticket conspicuously in his hand and looked inquiringly at the young lady.

The young lady turned the leaf of her magazine with serene deliberation.

He put his hand up to his mouth and coughed, then his face reddened as he realized that he was acting like a schoolboy.

"I beg your pardon," to his amazement his voice sounded husky and undecided, "I find this is my number. Can I sit down?"

He could have cursed his ridiculous, unnatural embarrassment, and the grammatical slip that gave the frigid one the opportunity to reply coolly, "I do not know. You should be the better judge of your ability in that direction."

And this with unsmiling lips, and eyes that were not raised above the suit case in his hand!

Her voice was clear, sweet and well-modulated—the voice of a woman of refinement and culture.

The disdained porter came to his rescue, and Carleton actually fell into the seat with a heavy awkwardness wholly at variance with his accustomed ease and grace of movement.

In pushing his suit case into position beside the one already occupying the floor space, a sudden jolt of the car threw him fairly into the girl's lap, and he failed to regain his balance until that imperturbable young person had had sufficient time to request sweetly, "Porter, will you be kind enough to remove—ah, thank you," as two strong black hands assisted the chagrined and purple-faced Charlton to his seat.

He was now desperate, furious, raging inwardly—angry with himself, with the porter, with that calm-eyed girl who continued to read in such utter oblivion, with the offending suit case, with the object of his trip, and with the man who had sent him.

He longed to go to the smoker, but with new distrust of his own powers of locomotion, he moodily decided to remain in his seat.

"Besides," he thought defiantly, "if I go, she will think I am afraid of her—and I'm not, nor of any other woman!"

He bought a magazine, and tried to read, but the fair face of his vis-a-vis persistently presented itself between his eyes and the printed page.

He glanced at her, and then looked up and down the car—not another woman there.

"Just my luck," he muttered, to have drawn a cake of ice in the lottery of car company. I ought to make an entry in my notebook, 'From Kansas City to 'Frisco with an iceberg.'

He actually made the entry, smiled at the conceit, and settled back more easily against the cushions. His thoughts dwelt with exhilaration, mingled with a strange uneasiness on his unpremeditated trip, and what might be the outcome of it.

Suppose it should be his fate to fail in some such unlooked-for way as—he compressed his lips firmly. He'd carry that case to 'Frisco and use the contents as his superiors had directed, or—he almost laughed aloud as the boyish phase, "die in the attempt," came to his mind.

He was half-ashamed of his forebodings—his errand was simple enough, there wasn't the lightest possibility that Goodwin's unlucky experience would be repeated in his case, and he had nothing to do but to enjoy the trip. If this pretty girl were at all companionable, now—

Carleton was an attractive young fellow, fresh-lipped and clear-eyed. He was blessed with social instincts, and possessed the faculty of making friends.

He watched for opportunities and made polite proffers of several little train courtesies that might well have been accepted, but which were either ignored or icily declined.

She takes no chances of making undesirable acquaintance," he thought grimly, "well, I won't even look at her again this evening. Perhaps in the morning she'll be better natured."

Yet he knew it was not ill-nature that prompted the girl's attitude, for she was graciously affable to the porter, and made smiling response when addressed by the pleasant old gentleman across the aisle.

In the morning, a cherry remark on the change in the temperature caused by the greater altitude met with brief, uncompromising reply.

He was piqued at the failure.

"I wonder what's the matter with me," he thought resentfully, "do I look like a villian, or a cheap 'masher,' I'd like to know!"

He noted with dismay the huge stack of magazines piled on the opposite seat.

"No time for conversation — she means me to observe. She needn't worry—I won't speak again, unless she speaks first," which seemed so very unlikely that he smiled at the suggestion.

He held himself firmly to this resolve, nor, indeed, did he have any encouragement to do otherwise.

Hour after hour passed, and without rudely staring, he watched the lovely face as she sat before him, her slender, erect body swaying lightly in accord with the motion of the train, and reminding him of some beautiful caryatid—as silent and as unresponsive.

Presently the conviction began to grow upon him that the girl was not wholly a stranger to him—that he had met her, or at least had seen her before.

"If not in actuality, then I have met her in spirit," he decided to his own satisfaction, "there is no lack of warmth beneath that ice, and — she'd probably annihilate me if she knew what was in my heart — but I believe I've found the one girl — for me, and I'll—oh, where have I seen her?"

