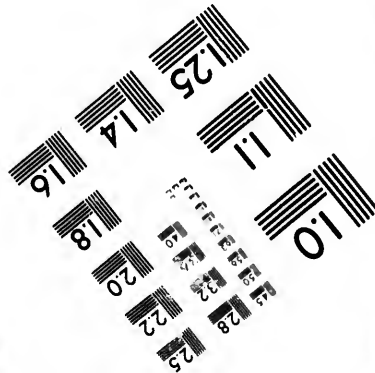
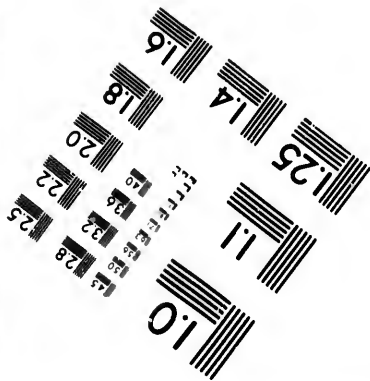
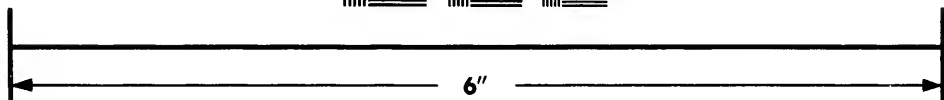
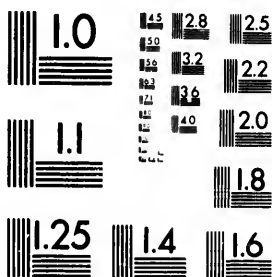


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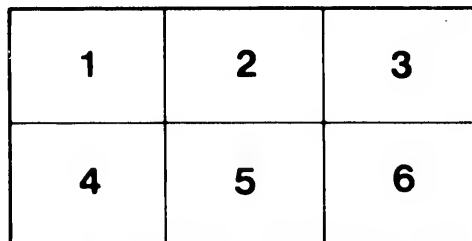
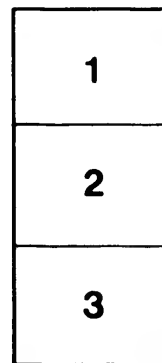
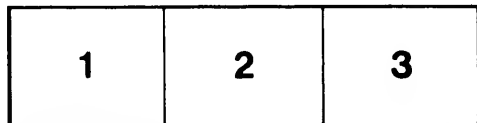
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CONTENTS.

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CHAP.	PAGE
I.—ACROSS THE WESTERN OCEAN.	
LEAVING THE ARMY—RACING A FAILURE—ACROSS THE WESTERN OCEAN,	1
II.—MY DEBUT AS A CANVASSER.	
ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK—CANVASSING FOR A BOOK— ITS CONSEQUENCES,	4
III.—THE TROTTERS.	
THE TROTTING STABLE—A VISIT TO FRIENDS IN UTICA— HIRE OUT AS A COURIER,	9
IV.—A COURIER VALET.	
ARRIVAL AT CHARLESTON — MEET SOME OF MY LOST TRIBE,	12
V.—FROM VALET TO GUEST.	
RESIGN THE POST OF COURIER—RETURN TO NEW YORK,	14
VI.—ANOTHER BRANCH OF THE TROTTER FAMILY.	
MEET ANOTHER OF THE LOST TRIBE—WORK IN A RAILWAY OFFICE,	16
VII.—AL-FRESCO TRAVELLING.	
LEAVE FOR CHICAGO—THE POORMAN'S SLEEPER,	18
VIII.—A STRANGE DRIVE.	
ARRIVE AT PORKOPOLIS—SICKNESS—A CHICAGO ALDER- MAN—THE COUNTY HOSPITAL,	21

75976

CHAP.	PAGE
IX.—PAUPERDOM.	
A TERRIBLE NIGHT IN PAUPERDOM—THE RAT'S FROLIC,	26
X.—IN THE PRESENCE OF DEATH.	
A DEATH SCENE IN THE SICK WARD—A HURRIED FLIGHT,	30
XI.—THE BAD SAMARITAN.	
A HARD-HEARTED JEHU—MY REVENGE,	36
XII.—A FRIEND IN NEED.	
A FRIEND IN NEED — A VERY OLD ACQUAINTANCE,	40
XIII.—HOW I REACHED THE GOLDEN GATE.	
DICK—"NIL DESPERANDUM,"	46
XIV.—A CHICAGO POLITICIAN.	
MR WILLIAM KING,	5
XV.—RUNNING FOR TAX-COLLECTOR.	
CANVASSING THE FOURTH WARD—PHALAN AND WHAYLAN,	55
XVI.—DOTTIE.	
A LOVE LETTER—THE WIND RAISED—DICK AND I GO WEST,	63
XVII.—SETTING OUT FOR A BUFFALO HUNT.	
ARRIVE AT LARAMIE—SET OUT FOR A BUFFALO HUNT—PRAIRIE DOGS,	70
XVIII.—I BECOME A MULETEER.	
MEETING WITH STRANGERS—SIOUX INDIANS ON THE WAR-PATH—COUNCIL OF WAR — AN OBSTINATE MULE,	74

CHAP.	PAGE
XIX.—ATTACK AND DEFEAT OF THE REDSKINS.	
A HASTY RETREAT—FIGHT WITH THE INDIANS —RESCUED BY CAVALRY,	80
XX.—MONTE DEALERS.	
ARRIVAL AT OGDEN—A VISIT TO SALT LAKE CITY —JOURNEY CONTINUED—FIGHT WITH HARD- SHARPERS—ARRIVAL AT 'FRISCO,	85
XXI.—SLINGING HASH.	
GARÇON IN NAME—DRUMMING FOR A LIQUOR STORE—A SLICE OF LUCK,	89
XXII.—OLD TOM WHITE.	
SANOMA VALLEY—REPAIRING CASTLE REYNOLDS,	95
XXIII.—I WOULD BE A CARPENTER.	
SAWING A TREE—PRUNING A VINEYARD—HOW TO MAKE A GATE,	99
XXIV.—FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.	
A FALSE FRIEND—RETURN TO 'FRISCO—START FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND—ARRIVE AT VICTORIA,	107
XXV.—IN GOVERNMENT EMPLOY.	
THE CANADIAN PACIFIC SURVEY—FRASER RIVER —THE GOVERNMENT OUTFIT—ON THE MARCH,	112
XXVI.—AN EXCITING DEER-HUNT.	
A NARROW ESCAPE—WOLVES,	116
XXVII.—THE RESULT OF A "SMUDGE."	
EAGLE LAKE—A BIG FIRE IN THE BUSH—THE ARRIVAL OF THE HEAD TYEE—MARCH TO THE COAST,	119
XXVIII.—SAVED FROM A WATERY GRAVE.	
ON THE HOOMATHCO RIVER—SALMON—RETURN TO VICTORIA—LOSS OF THE "PACIFIC,"	122

CHAP.	PAGE
XXIX.—JOURNEY TO THE GOLD MINES.	
THE BUNGALOW—FORT WRANGLE—UP THE STICKEEN RIVER—ARRIVAL AT THE GOLD MINES, .	126
XXX.—BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.	
UP THE LIARD RIVER—WRECK IN A CAÑON—NO NIGHT—A LATE BREAKFAST, .	131
XXXI.—A BOGUS BONANZA—A TURN OF GOOD LUCK.	
DISAPPOINTMENT—DOWN THE RIVER—A KIND FRIEND—IN CHARGE OF A PRISONER, .	136
XXXII.—ON ESCORT DUTY.	
ON THE TRAIL—DEATH OF AN OLD MINER—ONCE AGAIN AT VICTORIA, .	141
XXXIII.—NOT A MERRY CHRISTMAS.	
AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION—ON BOARD HUDSON BAY CUTTER—LAMENTATIONS OF AN INDIAN SQUAW—A PERILOUS VOYAGE—A HUNGRY CHRISTMAS, .	144
XXXIV.—CONCLUSION.	
LOSS OF A CANOE—AN ACCIDENT—RETURN TO VICTORIA—BACK TO THE OLD COUNTRY, .	149

ROUGHING IT AFTER GOLD.

CHAPTER I.

ACROSS THE WESTERN OCEAN.

LEAVING THE ARMY—RACING A FAILURE—ACROSS THE WESTERN OCEAN.

I HAD sold out of the army in a hurry, as many another fellow had done before me, to his sorrow. At first it seemed as if I were but on leave for a time, so I gave the matter but little thought. Gradually, however, I wearied of the monotony of having no fixed occupation. I had written innumerable letters, and answered scores of advertisements, in the vain hope of obtaining employment; but the result was invariably unfavourable. To add to my annoyance, my cash—I never possessed very much—was daily diminishing. My affairs, which from the first wore a somewhat gloomy aspect, finally became almost desperate, and, from the want of something better to do with the few pounds saved from the wreck of my commission, I went on the turf.

At first Dame Fortune smiled on me, and the "Two Thousand," "Derby," and "Oaks," were good business for me. But it was a case of "easy come easy go," and, instead of hoarding my winnings for a rainy day, I foolishly spent them. "Ascot" came round, and then "Goodwood," over which meetings I had but indifferent luck. On the "St Leger" I was once more

on the winning horse, and made quite a nice little stake over the northern "Derby." But in those days I believe I gloried in extravagance, and my winnings were soon scattered to the winds. I fully expected to do big things over the last two of the large handicaps of the year; but when "Jackdaw," over whom I stood to win a regular raker, was scratched for the "Cesarewitch," and a rank outsider, on which I did not have a single farthing, won the "Cambridgeshire," this was the climax of my racing career. To add to this disaster, I had been foolish enough to oblige a friend, and, as he either could not or would not meet the obligation, I had to pay the piper.

I was in Ireland, and one fine morning I was about to mount my horse for a day's hunting, when I received this last blow to my already shattered finances. I did not, however, allow the occurrence to spoil the last day's sport I was ever likely to have with the hounds I had so often followed. No! I proceeded on my way to the meet: we had the run of the season, and I rode as I never did, before or since.

The same evening, immediately after dinner I retired to my little room, and hastily packed the few articles of clothing and other things I thought most necessary for going abroad. At an early hour the next morning I arose, and, quietly creeping to my dear old mother's room, I bade her a hasty adieu, not, however, disclosing to her my destination; and a few minutes later was on the road to the station. Here I purchased a ticket for Dublin, and the same evening was on board the steamer sailing for Liverpool. Thence I had made up my mind to take the first vessel sailing for New York. Arriving at Liverpool, I took up my quarters at the North Western Hotel, and after breakfast I sauntered out to purchase my ticket and a few articles that I required. Having secured a berth on board the *Egypt*, which was sailing at 8 A.M. the next day, I returned to the hotel.

It was the last day of the old year of 1873, and the manager, who, I think, must have been a Scotchman, was about to give a grand ball to the hotel domestics and their friends. The guests staying in the house were also invited, myself among the number. We had a gala evening, which was to be my last in England, and I danced with the maidens fair till the "wee hours of the morn."

After the ball was over and the guests had dispersed, thinking a short sleep would refresh me, I retired to rest, having, however, given strict injunctions to "Boots" to call me in time. But good old "Boots" had evidently been drinking the health of the New Year, and never fulfilled his promise; for, on coming down about three hours later, there was he, fast asleep in one of the hall chairs. As I had scarcely a moment to lose I shook him, and I had some difficulty in making him understand that I wanted my baggage brought from my room. However, after some little delay it was forthcoming and placed in a cab, and, "Boots" having sworn everlasting friendship for me, I was quickly driven to the wharf, and in less than half an hour I was aboard the steamer, the anchor was weighed, and we were sailing down the Mersey on our way to New York.

CHAPTER II.

MY DEBUT AS A CANVASSER.

ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK—CANVASSING FOR A BOOK—ITS
CONSEQUENCES.

THERE were but few passengers, and, with the exception of myself and one other Irishman, they were all Americans. Considering the time of year, the voyage was a good one, and the weather was fine till we got off Sandy Hook, where the pilot and a heavy fall of snow reached us together. Nothing very interesting to relate occurred during the voyage. I was highly amused at the stories related by the Yankies about the "Boys of the Bowery," and I was duly initiated into the mysteries of "Euchre," greatly to the detriment of my finances.

On my arrival at the great American capital I took up my quarters at a cheap hotel, recommended by one of the passengers, where I remained for one week. As my means were limited, it was necessary for me to make every effort to obtain employment as quickly as possible; so every morning I went carefully over all the advertisements in the *New York Herald*; and, on the third day after my arrival, I saw one that I was in hopes might suit me. It read thus:—
"Wanted a respectable gentlemanly young man, wages \$15 per week; apply at office 396 Broadway, of Messrs Hass & Davit."

Dressed in the very latest London fashion, and armed with

a pile of credentials that I had brought over from the old country, I proceeded to the office. On my arrival at the door, I was a little surprised at finding the other Irish passenger aboard the *Egypt*, who had also come in answer to the advertisement. This gentleman was a tailor, and had been traveller for a large firm in Dublin; and he was now bemoaning his fate for having foolishly given up a certainty for that which might prove unremunerative. We both entered the office together, but I had the luck to obtain the first interview with Mr Davit, whose duty, it seemed, was to engage the staff. After some inquiries on the part of this member of the firm, and no end of explanations as to how I was to carry out my duties, I was finally engaged as a canvasser for a *Child's Illustrated History of America*, which was being published in weekly numbers. My canvassing ground was to be across the river, at Jersey City, and my wages \$15 per week. In order, however, to be in receipt of so large a weekly stipend, it was necessary for me to get some thirty subscribers every week, for this "The grandest *Child's History of America* ever brought before the public," and in the event of my failing to obtain the afore-mentioned number I was to receive no pay, and my time and trouble would go for nothing. This rather one-sided method of working for a living appeared to me not to be quite a fair deal. However, I made up my mind to give the business a trial; so, taking the three copies of this wonderful work handed me by Mr Davit, I quickly made room for the tailor, and, leaving the office shortly afterwards, I found myself in Jersey City.

