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"Love in the Wilds"
—OR—
The Romance of a South African Trading Station.

CHAPTER XXXII.
THE WATCHER.

CHAPTER XXXIII.
Let's take the instant by the forward top—SHAKESPEARE.
A good wit will make use of everything—IBID.

"DEFENSE, NOT DEFIANCE."

Cecil, when he heard Laurence's words and saw the ominous smile that accompanied them, turned pale and, with a low cry of fear, ran toward them.

"Oh, Master Laury, what is going to happen? Are they going to attack the house? Oh, Laury, don't get into trouble through me—oh, pray don't! It's all my fault," and half in tears, he wring his hands. "I'm always a nuisance to everybody. Master, let me go out to them and tell them it was all my fault; and that I'll do whatever they like, if they won't fight."

Mr. Stewart laughed. "Go 'long you, silly," he said. "They've got the mulligrubs and 'o'd find something to pick a bone over if it wasn't you. Though I haven't heard yet what it was all about."

Cecil covered his face with his hands. "Oh, dear—oh, dear!" he sobbed; "there never was such an unlucky boy as I am! Oh, dear!"

Laurence, who had been leaning against the wall with folded arms, looked up from his examination of the floor.

"What was it about Cecil?" he asked, kindly.

Then Cecil plucked up courage and told them how he had seen Tim sneak into the armory and steal the revolver.

The effect of the recital upon Mr. Stewart was something extraordinary. He ripped out a huge oath, turned purple, and swore that he'd shoot the skunk if the farm was to be burned over his head for it.



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"Steal my revolver, will you, Master Tim?" he exclaimed, striding up and down the room. "By the living fingo, I'll riddle you through and through like a colander! Cecil, you go up into the armory. Laury, I want a word with you."

Cecil left the room, and Mr. Stewart said, angrily: "I didn't want to show it before the youngster, but I'm clean riled. The darned skunk, to steal my revolver and then cuff the boy for his pluck in telling him of it! Laury, I'll have my revenge on him and the lot of them. I'm thinking I shall get a very good excuse for it. See there again—they've moved off."

Laurence uttered an exclamation of satisfaction. "Thank Heaven!" he said; "they have cooled down."

Mr. Stewart laughed a mocking laugh. "Don't you be deceived," he said. "You don't know them as well as I do. That quiet walk off of theirs means mischief. They've gone to plan it out in a regular scientific manner, depend upon it. Now, if they had come hedging up to the front here, and speeched and threatened, and all the rest of it, I should have said there was a very good chance of its blowing over; but this quiet walk off tells me they mean mischief."

"What do you intend doing?" asked Laury, watching the men as, still talking and gesticulating, they retreated toward the stables. "I'll tell you," said the settler. "The upper part of this place can be barricaded; that heavy frame-work on the landing lets down with a pulley and stops the way to the armory and upstairs rooms. I had it made on purpose, for I fancied when I came here that some time or other we might be troubled with this sort of thing and such a little barricade would be useful."

Laurence nodded. "You forget," he said, "that, though the barricade may shut them from us, they can smoke us out."

"They can, but they won't," said the settler. "They'll be afraid. Long Will and the rest of them would see the flames—you can see for miles in this clear air—and would come at once to the rescue. Nor trust them for a little artifice. They won't burn us out, or, at least, if they do it will only be as last resource. The frame-work is plated with iron, and there are little gun holes, through which we could fire a string of bullets upon the stairs. So much for the defense. Now, they won't commence until night, because this sort of fun fares better with them in the dark—so we'll just get a little prepared."

Laurence nodded sadly. "I'd give my worthless skin to avert all this from you and the farm," he said, with a sigh.

Mr. Stewart held out his hand. "I know it, Laury," he said. "I know it; but 'pon my soul, I'm so riled at that rascal's cursed impudence that I wouldn't miss him and a thousand head in the bargain. But to go on," he continued, hurriedly, his eyes twinkling, "as he resumed his shiny-top-up and down the room. "We must appear as if all was right and above board and that we suspect nothing. You must go down to the stables smoking a pipe. Try and get them into conversation

if you can while you're grooming the black. When you've done him sidget about his fetlock, and ask any of them for the shearing scissors. They're sure to say they haven't got one—if they answer you at all—because I happen to have the only pair there is in the place in the armory; then say you'll go up for 'em, and start; but if you suddenly change your mind, go back, and muttering something about saving time, take the black out, and just as if you meant to trim him in the yard here, bring him up and get him safe into the court—he's pretty quiet, isn't he?"