Puzzled and eager he was now gazing directly at the girl, as half-unconsciously, and without meaning to address her, he said aloud, "I know I must have seen you before — somewhere!"

She closed her book and turned toward him, half-smiling, yet there was nothing in the smile to reassure the now thoroughly abashed Carleton.

"You really look," eyeing him compassionately, "as if you might be capable of something more original than that. I read the newspapers occasionally. Your methods actually savor of antiquity."

He flushed hotly under the implied classification.

"Oh, I say," he broke out eagerly and awkardly, like a boy. "I didn't mean anything like that—I wasn't trying to 'scrape acquaintances,' honestly. I know I don't know you. It's only the oddest, most tantalizing resemblance—I can't seem to—" he ended dreamily, his eyes half closed in a futile effort to force an unresponsible memory.

THRUSTING HER OWN CASE FORWARD WITH THE OTHER FOOT, "YOU CAN'T HAVE MINE," SHE CONTINUED.

She smiled again, this time in evident enjoyment of his perplexity.

"Sometimes," gravely, "it is easier to trace a resemblance through the profile," and she turned an exquisitely tinted cheek to his inspection.

"Thank you greatly," with gravity equal to her own, "you are very kind."

He prolonged his admiring gaze until she faced him again with frank curiosity in her eyes.

"No, it didn't help me in the least, and yet, pardon the repetition, I know I must have seen you before somewhere."

It may occur to you later," she remarked kindly, but dismissingly, and tok up her book again.

Carleton was too wise to disregard the "no trepassing" warning, and she did not address him again that evening.

He waked in the morning with the conviction strengthened that she was the girl and with bright anticipations of a happy day in her company.

But the thaw of the evening was evidently only temporary and not to be counted upon as a precedent, for her reply to his morning greeting was of the most discouraging civility.

The porter came to her seat with a before-breakfast cup of tea.

"Why does the train stop so long here?" she asked pleasantly, "it seems to be a very small place."

The man glanced from the window.

"It is Carlin, Miss. Carlin is a junction. The delay may be—"

The delay was explained on the instant. The doors were thrown open at both ends of the car, and eight or ten masked and heavily-armed men rushed in.

Two or three of the passengers sprang to their feet, but one look at the pointing weapons of the bandits was sufficient.

One woman and a dozen unarmed men, taken completely by surprise, could hardly produce any argument to refute this glittering array of steel.

"Throw your travelling-bags into the aisle!" came a stern command.

Carleton and the girl were the only ones who hesitated.

A second more, and the leader stood beside them. It seemed to Dave Carleton that he lived centuries in that brief space of time. The fate of the discredited Goodwin menaced him. The story that Goodwin had told was reasonable compared with the explanation that he would have to give upon his return to his employers.

But no, he would never voluntarily give up that case—a man can die but once!

"Put out your case!" said the leader, quietly.

The pressure of cold steel to the temple has a persuasive eloquence beyond power of words, and Carleton stooped for his case.

He received a sharp kick on his hand from a well-booted foot, and the girl cried in a shrill, childish treble, "you let my case alone—give him your case if you want to," thrusting her own case forward with the other foot, "but don't you dare touch mine!"

Amazed and silent, Carleton pushed her case out into the aisle.

"You can't have mine," she continued, looking fearlessly up into the masked face, and putting both small feet firmly on Carleton's case. "I've got my costume for the fancy-dress ball at Sacramento tomorrow night in this case, and I'm not going to give it up to you or anybody else!"

The childish, petulant tones were wholly unlike the smooth, cultivated voice that Carleton had so admired, and he could only stare in wonder.

The man smiled behind his mask. This was the only lady in the car, and his followers were loaded with booty secured from other passengers.

"Will you dance with me at the ball, pretty one, if I leave you your case?"

She smiled radiantly.

"Sure, three times, if you're a dandy dancer!"

Her face, voice, manner and words were those of a careless, rollicking girl of sixteen.

He leaned toward her.

"I'd risk my neck to dance with you, little once, and I'll be there! What is your name?"

Carleton's heart gave a great bound of fear. His initials were on the case in plain view of the bandit, though hidden from the girl.

"Dora Virginia Channing," she redances for you!" and she waved her dances for you!' 'and she waved her hand in merry farewell as the man hurried away.