Although Davit had given me no end of instructions as to how I was to proceed on my mission, when it came to the point I was quite at a loss how first to commence the task set before me. After wandering about the streets for over an hour, I came to the conclusion that I had better either take action or return to my hotel to dinner. Seeing some

nicely dressed children playing outside a well-appointed house, at one of the street corners, decided me. There was a cake shop across the way, which I entered, and, having invested in a two-cent bun, I interrogated the young lady behind the counter as to what might be the name of the occupant of No. 1. The vendor of buns and lollipops was a communicative female, and I learnt from her that the occupier of No. 1 was a widow with four children. Her maiden name was Brown, but on marriage it became the still more familiar cognomen Smith.

With this information I paid my small account, and bade her adieu. Crossing over the street to where the young innocents were at play, I questioned the eldest of the young hopefuls. This lassie (for it was a girl) told me her name was Eliza Ann Fairbanks Smith; as also that her "Mar" was to home and in robust health; and for this bit of information she received one cent in current coin. Rapping at the door the summons was answered by a neatly dressed domestic, who gave me to understand Madam was at lunch; but, taking my card, she showed me into a nicely furnished drawing-room, where she left me to acquaint the widow of my arrival. I was left to my own meditations for a few minutes only, when Madam arrived on the scene.

"You must pardon me, Mr Trotter," said she, seating herself in an arm-chair; "your name is quite familiar to me, but your face is not. Are you one of the Trotters, my old friends who live at Utica?"

"No, Madam, I have not that honour; I am one of the Trotters of Castle Trotter, Galway, which is a sea-bathing place on the other side of the Atlantic. I am not surprised, Madam, that my face should not be familiar to you, inasmuch as I am but four days on American soil. Neither can I, on my part, claim any acquaintance with your family; although I am on very intimate terms with many of your illustrious name. The fact is, Madam," continued I, "in me

you see the sole representative, in the capital of the State of New Jersey, of the great Book Publishing Company of Hass & Davit, New York ; and I have called on you to ask you if you will permit me to place your name on our books as a weekly subscriber to one of the grandest child's"—

"Stop sir," broke in the widow, now thoroughly roused, "I quite understand: you are one of those horrid book canvassers. I quite mistook the nature of your visit; otherwise you would never have been admitted to my presence. I must request you to go; otherwise I shall send for the police."

"Your pardon, Madam, for just one moment. I am yet a stranger in your great country: wishing to get employment, I took what first offered. From your remarks I judge I must have mistaken my avocation. I shall therefore resign my position, and seek some more honourable course, whereby to earn an honest livelihood; and I feel certain that you, as a lady, will grant me the privilege of presenting to your dear little girl this copy of her country's early history."

Having gained her consent, the valuable copy was left; and, making the widow a polite bow, I took my departure. I did not attempt to make any further canvass in Jersey City, but took the first available ferry back to New York. On my way over I made a final effort to persuade an old gentleman to become a subscriber; but he also declined to entertain the idea. To him I presented copy No. 2. On my arriving at the office, my friend the tailor was descending the stairs, and, as was natural, I inquired how he had got along.

"Oh! begor this book business bates anything I ever dramed of. Ould Davit gave me a little Roman Catholic work to canvass for among the servant girls. Shure, man, dear, I had to go to all the back doors. I got a few of 'em to put down their names; but the last house I went to they

set a dog at me, and, look here," said he, pointing to a big rent in his continuations, "it's a mercy the savage baste didn't ate me. But how did you do yourself?"

"Me! oh, I did splendidly; I got, I think, close on fifty subscribers, had about three lunches, and no end of Bourbon whisky. But, what is better, an old chap I called on has given me a job in a bank. So, if you like, I'll hand you over my book; you can make money if you persevere. This *Child's History* is a dandy to sell."

"The devil a bit of me will have any more to do with it. I have enough money to pay my passage, and I'm going right back to ould Ireland."

I did not wait for any further conversation; but, ascending the stairs, went to old Davit to give an account of my stewardship.

"Well, young man," said the boss, "and how did you get along? Your friend, for a beginning, did tolerably well; but he ought to have carried a stick to keep off the dogs."

"Oh, I did well enough, I gave one copy to a widow lady, and another to a gentleman on the Ferry, and there's No. 3," said I, flinging it at his head; and you may believe I made quick time across the room and down the stairs. Once in the street I was quickly lost to sight, though, no doubt, to memory dear.

When I arrived at the hotel I told some of the clerks in the office what had happened, and they laughed immoderately, telling me, at the same time, had I got a thousand orders I would never have received as much as one cent for my trouble. This statement made me fearfully wroth, and I determined to have my revenge. As soon as I had partaken of some refreshment I walked down to the *Herald* office and wrote out the following advertisement, to be inserted in the morning issue:—"Wanted two good stout bootblacks at 396 Broadway; apply to Messrs Davit & Hass between the hours of 10 and 11 A.M." The next morning myself and an

acquaintance repaired to the scene of action. Long before the hour appointed the young urchins had arrived. Taking up our position in a doorway across the street we watched the proceedings, and if there was not a row on Davit & Hass's stairway that morning, then surely there was never a row in New York City. For nearly two hours those street urchins fought like demons to gain an entrance, and I verily believe the battle would have lasted till sundown had it not been for the police, who finally dispersed the knights of the brush. There was a reward out the next day for any information leading to the conviction of the gentleman who had perpetrated the joke ; but that gentleman had for the time being dropped behind the scenes, and, I am thankful to say, was never discovered.

CHAPTER III.

THE TROTTERS.

THE TROTTING STABLE—A VISIT TO FRIENDS IN UTICA—HIRE
OUT AS A COURIER.

STOPPING at the same hotel as myself was a racing man who kept trotting horses. Thinking I would like to try my hand in this line of business, I hired myself out to this individual, who was his own trainer, and the day but one after the bootblack business he and I left New York together for his headquarters at Ploughkeepsie, on the Hudson River. I did not remain at the training stable many days. Either riding or driving the horses I was equal to ; but, when the trainer informed me I would have to bear a hand in grooming the animals, this not being compatible with my tastes, I resigned the position. Thinking it would be indiscreet, as yet, to

revisit the city of New York, and recollecting that my acquaintance, the widow Smith, had mentioned the Trotters of Utica, I determined to run up to that city and make the acquaintance of that branch of the family.

In past generations the Trotters must have been a prolific race; and they do not appear at the present time to be on the decrease, for there is scarcely any part of the globe over which I have travelled where I have not come across some one of the name. There also seems to be a kind of freemasonry among us, as, on each occasion when I had the pleasure of meeting some of the members of this ancient race, I invariably received the greatest kindness. The Utica Trotters were no exception to the general rule. My first night was spent at a hotel, and the next day I called on my distant relatives—not that I could trace any direct line of connection—but it is, nevertheless, strange that when I came to talk matters over with my newly-made friends in Utica, I was surprised to learn that their progenitors hailed from my own county in the Emerald Isle; and although my American cousins had never been in the much distressed country, it is curious to relate that they were better acquainted with the names of places and people in the Irish county than I, who had but recently left it. Having received a polite invitation, which I gladly accepted, I took up my quarters with those worthy people, and under their hospitable roof I spent a very pleasant week; and then, with, certainly on my part, much regret, I once more returned to New York.

Finding hotels too expensive for my limited means, I hired a furnished room by the week, and boarded at a restaurant close at hand. Through the medium of an employment agency it was not many days before I succeeded, in obtaining a fresh situation. On this occasion I engaged with a gentleman, as a kind of courier-valet, to travel south with him. This was really not half a bad berth, as I received

\$45 a month, all my travelling and hotel expenses, and had but little to do but pack my employer's portmanteau and look after the baggage. My boss certainly did ask me if I could shave him every morning, which I agreed to do ; but the first experiment sufficed, and, it is needless to say, was not repeated. There were four of us in the party, which consisted of the boss, his daughter, her maid, and myself. Our destination was Charleston, South Carolina ; and thence it was their intention to proceed to New Orleans, and finally to Galveston.

The day before our departure from New York, my employer sent me to purchase return tickets for our journey by the steamer leaving for New Orleans ; and, I having packed up his clothes in good old military style, with which he was well satisfied, the baggage was labelled and everything ready for a start. The following morning I was to enter on my regular duties, call him in good time, and shave him. Now, although I was perfectly competent to use a razor on my own face, I never had the pleasure of trying my skill on that of another. It was finally arranged for that morning, as my razors—so I told him—required resetting, that I should send him over a professional barber. We got away in good time to catch the steamer, which sailed out of the harbour about noon. Our accommodation on board was everything that could be desired ; and, the weather being fine, I looked forward to having a good time of it. On the morning of our second day out, the question of shaving once more cropped up. Thinking further excuses would be useless, I made up my mind to do the best I could. I succeeded in removing his growing beard from his cheeks without much difficulty, but when it came to the chin—oh ! that chin—I became so nervous, and my hand shook to that degree, that I nearly dropped the razor. However, the lather was on, so there was no help for it but to proceed. I was congratulating myself on my success, when, just at a critical

moment, the ship gave a lurch, and, the razor at the same time slipping in my hand, I gave my unfortunate boss a terrible gash. He jumped up from his seat as if his jugular vein had been severed, and for the space of several minutes there was quite a scene. However, after a storm comes a calm. The blood was stanchd and the wound was finally covered with sticking plaster. Luckily, there was a ship's barber, and his services were called into requisition during the remainder of the voyage.

CHAPTER IV.

A COURIER VALET.

ARRIVAL IN CHARLESTON—MEET SOME OF MY LOST TRIBE.

ARRIVED at Charleston we took up our quarters at the hotel of that name, and right pleasant ones I found them. As the inmates of the hotel performed all the necessary duties required by the guests, I was virtually my own master, and was quite at liberty to go when and where I pleased. We had been in Charleston for somewhat more than a week, and in the course of a few days we should once more take the steamer and proceed to New Orleans.

Chancing one morning to take up a city directory, which I found in the hotel reading-room, I inadvertently turned to the T's, and was rather more delighted perhaps than astonished to find the noble name of Trotter figuring in its pages as one of the leading city merchants. On making inquiries, I ascertained that this gentleman was one of considerable means, had an office in town, and a fine sugar plantation some little distance away in the country. This was an

opportunity not to be thrown away ; so, hastily dressing myself in my best suit of mufti, I repaired to the merchant's office. I found him a very nice old gentleman, and he received me most cordially. Having informed him I was in search of some of my family who had emigrated to America in days gone by, we commenced to compare notes ; and now I was truly astonished, for his family also came from my own county. He related the genealogy of the whole family tree, and referred to so many places that I was well acquainted with, that I began to think I must have discovered a long-lost relative or else must be going clean out of my mind. The merchant kindly proffered his hospitality to me, and I promised, before leaving, that I would pay him a visit at his country seat.

Now, I really intended keeping my promise, and was fully determined that, on the day previous to our leaving Charleston, I would hire a buggy and drive out in style to call on my namesakes. Of course, holding the subordinate position that I did at the time, and having given the merchant to understand I was a gentleman of wealth, travelling for my own amusement, I was cautious and naturally anxious not to be discovered in making false impressions or statements. I was, therefore, not a little disconcerted when, about noon on the following day, one of the hotel bell boys informed me there were some ladies in a carriage that wished to see me. Taking the card which the boy held in his hand, I thought I should have dropped when I read, "Mrs and the Misses Trotter, Hollymount." There was no hope for it but to meet the occasion bravely, although at the time I was ungrateful enough to wish my fair friends at Jericho. Mustering up what little courage I had left in me, I proceeded to interview my guests. There were three ladies in the carriage, a very nice elderly lady and two charming damsels—Trotter *mère et filles*. The usual introduction over, Mrs Trotter told me how her husband was delighted at

meeting me, and how glad they would all be if I would come to Hollymount and spend some days with them. Indeed, so anxious were they to have a little of my society, that they offered, if agreeable to me, to take me back in their carriage. This, however, was out of the question ; so I was obliged to make some rather lame excuse. Ma was going to do some shopping, and, in the meantime, the young ladies were going to take a turn on the esplanade ; so it was agreed that I should meet them in half an hour. Being always of a hospitable turn of mind, I of course asked my friends in to lunch, which was then proceeding. The offer was, however, politely refused, and I was very thankful when they drove away in the vehicle. "Here's a pretty kettle of fish," thought I. "Here am I, a valet, thank goodness in disguise, about to be entertained by one of the good old aristocratic families of the Southern States."

CHAPTER V.

FROM VALET TO GUEST.

RESIGN THE POST OF COURIER—RETURN TO NEW YORK.

At the stated time I met my new friends, and, had I not been unlucky enough to come face to face with my employer, I should have spent a very pleasant afternoon. However, the *rencontre* passed off without any unpleasant results to my aspirations, although my boss and his daughter took rather a prolonged stare at us as we passed. When mamma had finished her purchases, she picked up my two fair cousins, and it was finally settled that, on the day but one following,

I would drive out and spend a week with them. It was now necessary, in order to carry out my intentions, to give my boss warning that I intended to leave his service; and I was very uncertain whether he would pay me the money that was due to me on so short a notice. It was not till the next day that I had an opportunity to speak with him, and I was very dubious as to the result. The next morning I took up some hot water to his room, and as I was about to make my exit, he remarked—

“You have some high-toned friends in this city, Trotter.”

“Yes, sir; my relations, I believe, are well-to-do people. Those were my cousins that you saw me walking with yesterday. I never saw them before, and my poor old aunt and uncle have been lost to my sight for many a long day. They have a plantation out in the country, and, please sir,” said I, fumbling at the handle of the door, “if not very inconvenient, I should like to leave.”

