

CHAPTER III. Amid the fright of that moment the feeling was strong upon me that a grotesque mistake had been made. Why should these people wish to do me bodi-ly harm? I had committed no crime since my entrance into the state of Mississippi, and men could not be stirred to such violence by any cause other than

an outrageous violation of law.

But the peril was imminent, and I had scarcely time to draw my weapon and back against the wall when the mob swarmed in after the landlord. As the foremost were making for me I leveled my weapon and called out:

'Halt; the first one lays a hand on me will be a dead man!" The bravest persons do not rush to certain death. There was a pause, although the men in the door kept push. ing forward until there was dauger of the leaders being forced against me. The countenances were like those of the canaille during the commune. Anger, fierce resolve and an almost irresistible yearning to clutch my throat were stamped on the faces, some of which were bearded, some clean shaven, while among the savage group were several who were not yet out of their teens. Their attire was coarse and slovenly. Most of them were in slouch hats, without coat or vest, with trousers tucked In their boots. Two had rifles in their hands, three carried revolvers, while as many more grasped short, thick clubs,

and a fourth gripped a fence paling.

If a hand to hand contest opened, might shoot down a number, but I could not hold out against a determined

Three persons in the group attracted my attention. Aunt Meg had fled before the mob, but her husband and Squire Gager remained. They were powerfully excited, like the others, but less demonstrative. The landlord was struggling to keep back the rush and begging his riends not to be too hasty. de only par-

tially succeeded in restraining them. The third man had come through the loor and moved a couple of paces aside, where he stood with his back against the wall, silent, but intently scrutinizing me. His face was smooth shaven, and he had dark hair and eyes. The pe-culiarity of the situation was the feeling that I had seen him before, but I could not recall the time or place, and the terrifying circumstances prevented matter further thought.

I fixed my eyes on the foremost man s the leader, and when something like a hush had been restored, so that noth-ing but the hurried breathing and an occasional muttered imprecation were

heard. I said, addressing him: "From your looks and actions you mean me harm. I demand to know the cause for such treatment.'

The savage faces broke into sneering grins, and one or two guffawed. The man to whom I spoke and who held a Winchester in his grasp replied:

"Hank Beyer, you've got cheek. We've all knowed you for a rogue ever since you was a boy, but we never got it dead to rights on to you till today. "Got what dead to rights on me?" I asked, a glimmering of light beginning to break through my muddled brain.

"The horse you stole from Colonel Mansley is in Tom Bulfinch's barn. You've kept clear of the law so long that you thought you was in no danger. You rid the animal here and had Tom put him in his stable. He was stele from Colonel Mansley last night. I don't suppose you've ever heerd of this before; of course not." The truth flashed upon me. The ani-

mal which I had bought that afternoon from the stranger at the crossroads had been stolen by him. I had ridden the horse to Aldine without a suspicion of the truth and in my stupidity had helped on the fearful blunder by allowing myself to be addressed by his name without protest. As if that inane busi ness was not enough, I had virtually admitted that my name was Hank Beyer in my conversation with Landlord Bulfinch and Squire Gager. Beyer was my double, and the resemblance between us was so perfect that our own mothers might have been puzzled. It would be idle for me to attempt to

bluff it through. I was in the gravest peril. Many an innocent man has been hanged by a mob, and unless these headlong yeomen could be convinced of their blunder my life was likely to pay

the forfeit. With this conviction upon me another startling truth became manifest. The real thief was in the room. He was the young man standing near the door, with nis back against the wall, silently and his back against the wall, silently and intently watching me. He had shaved off his mustache since our meeting and his dress had been changed. He had still a respectable appearance, but unquestionably he was the criminal. No wonder he was interested in me.

"My friends," I said, speaking earnestly, and instantly the hush became profound. "you have made a great mis-

profound, "you have made a great mistake. You take me for a man whom you call Hank Beyer, but I assure you I

am not he"—
At that moment it seemed as it bedlam had broken loose. The whole
crowd, numbering fully 15, broke into crowd, numbering fully 15, broke into uproarious laughter. Some slapped others on their shoulders, one man bent nearly double, and, flinging his hat on the floor, stamped on it, while all thought it the best joke of the season. Landlord Bulfinch may have had a sympathy for me, as he had proved at first, but he made matters still worse by call-

"Don't show the white feather,

Hank! Try some other tack!" "This strikes you as very funny," I added, when partial quiet had been restored, "but if you will give me time

I'll prove it, and"—
"That won't do, Hank," interrupted the man whom I had fixed upon as the leader and whose name I afterward found to be Jim Dungan. "If you ain't Hank Beyer, who are you?"