In the car confusion reigned. The thieves had taken every case and travelling-bag and the money sack of the conductor.

The whole transaction had occupied but three or four minutes. Similar reports came from the other cars.

A number of passengers left the train and joined the posse hastily formed to pursue the robbers. No one had been hurt, and the train soon proceeded on its way.

"Dora Virginia Channing" leaned back against the cushions, pale and trembling.

Under cover of the excitement and confusion, Carleton leaned forward and gently touched her trembling hand.

"Don't faint, please, Miss Channing, now that it's all over! What was in your case?"

"Nothing of value," she answered, trying to smile, "and I did not dare claim but one."

"You have saved me from—you don't know what you've done for me, Miss Channing," earnestly, "you can't know what you've done for me! Won't you let me tell you who I am, and—"

"I know who you are," gently, "you are David V. Carleton. You are private secretary to John Hazelton, president of the Western Water Pipe Company of Kansas City, but on this trip you are acting as paymaster. You have a large sum of money in gold in that suitcase with which to hasten the work on the big contract which the Water Pipe Company has secured in San Francisco. It would be a pity for them to meet with a second disappointment!"

Her smile came readily enough now, as she looked into his astonished face.

"You know then, about—about the other man who was sent out?"

"Who was 'set upon by thieves and robbers in the devastated city,' and who returned to Kansas City with his arm in a sling and blackened, bandaged eye? Yes, I heard about him," her lip curled contemptuously.

"And yet, Miss Channing, but for you I should be in a worse position than he—my experience would remind one of stage-coach days. Goodwin's story was doubted, mine—"

"You forget, there are witnesses to this occurrence. But, for a moment, my thought was the same as yours—that the story you would have to relate would be even more unbelievable than Goodwin's, and my one impulse was to save your case!"

"But, Miss Channing, how did you know the value of mine?"

"Oh, I know much more than that! Let me see," teasingly. "I know that you offered your services to Mr. Hazelton—said you could 'carry a message to Garcia,' didn't you?"

Carleton gasped and blushed.

"I cannot imagine, Miss Channing, how any one—"

"I am not Miss Channing, Mr. Carleton, not even 'Dora Virginia.' I am Eleanor Hazelton—your president is my uncle."

She watched his face as it brightened comprehendingly.

"Now you understand the resemblance that so puzzled you?"

"Indeed I do!" he cried, "you are very like Mr. Hazelton. Why didn't I see it before! Your uncle has been more than kind to me since I have been with him. Miss Hazelton, it would have been a bitter blow to me if I had failed in this work he has entrusted to me."

"Uncle has great confidence in you, Mr. Carleton. He says you are throughly dependable."

Carleton flushed with pleasure at the praise.

"And yesterday he said, 'There is something very fine and clean about Dave Carleton as if his morals as well as his body had a daily plunge bath'!"

Carleton laughed enjoyably—the remark was so entirely characteristic of the man.

Then he said soberly, "I hope I may always reserve that, Miss Hazelton!"

"He has talked so much of you at home that I became interested, and—and I have seen you several times. I go to Uncle's office through the private entrance—I've often seen you in the outer office."

Unconsciously Carleton pressed his hand against his side—his heart was in such a tumult that he lost her next words. Talk about the subtle sympathy of kindred souls! Talk about spiritual affinity and love at sight! Why he'd have to hold himself as in a vice to keep from proposing to her before they reached 'Frisco!

"Uncle John had said several times," she went on smoothly, and Carleton braced himself—he had already learned to recognize the sparkle of mischief in her clear, dark eyes, "that he meant to bring you out to the house sometime—when you 'had got a little more salt rubbed into you'!"

The young fellow winced, but her low laugh was so sweetly infectious and so free from malice, that he could but join in her merriment.

"When he told me that you were to take this trip, I thought—I thought I'd like to see how you appeared before the salting process!"

Carleton could afford to laugh now.

"I was at the station Wednesday, before the train was made up. It was more than I had counted on, however, when you came to my section to calim a seat."

The thought of what he meant to calim when they reached 'Frisco made Carleton's brain reel, but he knew the time was not yet.

"And you did it so gracefully, too!" she added.

"I know, even to grovelling on your knees, with your head in my lap—and without an introduction!"

"I did my best to introduce myself," defensively, "but you wouldn't even look at me, nor let me speak to you. You actually froze me! See here," he handed her his open note-book.