The old gentleman took my resignation more pleasantly than I expected; and when I explained to him how that a good position on the plantation had been offered to me, and that I was really a gentleman in reduced circumstances, he presented me with my whole month's wages. I procured him another valet (a coloured gentleman), and the next day my New York boss and his party sailed for New Orleans, while I drove out to the Trotter plantation and spent two weeks with this new found tribe of the lost Trotters. Then, after having promised to pay them another visit on a future occasion, I returned to New York.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER BRANCH OF THE TROTTER FAMILY.

MEET ANOTHER OF THE LOST TRIBE—WORK IN A RAILWAY OFFICE.

A FEW days after my arrival in "Gotham," as it is often called, I was scanning the columns of one of the daily papers when this paragraph met my eye:—"The Honourable Alexander Joshua Trotter, President of the X.Y.Z. Railroad, is stopping at the Hoffman House." "By George," thought I, "here's another member of our prolific family. I must call on this honourable gentleman and see if he cannot give me a position on the railway." Wasting no time, I straightway went to his hotel. He was out, so I left a note, of which the following is a copy:—

"DEAR SIR,—Seeing in the paper your arrival at the Hoffman House, I take the liberty of writing to you. This letter may somewhat surprise you; nevertheless, I feel certain it will meet with your mature consideration. I have only lately arrived from the old country, and I am endeavouring to discover the whereabouts of some of my relatives who emigrated to the United States many, many years ago. Without in the smallest degree imagining for one moment that in you I shall find the head of the Trotter branch, of which I am now in search, I am in hopes that, from the position you hold, you may be able to afford me some assistance in attaining the object I have in view; and as I am in possession of letters to some of the leading

members of society in this country, you need have but little hesitation in granting me an interview.—Yours, &c., OF TROTTER.”

This letter I handed to the clerk in the hotel office, to be by him delivered to the railroad magnate on his return. Persons holding the position of the Honourable Alexander Trotter are so much sought after when they arrive in a large city, that I had but little hope that my third interview with one of the Trotters would turn up trumps. Indeed, I thought I stood but a poor chance of receiving any reply; so the reader can imagine my surprise and delight when, on my return to my humble lodgings, I found on my table actually a telegram awaiting me, and on reading it I found it to be from the X.Y.Z. President, requesting my presence at his office the following morning. It is needless to say I was there at the appointed hour; and, my credentials being satisfactory, I explained to him more fully as regards my missing relatives, and that, could I succeed in finding them, I felt certain they would use their influence in obtaining for me some employment on this occasion. However, the Trotter representative did not hail from Ould Ireland. His family were of English extraction, and originally came over from that country in the “Mayflower.”

“I shall, however,” said the President, “taking into consideration the high references you bring with you, use my endeavours to find you something to do. Would you have any objection to handle a truck?”

My reply was, “Not in the least.”

A few days later I received a letter telling me that, on the recommendation of the President of the X.Y.Z. Railroad, my services had been accepted as one of the junior clerks in the Erie office, and I was to report myself at once. This I did, and I held this position for over two months. One day, however, the man who cleaned the windows and

swept out the office was absent, I believe, ill. Being the junior, I was ordered to do his duties. This I unfortunately considered as an insult, and straightway went to the manager and took my discharge. Had I acted with more prudence my luck would have been in the ascendant, as I afterwards learnt that within a week the Honourable Alexander had sent for me to work in his office. The news reached me too late, for I had left New York, and had been in Chicago over two weeks when the letter was forwarded offering me the appointment.

CHAPTER VII.

AL-FRESCO TRAVELLING.

LEAVE FOR CHICAGO—THE POORMAN'S SLEEPER.

It was in the merry month of May, early in the seventies, that, after a short sojourn in the great metropolis of the Western Continent, New York, I thought I would follow the advice of the cold-hearted, though long-headed, Horace Greely, whose everlasting cry to the emigrant, and those seeking employment, was, "Go West, young man, go West." The utterer of these words has joined the "great majority;" but the echo still resounds "Go West," and so it is the living stream which has its source in the over-populated districts of the British Isles and other parts of the Old World, flow with a pertinacity only equalled by that known as the Gulf Stream, which, to navigators and others interested in the physical geography of the deep, still remains a mystery. Quick is the word and sharp the action across the Herring

Pond, so it did not take me long to decide, and having packed my belongings, and had them conveyed by an express to the Union Depot, I purchased my ticket, and with, I believe, a fair wind and no favour, started for "Porkopolis," otherwise called Chicago, the capital of the Far Far West. I had had but indifferent luck in the mighty "Gotham." However, my heart in those days was a bit lighter than it now is, many years having passed over my now scanty locks since then. Yes, I think I was as light-hearted as most young fellows would be under similar circumstances; for although the contents of my pockets were very low down, an unknown quantity of privation and hardship staring me in the face, added to a decided want of knowledge of a Bohemian life, yet there still remained the dogged determination to do or die, and bright visions of the future buoyed me up. It was my first experience of a rambling life, and everything in this newly-found world was novel—in fact, I was at this period of a rather eventful career, what the Yankee would term a decided "greenhorn;" for although I had no little experience in travelling previous to this epoch of my existence, yet it was under different and more propitious circumstances. I spent the greater part of my last few dollars in luxurious transit, as I carefully booked my living freight by Pullman Palace Sleeping Car. I have since learned to be satisfied with a much less expensive mode of conveyance, and have on more than one occasion been obliged to have recourse to what is jokingly called the "Poorman's Sleeper." This rather unique, and, I may add, not over comfortable mode of transit varies according to circumstances; sometimes the trip has to be made in an empty freight car, which is not only fatiguing to the body but fearfully tedious, as all freight trains are shunted, or, as it is called, "switched off," to make way for express and other faster ones. Sometimes you are "sided" for hours, and it is therefore almost impossible to make any accurate

calculation as to what hour, or if the distance be long, what day, you are likely to reach your destination. There is, however, a more accelerated means by which you can reach your hoped-for Eldorado, by travelling by the ordinary passenger train, and making use of that part of it, known to all Americans, more especially "Brokers," as the "Blind Baggage." Let me here state for the benefit of the uninitiated that this rather jolting sedan lounge is the platform in front of the first car just in rear of the tender, and takes its name from the fact that the compartment of which the platform is itself a portion contains the belongings of the authorised passengers, and is duly ornamented with a window through which daylight never penetrates. On this stool of repentance, if you are lucky enough to find room, which is rather limited, you can amuse yourself by watching the coaling system as practised on American lines, and there is also considerable employment in the mere fact of keeping your seat, and, unless in warm weather, in keeping yourself from freezing. To add to this there is also a certain amount of gymnastics to be gone through, for, these "unreserved seats" not being on the schedule of existing fares, no charge is made; but should any of the authorities at wayside stations behold your noble person on your perch you are quickly desired to descend therefrom, and either take an inside seat paying the fare, or as they say out West "Vamoose the Ranche." In order, therefore, as far as lies in your power to avoid discovery, it is necessary for you to descend at each station, and on no account to remount until the train is once more on the move. This, I may say, is attended with no little risk to your personal safety, as a false step or slip is almost fatal. On the other hand, there is much inconvenience in this mode of travelling, for should the conductor spy you, and you are minus the needful, you are pretty certain to be left behind to twiddle your thumbs till the next "passenger" comes along; and, I may say, that although to the

reader this may appear but a matter of little moment, yet to the unfortunate traveller it may turn out very serious, especially on the longer routes where the stations are very far apart, and in an uninhabited district where perhaps the train only stops to take in water at some of the lonely tanks. Nevertheless, the adventurous stream still flows; money or no money it is bound to find an outlet, and the daring vagabond is daily and hourly found travelling in all sorts and conditions of trains, and in every conceivable and inconceivable part of the same, from the airy "Blind Baggage" to the confined tool box under the hinder part of the locomotive, and even at times a few are known to take a cross-country ride astride the buffers of the end car. It may appear incredible, but it is nevertheless a fact, that numbers have travelled hundreds of miles in one or other of the ways above described, and on more than one occasion have I been myself a participator in these perilous voyages which, although fatal to many, I managed to survive without accident.

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE DRIVE.

ARRIVE AT PORKOPOLIS—SICKNESS—A CHICAGO ALDERMAN—
THE COUNTY HOSPITAL.

I ARRIVED at Chicago after a pleasant journey of rather more than two days; but bad luck seemed determined to pursue me, for notwithstanding the luxury of the coaches I somehow or other managed to contract a severe cold, and this, in augmentation with what the late Theodore Hook facetiously termed "disease of the chest," caused me much pain and

inconvenience. My stock in trade on my arrival at the terminus of the Great Lake City was my small quantum of worldly goods and a trifle over £2 in hard cash. Here, again, want of judgment or experience played me false, for, instead of retiring to some quiet hostelry at a moderate tariff, I must needs go to perhaps the most expensive hotel in the city. To this day I cannot tell why I did so, but in all probability because it happened to be the nearest to the depot; however, be that as it may, at the Grand Pacific I took up my abode, with what result the sequel will show. Time flies—so does money—therefore my sojourn in magnificence and luxury was of short duration. With the tariff at £1 per diem, a few mild concoctions of American mixology, and other minor expenses, my two little “yellow boys” quickly melted away. So that after my first day’s stay at the hotel I found myself at such a low financial ebb as to cause me considerable uneasiness as to the keeping of body and soul together and a roof over my not a little confused head. To add to my discomfort, moreover, the cold that I had the misfortune to contract in the train settled in a violent attack of rheumatism in one knee; this became so inflamed that I could move about only with considerable pain. However, action had to be taken at once, so I moved my baggage from the hotel and placed it in the custody of a knight of the shears, who had exercised his skill on my scanty locks on the previous morning, and who kindly permitted me to deposit it there till I would look around. Driven to the ragged end of despair I had but one alternative, and that was to apply to the only individual I knew in that part of the world for advice and assistance. Many years previous to the date of the events of this story, my worthy father, pastor and master, squire of a parish in the wilds of old Ireland—who was always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need—was, I may say, the direct means and instrument of furthering the wishes of a tenant farmer on the

family estate by franking his way across the Western Ocean. Mr Keogh, the gentleman in question, embraced the opportunity; and having gone through the many and various vicissitudes, the ups and downs, and the severe preliminary training always considered necessary for the well-being of the raw Irish emigrant, by steadiness, perseverance, and strict application to business, gradually ascended the mercantile ladder, and at the time I speak of was considerably over half-way up, being the proprietor of a by no means inconsiderable grocery store; he was a city alderman to boot. To this gentleman of exalted position I bent my weary steps. His place of business and combined family residence, after much limping and no end of false tacks, I eventually reached. As I entered the premises of the worthy citizen, vendor of cheap groceries, indifferent beer, and precious bad whisky, I spotted the follower of the plough in days gone by. Changed though he was, there was no mistaking him. There he stood, like "Muldoon, the solid man," behind the bar, dispensing drinks and conversing with what seemed to me rather a motley crowd. It was some little time, so busy was he engaged in entertaining his customers, before I was successful in obtaining an audience with my friend of the City Council, but, having once done so, with the aptitude of those hailing from the Emerald Isle, I lost no time in making myself known and acquainting him with my circumstances. Now, some Irishmen have hearts too big, some too small, whilst others, I am sorry to say, have none at all, though this is the exception, not the rule, amongst the Celtic race. The Alderman's heart was of the middle class, and although he listened with attention to my troubles, he did not, at least outwardly, show that amount of sympathy and wish to help that I expected from one who had received so much in the past from the author of my being. However, after a lot of small talk, various inquiries about persons of our mutual acquaintance in the "ould

country," and one or two mild libations to wet the occasion, I succeeded in getting him to promise that he would use all his Aldermanic influence to get me into the City Hospital, where he assured me I would receive every care and attention ; and it being finally arranged that I was to parade at his store at an early hour the following morning, to be by him personally introduced to the sick ward of the hospital, I took my departure. That night I spent my last few pence in a cheap bed, and as it was not particularly comfortable it gave me but little trouble to turn out early, so as the clock was striking the hour, bundle in hand, I once more appeared on the scene at "Keogh Castle." The "boss" was there behind the bar performing the various functions of his calling. He recognised me ; and, the usual salutations passed, we entered into conversation. Imagine how down on my luck I felt when "mine host" informed me the City Hospital was full, and that notwithstanding all his endeavours it was quite impossible to get me admitted to the sick ward of that institution. However, he added, if you have no objection, I have been successful in obtaining you an entry at the County Hospital, about twelve miles out in the country. Being ill and penniless, like the drowning man who clutched at a straw, I was glad to jump at any opportunity whereby I could obtain medical advice and a haven of rest for the time being, so I cheerfully and gladly acquiesced. Little did I know where I would find myself a few hours later on. I was duly informed that there was a public conveyance which would be ready to take out sick passengers, starting from the Town Hall at 2 P.M. So having bade adieu to the "Justice of the Bar," one of the clerks under whose care I was placed led me off to some small place of refreshment, where he regaled me with something substantial to eat, washed down by copious draughts of frothing lager beer, and notwithstanding my troubles and trials, my aches and pains, my appetite was sufficiently keen to permit me to do ample

justice to the provender set before me. As the clock was striking the hour we arrived at the office of departure. The omnibus was ready waiting, so with a last farewell to my kind companion I took my seat in the conveyance, which, from its outward appearance gave one the idea that it was just as likely to arrive at a "County Jail" as a County Hospital.

