

FURTHER DOINGS OF THE MAJOR.

By F. BLAKE CROFTON.

(Author of "The Major's Big Talk Stories," "The Bewildered Querrists," &c.)

HEROES AT BAY.

We had halted on a perfectly level plain—my two trusty servants and I. Having watered our horses, we had tied the reins to some stunted shrubs (the only ones in sight), and left our rifles leaning against a branch. We were drinking, and washing our parched faces, and generally luxuriating, in a brook a few rods away.

Our pleasure was interrupted by a terrified snort from one of the horses, and we saw the three brutes plunging and straining to get away in our direction, and glancing behind them as they struggled. Long before we could reach them they had all three snapt their reins and galloped close by us at a truly magnificent pace. They had carefully concealed their speed before, had these dark horses.

Glancing back beyond the bushes, we saw the cause of their hurry and dismay. Far away on the plain a beast was approaching us. Not in a stealthy, stalking, feline manner; but in a bounding, boisterous, straightforward style—like a British lion, or traditional lion of the old school. And the king of beasts indeed it was, as an appalling roar made us presently aware. Gradually the outlines and colour of a black-maned lion became defined.

I made my successive observations on the run. In fact we were all running over since our horses had stampeded. "I galloped, Dirk galloped, we galloped all three." Not that either of my negro servants was really named Dirk—one being Jumbo and the other Gumbo. But a fast line may give some idea of our travelling gait. The lion, however, ran faster than us all, and his form grew larger and larger, and plainer and plainer.

Not having quite recovered from a sprained ankle, I began to suffer acute pain after a time. I was now the hindmost, and felt that I was the one destined to be caught. Just about this time it dawned upon me that it was a base and shameful thing to run away. At first I had been running too fast to think of this.

I was now purposing to appeal to the manhood of my men not to flee so ignominiously from a brute beast. I was about to suggest that, if we all stood boldly in a row, the lion would only eat one of us—even if we could not overawe him by our human eyes. To my wonder and admiration, Jumbo, who was the foremost of us, halted and made a similar proposal of his own accord! And Gumbo, who was close behind him, seconded it! They would not leave their lame master to be devoured, they exclaimed. Their flight, they said, was a weakness of which they were ashamed. And the nobility of their sentiments was only the more touching from the quaint, broken English in which they expressed themselves.

"Nay, my faithful servants! I will not accept this sacrifice," I said, or rather sobbed, for I was really thrilled by their heroic devotion. "I have faced as great dangers before, and come off unscathed. Leave me to my destiny!"

My words were bolder than my thoughts just then; but I would not be outdone in chivalry by two niggers.

I did not reflect that these trusted servants had taken off their shoes to wade in the brook, and had not time to put them on again. Nor did I observe that their feet were burned and blistered, and bleeding from the hot, rough sand. It was no time to notice such seeming trifles.

The lion was perhaps a quarter of a mile away when we halted and began our rapid colloquy. He was now hardly two hundred yards from us. Finding my negroes resolved to stay, I proposed that we should stand in a row, as far apart as possible, to further the escape of the two of us who should not be seized first. But the devotion of the gallant fellows waxed warmer and warmer. They insisted upon standing in front of me, shoulder to shoulder, to shield me from the lion.

Such sublime self-sacrifice is sometimes catching. Seeing it was vain to reason with these heroes, I was debating the possibility of jumping over their shoulders, or creeping between their legs at the critical moment, and proving that a pale face can be generous too! And I was struggling vigorously against a mean temptation to move an adjournment and to carry out the motion behind their backs.

But I might have spared myself the struggle and the debate. When the lion was only fifty yards off, I overheard my trusted servants whispering in their native tongue, which I understood better than they fancied. They were plotting to spring nimbly apart when the lion made his final spring, leaving me in the middle for him to light on! While he was eating me, they would hobble back and regain their guns at all events, even if they couldn't catch the horses.

This was the secret of their present chivalrous stand and sore feet the reason of their heroic halt! And it was for these men that I had been about to bring my life and narratives to a close!

But, thank goodness, there was some time left. The lion's advance had grown a little less energetic, as if he was slightly scared, or at least puzzled, by our bold attitude. Yet he continued coming on.

When he was within twenty yards, I stooped down behind Gumbo, grasped him by the ankles, lifted his legs from under him, making him fall forwards on his hands. I ran him right at the lion, "wheelbarrow" fashion—the bewildered nigger instinctively putting one hand before the other, before he knew what he was about. This brought us within a spring of the lion. But the spring came from our side. For, Gumbo having now ceased to walk upon his hands except in a backward direction, I hurled his legs forward over his head with such force that, when they struck the ground,

his body rose, and he described an involuntary somersault. This carried him two lengths ahead of me—into the very jaws of the lion, if the latter had stayed.