"He will do anything I tell him, save speak," said Laurence, who was adding within his mind to this outline of Mr. Stewart's and planning out an elaborate defense.

"Well, perhaps you could bring him into the hall?"

"Yes," said Laury, "and get the roan and the chestnut at the same time."

"Without exciting their suspicion?"

"I think so," said Laury, thoughtfully.

"That's the style," said the settler. "We'll give them a drubbing yet, the vagabonds! Oh, what I'd give to have Long Will and the rest of them here! We'd drop every mother's son of them as dead as a nail before the first quarter of an hour had turned!"

Laurence frowned. "I am no assassin," he said, sternly, "and will take no man's life until occasion warrants it; but if one of them fires upon the farm their blood will be upon their own heads."

"That's it," said Mr. Stewart; "that's it—defense and not defiance." And with a snort of anger that had the strong flavor of the article he professed to shun he left the room, returning as Laury was making his way to the stables to warn him not to be drawn into a scuffle.

"Have no fear," said Laurence, gruffly. "I shall not forget that the odds are against us, and that one even can not be spared."

Mr. Stewart ran upstairs and examined the barricade, taking precaution to oil the simple machinery by which it was raised and lowered. While he was doing this Laurence had made his way to the stables, and he was grooming his horse.

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are not to drink it. Now, see: hold it like that, so that I can see it. That's right. Now crawl on your hands to the mound besides the stables, and directly you get there hold up the flask above your head and look at me. You understand?"

"Yes, massa," grinned Joe.

"That's a good lad. When you see me hold up my hand start off as fast as you can go—you won the race with Samba last week, didn't you? If one of them men catches you before you get to the thicket you have lost the flask; but if you get away without them catching you, the flask is yours—you can keep it."

By dint of careful repetition he managed to drum this performance into the negro's woolly head, and then watched him off with a little anxiety.

The lad crawled along to the mound as directed, and, arrived there, held up the flask with a shout.

As Laurence had expected, the group in the stable caught sight of the tempting bottle, and at once jumping to the natural conclusion that Master Joe had stolen the precious article set up a shout and, forgetting everything for the moment in the hope of getting a little French brandy, started after him.

Joe—fleet as a young deer—bounded away across the prairie, and Laurence stole round and with wonderful rapidity got the horses from the stalls and into the court before the runners, disgusted with their fruitless chase, returned to their lounging and their plotting.

Carefully locking the door of the large room into whom he had taken them, he went in search of Mr. Stewart, and found him distributing some food to the crowd of natives who were thronging around.

"Poor devils!" he said aside to Laurence as he came up. "Perhaps this is the last meal they'll have for a day or two."

"Are they of no use to us?" asked Laurence.

"No," said the settler, stroking his beard. "Not to be depended on. They'd be all for dying for us before the first shot was fired, and afterward clinging about our knees and shrieking enough to drive us mad. No, they'd be in the way. They and the two women are safest at the huts. The ruffians won't hurt them; it isn't worth their while. How have you managed about the horses?"

Laurence told him and he was delighted.

"Ah, that's a load off my mind!" he muttered. "I feel as if a back door was opened when the nags are at hand, if a chance comes. It was a cute trick of yours, though—wonderfully cute."

Then they walked upstairs and the settler explained the working of the barricade.

Laurence looked toward the armory door.

Mr. Stewart, replying to the look, shook his head.

"Poor lad!" he said. "Pon my word, Laury, I feel for him more than I do for myself. These brutes'll have no mercy on the youngster if they get him."

(To be continued.)

Fashion Plates.
A SIMPLE DRESS.
3141

Pattern 3141 was employed in this instance. It is cut in 4 Sizes: 2, 4, 6, 8 years, and will require 2 3/4 yards of 27 inch material for a 4 year size. As here shown, natural shantung was selected with embroidery in red, and bright red buttons for trimming. Gingham, lawn, percale, voile, china silk, challie, repp, poplin and velvet would be good for this design.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 15c. in silver or stamps.

A DAINY DRESS FOR MOTHER'S GIRL.
2808

2808—Batiste, voile, charmeuse, satin, taffeta, velvet, serge or gabardine could be used for this model. The tucks on the skirt may be omitted. The dress may be finished without the bolero and with long or short sleeves. This style lends itself nicely to combinations of material.

The Pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. Size 8 requires 3 1/2 yards of 27 inch material for the dress and 1/2 yard for the bolero.

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