There were six passengers including myself, and judging from the appearance of my immediate right and left hand neighbours we must indeed have seemed a curious lot. In the corner on my left sat a "lady." Yes, I will stretch a point and say lady. I invariably sympathise with females, especially those who are afflicted. Now, this one was very badly afflicted, for she was mad, not perhaps dangerously so, yet nevertheless so painfully imbecile as to be anything but a pleasant companion. Just imagine my feelings, I, an orphan; homeless, penniless, sick and dejected; can any one picture to themselves anything more obnoxious to an invalid than to be fondled and caressed by a rather dirty badly-dressed lunatic. Such, however, was my fate; she pinched me, poked me in the ribs, and finally, as it were to make up for the injury she had done me, actually—oh! horror of horrors—put her arm round my neck, and owing to my rather weak state would finally have succeeded in pressing her ashen lips to mine, had it not been for the timely aid of my *vis-à-vis*, who, fortunately, turned out to be an hospital nurse, and had experience in dealing with individuals who, though wanting in intellect, made up their loss by an extra quantum of bodily muscle. I was thankful for the intervention, for strange fancies flitted across my mind. I suddenly got the notion into my head that the mad creature would bite, and that I should fall a victim to her vicious designs. The individual on my right was a man, or rather what was left of one; he was a wreck in masculine apparel of what once might have constituted a well-framed and not bad-looking

man. Alas! now the saddened look, the pallid cheek, the wandering eye showed only too plainly how the ravages of time, poverty, and disease had told on a frame that at one time must have reached even to Herculean development. Alas! the poor fellow was suffering from cancer in the neck, and what with the scanty covering he had to protect it from view, made him a most unpleasant neighbour. Of the remaining passengers there was nothing peculiar in their appearance or behaviour. After a tedious and suffocating journey of some three hours' duration, we arrived at the gates of the County Hospital.

CHAPTER IX.

PAUPERDOM.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT IN PAUPERDOM—THE RAT'S FROLIC.

As the omnibus passed through the dismal entrance, a horrible spectacle greeted us, for, as we entered the prison-like walls from the outer world, coffins piled one on top of the other, till they reached a considerable height, bade you welcome.

"Why, them's coffins, hain't they?" said one of the sick travellers to the driver. "In the name of God where are you taking us to? the dead-house, or where?"

"Guess," replied Jehu, with a sneer. "You ought to know war y'ere goin' to, if you don't it's tarnation queer. Why, man dear, this is the County Union, the Poorhouse, where all the past work, down sick blokes, in the whole State are sent. Yes, them's coffins, as you say, right sure. Once you come in these ere gates ye seldom goes out till you

are carried out. Oh, aye, them's coffins all right. Doctor has 'em all ready to hand, and he gets five dollars for every one he fills. It's a good paying game, and, I'll give you a pointer, he's no slouch at the business neither."

A minute or so later the van drew up at the door of the pauper wards. Here we were received in high state by the inmates, old and young, male and female, crippled, lame, blind, and otherwise disfigured. All seemed to take a kind of general delight in giving welcome to their new comrades. The children screamed, clapped their hands and danced round us in rings, whilst the elders of both sexes interrogated us as to what was the matter with us, which finally became a tender inquiry as to whether we had any spare tobacco. I had tobacco but none to spare, and said so. Soon after our arrival tea and cake, or rather potwash and corn bread, were served in the grand saloon. The repast not being to my fancy, the aroma from the so-called tea being quite sufficient for me, I withdrew from the *salle-à-manger*, and retiring in rear of the building solaced myself with a pipe of Virginia fine cut. Here I remained until a bell rang, which announced to the inmates that the hour had arrived for all concerned to repair to their sleeping cots for the night. On entering the ward to which I was told off to pass my first night beneath the roof of pauperdom, everything to all outward appearance looked neat and orderly enough, but I must confess I felt rather disgusted when I was informed by a somewhat tyrannical Irish warder that, owing to want of accommodation, it would be necessary for me to share a bed with a fellow-pauper, and after some little delay I was assigned to the tender care of a resident of some years' standing, who was to be my sleeping partner for the night.

"Is the bed clean?" anxiously inquired I.

"Begor, then, it ain't too faulty," was the reply of my mate, who from his brogue at once declared himself to be a gentleman from Paddy's land. "There's nothin' amiss wid

the bed bar the bugs, which are a caution, and faith I'm thinking there's some of the other little fellows too." Good heavens! thought I, here's a come down in the world. Here am I, a born gentleman, brought up in the lap of luxury and refinement, actually an inmate of a poorhouse, and obliged to share my sleeping cot with a stranger, who himself acknowledges that our litter was infested by insects both loathsome and disgusting. There were some forty cots in the ward scarcely commodious enough to contain one person each, but which by dint of pressure were made to hold double the number. At the foot of each cot were wooden forms which almost touched the beds. Not feeling inclined to test the ferocity of the insects, I intended to take up my quarters for the night on one of the benches, and leave my comrade in entire possession of the bed, which by right of priority of tenure I considered him justly entitled to. My plans were however frustrated, for scarcely had I lain down when I was roughly shaken by a warder, who peremptorily ordered me to undress and join my comrade then in bed. As I did not immediately comply, but commenced to argue the point with him, he went off, as I presumed, for assistance. "Joomp in quick," says my Hibernian bedfellow, "he's gone for the boss, and if he catches you lying there it's like enough he'll shove you in the black hole for the night." Thinking that perhaps I might come to a worse evil I took my pal's advice, so without waiting to undress, turned in all standing, boots and all, much to the discomfort I should say of my companion. A few minutes later the boss and his lieutenant came on the scene, but owing to the stupidity of the latter, and my skilfully playing sleeping innocence, notwithstanding their making a minute search, I am thankful to say I escaped detection.

I remained quite still for some considerable time. My partner was quickly off in his first sleep, dreaming probably of the old home and the fair colleen he had many years ago

left behind him in the little green isle beyond the sea ; perhaps also his mind wandered back to the country fair, the dance at the "Pattern," the farewell embrace of an aged parent, and also the kind advice and parting words of his spiritual adviser. Yes ; all these little incidents of days long gone by may have returned to his thoughts in a passing vision, as his slumbers, though sonorous, were anything but musical, and were at times intermingled with sobs and deep sighs, then a short laugh, followed by a kind of struggle. It must have been close on midnight ; the warders had long since made their final round and extinguished the lights in the dormitories, with the exception of one faint glimmer, when I once more determined to vacate my couch and return to the bench at the foot of the bed for the remainder of the night. I felt I was not likely to be disturbed again by the officials, as the lazy hounds were much too fond of their own rest and comfort to turn out except under an alarm of fire, or other exceptional circumstances. So with my little bundle as a pillow, and my coat my only covering, being tired and wearied, I very quickly fell into a deep slumber. How long I remained in this state of forgetfulness I am unable to state ; I can well remember suddenly awaking ; that something was wrong I felt certain, but what it was I knew not. At first I imagined it was one of the warders tapping me on the body ; but no, I was mistaken, for no one was in view, and nothing broke the stillness of night but an occasional snore from one or other of the sleeping forms around me. Thinking I must have been dreaming, and had some sort of nightmare, I once more turned on my side, and was soon again fast asleep. Alas ! my peaceful moments were to be of short duration, for it seemed to me I had scarcely gone to sleep when I was aroused by the same creepy sensation I had felt before. I was in a tremble, my hair seemed to stand on end, and I was in a regular bath of perspiration. Nervous I felt I admit ; but not being

in any way superstitious, I could not permit myself to fancy that a room with some forty inmates could be haunted. So great was my consternation that at first I did not move ; but again feeling the horrible tap, tap, tap on my side and face, I quickly threw off the coat which covered my face, and, springing up, what was my horror at beholding a whole army of rats scampering over the forms and down the centre of the room, till they reached the door at the head of the stairs, and vanished. It did not take me long to dress myself, as I was only partially undressed. So I slipped on my coat and quitted the dormitory. All sleep had vanished ; so I descended into the court below, where I prowled about till the day dawned.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE PRESENCE OF DEATH.

A DEATH SCENE IN THE SICK WARD—A HURRIED FLIGHT.

THE inmates of pauperdom are early risers, and bright Phœbus had scarcely peeped his golden head from behind the grey curtain of the distant horizon, when the inmates of the County Union were once more on the move. I succeeded in obtaining a bucket of water, with which I made my ablutions and laved my aching temples. Breakfast was served in the same apartment as the evening meal of the previous day ; but, hungry though I was, I could not bring myself to face the uninviting *menu*. So once more I had recourse to the soothing influence of "Virginia." At ten o'clock, the fresh arrivals who were not classified as paupers,

but came for medical advice, were marched to the surgery and examined by the officer appointed for that duty, and his decision finally determined whether you became an inmate of the sick ward, or were politely informed that your case, though bad, was one that must be treated in other quarters. Out of six, or rather five (for I must not count the nurse), members that made up the omnibus party, I was the only one who was considered by the doctor eligible for admission. What became of the others I never knew, neither do I know why their cases were discarded, but can only assume it was done on the lines, "that when many come few are chosen," and I have little doubt I should not have been of the elect, had it not been for a letter from such powerful quarters as a member of the City Council. Having duly passed the doctor's inspection, I was taken to the hospital ward by a male nurse, who, having introduced me to my sick and dying companions and allotted to me a sleeping cot, left me to my reflections. There were all sorts and conditions of men in the ward—whites, blacks, half-castes—sick, very sick, and dying. I was, I suppose, considered only sick at the time. I really felt my days, nay, my hours, numbered. To occupy my time I carefully examined my sleeping berth, and, finding the sheets in anything but a cleanly condition, inquired from one of the warders if I could be supplied with fresh ones. It may easily be understood how disgusted I felt when he informed me that on the previous evening a man had died between those very sheets, and that the bed linen was not changed regularly; but he might manage to procure others if I could muster sufficient monecy, or, as he called it, "spondoolux," to stand treat for himself and the boss. As I was the proud possessor of the magnificent sum of 25 cents only, it is needless to say I declined the offer. For aught I know, those same sheets may still remain on that very cot. It matters not to me now, neither did it then, as things turned out,

for I am thankful to say I never used that cot. During the morning one of the assistants brought me a bottle of iodine and a small brush with which to apply it. There were full directions on the label, as also a caution that it was for external use; but from the remarks made by the "Jehu" on the previous day, I have no doubt there would have been no objection had I swallowed the contents of the vial, but not having reached that state of despondency I proceeded at once to paint my swollen limb, and test the efficacy of the lotion. Having accomplished this, in what I considered a good surgical style, I left the dormitory for the fresh air. In rear of the hospital was a grass plot of about half an acre, with a few shady trees here and there. This "oasis" amidst the desert of misery was kept for the exclusive use of the sick, and those who were not quite prostrated or confined to their beds would on sunny days come out and enjoy the warmth and balmy breezes. Here on the green sward they could rest their weary limbs, and, although forgotten by the world, could at least obtain repose undisturbed. As I arrived on the scene some were sleeping, but the majority were grouped together talking and smoking. The weather being sultry, I selected the coolest spot available and sat down, quite close to me being a man who had evidently seen better days. I entered into conversation with him, and he informed me he had been in hospital for some months with a broken leg, but was now rapidly approaching convalescence. He gave me a graphic description of hospital life, and although some of his stories were amazing, for the most part they filled me with horror and dismay. As the clock in the hospital tower struck one a bell rang, which my companion informed me was for dinner. Being a member of the same ward as myself he tried to persuade me to come and partake of some refreshment, but although he declared the food supplied in the sick ward was far superior to that of the casual ward, and that I really required sustenance,

yet so great was my distaste to hospital diet that I preferred to fast. Being again alone, and left to my own meditations, owing, I suppose, to the wearisome night I had passed, sleep overcame me, and once more my troubles for the time were forgotten. At least two hours must have passed ere I awoke. I felt greatly refreshed, and oh! gleam of joy and hope, I found that the effect of the iodine had greatly reduced my swollen limb. I at once tested my walking powers, and, although anything but perfect, were so far improved as to determine me to make one desperate effort to rid myself of the pauper hospital, and retrace my steps to Chicago, or perish in the attempt. As the cool of the evening approached I made up my mind to risk the venture, and watching an opportunity when the warders would be out, and the inmates for the most part asleep, I once more stood at the door of the chamber of sickness and death, and peeping in I witnessed a scene which thrilled my very soul and made my blood run cold. In the right-hand corner next the door lay one of the sick inmates who, I was given to understand in the morning, had but a few short hours to live. As I peeped through the half-open door for the purpose of ascertaining if any of the officials were about, I beheld a man, half dressed, leaning over the prostrate form in the bed, now no longer breathing, and his back being towards me I could watch his movements unobserved. Stealthily he withdrew from beneath the reclining head a pair of trousers, and taking from one of the pockets a small bag, proceeded to empty its contents into a handkerchief. I heard the clink, clink, and knew it was money. Having replaced the empty bag and put the trousers into their former hiding-place, he made for his own bed on the other side of the room, but ere he could reach it with one bound I seized him round the waist with one hand, whilst with the other I grasped the handkerchief; so sudden was the shock to his nervous system that at first I thought he had fainted, and it

was with no little difficulty that I succeeded in getting him to his cot. After a little, however, he came to himself, and seeing I was not, as he supposed, an official, took courage and pleaded for mercy.

"Scoundrel," said I, "you who are so close to the verge of death, would you rob the dying of a few paltry dollars?"

"Spare me, oh, spare me!" he replied. "I never would have done so, but that he who lies in yonder corner no longer requires the money. He is dead; died not less than ten minutes ago. Here am I rapidly following him, and without any little comforts to soothe me in my last days; surely the few dollars are better in my hands than in those of the thieving warders who will but spend it in drink."

Passing over to the dead man's cot to see that the culprit had really spoken the truth, I found it to be a fact. The glazed eye and fallen jaw too plainly indicated that the poor fellow had left this world of sin and sorrow—let us hope for those regions above where all is peace and the weary are at rest. Hearing the warders ascending the stairs, I came to the conclusion it was time to decamp. "Let him keep it, poor devil," thought I, "what good would it do me to peach on him?" I had just time to get my small parcel of belongings, and slip into a small room used by the sick inmates for washing purposes, when the warders entered. As there was a back staircase leading from this room I felt pretty secure that I could make good a hasty retreat should it be necessary, and curiosity prompting me I anxiously waited to hear what the warders would say and how act. Through the chinks in the door I could see them pass over to the dead man's cot.