She read the entry, and colored

"I didn't know, you see, the exact amount of salt you might require. I knew nothing about you previous to your coming to Uncle John's.'

The came Carleton's golden hour. He told her of himself, his life, his free, happy boyhood, of the death of his father, of the years of struggle that followed and the happiness when he could "make things easier for mother," and choking a bit, for this last was yet new—of the passing away of the gentle, little mother.

"I'm alone in the world now, Dora Virginia," with pleading voice and eyes. "I have no one in all the world—but you."

She did not speak, but her tender, wistful, maternal smile thrilled him as no other words could have done.

Presently she said, amusingly, and as if half in jest. "It is very strange, but I felt it quite in the line of my duty to exercise a sort of guardianship over you until you reached 'Frisco, and could deposit that—"

"Oh, Dora Virginia," he interrupted softly. "I can't deposit my heart, and that is—"

"The next stop is Reno," she remarked calmly, rising, "and at Reno you can wire to the company that you and yours—meaning the case, Mr. Carleton—are safe. Uncle will learn of the hold-up, and be anxious about you."

Carleton rose, too, and faced her with beseeching eyes and detaining hand.

"One 'hold-up' is sufficient for today, Mr. Carleton, and—and," her eyes met his levelly, and the light in them was very sweet and true, "and I don't care to discuss personal affairs on the train!"

Carleton passed from the car without speaking.

A minute later he appeared at the door and beckoned to her.

She went forward obediently.

"The train will stop here five minutes. I thought you might like to walk on the platform.

He stepped down and turned holding up his hands to her assistance. She drew back, hesitatingly and blushed.

He comprehended instantly.

"I won't say a word, Dora Virginia, honest! It shall be that we are still 'on the train.'"

She gave a quick glance around, held down both hands, and as he lifted her from the platform kissed him!

It was yet ten hours to 'Frisco.

ANOTHER BIT OF EXPERT TESTIMONY.

"No," said the beautiful girl, "I cannot be yours."

"Why not?" he demanded, with a good deal of dignity.

"I don't think it would be wise for me to become the wife of a man who—please don't ask me to explain it. I do not wish to hurt your feelings."

Folding his arms across his breast and assuming his proudest look, he said:

"I must insist that you finish what you were going to say."

"Well, then, if you will have it, I am afraid you have an exaggerated ego. The next time you ask a girl to be your wife don't do it as if you thought you were conferring a favor upon her."—Chicago Record-Herald.

A MARRIAGE WARNING.

In Germany all marriages have to be contracted before a register previous to the ceremony in church, which is optional. The law requires public notice to be given of the match, and this notice is generally exhibited in a box hung up at the town hall or other municipal building. The following official announcement appeared lately in a small town: "From today there is fixed at the town hall the new box, in which all those who intend to enter the married state will be hung."

NOT LABOR LOST.

The safe bore a paper stating that there was nothing of value within. Nevertheless the burglar blew the receptacle open, finding the statement correct. "Well," he remarked, gathering up his tools, "it's worth something to ascertain that there are still people who tell the truth."

WHEN WOMAN GUIDES THE PLOT

By H. L. Doolittle

(Copyrighted, 1907, by P. C. Eastment.)

The unusual is ever the most attractive. From his assortment of morning mail Bower first of all selected the one unbusiness like enevelope and hastily tore it open.

"My dear Jimmy"—he read softly, with rising elation.

"On Monday evening next, April the first, I am planning a little heart surprise party in honor of little sister's birthday. It won't be complete without one of her best friends, so please cut everything and come. I should have let you know sooner had I not expected to see you at the club reception last night. Where were you—out with the other girl? Anyway, Monday evening without fail:

"Your sincere friend,
"Grace Louis Elston.

"March 27, 1906."

"It wouldn't do to miss Marjorie's birthday—in memory of three years ago, if for no other eason," he meditated.

"Too bad she had to kick up such a fuss over nothing. How was I to blame? She must have wakened up, or I never should have been invited. I wonder"—but at that moment the pile of business letters caught his eye reprovingly.

Arriving early at the Elston home, he found the apartment ablaze with hearts, large ones adorned the curtains and electroliers, while smaller tokens of the occasion were strewn about in picturesque profusion. Above the main doorway hung a flying cupid, prince of romance.

