

height of luxury. Mr. Bangs saw he was not wanted as a fellow pedestrian, and mounted his horse instead of having him trot behind a waggon. The vehicles, or at least one of them, received instructions to wait at the post-office for the three members of squad No. 1. The walk was strictly proper, Mr. Errol taking Miss Carmichael, the dominie Miss Halbert, and the lawyer Miss Du Plessis. "What a goose you are, Mr. Wilkinson," said his fair companion. "What a goose you are to leave Cecile, whose footsteps you fairly worship, and to come and walk with a girl for whose society you don't care a penny."

"I should care more for Miss Halbert's society if she did not say such unjustifiable things."

"Cecile," called the young lady, "I want to change escorts with you; I like pleasant society."

The dominie felt as if a big school-girl had declined to receive a reprimand from the principal, and coloured with vexation, but Miss Du Plessis calmly turned and said: "If Mr. Wilkinson is tired of you already, Fanny, I suppose I must send Mr. Coristine to comfort you," whereat Mr. Errol and his companion exchanged a smile.

"Did the villain shoot Wordsworth at you, Miss Halbert, or was it Hans Breitmann in the original, or a Spanish *cantinella*, or some such rubbish? If I was Miss Du Plessis I'd wear a signboard over my ears, 'No poetical rubbish shot here;' perhaps that might fix him."

"Cecile is sentimental: she dotes on poetry."

"Pardon me for saying I don't believe it. I offered to recite my original poem on the Grinstun man to her, and she didn't seem to want to hear it."

"How ungrateful and unsympathetic! You will favour me with it, will you not?"

"With the greatest pleasure in the world. You know it's awful halderdash, but here goes."

The original poem was recited with appropriate gestures, intended to imitate the walk of the hero of the piece and his various features. The people in front turned their heads to look at the performance and take in the words. Not to laugh was almost an impossibility, but the dominie succeeded in doing the impossible, and frowned heavily. He felt that his unworthy friend was bringing disgrace upon the causes of poetry and pedestrianism. When her laughter subsided, Miss Halbert said: "There is one thing I want to ask you seriously, Mr. Coristine." "Name it," he answered, "even to the half of my fortune." "It is to look after papa, and see that he does not expose himself too much to danger. I asked Mr. Perrowne too, but he is with the horsemen, you know." This last was said with a peculiarly arch smile, which convinced the lawyer that Perrowne was in deeper than was generally suspected. The first thought that followed in Coristine's mind was what awful cheek he had been guilty of in following Perrowne's precedent in drop the handkerchief. He managed, however, to assure the lady that he would do his best to watch over the safety of her father and Squire Carruthers, the latter words being spoken loud enough for Miss Carmichael to hear. When the post-office was reached Mr. Bangs dismounted, was ready to receive the ladies; and the three escorts, shaking hands warmly with each of their fair companions, entered the remaining waggon and drove away, the buts of their firearms rattling on the floor, and the suspended bludgeons playfully flogging their shoulders.

It was ghastly work propping up the dead murderer's shoulders in the shell, and placing a rest for his head. The jaw had been tied up, but the eyes would not close; yet, staring though the face was, it was not a repulsive one. The ordinary observer could not read what Bangs saw there, greed and hypocrisy, envy, treachery, murder. While Miss Du Plessis went on calmly sketching, the other girls turned their heads away. No one cared to break the stillness by a word. The detective went out and secured the services of Styles to accompany the ladies home, and remain at Bridesdale till the armed band returned. Then he went over to the shell in which the body of his brother detective lay, and, nobody looking at him, allowed himself the luxury of a few tears, a silent tribute to the man he honoured. When the sketch was completed, he warmly thanked the artist, and told her that he never would have dreamt of proposing such a task, but for his desire to do justice to his dead friend, whom an informer named Flower had greatly injured in the department. The department had faith in his cleverness all along, but suspicions had been cast upon his honesty, which embittered his days, along with troubles that were then only known to himself.

Bangs was not a detective, but a man of warm, brotherly heart, as he told the tale of the outwardly always cheerful, but inwardly sore-hearted, Nash, cut off in the midst of his years and usefulness. Then old Styles appeared, and, with a salute, the detective mounted and rode away to join the forces in front, while the ladies journeyed homeward. Mr. Bangs soliloquized as he rode rapidly on. "Boys read detective stories, and think our life an enviable one. They dote on the schemes, the plots and counterplots, the risks, the triumphs, and look beyond to fame and reward, but they know nothing of the miserable envies and jealousies, the suspicions, the checks and counterchecks, and the demnable policy of the department, encouraging these irresponsible informers, dem 'em, to break up all legitimate business and murder honest men. O Nesh, my pore dead friend, you're avenged in a wey, bet who's going to avenge yore pore sister, and even this devil of a Flower or Herding, whose death lies at the door of that greater devil of a Rawdon?"