"The old chap is gone at last, Bill," said one to the other. "We must collar what he has got, quick, before any one comes. The lad in the far corner will never say nothin'. So here goes." Well, he went through the same performance as

the "lad," as he called him, had but a few minutes before. The result this time, however, was not so remunerative, as to their disgust the lucre was wanting.

"Dog on the luck," says the would-be thief. "Tarnation seize the red cent he has on him. Queer too; for I'll give my oath he had over fifteen dollars in the bag, besides the one I changed this morning when I got him the drop of brandy."

"Told you so," said the mate. "Darn your chicken-hearted liver, we'd have had the 'rhino' all right if it had not been for your tomfoolery and want of pluck to take it when you were making up the bed. I guess some of those infernal sick beggars have played 'smart Alec,' and got away with the boodle. Let's, if we can, draw out the old 'un in yon corner."

One of them pulled the sheet over the dead man's face, and then they both crossed over to interrogate the real culprit, who was long before this safe in bed, and playing "possum." After a good shaking they managed to make this individual understand that his evidence was required with respect to the deceased.

"Do you know that that ere coon yonder is dead?"

"No."

"Do you know anything about his money? Now, don't lie or I'll tear the heart out of you, for I believe you took it."

"Oh, my God! how could I? Ye's know I have not left my cot for weeks, and could not crawl to yon side if I could enter heaven for a-doing so. If the dead 'un had money and it's gone, it ain't me as is to blame; that chap with the bad knee was up here awhile ago a-paintin' of it. He was over yon side a-prowlin' about; it's he as has took it, and he ain't gone more than fifteen minutes."

"God forgive you, you lying old scoundrel; if there is not a hot reception awaiting you in the great hereafter there ought to be," and without waiting to hear more, and discard-

ing the orthodox means of descending, I threw myself astride the bannisters and slid down with the velocity of a shooting star.

CHAPTER XI.

THE END OF SAMARITAN.

A HARD-HEARTED JEHU—MY REVENGE.

I QUICKLY reached the little grass plot, which I crossed, and passing out through the iron gate which I had entered only the previous day, shook the dust from off my feet and bade adieu to Poverty Hall and devils incarnate who dwelt therein. I felt quite uncertain about being followed by some of the officials and accused of stealing the money of the dead man; so, walking as fast as my partially recovered limb would permit, I did not pull up till the pauper buildings were lost to view. Even now, thought I, I don't feel quite safe, so shall just arm myself a little in case of attack. For this purpose I selected two smooth stones about the size of an egg; these I placed in my right-hand pocket. I then slipped off my shoe, and taking off my sock put a stone into it, only not quite so large as the other two. This latter weapon was to be used as a slung shot, and a very dangerous one it is too at close quarters. Having consigned it to my left-hand pocket, and procured a good stout piece of fence rail splintered off at one end, I felt I was fully prepared for any attack, and could make it hot for an enemy, unless he were armed with a six-shooter, which they were more than likely to be. However, my precautions turned out unnecessary. No hospital officials appeared; so, after a while, finding

there would be no use for them, and being an extra weight, I discarded them. I can scarcely describe how light-hearted and gay I felt as I trudged along. To be once more in the open country, once more free, it gave me exquisite joy even in the midst of my misery, and so deeply impressed me as to never be forgotten. Indeed, none but those who have passed through such an ordeal can imagine my feelings; and I sincerely trust that none of my readers may ever have occasion to test their experience. Fearing that long marches might further inflame my knee, I determined to make my journey by short stages, resting at intervals. About an hour before sundown an individual overtook me driving in a buggy. Seeing that he was alone, and had a seat to spare, I was about to request him to give me a lift. The wretch, however, forestalled me, and not only understood what I was about to ask him but also my destination, for as I was about to speak as he drove quickly by, he shouted out, "I'm going to turn off into a byway a few yards further up or I'd give you a ride 'Cap.'"

This was a deliberate falsehood, as I saw his horse and buggy standing outside a public-house five miles up the road, and as I entered to get some slight refreshment I saw him drinking at the bar; but I could not help thinking to myself how much I would like to be even with him. As I turned and left the house little did I think that within the hour I should be so amply revenged. I had tramped along on my onward journey for perhaps a mile or so when I beheld a cloud of dust on turning round, and a few minutes later a horse and buggy came into view. There was no driver, and the horse came slashing along at full speed, as if the very devil himself was after it. To avoid being run over I got over the fence, and as the animal ran by I recognised it as belonging to my hard-hearted friend, and I am sorry to say I was highly delighted at his misfortune. I watched its onward flight, and at a bend in the road, some four or five

hundred yards further on, just as the corner was turned, the buggy capsized. I hurried on as fast as I could, and was not long in reaching the wreck. I found things were rather worse than I anticipated, for the conveyance was smashed into kindle wood, whilst the unfortunate horse had fallen head over heels into a wet ditch, and was deeply imbedded in the mud and slush. As I had made pretty good time I thought I would tarry on the road awhile and watch what happened. I did all I could to extricate the poor horse, not only as an act of kindness to the animal, but I had serious thoughts that he might aid me on my journey to the city. Seeing, however, that without help it was quite impossible, I gave up the attempt, and seating myself on the fence awaited the arrival of the owner. I was not kept waiting long, for in the course of a few minutes I spied my hero coming as fast as his short legs could carry him. Arriving at last at the scene of destruction, puffing and blowing like a grampus, he commenced bemoaning his fate and cursing his luck and the half-drowned horse that caused the accident. As soon as I could command his attention I thought I might as well have a little amusement at his expense. So putting on a bit of Yankee twang I informed him that that "ere quädrooped was a-sinking fast, and if he did not hurry up and procure help and a rope he was a gone goose certain."

"Do you want to earn a quarter?" asked he of the compound fractured buggy; "'cause I'll give you one if you run back and fetch me a rope or strong line from the saloon. Bah! I'll make it a half. Pshaw! I'll make it a cart-wheel, a whole dollar if you do it, and I guess that's more than you have earned for many a day, I reckon."

"Perhaps so," said I; "but you see I am only out for a holiday airing now, so am not on the job. If you take this chicken's advice you will just scoot arter that there rope yourself, and be quick about it too. Shoo! fly, there he goes,"

and just at this moment the horse gave a violent plunge, which sent him deeper into the mire.

“ Nothing like leather, as a rule, boss,” said I, determined to give him a good “ bulldosing ” when I was at it ; “ but I reckon, on this auspicious occasion, a rope would take the cake. Jest see if ye had one now, how easy it would be to slip a loop over his two forelegs. Why, dang it all, we’d have him out in a jiffey ; but what is the use of talkin’ when you ain’t got none. Sorry I can’t stop along with you to watch the animal. Should like to stay wid you all the summer if I could ; but, fact is, I have got an engagement to sup with the mayor of the city at eleven o’clock to-night, so as the time is getting on, guess I’ll make tracks. I’m thinking I’ll be late now, and I hate to keep his honour awaiting for his wittles, as it might spile his digestion. If I can do anything for you in the city, give it a name and I’ll do it. I shall be back this way in about a week, and if you’re anywhere about, I’ll look ye up ; so good night, and good luck to you.”

I had managed to take a good rise out of him, so I took no notice of a whole volley of oaths he shouted after me, as I gradually increased the distance between us. I had my revenge, that was certain and sufficient.

CHAPTER XII.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

A FRIEND IN NEED—A VERY OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

It was close on midnight when I reached the city, and as all I possessed in cash was ten cents, it was quite impossible to procure a lodging of any kind. Being awfully thirsty, I invested my capital in a mug of beer, and moistened my parched lips with foaming lager; and, as I did so, I turned over in my mind where it would be best to spend the remainder of the night. I might have remained in the saloon where I was, as it was open all night; but then it was hot and noisy, and being tired I wanted to rest. Then I thought of the police station, that last resource of the "broker;" but I had had quite enough of the society I should be likely to meet there, which caused me to fight shy of making any further acquaintances of that description. As I vainly endeavoured to solve the sleeping problem, a happy thought flashed across my rather overtaxed brain. I remembered on the day of my first arrival in the city taking a stroll in one of the parks. The Lake Park, as it was not enclosed, and there were plenty of seats, I saw no reason why I should not use it as an open-air bedroom for the night. So making my way thither I selected one of the most secluded benches on which to repose. I had, however, a kind of misgiving that I was infringing the rules, and was liable to be disturbed. My conjectures proved to be correct, for scarcely had I got myself into a reclining position, when a parkkeeper arrived

on the scene, and informed me that the grounds, though not enclosed, were not open to the public, except on special occasions, after the hour of ten o'clock; and he further gave me to understand, should a policeman see me, he would assuredly shove me in the "cooler" for the remainder of the night.

"Well, my friend," answered I, "it matters very little to me whether he locks me up, or, for that matter, flings me in the lake. I have no money, no friends, no home. I have been ill, and have this day only come out of the County Hospital uncured. This evening I have walked from there, some fourteen miles, rather too long a distance for a man sick and without food for thirty-six hours. I pray you, therefore, allow me to rest here and die in peace."

"Why, dang it all," says the keeper, peering into my face, "ain't you the young man I saw a few days since limping round the park with the help of a stick?"

"Yes; the same."

"Ah! I ken you weel now. You looked na weel then; but, hoot mun, why you're like the death now. Ye're na lang from the auld sod, I reckon; and from your clothes and talk ye're na tramp neither. I'll give my swear I'm not the man to see an auld country lad who is sick die for the want of a meal of victuals. I've been in a like fix myself; so come ye alang of me, and I'll put you up in the wee shanty yon for the nicht."

This was indeed a joyful surprise to me, and without any coaxing I followed him to his humble abode. On our arrival he lighted a candle, and made me a shakedown on the floor.

"Ye can lie there," said he, "it's the best I can do for ye; but there no one will meddle wi' ye. I'll gang noo and see if I canna find ye a bit to eat, and a drop of something to cheer ye up a bit."

He was absent but a short time, and, on making his reappearance, came full-handed, for he brought me a small

loaf of bread, some pickled pigs' feet, a lump of cheese, half a pint of whisky, and a billy-can of lager beer.

"Thar ye are, friend," said he, placing this load on the floor close to me. "Now you can steam ahead, and eat and drink every jot and tittle of it. It's na too much for a famished man. When you have finished, turn over and tak' your rest. You won't see me the nicht again, as I am on watch and have to go my rounds."

I did ample justice to the bill of fare set before me, by eating all the viands, and polishing off all the drinkables, not a bad performance for a dying man. Fatigue and the whisky soon caused me to forget my troubles, and the sun was some hours up when I awoke in the morning. My Scotch friend further extended his hospitality to me, inasmuch as he provided me with breakfast, and having partaken of a hearty meal I bade him adieu. I sallied forth, being quite unacquainted with the geography of Chicago. I knew only the direction in which resided my Aldermanic friend, and this route I wished to avoid. Thus it happened that, travelling up one street and down another, neither knowing nor caring where they led to, I eventually found myself towards midday on the outskirts of the city. The day being warm, and feeling tired after my ramble, I took advantage of the shady verandah of a small store, and there being plenty of seats, was just the place for a weary traveller to rest. A wagon and horse stood in front of the building, having the appearance of a bread cart, and I took it for granted it contained that useful household commodity. I also further judged that, as no driver was to be seen, he was inside disposing of his goods. On both points I proved to be correct. I had not been seated more than a few minutes when the owner or driver made his appearance, basket in hand. He was a strapping, fine young fellow, and as he passed close to me I gazed on his comely features. A sudden feeling came over me that I had seen his face

before, but when or where, for the life of me, at the time I could not say. He had taken hold of the reins, or lines, as they call them in the States, and was just on the point of mounting to his driving-box, when, happening to turn his face towards me, I called out "Hi!" and beckoned him that I wished to speak to him. As I was a stranger, he was not a little taken aback; but after a slight hesitation he came over to where I was seated. As he approached I gave him "Good-day," and apologised for calling him back. I gave him to understand that my reason for calling him was that, although I could not recall his name, yet something told me that, unless I was greatly mistaken, he and I were not strangers to one another. He eyed me attentively for a few moments, and then suddenly, as if bewitched, flung his hat in the air, and with a whoo hoop that would have done credit to the "Galway Blazers," exclaimed—

"By the taring smash this, bangs Banagher, bates the very divil entirely. Why if you ain't Mr Joe Trotter you're his ghost anyhow, and I'm blind and a Dutchman! Oh! oh! tip us your flipper. How are you, Mister Joe? How is every bit of you? When did you leave the ould cuntry? What brought you here anyway?"

His queries came in such quick succession, and being excited I could scarcely follow him. However, I replied that every bit of me was quite well. I had left the old country about five months ago, and had reached Chicago by train. "And now," said I, "you that are familiar with my name, tell me yours, for, hang me, if I know who you are now."

"Do you mean to say you don't know me? Why, I am little Dick, Dick the 'Tearer,' as you used to call me, as used to be wid you out snipe shooting in the Killbraggan bogs in the ould cuntry. That's who I am, and right glad I am to meet wid you."