But the beast had turned to flee. Our "wheelbarrow" charge had brought him to a halt. Gumbo and I seemed to be amalgamated into a now and ugly monster, with two heads and a doubtful number of legs, not to mention a curiously piebald colour. Then the curved but boldly aggressive spring of Gumbo completed the animal's dismay. It was springing a surprise upon him with a vengeance. And he shrank back, as a lap-dog shrinks from the startling apparition of a Jack-in-the-box!

He fled; but he soon converted his flight into a detour. He wheeled round to pursue Jumbo, who was silently stealing away, quite forgetting his sore feet in his double terror, at the closeness of the lion, and my manifest detection of his own treachery. Finding himself pursued, Jumbo howled lustily. It was a sad disenchancement for me, who so lately fancied him a hero. His case, it must be owned, was seemingly hopeless; for, though a man remarkable for agility, his feet were really in a pitiable condition then. Besides, the lion, which had begun the chase in a half-hearted, undecided sort of way, was soon pursuing him in grim earnest. His tail and his courage rose at the unconcealed terror of Jumbo. As the savage beast seemed about to spring upon his victim, I trembled for the poor fellow, traitor though he was.

But Jumbo's end was not yet. He had gazed over his shoulder, as he fled, at the involuntary gymnastics of Gumbo, and their pronounced effect upon the lion; and he had not gazed in vain. In sheer desperation he now stooped sideways to the ground, and, with a rapidity seldom excelled even by a London street Arab, he turned six or seven consecutive "Catherine-wheels" before the utterly non-plussed lion. In other words, he made his outstretched arms and legs the spokes, as it were, of a rimless wheel, and on those spokes he made several complete revolutions.

For a moment the dazed lion stood agape, like a peasant-boy gazing at a strange vehicle. Then he turned and fled a second time. Jumbo's capers might not have demoralized the beast by themselves; but succeeding the former and greater shock, they quite upset the nervous system of that black-maned lion. Two transformation scenes in one pantomime were too many for him.

(To be Continued.)

Tea! Tea! Tea!

GRAND OPENING!

The Hong Kong Tea Co'y

Will open a BRANCH STORE at

139 — Argyle Street — 139
HALIFAX, N. S.

On Saturday, 1st November, 1874, with the largest and choicest selection of NEW SEASON TEAS, ever offered in Canada.

PRICE LIST—25c, 30c, 35c, 40c, best 50c. p. lb.
COFFEES—Fresh Roasted and Ground every day.

Price List—30c, 35c, Best 50c. per lb.
ELEGANT PRESENTS given to purchasers of Tea.

SUGARS of all grades Retail at Refiners' Prices.
All GOODS warranted to give satisfaction or the money will be refunded.

HONG KONG TEA COMPANY,
139 Argyle Street.

DAVIDSON & McMANUS,
FINE TAILORING.

139 HOLLIS STREET,
HALIFAX, N. S.

To our Patrons we offer the largest and most carefully selected Stock in the city to choose from, and guarantee perfectly

FITTING GARMENTS,

Made under our own personal supervision.

Acadian Hotel

Granville Street Halifax, N. S.

This Old-established and Favorite House having been Renovated and Newly-Furnished Throughout, is now open, under modern management, for the reception of guests.

The Rooms are all handsomely and completely furnished—there is no old furniture in the place.

ELECTRIC BELLS on every floor.
The Table will be supplied with all the delicacies of the season (American style).

TERMS MODERATE

WM. POPPLETON, Proprietor.

TRURO AND KENTVILLE

Marble, Red and Grey Granite, and Freestone Monuments, Tablets, Headstones and Tabletops, Soapstone, etc.

A. J. WALKER,
Corner Prince and Waddell Streets, Truro.
A. J. WALKER & CO.,
Church Street, Kentville.

JUST RECEIVED.

Per S. S. YORK CITY,

A LARGE ASSORTMENT OF
LADIES'

MANTLES AND DOLMANS!

—IN—

Cashmere, Ottoman,
Broche, Stockinette, &c.

—ALSO—

LADIES' JERSEYS,

In Black and Colors

—AT THE—

London House

WM. MOODY & CO.

168 and 170 Granville Street

This Space belongs to

M. J. O'BRIEN,

Confectioner & Biscuit Manufacturer,
170 to 174 Upper Water St.

WM. BANNISTER,

Importer and Dealer in

Watches, Clocks, Jewelry,

SPECTACLES, PLATED-WARE.

144—Granville Street,—144

HALIFAX, N. S.