The early arrivals had formed into interested groups. More than once Bower thought he heard the mention of some engagement, but upon drawing nearer he was met by a sudden change of subject and what seemed half-startled glances. At last he cornered his hostess.

"What does a heart party usually mean?" she parried with a laugh that jarred strangely on his nerves. "Oh, there's Mr. Stenwood. I must see that he meets some of the out-of-towners," and she was gone.

Just then Marjorie entered. "Little sister," as he had once called her, looked very much grown up tonight. Bower was among the first to press forward with congratulations. "How many is it this time?" he quizzed in well-feigned ignorance. "Let's see, three years ago it was nineteen; this time you throw double twos—sign of good luck."

She smiled in some embarrassment. "You have too good a memory, Jim. Can't you ever forget? After the teens, a girl isn't so proud of her age."

He made way for the others, with a tingling sensation of loss. After all, had it been so much her fault three years ago? At the other side of the room he caught sight of Miss Sherwood beckoning to him with parted lips. Mechanically he crossed to her side.

"I was never so stumped in my life," confided his companion. "You are an old friend of the family, Mr. Bower—did Miss Elston tell you before tonight?"

"I was about as much in the dark as any one," he evaded.

"And did you see the ring?" she rattled on. "It's a perfect beauty!"

Jim smiled to hide his suspicion. Those best wishes—were they as innocently attached to her birthday as he had supposed? He tried to recall her new friends, but none seemed to fit the case.

"Well, if you can't tell me any more about the man than that, I guess I'll hunt up some one who can." Miss Sherwood disappeared with a parting shot: "I always supposed you were the right bower in that game."

Miss Elston was passing the tally cards. "The head table is up there," she indicated, "and the booby at the other end. As there are two people short, the poorest couple at the last table will have to drop out each time until the next change. You'll find a consolation cozy corner in the conservatory."

Starting at the third table, Jim slowly advanced to the head and then as suddenly dropped to the other end. Marjorie was already there.

"Unlucky in cards——" she laughed.

"You might have given a fellow a little warning," he grieved, "sort of chance to renew his option." But the sound of the bell cut short the conversation.

For the next ten minutes he played atrociously, now heaping hearts upon her score, now adding needlessly to his own. The other pair exchanged knowing glances. He couldn't have made a plainer bid for the cozy corner. Yet Marjorie seemed oblivious.

"Now tell me all about it," began Jim a few minutes later.

Marjorie hesitated.

"There isn't so much to tell," she began slowly at lats. "Clinton is a distant cousin of mine. He cares for me and I care for him. He is well off—and generous—and good looking." She weighed each winning quality with a deliberation that hurt. "And above all he knows his own mind. Why shouldn't I love him?" she demanded turning suddenly to her companion.

"Oh, don't mind me tonight," he deprecated. "It's just this: I can seem to realize what it all means to me. We did have such good times once Marjie."

She started at the sound of her nickname, so dearly loved of old. "We were children then," reflectively.

"And you promised to give me first chance if any else came along," he pursued drawing closer.

"Did I really? How foolish of me," she laughed. "Yet we were children through it all. We even scrapped like children at the finish."

"Mostly my fault," he owned.

Her laughing eyes glanced up to his.

"No, all your fault," she corrected.

"Marjie, do you really love him?" demanded Jim.

She started violently.

"Why, the idea—what a question! Here I came out for a friendly little talk with you, and you are proving a regular inquisitor. Do you suppose I shall ever marry a man I don't love? Not much!"

His arm crept softly around her waist.

"Haven't any regard for honor?" she entreated. "We mustn't—I mean you mustn't forget——"

"Honor," repeated Jim, slowly; "no, what do I care for honor if I lose you, Marjie? Can't you see that I've loved you all the time and that it was just my infernal jealousy and pride that kicked up the trouble? Yes I suppose we were children then—for children never stop to appreciate their happy comradeship till too late. But couldn't we be children again, Marjie—you and I—while all the rest are growing up—Do you remember it was four years ago tonight that I met you at the Preston's box party?"

He drew her closer to him. Everything favored the contrite lover. The fragrance of the hothouse plants blended into a heavy perfume. The Japanese lanterns glowed softly with warm color harmony.

.Mfiob-mhdreffiLhowed s

He gently turned her face from the shadow to the softly glowing light.

"Do you really love me, Marjie?" he repeated.