It was now my turn to be surprised, for Dick was without

doubt grown from a stripling of a lad into as fine a specimen of a man as you might wish to see. Yes, many and many a day had Dick and I travelled the bogs of old Ireland together when boys. He was the son of a tenant farmer on the old family estate. Many years had passed since we parted. Well do I remember the day when he took my luggage to the train that bore me on my way to India to join the "Smashers;" and he, ere I returned after an absence of some years, had, I learned from his poor old mother, taken himself off one fine morning to America to her great grief and sorrow, for she was a widow, and he her only son and support. Strange that after a lapse of so many years we should meet again under such very different circumstances. But such is life. My friend Dick proposed we should wet the occasion, and being thirsty I was nothing loath. So we entered the little store where they dispensed beverages they called beer and whisky. But "what's in a name?" The beer of which I partook at least quenched my thirst, which was all I required. Having nothing better to do, at the invitation I accepted his offer to take a drive with him and get an insight into the lucrative business of selling pies. He was working for a wholesale pie-maker, and his daily duties consisted in driving the wagon on his rounds to supply the various customers, his weekly salary being twenty dollars, or about £4—not too bad for a working man. But the position was a responsible one, and Dick was well worth the money. During the drive I informed my friend of my altered circumstances and somewhat awkward position. He seemed to think nothing of it, and remarked—

"Ye're down to-day, up to-morrow; and if you mind your pointers, and keep a stiff upper lip, maybe it's yourself will be the mayor of the city in less than six months."

It may seem strange, but 'tis nevertheless true, that I never attained the exalted position referred to by Dick. As we made our final call for the day in the pie business,

we called at the barber's shop, where I had left my bundle on a former occasion. We conveyed it to the "Tearer's" boarding-house, where I purposed taking up my abode for the time being, and on his introduction the good landlady was kind enough to say she would give me credit for a few weeks till I either got employment or a remittance from home. I am thankful to say not many days had elapsed before the letter which I was expecting arrived, and within the month I got a very fair position as clerk in the yearly exhibition, which I held till it closed. During the second great fire in Chicago, which took place the same year, I had the opportunity of, in a measure, repaying the kindness of my Scotch friend Sandy M'Dougal, the parkkeeper, as I was the means of saving his things from the destructive element, and possibly more than his goods. I introduced him to the "Tearer;" and many a talk and many a glass of "Bourbon" we consumed as we called to memory the eventful (at least for me) night in the Lakeside Park.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW I REACHED THE GOLDEN GATE.

DICK.

"NIL DESPERANDUM."

I HAD been a resident in Chicago for nearly a year. I had arrived late in the spring of the preceding year, had endured the parching heat and dust of summer and fall months, and experienced the piercing cold of an excessively severe winter. For the second time during my sojourn in Porkopolis, spring in all its loveliness had once again burst forth, and was rapidly verging into summer. So as I did not wish to experience a repetition of such climatic extremes, I made up my mind that as soon as possible I would leave the City of the Lake and try my luck still further west on the Pacific Slope. San Francisco was my beau ideal of what the Americans call a "live town;" it was my Eldorado, my plum. My friend Dick and I had talked about it till we were tired, we raved about it; indeed, so enthusiastic were we in the matter that I really believe we finally came to the conclusion that the streets were paved with gold. Of the numerous plans we made, the countless schemes we concocted, it would be absurd to dwell on. That every one there was rich, and that we would make a fortune should we once succeed in reaching the Golden City was a certainty. We bought every map and every plan of the route to the far distant city and of the city itself, and studied them so closely that we knew

every yard of the road and every nook of the famous capital of the State of California long ere we had reached it, and found to my disappointment how different is the reality to imagination, and that "all that glitters is not gold." But how to reach the great "Bonanza," ah! that's the rub. Dick and I were both in receipt of good salaries, but like many others we were not saving, and spent our money as fast as we earned it; indeed, more than likely our weekly stipend would be mortgaged considerably before even it was due. We tried all sorts of dodges to retrench and save up money. We eschewed drinking saloons, and sent the girl of the house round the corner for a small billy-can of the cheapest. All change under five cents that we might happen to have at the close of the day was deposited in a kind of missionary box, but this turned out a failure, as we each possessed a key and opened it at will. Then we tried investing a small sum in the Post-Office Savings Bank, but with no better result, for just as perhaps we had got a nice little sum placed to our credit, and as we hoped in safety, funds would be required for a picnic or something else, which we considered our downright duty to patronise. Thus it was that all our castles, which we so carefully constructed, had but poor foundations, and invariably collapsed and came down with a crash. And so it was week after week and month after month passed over our heads without bringing us the least bit nearer to the goal we so desired. Indeed, our chances of ever reaching our Eldorado seemed more remote than ever, for, besides having no capital, the employer from whom I received my weekly payments had taken it into his head to attempt big speculations on the Corn Exchange, and his expectations having utterly failed, he had to retire from business and the world a ruined man. This, of course, upset all my calculations, and with only a dollar or two in my pocket placed me on the list of the unemployed. In course of time there is little doubt that I would have been successful

in obtaining employment, as my credentials were good, and I had made many friends and acquaintances amongst business men. This, however, would materially delay the carrying out of my pet hobby, which I so earnestly desired. I might, however, have reached my "promised land" had I only the pluck and determination of very much roughing it by "beating" my way on freight trains and other means of conveyance so familiar to the American tramp, but I had experienced this dangerous and more than uncomfortable mode of transit on a former occasion, so had neither the courage nor inclination to repeat the experiment. Having carefully weighed the pros and cons of the alternatives left me, I decided that of two evils it would be better to choose the lesser. I therefore abandoned the idea of leaving the Lake City, and had given up all hope of carrying out my long-cherished scheme, when an unexpected event came to my rescue, and so replenished my exchequer as to enable me to purchase tickets for myself and the ever-faithful Dick, and send us on our way rejoicing to the Golden Gate of the Golden City, 'Frisco. It is now necessary that I should inform the reader who my friend Dick was, and for this purpose I must write a short biography of that partner in my travels, who was more or less the means of furnishing the details on which this story is based. Dick and I had been mates ever since my arrival in the western capital some six or seven months before. We had come across one another after a separation of years. In my boyhood days we had been companions, though on different lines. We had grown up together at the old country homestead, I as the son of a landed proprietor, he as the offspring of a well-to-do tenant farmer, acting as my personal factotum, his usual occupation being to take my pony, or in later years my hunter, to the cover side. We rambled over the bogs in the old country, he carrying the bag which I endeavoured with sometimes indifferent luck to fill. The last service the lad performed

for me being to take my baggage to the station, when having been gazetted as a full-blown ensign in the "Smashers," I got my orders to report myself at the depot in England. But times had changed with me since those happy days of "auld lang syne." Born as I was with a silver spoon in my mouth, the spoon being small (an egg spoon I should call it), it had melted quickly away, and in order to keep pace with the regimental extravagancies it ought really to have been of the dimensions of a good-sized soup ladle. Alas! it was not. In the Emerald Isle I was always "Master Joe" or "Mister" as the case might be, now I was plain and simple Joe Trotter. Frontier life, and circumstances over which one has but little control, erase caste and obliterate the distinction which prevails in the older world. I was, however, satisfied, for what better friend could one desire than the friend in need. For the sake of the old happy days, the Irish country lad, now grown to manhood, had acted on more than one occasion with a delicacy and forethought which would put to blush many of my patrician acquaintances, who are often more inclined to kick the lame dog than help him over the stile.

"Hallo! Dick," said I, returning one evening after a ramble through the town. "I have some good news to impart, which I have no doubt you will be glad to learn."

"Well, what is it, Joe?"

"Nothing more or less than that I am off to 'Frisco by the train to-night."

"Well," said he, "by Jove, that's pretty smart work. How did you manage to raise the wind, for you had no idea of leaving yesterday morning? If you're going you surely ain't going to leave me behind, are you?"

"Not a bit of it, old hoss. I have got sufficient to pay the expenses of us both and to spare, and if you will give me time I'll tell you how I have worked the oracle. Our mutual friend 'Billy King' is the mainspring by which we are to jump the distance from here to the Golden Gate.

Myself and others had a hand in the scheme, but Billy's the boss of the show."

So lighting my pipe and seating myself in the old oak chair, I related to Dick what I shall now endeavour to place before the reader.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHICAGO POLITICIAN.

MR WILLIAM KING.

MR WILLIAM KING, familiarly called "Billy," was the owner of a very small grocery store situated in one of the back streets in Chicago. He was an American, born of Irish parents, and, besides carrying on trade in groceries and stimulants, amused himself in his spare moments by the study of politics and discussing the political questions of the day with those of his customers who would listen to him. The boarding-house in which I took up my abode, although in a larger street, was yet quite close, and consequently convenient for the purchase of lager and honey dew which we obtained there. He was an old acquaintance of Dick's, and it was quite natural that in due course we should get to know each other; and Billy, although a keen tradesman in his little business, was by no means bad hearted, and was ever willing to help those he liked, more especially if by so doing he saw his way to benefit himself without expending any large amount. It was on a warm, sultry day, towards the end of summer, having severed my connection with my boss the corn factor, that being out of employment I

sauntered into the little store to have a chat with the proprietor on the topics of the day. Having wished me "How do?" the voluble little grocer gave me to understand that he was aware of the smash up of my late employer.

"It's a bad business for him, as he's a married man with a young family; but as for you, what's the odds, you can get employment elsewhere. Now, look here, from what I have lately learned from you, you have evidently a hankering after California, and if you are not too particular, and are still of the same mind, darned if I can't put you on to a lay by which you can get there, and that without much trouble."

"Well, Billy, that's the ground I want to tread this fall, if possible; but as I have saved no money, how to obtain my desire at present is a mystery to me. However, if you have any scheme to lay before me, and there is nothing in it that I should not do, why I'm your man, and my name is Starter."

"All right; consider it as good as done. I'll not put you on any wrong track, I promise you; so put on your best Sunday-go-to-meetings, be here not later than eight o'clock this evening, and I'll give you full directions how to act."

At the hour appointed I was once more on the threshold of the vegetable king, who I found ready dressed in the height of Western fashion—white shirt, coloured tie, wide-awake hat, and suit of broadcloth. As I entered he was counting some money, which he was about to transfer from its safe keeping into his capacious pockets.

"So you're come, Joe? Well, that's good. Here, stick these in your fob" (at the same time chucking me three V's across the counter); "you'll need them in your business, and when the work is done you'll have no trouble in repaying me. And now," continued he, "we'll retire to the back room, where we shall be undisturbed, and I'll put you on the country that you will have to follow to accomplish the

end I have in view. Now, listen! There's a box to sit on, there's some Bourbon, there's a tumbler and the water. It is close on five years since I took up my abode in this very shanty. I came from the East, brought a little capital with me, and started this business. At first I was only in the ordinary grocery business, but little by little I increased the commodities, till I finally obtained the licence for the sale of beer, wine, and spirits, and ran the concern on the lines you now see it. From the day I commenced till about eighteen months ago I did a very nice little trade, when I had the misfortune, at a mass meeting, to be introduced to a couple of politicians canvassing for a Republican representative at the next Presidential election. As you are aware, I am a Democrat, heart and soul; nevertheless, I was in no way averse to these gentlemen coming to my store to air their political knowledge and spend their money as freely as they pleased. Not I; but I had no intention of allowing them to influence me, or interfere with any of my friends who held the same political views as myself, and on this understanding they patronised my saloon frequently. Well, one night the two of 'em turned up as usual. The house was full of customers, liquor flowing freely, and arguments for and against the nominee were hot and strong. I was behind the bar doing a roaring trade, when suddenly a regular shindy took place,—a report of a pistol, and a general stampede to the door; and when I jumped across the bar counter to see what was up, there was Phalan stretched on the floor, bleeding like a pig, with Whaylan, his friend, standing over him. At first I thought the one had turned the pop on the other; and all I could tell at the time was that they were my canvassing acquaintances—one badly wounded, whilst the other held his bleeding form. Whether the shot was fired intentionally or by accident never was decided; for at the trial several persons who were present at the time, and were arrested as being either

the actual perpetrator of the deed or in some way implicated, were eventually discharged, the jury disagreeing. The shootin' turned out, however a mighty poor affair for me, for Phalan (who, by the way, was more frightened than hurt) and Whaylan took it into their heads that I connived at the deed, and knew who had committed it. So determined were they to be revenged on some one that, I being the only one handy to get at, they trumped up a case against me; and by swearing their very souls away, gained a case before the City Council, in which I was fined in costs to the tune of some \$250 or \$300, and the suspension of my licence for three months. The time has long since elapsed, and I am once again in possession of my trading certificate; but I have been patiently biding my time to get even with these rascals. The time has arrived, the game is in my hand, and with your assistance the battle is won, and the indemnity will, I fancy, be paid by Messrs Phalan and Whaylan. And now, Joe, my boy, in order to carry out my designs to the bitter end, I am going to run you for tax-collector of the fourth ward. The berth is now vacant, owing to the sudden death of the old man, Jones.

"William King," cried I, jumping up and trying to appear as grave as a judge, "may I ask if you have imbibed too much of your own rock and rye, or have you taken leave of your senses; for in either case it is better for me to at once sing out for the nearest policeman. Why, hang it all, I am not eligible for any such position as tax-collector or any other Government collector. You'd want to run me for mayor of the city next, or perhaps you would like to start me as senator for the State. Why, my dear man, I have not been a whole year in the United States, to say nothing of the short time I have resided in Chicago. I have not even taken out my first naturalisation papers, and even if I could run for the office and obtain it, I can't see how it would enable me to leave for California

for many months to come, if ever. I must ask you, therefore, if indeed you are sane, to explain matters, and point out how I am to benefit, and to what extent, by attempting to obtain a position that it would be impossible for me to hold even for a week, perhaps not twenty-four hours."

"Well, Joe, if you have finished, and will give me a show, I will put you on the right track to California—that is to say, if you follow my directions. In the first place, you are partly right, and on the other hand you are altogether wrong, in your conjectures. I'll enter you for the race, but you will not start, for I will have you scratched and shipped west long before the appointed date for going to the post, or I shall say in this case, going to the 'pole.' No, siree, you will have skipped this city and gone where the woodbine twineth. As I told you, poor old Jones is gone, died the night before last. The tax-collectorship of this ward is vacant. The election for the office comes off early next week; there are three candidates. You are to be one, and who do you think are the other two? Why, devil a one else but the two playboys Phalan and Whaylan. I'll playboy 'em. A friend of mine who knows, has informed me of the game they're about to play. They both have a certain amount of influence, and will canvass the ward independently; any votes the one can't secure in the ordinary way, the other will obtain by bribery, both of them sharing the expense. It don't matter which of them gets in, as they mean to divide the salary between 'em. Neither of 'em knows there is a third party on the string, so we will be a-head, and one or other must buy you out, and with the dollars you can go to California or any other State in the Union that pleases your fancy. So now, me boy, we'll make a move to the seat of war."