Southfield yesterday on the steamer

"What bus'ness brought you to Al

"I am bookkeeper in a bank. Our

cashier ran away some weeks ago with

we heard he was hiding at Aldine. I

was sent to arrest him, but it seems he

It was evident that not a man in the

oom believed a word I had said unless

it was my double standing near the

door, and of him I was not certain. I saw a sarcastic smile on his face, but

he let the others do the talking. He

the crucible would come very soon.

must have foreseen that his pounding in

"You say you started to walk. How,

then, was it you rid into Aldine on

I foresaw the rumpus that would fol-

"At the crossroads about nine miles

on the horse which has caused this trou-

ble. He told me he was in need of

I said more, but not a syllable was

audible. Every one seemed in danger of

apoplexy from furious merriment. They

aware of the proceeding. The uproar

lasted for several minutes, when Dungan managed to make himself heard. His

remarks may be characterized as point-

wasn't a coward. Hank, if you want to

save your neck from the noose, you'll

have to get up a better yarn than that.

"Twon't do."
"Let me ask you a question," I said

in deadly earnest, for it looked certain

that the matter was to be settled by a

"You would not stand by and see an

"We ain't going to hang any inno-cent man. We've got hold of the worst

horse thief in the state. We ain't mak-

But you are. That the resemblance

between me and this Hank Beyer is

very close is clear. Nevertheless he is

another person altogether. I have in my pocket the warrant for the arrest of

our absconding cashier, and I can prove

my identity by other papers."

I lowered my weapon and started to

"There stands the criminal for whom you are looking. He is the real Hank Beyer."

+++++++++++++++++++++++++

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nnocent man hanged, would you?"

ing any mistakes there, Hank."

"Waal, what is it?"

with me.'

said impressively:

"I never knowed a horse thief that

Colonel Mansley's blooded chestnut?"

New Orleans and started to walk to Al-

dine?" again interrupted Dungan.

has never been here."

low my explanation.

"I am Edward Kenmore, and my home is in New York city. I reached

Since he was a stranger to the rest or, what was the same, they believed him to be such), I hoped to gain an advantage from that fact.

information they desire. a large amount of the bank's funds, and

Nothing could have been cleverer than his manner and words. His announce nent that he was after cotton land was passport to the good will of the counymen, most of whom were eager to ell their unproductive property. His glib story of our traveling together on he steamer was accepted as truth.

"Then you deny selling me that horse yesterday?" I said, floundering in the wordy mire into which I had step-

excessively weary." It was vain to dally with him. Stagout a young man rode down from the direction of Mapleton. He was mounted words to those, arou

when S. Gager, who had not yet spoken, . posed. He was a conscientions san, and, though he undoubtedly sympathized with me, did not sympathize with the frightful fiction which he believed I was trying to weave. "I wish to ask this man a few ques ions," he said, and the universal re-

struck one another, flung their hate down, and one caught up a plate from the table and shattered it over the head of Landlord Bulfinch, who seemed unbowed, suspecting what was coming his stable at your request?" "I have already admitted that. I aft-

erward crossed to the postoffice and got letter which was mailed from New York and addressed to me, Edward 'And any of us might have done the same by asking for it, having arranged

"You talked with us as if you were Hank Beyer. You spoke about your father and asked questions of us. Why didn't you deny you were Hank Beyer

at that time?"

It was driving a nail into my coffin, and I knew my explanation would not be accepted by a single one of my hear-"I did a foolish thing. I was amuse

by the mistake, and by way of fun I humored it. You will recall that my questions showed my ignorance, not bring out the documents, when Dungan waved his hand.
"It's no use to keep up this fooling. We don't want to see any of the papers that was stole or fixed up for this bus' "But the real thief, the ger

of the kind."

The squire mournfully shook hi
head. He was through, having sen
tenced me, as may be said, to capital Hank Beyer, is standing in this room Before any explanation could be punishment. asked of this remark, I pointed my finger at the young man by the door and

after we parted, probably foreseein something like this. But I have the

Which the same is what we have

"Which the same is what we have done with the help you have given us," replied Jim Dungan, with a significant grin in which the others joined.

