

had spread out the refreshments in a tasteful manner, and all enjoyed a pleasant day.

Mr. James had refused to tell Ned any particulars about Sandy Flat until he and Professor Ballentine and Ned had left the picnic party behind.

As they reached a desolate spot, which was an alternation of yellow sandy ridges, Mr. James said:

"There lies the object of our visit, Ned."

"This is Sandy Flat?"

"Yes."

Ned looked disappointed. Certainly a more desolate spot he had never seen.

"And you hinted that it had become a—what was the word?"

"A bonanza," smiled Professor Ballentine.

"That means that it has some value?"

"Yes."

Ned looked incredulous.

"I don't understand it at all," he said, with a perplexed air, "unless it is that gold has been found here."

"No, Ned, there is no gold here."

"What makes the land valuable then?"

"Chrome. It's a long story, Ned, but the whole point of it is contained just in two words—yellow chrome."

"Yel-low chrome! yel-low chrome!" repeated Ned, bewilderedly. "What's that?"

"We won't keep him mystified any longer, James," broke in Professor Ballentine. "In a few words, Ned, we have discovered that all this seemingly valueless pile of yellow sand comprises one of the richest deposits of yellow chrome in California."

"Is yellow chrome a mineral?" inquired Ned.

"It is a substance employed for various important uses, and so rare that only three places of deposit have been found—in Turkey, Maryland, and California. Yellow chrome is the base of all artist's colours; it is extensively employed in the refining of sugars, and is that which gives the tensile power to steel. The great Brooklyn bridge owes its great strength to chrome, of which the supply here is exhaustless. Your land to-day is worth a fortune, and the crude sand run through a mill will sell on the markets of the world as staple as flour, at a figure which will make you rich."

Ned Darrow was dazed, stupefied. He could scarcely believe his good fortune.

"Me, rich?" he murmured, vaguely. "Then I can continue at school. Oh! Mr. James! I owe to you all this."

"To me? No, Ned, your brother left you the land."

"But I know you have not learned its value without trouble, and I do not forget that your prudence prevented its sale for a trifle."

"I only acted as any careful man should. When John Markham robbed me of the papers my suspicions became certainties. I determined to find the true reason for his wanting the land. I watched him closely without his knowing it."

"Did he claim the land?"

"No, for the deed he stole was, to his disappointment, on record. Then he claimed that you were dead, as no trace could be found of you, and that he was the heir, but the court demanded proofs."

"What did he do then?"

"Disappeared when the Aldine brought the news of your being alive. There will be no contesting of your claim. Your title to the land is perfect, for it is conveyed to me as guardian for you."

"And a faithful one you have been," said Ned, warmly. "But how did you learn of the value of the land?"

"It seems after Markham swindled your brother, and after his death, some scientists discovered the true character of the soil. Then Markham determined to buy it back. I have been to some scientists of San Francisco and learned all about it. In fact, I am now negotiating with a capitalist to purchase a half-interest and sell the chrome, so that even at a distance your interests will be protected."

Ned became sad as he reflected on his dead brother's misfortunes, but was gratified to learn that John Markham's evil schemes had been completely foiled through the fidelity and shrewdness of Mr. James.

Until sundown, after their return to the beach, they had a pleasant time, and the grammar school boys and the seminary girls parted with many a regretful adieu after what they decided was one of the most enjoyable days of their lives.

They reached San Francisco on the return trip after midnight, and went to their hotel. Here the Professor decided that the day following they would start on the return journey to Ridgeland. The one day left before their departure the boys were allowed to take a carriage trip into the country. They returned weary after a day of travel and enjoyment, and they retired to their rooms early.

Ned happened to glance from his window as he was about to go to bed. His room looked down on an extensive court-yard. As he looked casually down he started and drew back. A man, skulking back in the shadow of the next building, was looking up at the windows of the hotel. And at a glance Ned recognized him as John Markham, his old-time enemy.

(Concluded in next issue.)

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN WOODWARD.

BY THOMAS WALKER.

In the year 1791, Woodward sailed from Boston in the ship Robert Morris, Captain Hay, for the East Indies. On his arrival there he was employed in making country voyages until the 20th of January, when he sailed as chief mate in an American ship from Batavia bound for Manilla.

In passing through the straits of Macassar, they found the wind and current both against them, and after beating up for six weeks they fell short of provision. Captain Woodward and five seamen were sent to purchase some from a vessel about four leagues distant. They were without water, provisions, or compass—having on board only an axe, a boat hook, two penknives, a useless gun and forty dollars in cash.

They reached the ship at sunset, and were told by the captain that he had no provision to spare as he was bound to China and was victualled for only one month. He advised them to stay until morning, which they did. But when morning dawned, their own ship was out of sight even from the mast head, and with a fair wind for her to go through the straits of Macassar. Being treated coolly by the captain, they agreed with one voice to leave the ship in search of their own. On leaving the vessel, the captain gave them twelve musket cartridges and a round bottle of brandy, but neither water nor provision of any sort.

They rowed till twelve o'clock at night, in hopes of seeing their own vessel, and then drawing near an island, they thought it prudent to go there to get some fresh water. They landed and made a large fire in hopes their