CHAPTER XV.

RUNNING FOR TAX-COLLECTOR.

CANVASSING THE FOURTH WARD—PHALAN AND WHAYLAN.

SUING the action to the word, Billy turned down the gas, and, followed by your humble servant, we sallied forth to canvass the electors of the fourth ward for my appointment as tax-collector. What the plan of campaign was to be at the outset I did not know, as Billy made no remarks as we sauntered along through the streets, nor did I. However, it was not long before I was to receive my first political baptism, for, checking my onward progress with his hand, we pulled up before a well-lighted and furnished lager beer saloon.

“Here’s No. 1,” said Billy; “so mind your points, and take the cue from me.”

As we entered, all eyes were at once turned on us. We marched up to the bar, behind which stood awaiting orders a jolly-faced corpulent Dutchman (Germans all go by this designation).

“Good evening! Mr Zimmerman,” said the Irish-American, as he stretched out his hand across the bar to the smiling Teuton.

“Vel, s’help me never, if dis ain’t mein frind, Meister King? By Jimminy Crack, how you was? a long time I no see you. Come, vot vill you and dis gentleman’s have to think.”

I was introduced, and frothing lagers were soon placed

before us. We chatted together on various topics for some minutes, when Billy, by occult signs known only to saloon keepers in America, made the boss understand that he would have a word with him in private. So they both sidled to the far end of the bar, leaving me to my own reflections, and to wait for further directions. I was not close enough to hear the whole of their conversation, but every now and again a few sentences, more loudly expressed than others, reached me, and gave me to understand that the coming election for the post of tax-collector for the fourth ward was the topic of conversation. Some twenty minutes or so elapsed ere they both returned to where I was standing.

The German then offered me his support in the contest; and I knew then that the first shot had been fired in the campaign. There were, I should say, about five-and-twenty loungers in the saloon. Some were trying their skill at a game of American pool, whilst others, seated on chairs, smoked, talked, and looked on at the game. Others, wearied by the toils of the day, were enjoying semi-forgetfulness. The King of the fourth ward, who had evidently laid all his plans with much care, having once gained the key of the position, was not a man to throw away a chance by a false move or want of energy; so turning towards the players, he rapped loudly on the counter, exclaiming as he did so—

“Come up boys and take a drink—come up every mother’s son of you.”

The command acted as an electric shock. Cues were thrown down, sleepers awoke, and a general move made by the entire house, and in less time than I have taken to write it five-and-twenty faithful followers of Bacchus were breast-
ing the bar, each one facing his “schooner” of lager. The glasses were clinked in good old German fashion, and loud were the mingled ejaculations of “Gesundheit,” and “Here’s another slantther,” &c. I was then formally introduced to each member present, and the gay monarch, who

was now in his glory, made a neat little speech, in which he contrasted my good qualities with those of the other candidates. He explained to them that although I was now a citizen of the greatest republic on earth, I was a native of Ireland, and that myself and all my relatives in the old country were Parnellites and Home Rulers to a man, to a woman, even to infants in arms; in fact, he made me out such a hero that when he asked for their support in the coming election the meeting declared they would plump for me to a man. The 'eute King was not, however, content with their verbal promise to vote for me, but pulling out a formidable-looking document which, when unrolled, disclosed in large red type, "Vote for Trotter, the people's friend. Gentlemen of the fourth ward, Trotter is the man for our next tax-collector," got each one of them to sign his name and register his address. Act No. 1 was concluded by my returning thanks in an appropriate speech, in which I assured my constituents that, if elected, I would do all in my power to carry out the arduous duties connected with my office in as lenient and inoffensive a manner as possible; and trusted that, by a strict attention to business, and the study of the welfare of the fourth ward community, to gain their entire confidence and respect. Having ordered up a fresh round of drinks, and thanked my supporters again for their good wishes and promised aid, the King and I bade them "Good-night," and sallied forth to repeat the experiment in the next public-house.

It would be quite useless to attempt a description of each saloon we visited that night. Similar tactics were pursued, with the same good results in each case; and, I well remember, it was early morning when "his majesty" and myself found ourselves once again in his little back-parlour, with a large enrolment of votes and a heavy consignment of—no matter what. Having partaken of supper, or rather American lunch as it is called, and received final instructions from

the King, who informed me it was a dollar to a cent I would receive a visit from the two candidates, Phalan and Whaylan, during the day, or certainly the day after, the management of whom he must leave entirely to my own ingenuity, I bade him "Good morning," and went home to bed.

Boarding-house residents in America are for the most part early risers; and notwithstanding the fact that the day was dawning when I retired to rest, so great was my anxiety regarding the issues of the day, that I was the first to put in an appearance at the breakfast-table. Finding my landlady, Mrs Crook—who, by the way, was a smart, shrewd American—I gave her to understand that I was expecting two gentlemen on important business in the course of the day. Having made my plans, I had further to explain to her that, should the two gentlemen arrive together, I would interview them at the same time, but should they come singly, the one was to be kept in perfect ignorance of the other's presence in the house. They were to be shown into different rooms, and every precaution taken, on the arrival or departure of either, to prevent their meeting. She was a smart little lady, and fully entered into the spirit of my little game. I was careful to impress on her the fact that, should she fail to carry out my instructions to the letter, the result would be disastrous to us both, inasmuch as I should be the loser of a very considerable amount of money, which would prevent my increasing her exchequer by paying up my indebtedness to her. This made her doubly cautious, and the result was she played her part in the little drama to perfection, and to my entire satisfaction. Breakfast over, and the boarders off to business, I was left the sole occupant of the little front parlour. Procuring a newspaper and lighting my pipe, I cast anchor in an easy-chair, and awaited the result of my well-laid schemes. I had smoked several pipes, finished the newspaper, and was just on the move round the corner for a refresher, when a tap at the door, and a

"Come in" from me, brought the landlady on the scene.

"Gentleman arrived, asked for you, told him I would see if you were in, he is alone, this is his card."

Taking it, I found that this was No. 1—"Mr George F. Whaylan, architect and builder."

"Show him up, quick. Rum go, this," thinks I; "hope I shan't make a big mess of it. Well, here goes;" and in stepped Mr Whaylan, architect, &c.

"Good day, sir; please to take a seat. I see, sir," said I, "by your card that you are an architect and builder. As I am not in that line, I presume you have learned from some of my clients that this is one of my reception days at home here. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays I am always at home for consultation from ten till four; on other days of the week I do a round of calls in the country. Now, sir, if you need my professional aid, and will state exactly what you require, or the nature of your case, I shall be glad to help you to the best of my ability. Fees according to requirements, but always five dollars in advance, with balance as may be agreed upon. Is it matrimony or divorcee?"

"Matrimony or divorcee! Why, bless my heart! I must have made some great mistake. Have I not the honour of addressing Mr Trotter, late of Milligan Brothers, corn factors?"

"I am that enlightened individual. My name is Trotter. Fathers, mothers, and whole lot ever so far back were called Trotter. Never knew of any O's or Mac's or The's tackled on to any of my name. Joe Trotter, that's the name I go by—that's the name I was entered by at Milligans', and that's the name I sign to all cheques. Yes, sir, family name Trotter, christened Joe—pronounced long. It's true a few of my pals facetiously call me Globe Trotter, owing to a little weakness of mine to scamper about the world a bit.

Bless y're heart, I have done some big travelling in my time. I have started from the North Pole, and never lit up till I carved my name with my jack-knife on that of the South. Why, I have got chips off both poles in the New York Museum. I'm the only man alive who has toed the line from east to west on the equator, or who has ever attempted to make the circuit of the world on its outer edge. There's P. T. Barnum,—he'd give me thousands to travel with his big show; but no, I would not travel for money, no how. But my travelling is now over. I have journeyed on horseback, cow-back, camel-back, elephant-back, and every other kind of back that's used by man, but I'll travel no more; I'm settled now here in Chicago for the balance of my days. However, Mr Whaylan, I don't suppose you came here to listen to my adventures; so sir, if you please, we will resort to business, and you will oblige me by being as concise as possible in stating the object of your visit to me to-day."

"Certainly, Mr Trotter, I shall be glad to do so; but, from what I can gather from your conversation, you have taken up the medical or legal profession, and neither of these, I am glad to say, am I at present in need of."

"What! Hold on, my friend, you are altogether out in your calculations. The profession I now follow, and have done ever since I left Milligans', is that of matrimonial and divorce agent. If you want a wife I can procure you one in a week, charging 10 per cent. on her dowry; if you require a divorce, I can get one in forty-eight hours, fee \$50·25 down, and the balance to be lodged in Court, to be received on completion of business."

"It strikes me, Mr Trotter, that we are working at cross purposes. So, to save further time, I may as well state that I have come to inquire if there is any truth in the rumour that you are a candidate at the next election for the tax-collectorship of the fourth ward?"

“Well, yes, it is true; some influential friends of mine are desirous that I should run for that honourable position. At first I demurred, thinking my doing so would interfere with my present lucrative business, but it has been pointed out to me that it will in no way do so, so I have made up my mind to have a try for the appointment. Having said so much, perhaps you will enlighten me as to how my being a candidate can in any way interest you.”

“Certainly,” replied my visitor. “My interest in the matter is simply this: that myself and a Mr Phalan are also candidates for the same position. Now, he and I were at one time the greatest friends, and our intention was to run for the office conjointly against any third party; this we easily arranged by canvassing the ward, when we could at once determine which of us had the better chance of gaining the day. It was then simple enough for the one in a minority to resign and use his influence on behalf of the other, the party resigning to receive a gratuity. Since this arrangement, however, Phalan has played me one or two dirty tricks, that I have determined to dissolve partnership. ‘Diamond cut diamond,’ thinks I. My object, therefore, Mr Trotter, in calling on you to-day is to ascertain if you are willing to enter into an agreement with me to run for the position on the same lines; or, should you prefer it, I am prepared to pay you a certain sum down if you will at once withdraw from the contest in my favour.”

“Your proposition, Mr Whaylan, has really taken me by surprise, and requires some consideration, or none at all. As far as I am personally concerned, it matters little to me whether I gain the victory or not. You must, however, perceive what a risky proceeding it would be on my part to accept your proposal and go back on my trusting friends; for, should it come to their ears, as doubtless it would, that I had accepted a bribe, it would spoil my professional career. I must therefore decline your offer.”

This rascal, who would be smart if he knew how, was really as ignorant as the pigs of old Ireland. He thought he had a flat, but I think he was mistaken. He let the cat out of the bag that the cash was ready, so I made up my mind to give him a stick and bleed him freely. For some minutes we sat in silence, eyeing one another, each trying to read the other's thoughts. I surmised he was calculating how he could best effect my resignation at the minimum of expense to himself; I was racking my brain to hit on the best plan to relieve him of his ready cash, and various were the schemes that flitted through my brain, but none of them seemed exactly suited to the occasion. I had almost made up my mind to come the injured innocent and kick the architect out of the house, and trust to my chance of making a "grand coup" out of Phalan, should he come on the scene, or else wash my hands of the whole affair. But I didn't, for just as I was in the act of hastening his departure, the thought flashed across my mind that I might possibly gain my ends by working on his vanity or trading on his fears of exposure.

"I have been turning this matter over in my mind," said I, "once more breaking the silence; "and the more I think of it the less I like it. You will never succeed in placing me in such a false position with my friends as to accept a bribe. There is a plan, however, to which if you are willing to accede you can gain your object with honour to yourself and no discredit to me. You are perhaps aware that in this city a society is being formed for the provision of lifeboats for use on the lake. I am the honorary secretary of this society. You have already informed me that you would give me a sum of money to withdraw. If, therefore, you hand me over the sum of \$250 to go to the fund, I will immediately send in my resignation. This will be a noble and charitable donation on your part—one which I will take good care comes to the ears of my constituents, and will afford me

an opportunity of smoothing over their disappointment at my retiring from the contest. This is my ultimatum ; take it or leave it. Of course, if you refuse, I shall go straight to Mr Phalan and make him the same offer, and I have little doubt he will gladly avail himself of it."

The architect began to see I had got him in "the nine hole ;" so, after some little haggling on his part and threatening on mine, he counted the money out on the table. I gave him a receipt, not on behalf of the Lifeboat Association, you may be sure, but for "value received by Joe Trotter." A few minutes later I had the satisfaction of seeing his vanishing form as he passed through the little garden gate. I was precious glad when the interview was over, and had little relish for No. 2, should he turn up. However, I made up my mind, as I had skinned one lamb, not to let the other go unshorn.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOTTIE.

A LOVE LETTER—THE WIND RAISED—DICK AND I GO WEST.

DINNER over, I once more found myself seated in the old arm-chair, the sole occupant of the little parlour. I can't say I felt quite comfortable regarding my morning's work ; in fact, I felt rather disgusted at the part I had taken. Again and again I made up my mind to run up to the little store and pitch the dollars at the head of the uncrowned King and fly. But it was of no use ; the spirit of adventure, combined with a little Irish devilry, urged me to see the game out to

the bitter end. Time sped slowly on, and still no sign of No. 2.

At last there was a tap at my door, and I made quite sure it was the aspirant for office; but no, it was my landlady with a letter with the San Francisco postmark. The handwriting was only too familiar, for I knew it at a glance. It was that of Dottie, one of the dearest and best little Irish girls that ever breathed. Dottie had been a resident in Chicago, where she was employed as a telegraph operator, but had left some months before for a better and similar position in 'Frisco. I shall not enter into any detailed description of her, as thinking of her brings back such painful recollections. I shall, therefore, give the reader the contents of the letter as she wrote it, which will be sufficient to show the relations in which we stood to one another:—

“SAN FRANCISCO, *August 25, 18* .