"It looks that way, but you are in error. Now, it is easy for you to telegraph to certain parties whom I will name in New York and by whom I can establish my identity. You will do me establish my identity. You will do me that justice. If I fail to convince you that I am what I claim, then do with

me as you wish."
"That request sounds fair," interposed the squire, "but I'm sorry to say that the nearest telegraph station is at Southfield and with our bad roads it will take two days to go there and

not quite comprehend what I said and then with a laugh called out: "You are Hank Beyer," I added, keeping my finger pointed at him and restraining my anger. "You know it as well as I. Dare you deny it?" "What's that, Hank?" St. Leon Water

His merriment seemed so hearty that several joined it. Comprehending his baseness, it required my utmost self re-straint to keep from sending a bullet into his worthless brains.

Every eye turned toward the man hom I indicated. He must have ex-

pected something of the kind from my

nanner, for he was prepared for it, and

never was there more perfect acting. He stared right and left, as if he did

"If you deny that you are Hank Beyer, who are you?" "You ought to know, Hank," he said, with amazing coolness. "I came up on the steamer Bonnie Belle yesterday with you from New Orleans and

you won all I had at poker." All who looked at the miscreant must have noted his extraordinary resemblance to me. Had he not removed his mustache the difference would have been unappreciable. His preparation for his part was admirable, for when he spoke I observed that his voice sounded different from when he talked with me at the crossroads. He had suc-

ceeded to perfection in disguising it.

'Who are you?" I thundered. "I'm not accustomed to introduce myself to folks in that fashion, but you haven't forgot that when you gave me your name on the steamer as Hank I told you mine was Richard

Early—at your service, gentlemen."

And the unconscionable scoundrel doffed his hat and bowed to the right and left with the snavity and blandness

"If you are a stranger like myself, what business brought you to Aldine?"
"I explained all that to you on the boat. My uncle sent me here to look up ome valuable cotton land that is in the market, but," he added, shrewd enough to perceive the tangle in which I was likely to involve him, "I decline to be nestioned any further by you, though am ready to give these gentlemen any

"Oh, I don't deny anything," he answered with a bored air. "Tell your story to these gentlemen. You make me

gered for the moment, I was about to

pect felt for the officer of the law caused a hush to fall upon the angry throng. "You don't deny that you rode up to this botel this afternoon on the chestnut gelding which Mr. Bulfinch put into

that little matter beforehand," said

the squire, brushing aside this cobweb. 'but when you came and sat down on the porch and talked with me and Mr. Bulfinch we both addressed you as Hank

"You did," I replied, and the land lord nodded his head in acquiescence.

only of your affairs, but of Hank Beyer's."
"I believe you pretended something of the kind."

punishment.

"I do not deny, gentlemen, that the case looks bad against me. You have, noticed that the man whom I pointed out by the door resembles me, except that I wear a mustache and he does not. He had one today, but shaved it off right to ask that before executing me you make sure that I am really Hank Beyer, the horse thief."

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\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* I'm afraid," he added, looking round at the savage countenances, "that my friends will not be willing to wait that long."

one in the room. "A good deal might happen in that time." "He wants a chance to give you the slip," added the real Hank Beyer from

"No, no!" came from nearly every

his station by the door. "Why not let him have a chance for his life?" At that moment nothing was more evident than that every man crowded into the room was my enemy. I looked around into the unpitying faces and braced myself for the final struggle, which I believed could not be deferred



"He wants a chance to give you the slip," been balked so long of their prey. In many portions of the southwest the most s crime a person can commit to steal a horse. Beside that offense murder sinks into insignificance.

It will be conceded that the circum stantial evidence against me was of the stantial evidence against me was of the strongest character. My marvelous resemblance to the real criminal was irresistibly convincing, and if anything was lacking it had been furnished by my idiocy. Had I resented the mistake from the first it might have raised a possible question which would have caused a postponement of my execution. No man knows precisely how his own voice sounds, but there must have been voice sounds, but there must have been similarity between mine and Hank Beyer's or the difference was not mark ed, since it seemed to attract the attention of no one.

Only one hope remained—I must secure a "stay of proceedings" if but for a limited time. But how was that to be done? I had already made the attempt and been rebuffed.