The expedition was waiting for him at Richards', the colonel in command. The scow had departed in charge of the captain, who had orders to do nothing to the barrier till he heard a signal shot; then he was to respond with the unmistakable blunderbuss, and batter down the obstruction. Squire Walker, Mr. Perrowne, and Maguffin had patrolled, without meeting even a passing team or wayfarer; but the colonel judged it best to get off the road without delay. Accordingly the waggons were left in Richards' shed, and the infantry doubled forward after the colonel and Bangs. When the rocky ascent was reached, over which the fugitives of the night before had clambered, a halt was called, and the colonel gave Dr. Halbert instructions. Just where the rock rose out of the swamp, Sergeant Terry's squad entered, and easily wheeled round large trunks of trees resting on stone pivots, revealing a good waggon-track, the masked road. This the cavalry occupied, looking to the priming of their pistols, and bringing their clubs into handy positions. The Squire's squad scaled the height near the road, and Mr. Terry's took ground farther to the right. The doctor led the way in front of and between the two sections. The cavalry moved slowly, keeping pace with the climbers. Soon the crest was reached, and the main body began to descend gradually, when the dominie slipped and his piece went off, the trigger having caught in his red window cord, startling the echoes. Then came the diffusive boom and crackle of the blunderbuss, and the doctor, inwardly anathematizing Wilkinson, hurried his men on. They heard axes at work, as if trees were being felled; it was the Captain and the Richards at the barrier. No enemy appeared on the rocks, but pistol shots warned them that there was collision on the road, and the doctor called the second squad to wheel towards it. The dominie, on the left of the first, saw what was going on below. Revolvers were emptied and clubs brought into requisition. He could not load his old muzzle-loading piece to save his life, but he knew single stick. Two men were tackling the brave old colonel, while a third lay wounded at his horse's feet. The dominie sped down to the road like a chamois, and threw himself upon the man on the colonel's right, the dissipated farmer. He heard a shot, felt a sharp pain in his left arm, but with his right hit the holder of the pistol a skull cracker over the head, then fainted and fell to the ground. His luckless muzzle-loader was never found. The colonel had felled his antagonist on the left, and turned to behold the dominie's pale face. Leaving the command to the doctor, he dismounted and put a little old Bourbon out of a pocket flask into his lips, and then proceeded to bandage the wound. Wilkinson had saved his life; he was a hero, a grand, cultivated, sympathetic, chivalrous man, whom the colonel loved as his own son. When he came to, were not the very first words he uttered enquiries for Colonel Morton's own safety? Maguffin, having felled his man, held his master's horse.

Squire Walker, Mr. Perrowne, and Bangs galloped on, the latter eager to seize Rawdon. They and the infantry squads came almost simultaneously upon the select encampment, which was simply a large stone-mason's yard, full of grindstones in every state of preparation, and bordered by half-a-dozen frame buildings, one of which, more pretentious than the others, was evidently the dwelling-place of the head of the concern. Two simple-looking men in mason's aprons stood in the doorway of another, having retired thither when they heard the sound of firing. This was evidently the boarding-house of the workmen, and an object of interest to Ben Toner, who, with his friends Sullivan and Timotheus, pushed past the two stonecutters, immediately thereafter arrested by Sergeant Terry, and invaded the structure. Soon Ben reappeared upon the scene, accompanied by a young woman whose proportions were little, if at all, short of his own, and calling aloud to all the company, as if he had accomplished the main object of the expedition, "It's all raight, boys, I've got Serlizer!" Behind the happy pair came an old woman, gray, wrinkled, and with features that bore unmistakable traces of sorrow and suffering. "Hev they ben good to you, Serlizer?" asked Mr. Toner, after he had in the most public and unblushing manner saluted his long lost sweetheart. The large woman raised her bared arms from the elbow significantly, and replied, with a trace of her father's gruffness, "I didn't arst 'em; 'sides I allers had old Marm Flowers to keep 'em off." The expedition was demoralized. The colonel and his servant were with the dominie on the road. Ben, with Timotheus and Sullivan, was rejoicing in Serlizer; while Mr. Hislop and Rufus were guarding the captured stone-cutters. Sylvanus, not to be outdone by his companions of the second squad, attached himself, partly as a protector, partly as a prisoner's guard, to Mrs. Flower, the keeper of the boarding-house. Sergeant Terry, without a command, followed what remained of the first squad in its search for Rawdon. The first person he came upon, in his way down to the water, was Monsieur Lajeunesse, who could run no farther, and, perspiring at every pore, sat upon a log, mopping his face with a handkerchief.