With a gesture of impatience—or was it of fright—she arose and threw open a window. As she stood gazing into the night a distant hurdy-gurdy struck up the much-worn "Good Old Summertime." He joined her.

"Do you remember the first time we heard it together, down on the Jersey shore—Marjie?"

"Do I! Oh, what was I saying! It isn't fair," she implored.

Jim turned unsteadily from the freshening breeze to the heavy fragrance within. "Well, I guess it's good-by, Marjie." He held out his hand.

"Oh, why couldn't I—?" she breathed.

He snatched her to him. "Marjie, look at me."

Slowly she raised her eyes, then as suddenly buried her face in her hands.

"Oh, how could you!" she gasped with a frightened cry.

Gently he stroked her hair. "I'll go away and wait if it will do any good," he began feverishly, "if you'll—ah, hang that engagement. Others have discovered their mistake and broken off before it was too late. Will it do any good if I wait? Tell me, Marjie; I must know."

Unresisting, yet shaking violently, she rested her head against his shoulder, but only for an instant. There was a sound of moving chairs and approaching voices.

"May I come around tomorrow night?" he urged as she turned to the room.

She nodded carelessly, for steps were close at hand.

"We were just looking for you, Marjorie," said her sister. "It's time to cut the birthday cake. What has kept you two has-beens so busy out here? You'll be talked about."

"I was just outlining my future plans," answered Jim, following the girls to the cardroom.

* * *

"You're perfect dears, both of you," Marjorie was saying to Grace and Clinton an hour later. "Jimmy's such a dog in the manger. I knew he cared for me but that he'd never come to the point unless some one else butted in. It was such a joke to see how everybody thought Clinton was engaged to little me when big sister was it the whole time."

Grace sleepily consulted her watch.

"All Fools' day is past," she commented. "Suppose you return my ring. From my first glimpse into the conservatory I should judge that yours will arrive in a day or two."

FROM MINIMUM TO MAXIMUM

By Wm. F. Bryan

(Copyrighted, 1907, by M. M. Cunningham.)

Out of the night came the sound of galloping hoofs and the staccato bark of small arms. Little Bradley, who had arrived at the Shaw ranch that evening on his first visit West, promptly dropped under the billiard table. The others, to whom it was an old story, glanced out of the window and went on with their game.

"Looks like a part of the B 4 outfit," remarked Callendar carelessly as he chalked his cue. "Come on out, Bradley, they're merely some joyous, cowpunching souls on their evening out. Going down to the Palace, I imagine."

Bradley, red both from exertion and chagrin, emerged from beneath the table and picked up his cue. "I thought that people out here had quit those fool tricks," he explained, his teeth still chattering.

"They have, except for special occasions. But when they do turn loose they generally give us a salute in passing."

"The Palace is that drinking place down the road?"

"Just that. You see," explained Callendar, "when Col. Shaw bought his ranch, there was one quarter section he could not get hold of; owned by a stubborn brute of a fellow who would not let go. That was the foundation of the town of Minimum."

"Funny name," commented Bradley.

"That's why they took it. The original holder has been dead some years now, but the town goes on. You see it's nearer the mines by ten miles than the railroad town, and between the miners and the cowboys, things are kept lively."

"They don't like the colonel because he objects to the hell-holes they run, almost at his door, and when things are mussed up, they generally ride past and give us a salute. It's only once or twice that the shots have come through. As a rule they fire into the air."

Some one called Bradley to make his shot, and the matter was not again taken up until late that evening, when Bradley and his host sat chatting in the smoking room, and the guest good naturedly told the story of his fright.

"I'd give half a million to have that collection of dives moved away," said Col. Shaw bitterly. "I suppose when the railroad comes it will be still worse."

"The L. C. L. cutoff?" asked Bradley. "Are they coming through here?"

"Right past the town," assented the colonel. "I think I shall have to give up the idea of living here. I had hoped to puy up all the land and have the finest place around here in my old age."

"How much are you really willing to spend?" demanded Bradley. "I mean business."

"And I meant the half million. I offered old Pete $300,000 for the quarter before the town grew up, when he just had a little saloon down in one corner."

Bradley gravely put out a hand so white and slender that men seldom anticipated the strenght of his grip. "I'll do it and make a profit in the end," he announced.

Col. Shaw shook hands gravely enough, but he smiled beneath his heavy mustache. A six footer himself, he had all the big man's contempt for the little fellow. How could Bradley with his five foot seven, conquer where his six foot two had failed?