At this apparently hopeless juncture, when I stood mute, not knowing what to say, but ready to go down with colors flying, the unexpected occurred. The good angel appeared in the last person to whom I looked for support. He was Jim Dungan, the leader of the vigi-

CHAPTER V. Turning toward the men who had warmed around him, Dungan spoke in a loud voice and an earnestness of manner that commanded attention:

"You all know me well enough to know I haven't a grain of pity for horse thieves. This part of the state has suf fered so much from that sort of people during the last ten years and the court have been so slow in getting hold of them that we formed ourselves into a vigilance committee of the whole to regulate things, and I flatter myself we've had tolerable success in the bus'

He "paused for a reply" and received a thunderous one. There were general nodding of heads and exclamations of

"And we intend that the good work hall go on," he resumed. "A rope and the limb of the nearest tree is our medieine for men that have an itching for other folks' property in the shape of horsedesh. But boys, we all believe in

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fair play. Now, while you and me are satisfied that the man standing on t'other side of the table is Hank Beyer, and no ne else, there's one chance in a million that he ain't. That chap over there by the door calls himself Dick Early. He's a stranger to us, and there ain't any denying that he looks like Hank. If he had a mustache, he would look more like him than Hank does himself." He laughed at his own facetiousness

and the forbidding countenances were lit up with approving grins. "Once or twice when he stood there talking," added Dungan, alluding to me, "I've noticed something that was a little odd—that is, that didn't seem to be quite like Hank. I can't tell what it is, but mebbe some of you have observed

He looked around again for signs of assent, but unfortunately there was none. No one shared his doubt, and Squire Gager spoiled the possible effect of his appeal by a sad swaying of his

"Hank has been away long 'nough to pick up some differences of speech, if that is what you mean, Jim, but you're

In another respect this remark served me well. It roused the resentment of Jim. Evidently he was the leading spirit of the neighborhood and was not accustomed to be opposed like this, even by Squire Gager. I noticed the flash of his gray eye and the compression of his thin lips as he said:

"Waal, we'll take till tomorrer morning to drive out what doubts we have

"But we hain't got no doubts, Jim," remarked a man standing at the leader's

"That don't make no difference. "How are we going to have them aforesaid doubts removed?" asked the

"I have a plan that will do it," was the reply of Dungan. I was satisfied that he had no definite scheme at that moment, but that he ex-

pected to hit upon something decisive. "Begging your pardon, gents, I think Mr. Dungan is right. No matter how black it looks against Hank, give the poor devil a show."

It was Hank himself who made this emark, and nothing could have been more politic. At that moment there was not a person in the room besides us two who was not morally convinced that I was the real criminal. Jim Dungan believed it, but the rude chivalry of his nature answered my appeal. He intended to respite me until morning, when none would be more eager than he to pull the rope over the limb with

me dangling from the end of it. The man's personality impressed itself upon the rough group. They accepted his decision and looked expectantly at him for further orders.

'We'll hold this fellow till tomorrer morning. Then, if matters stand as they eem to be now-that is, if we hain't found out that he's what he says he is -why that ends it." "Will you bind him?" asked one of

"If you're afraid he might bite you, we'll put a muzzle on to him," replied Jim with fine surcasm, and a general

guffaw followed. "No, gents," he added, "we won't tie him up, 'cause there ain't any use of it. We'll take his gun away from him, set him in the very chair from which he has riz and put two men to watch him through the night. How will that do?" A general nodding of the heads

showed how quickly the leader had molded the turbulent spirits into his way of thinking.
"Fil app'int," he continued, looking

round the room into the different faces, 'Cy Walters and Archie Hunter the guards. They'll stay here with the prisoner all night, ready to shoot him on the first move. Hank, I'll trouble you for your shooting iron and cartridges,' said Dungan, turning abruptly toward

I promptly handed them over with the remark : "I surrender with pleasure to you

and place myself at your disposal.' He shoved the weapon without speaking into his capacious hip pocket, the rest of the crowd looking silently on.
Night had fully come and an oil lamp
was lighted by Landlord Bulfinch and placed on the table. Dungan talked for a few minutes in a low tone with the host, and then, turning to me, spoke and enough for all to boom To be Continued.

It Was His Deal. A mining engineer who has returned from Alaska brings, among other interesting things, evidence that the higher the latitude the greater the latitude. Watching a poker game in which the stakes were heavy he saw a player give himself four aces from the bottom of the pack. Burning with indignation at such

shameless cheating, he turned to a bystander and whispered, "Did you see "Why, that fellow dealt himself four

"Well, wasn't it his deal?" Professor Vivian Lewes, at the London institution, recently furnished the following answer to the question "Why do we bathe?" Twenty-eight miles of sweat glands in our skin are discharging 26 ounces of water per day and leaving upon the outer surface of the skin a full ounce of solid matter. These are aided by the oil glands of the hair, which facilitate the adherence of

character of the morning bath and the necessity for grease absorbing alkalies George—I have just invested in one of those "pepper and salt" suits.

Robert—Ah! That ought to be good

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