"A such coorse 'ave I not med, Meestare Terry, sinsa zat I vas a too ptee garson." Mr. Terry understood, owing to large experience of foreigners, and could not permit the opportunity of making a philological remark to pass, "D'ye know, Mishter Lashness, that Frinch an' the rale ould Oirish is as loike as two pays? Now, there's garsan is as Oirish a worrud for a young bhoy as ye'll find in Connaught. But juty is juty, moy dare sorr, so, as they say in the army, 'Fag a bealach,' lave the way." The sergeant's next discovery was the doctor, borne in the arms of the lawyer and the dismounted parson. He had

sprained his ankle in the rapid descent to which his zeal had impelled him, and had thus been compelled to leave the Squire in command. Mr. Hill had been left behind on the left of the encampment with the horses of the three dismounted cavaliers, Squire Walker, Mr. Perrowne, and the detective, so that Sergeant Carruthers, now acting colonel, had with him a mere corporal's guard, consisting of Messrs. Errol and Bigglethorpe.

The junction of the land forces with those operating on the water was effected in good order, the latter being intact under command of the captain, but the former exhibiting, by their terribly reduced numbers, the dreadful fatality of war. Squire Walker and Mr. Bangs alone represented the cavalry; Carruthers and his corporal's guard, the first squad, and the veteran all alone, the second squad of the infantry. Even this remnant had its deserter, for, during the conversation between the Squire and the Captain, private Bigglethorpe stole away, and when next seen was standing far out upon a dead hemlock that had fallen into the lake, fishing with great contentment, and a measure of success, for bass. The numbers of the force were soon augmented by the appearance of the doctor and his bearers. The disabled physician was accommodated with a seat on the bottom of the scow, two of the Richards boys being displaced in his favour. The Captain reported a prize in the shape of a handsome varnished skiff, which he found drawn up on some skids or rollers at the foot of a great mass of rock, that seemed as if cut all about in regular form, in readiness for quarrying. The finding of the boat just opposite it, the worn appearance of the ground, the absence of moss or any other growth on the severed edges of the square mass of limestone, led the detective to ask if there was any report of a subterraneous passage in connection with this mysterious region. The doctor, whom his former guide had taken by water, and insisted on blindfolding at a certain point, was sure that he had walked some distance on rock, and, although the lamp-lit room, in which he had seen his patients, was lined with wood, and had blinds on apparent windows, he doubted much that it was built in the open air. Then, Coristine remembered how the dissipated farmer had coupled Rawdon's geology with trap rock, as well as with galena, quartz and beryl. Knives were produced and thrust into the seams at the top and on the two sides, as far as the blades would go, but along the bottom there was no horizontal incision answering to that above; it was perpendicular towards the earth, and of no great depth.

It was decided, in the meanwhile, to leave the Captain with Richards senior, his youngest son, and Mr. Bigglethorpe, who declined to leave his sport, as a guard on the skiff and the adjoining mysterious stone. The rest of the party returned to the encampment, to consult with the colonel and learn the reason of his absence. Pierre Lajeunesse was found where Mr. Terry had left him, and gladly accepted an arm up the hill. Arrived at the stone-yard, the Squire and Coristine learnt with concern of the dominie's wound, but were rejoiced to find it was nothing more serious, and that his was the only casualty, besides the doctor's. Squire Walker and Mr. Bangs accompanied the colonel, whom Coristine relieved in attendance upon the dominie, and Maguffin, to look for the felled accomplices of Rawdon, but, of the four who certainly were knocked insensible by the clubs, not one was to be found, nor was there any sign that the pistols of the cavalry had taken effect on the other three. The whole seven had escaped. Meanwhile Rawdon's house and all the other buildings had been searched by Carruthers, without a single incriminating thing, save a half empty keg of peculiar white spirits, being brought to light. The stables contained many horses; and strong waggons, such as those seen by the pedestrians at the Beaver River, were in the sheds. The stone-cutters and the women professed to know nothing, and, save in the case of the woman called Flower, Bangs was of opinion that they spoke the truth. All the men could tell was that Rawdon paid them good wages, so that they were able to live without work all winter; that six other men worked for him elsewhere and came to the boarding-house for their meals, but did not sleep there; that one of them had got hurt in the back, and was away in the hospital, and that two teamsters had left shortly before the intruders arrived, along with the remaining five. They had also seen Rawdon ride in that morning, but did not know where he had gone. Did they know of any underground vaults or trap doors, or any buildings apart from those in the encampment? No, they had seen none; but, three years ago, before they returned to work in the spring, there must have been quarrymen about, for enormous quantities of stone were lying ready for them, which they had not taken out. Mrs. Flower declined to answer any questions, but did not scruple to ask if the Squire and others had seen anything of a man called Harding. When she learned the man's fate, as she sat in a low chair, she rocked it to and fro and groaned, but shed no tear nor uttered an articulate syllable.

Bangs would not give up the search, nor would he leave the place. There was food enough in the boarding-house, and he would remain, even if he had to stay alone. Squire Walker had to be home for an engagement early in the morning; the two clergymen had to prepare for Wednesday evening's duty, and had pastoral work before them; the colonel could not leave the man who had saved his life. The doctor and the dominie were incapacitated; Ben Toner was worse than useless over Serlizer; Pierre dreaded his beloved Angélique's ire if he remained away over night; and Sullivan's folks might be kinder anxious