But he rather liked Bradley in spite of his handicap of size. Of course, he was impossible as a suitor for Nancy's hand, though personally he was a good sort of chap.

The following morning Bradley strolled down to the Palace for a drink and in ten minutes he had picked up an acquaintance with the proprietor. That evening at the dinner table his announcement that he found Pete Buckley rather a companionable sort of chap created an even greater sensation than had his performance of the night before.

"He didn't throw you out?" cried Col. Shaw in amazement.

"Not a bit of it," said Bradley comfortably, blissfully ignorant of the fact that the colonel himself had been subjected to that indignity, as well as all and sundry of his previous guests who had strayed into the place. "We had a couple of bottles of champagne and quite a long chat."

All the guests were regarding Bradley curiously, but that did not effect Bradley. He was chatting with Nancy, and he did not even hear the colonel's muttered explanation:

"He was so little they were ashamed to hurt him."

Bradley's visit was the first of several during the week and when he started back to town it was with a bottle of "Buckley's Best" (which was very bad indeed) in his travelling bag and a hearty send-off from the "regulars."

He was back again in a couple of weeks, and the colonel regarded curiously the smile of contentment that played about his lips when Minimum was mentioned. Bradley refused to divulge any of his plans and diverted discussion by the announcement that the L. C. L. had decided to run the line three miles further to the south.

The statement was received with incredulity until Bradley pointed out the advantages to be gained, and the colonel sighed contentedly. Not only would the line leave his property untouched, but Minimum would not be a railroad town.

Down at Minimum the news was received with less placidity. Buckley promptly decided that it was the colonel's work, and was for immediate extermination of his neighbor. Only Bradley's arguments induced him to abandon the plan, and when his excitement had cooled somewhat he and Bradley went into executive session.

"That evening as Bradley strolled in to dinner the smile had broadened and he loked pityingly at young Callendar, who was generally supposed to be the colonel's choice for son-in-law.

It was when the others had gone off to play billiards that he dropped into the library, where the colonel sat writing.

"It's going to cost you about thirty thousand and two half sections of good land," he announced. "Will that be all right?"

"Which half sections?" queried the colonel.

Bradley indicated them on the map.

"I'll deed them to you tomorrow," agred the colonel. "How did you do it?"

"Sympathized with Buckley," explained Bradley. "Told him it was a shame that the line of the road was transferred south (without explaining that it took me a week to argue my uncle into changing the route, Uncle Jim's president of the road, you know.) Then I pointed out that we could get some land to the south where we could spread out as we never could in Minimum, and I undertook to induce you to give up the land.

"Then I volunteered the promise that you would duplicate the town buildings on the new site as a bonus and Buckley gets the extra quarter section for more town lots. He's so profoundly grateful that he wants to take me in as a partner."

"And all this has taken you less than three weeks," said the colonel, admiringly. "Why man, I've worked for twelve years to get that quarter section."

"By force alone ye shall not conquer,'" quoted Bradley softly. "Even we little fellows have our uses, colonel. I guess I'll see if there's a chance to get into the game in the billiard room. We can fix up the titles and the contracts in the morning."

He strolled out, but the colonel did not resume his work. He wheeled about, starting into the fire.

It was a twelve mile drive to the county seat where the papers were recorded and as they drove home in the twilight of the next evening, the colonel reined his horse in front of Minimum. Across the front of the palace was an oilcloth sign which read:

"On or before July 1
This hull town will
Remove
to
Maximum
Three miles down the road."

"My name," chuckled Bradley, as the horses moved on. "Suppose we celebrate the Fourth by making a bonfire of the town?"

"That'll be a good site for you to build when you marry Nancy," chuckled the colonel. "That is, if you still want her."

"If?" echoed Bradley. "It was to gain her that I worked so hard."

"You've earned her," assured the colonel. "I'm proud of you, my boy."

PRECAUTIONS OF OLD TIME DOCTORS.

It was formerly the practice among physicians to carry a cane having a hollow head, the top of which was gold, pierced with holes like a pepper box. The top contained a small amount of aromatic powder or of snuff, and on entering the house or room where a disease supposed to be infectious prevailed, the doctor would strike his cane on the floor to agitate the powder and then apply it to his nose; hence all the old prints of physicians represent them with canes to their noses.