“DEAREST TROT (poor darling, she always called me Trot. The boys used to say Dot and Trot, the happy couple),—
What has become of you? It seems years since last we met, and ages since I received your last loving letter from far far away. None but myself and God knows how I have missed you, and how I long for you to be once again with me, whispering in my ear that you love me. Oh, you love me still! You will doubtless think me silly for writing as I do, but I feel so lonely, so very lonely. Darling, forgive me, but is it money that separates us and keeps you silent? If so, you can surely let the little Dot who loves you more than life itself be the means of helping you now even as she hopes to in the future. Pray, pray, don't wait to write but telegraph that you are on your way to your ever patient and loving
“DOTTIE.”

Little did I think at the time that this was to be the last, the farewell letter—that never again should I gaze on the

face or press the lips of the fair girl who had promised to be my bride. Long ere I reached the Golden Gate I learnt that she had gone to rest. She was one of a picnic party returning from Pataluma, which lay across the bay from San Francisco, when the steam ferry, which was greatly overcrowded, had reached about midway a panic occurred on board. The boat was capsized, and she, with many others, found a watery grave. Truly in the midst of life we are in death. Had I but known, this story, though begun, would never have been ended. I am, however, in advance of my story, and not being cognisant of the deep sorrow that awaited me, immediately sent off word to say that I was coming. I read poor Dottie's letter over and over again, and finally placed it in my pocket-book. The envelope still, however, lay on the table; and as I looked at it the thought entered my mind that it might be useful for it to contain in lieu of a love letter one of business; so I set to work and wrote to myself the following unofficial letter:—

“FRISCO, *August* , 18 .

“DEAR TROTTER,—I have been expecting to hear from you for some time, but no letter up to the present has reached me. I thought it better to advise you. I am now the teller in the Bank and Express Office of Wells, Fargo & Co. They are in immediate want of an escort agent. The billet would exactly suit you. I mentioned your name to the head of the firm, and I feel certain you can obtain the position; so, if you are not better engaged, pack up your portmanteau and come at once. Don't forget your credentials.

“Ever your old pal,

“BEN CARTER.”

“*P.S.*—Wire if you can come.”

I had scarcely finished this fictitious document, and put it

in the envelope, when No. 2 suddenly made his appearance on the scene. I had given Mrs Crook orders to show him up at once should he come; so in he came *sans cérémonie*, and having wished me good evening, and taken a seat, made the first move by explaining who he was, and his object in trespassing on my valuable time. He then proceeded to give a somewhat lengthened account of his differences with his late partner, Mr Whaylan, and calling him anything but his Christian name. All this time I was looking him over, as he rattled along. He was a commøner sort than No. 1, and would, I felt certain, give me more trouble to trap. "Go it; take all the rope you want, you'll hang yourself directly," thinks I. Presently he stopped short for want of breath.

"So help me goodness," said I, when he had made an end of his oration. "I don't know what you are driving at. Are you married to your late partner's sister, and want to get a divorce? If so, I am your man. Have it done in forty-eight hours. Charges, \$25 down, and \$25 on completion of the business—latter lodged in Court to avoid mistakes."

"Phew! married to his sister? Not I; shouldn't like to be if she is anything like him. What I want is to get even on the hound; and as I understand you're a runnin' for the same office as myself, I want to go pards wi' ye, and beat him—dog on him. What do ye say if we do, or are you willing to take a trifle to withdraw from the 'lection altogether, doing all you can to help me? Come, I'll give you \$250 if ye do it, just to spite him. Cuss him."

By this time it was getting late, so I thought it would be better to make short work of him.

"Well, Mr Phalan," replied I; "this is one of the strangest experiences of my somewhat eventful life. Here am I, doing a quiet little business of my own, assailed by two individuals, both having the same aim, viz., bribery,

because some friends are desirous of running me for an office that I care nothing about. Are you aware, sir, that your late partner, Mr Whaylan, has been already with me on a similar mission, the only difference being in the amount, his being \$300, whilst you are only offering \$250. As I have declined his offer, I'm not very likely to accept yours. However, I made a proposal to him, and have given him till to-morrow morning at nine o'clock to make up his mind. The money he offered I considered sufficient had I intended to remain in this city on resigning my interest in the election for tax-collector; but I have made up my mind to run for the position, or go to California. He and I differed about an extra \$50 to defray my expenses to that state. My friends and myself have been put to no small trouble and expense already. It would scarcely pay me to accept of any smaller sum than what I now name—\$350. You will see by the contents of this letter," said I, reading it to him, "that I can either go or stay, as it pleases me; but no amount of money will ever persuade me to withdraw without the sanction of my friend, Mr W. King, who has been my chief supporter."

"Do you mean to say that that 'ere Whaylan has got ahead of me, and been here afore me? Darn my socks, that's good, and so you giv' him till to-morrow, has ye? Are you willing to take the money from me this evening, fer I'll give it you right away?"

"Certainly; but on the condition that Mr King will make no objection to my withdrawing from the contest; so now if you are willing to ante up the dollars, and confront Mr King, the matter can be settled in ten minutes. I suppose you have the money with you?"

"Yes, I have the dust all right, so now let us go."

On entering the little store, which we quickly reached, we found the King in his usual place behind the bar. There happened to be no customers in, so tipping him the wink, I

said, "Mr King, this gentleman, Mr Phalan, is a candidate for the same office as that which you have been to so much trouble to try and secure for me. I have this afternoon received this communication from San Francisco (handing him the letter) offering me a position in a bank. I accidentally met this gentleman who has kindly offered to defray my expenses to the above city, and also refund the sum we have already expended, \$350 in all. You, who know my case so well, and how necessary it is for me to obtain the highest wages possible to aid those depending on me, will you think it shabby if I withdraw from the election, and aid this gentleman all you can? by so doing you will increase the debt of gratitude I already owe you."

"Well, Mr Trotter," replied the King, "this takes me truly by surprise. You know the trouble I have been to on your behalf, and what the boys in the ward will say, Lord only knows. However, as you say, I am fully aware of your circumstances, and as you appear to have a good thing on in California, if this man here will hand over the cash to furnish the bill, I will stand to you and make it as right as I can with your supporters."

The money was paid in cash, and we got rid of No. 2, who departed highly pleased that he had, as he thought, euchered No. 1. As soon as he had gone, I handed over all the cash to King. He was quite surprised at the way I had managed the business. The money received from No. 1 was to be given to the poor of the fourth ward. From the \$350, from No. 2, he deducted our expenses for canvassing—\$30; this left \$320, which he handed over to me. The King would keep no further sum himself, and it was agreed that should I be in a position in time to come, this sum should be sent by me as a donation to the City Hospital. It did not take Dick and I long to put our belongings together, and with a well-filled hamper of grub and liquor we bade farewell to the King of the fourth ward, and Chicago. Of

the many experiences we had across some 2000 miles of plain and mountain it is not my intention here to give any record; I must leave them for another yarn, but I must inform the reader that we did eventually reach the Golden Gate of the Golden City. On my arrival, letters were awaiting me at the G.P.O., one of which was from the King, and I will wind up this chapter by giving its contents as written by him:—

“DEAR JOE,—I suppose you and Dick have arrived at San Francisco long ere this. You had not left the city twenty-four hours, when the two lads, who had evidently made up their quarrel, came to my store together, and kicked up an awful racket about the trick we played them. I gave them your address, and advised them to write to the bank president, who I felt sure would see them righted. I was obliged finally to take “Johnny” from the till drawer. At his appearance they withdrew, vowing vengeance, but I have never seen either of them since. The best of the joke is, that a third party, just at the last moment, was started as a candidate, and being very popular in the ward, headed the poll by a large majority; he is in office now, doing well and much liked. I hope you like bank work, and I trust to hear of your being president of one, or boss in the Mint. Should I ever require a job, and come across you when you are in either of these exalted positions, I hope you won't forget the poor little King, who started you for tax-collector of the fourth ward, Chicago. Kind regards to Dick.—Truly your friend,

“BILLY KING.”

CHAPTER XVII.

SETTING OUT FOR A BUFFALO HUNT.

ARRIVE AT LARAMIE—SET OUT FOR A BUFFALO HUNT—
PRAIRIE DOGS.

It was the intention of myself and friend Dick, when we boarded the train at Chicago, to push through as quickly as locomotive engine would take us to the Pacific slope; and, had we used a little forethought and discretion, it would have been better for us to have done so. But the spirit of adventure was upon us, and we delayed several days *en route*. In the ordinary passenger train we sped through the lovely cultivated fields of the States of Illinois and Iowa, and, crossing the Missouri river at Counsel Bluff, we reached Omaha, the capital city, situated on the confines of the vast plains of the State of Nebraska. This was the eastern depot of the Union and Central Pacific Railways, which had but a few years been completed. Omaha itself, at the time I am now writing of, was a mere village, with a few streets of wooden buildings; and it was the rendezvous of some half-civilised Indians and numerous cowboys, who periodically visited the State capital to fling their hard-earned dollars to the publican, and for a limited period to enjoy themselves by, in cowboy parlance, "painting the town red," and who, escaping the somewhat disagreeable hospitality of the calaboose, sometimes facetiously called the cooler—or, unless, as it not unfrequently happened, they became the victims of the deadly six-shooter—returned to the outlying

ranches poorer, though, I am sorry to say, not always wiser men.

I have used the word "men;" but, *de facto*, the orthodox cowboy, whose age varies from six years to sixty, never becomes a man. In the more civilised States of the United States, and perhaps in other parts of the world, the cowboy bears a bad name; but they are not all so bad as fancy paints them: far from it. It is true they are hard drinkers—hard swearers, too, when under the influence of intoxicants; but this is not their true nature, being only due to the fearful influence of what is called in the West "tangle-foot whiskey," with which they are primed by greedy and unprincipled licensed victuallers. My own experience of the cowboy is one of kindly feeling, as I have always found him, away from drink, kind-hearted to a degree, sharing with you not only his last dollar but even his last crust, and brave in defending his comrade, even to death, should it be necessary.

My friend and I remained one night at this western town, which, by the way, small as it was, was the only one of any note till you come to Sacramento. At noon the next day we proceeded in the emigrant train to the West. There were only two passenger cars attached to the train, which was a long one, the remainder being for freight. Our car contained males only, while No. 2 was set apart for married couples and their children. We were a jovial crowd in our compartment—some good singers and some good musicians. The weather was all that could be desired, being the very cream of the American season—"the Fall"—and, what with singing, dancing, yarning, shooting at prairie dogs, and periodical stretches on the boundless prairies when the train pulled up at a wayside station, right merrily the time slipped by.

Nothing of any particular moment occurred till we reached Laramie, which was a military outpost, and consisted of a small fort, the railway station, a good sized store, and a

hotel. Here our train was run on to a siding to allow the limited mail to pass. In the course of conversation with some of the inhabitants who were lounging about the station, we were given to understand that buffalo abounded on the prairies and were now on the move to southern latitudes. Being passionately fond of sport, and never having experienced the delights of very big game shooting, I proposed to Dick that we should take advantage of the privilege we were allowed and break the journey; and he being as keen as myself on any kind of sporting adventure, readily acquiesced. Bidding adieu to our travelling companions, who continued their journey, we took our traps to the hotel. In so small a community as was congregated together at Laramie, the news very quickly passed round that a brace of Britishers had detrained, and were about to form a party and go on a buffalo hunt. Scarcely had we hung up our hats in our small apartments than we were besieged by visitors, offering their services as experienced hunters and guides. As we were perfect greenhorns in the matter of buffalo-hunting and the navigation of boundless prairies, we took the hotel-keeper's son into our confidence, he being an authority on these matters. Dick and I had nothing approaching to a sporting outfit, not even as much as a pistol; but our young hotel friend was amply supplied with all the necessary appliances for camping out and the destruction of wild animals; and he agreed to furnish us with a couple of saddle-horses, guns and ammunition, as also to provide a pack-mule and Indian cook. The provisions we were to purchase at the general store, and the expenses of the trip were to be equally divided between the three of us.

As the horses, guns, and the rest of the paraphernalia necessary were all on the spot, it took but short time to complete our arrangements. So the next morning we were up with the lark and ready for a start, and, without trumpet

to sound boot and saddle, but with a final stirrup-cup, we set out on our hunting expedition. The young publican, whom I shall call Bob, led the van and steered us across the arid plains in a north-easterly direction. Our intention was to strike the North Platte River at the nearest point, and then run up it towards its source; from thence cross over to Suada Lake, and back to Laramie by another track. This, Bob calculated, would take about a week, which was just the right length to suit our expenditure, and to give us a glimpse of Indian life, and, we hoped, a taste of buffalo hump. Of the former we received a superfluous dose; of the latter, never a bit. On leaving Laramie our route lay through about as uninteresting a tract of country as can possibly be imagined. No vegetation, no trees, no distant mountains,—nothing but one vast yellow Sahara greeted the eye, with here and there cactus plants and a few tufts of dried-up grass.

The monotony of the journey was, however, somewhat varied by the gambols of the prairie dogs, which abound in these parts in millions. Why they are called prairie dogs is and always has been a puzzle to me, for they no more resemble the ordinary specimens of the canine species than they resemble an elephant; and the only reason I can assign for this misnomer is, that the tiny little animals (which are in fact a species of squirrel) make a noise, as they sit on their haunches at the mouth of their burrows, something like the yelp or whine of a new-born puppy. It may not be generally known, and perhaps may interest the reader to learn, that these little animals never live alone. I daresay the aforesaid reader will hesitate to give credence to what may appear an almost fabulous statement. It is, nevertheless, a fact that the prairie dog in his kennel has as his associates a rabbit, a snake, and an owl; and how they all manage to agree is a mystery as yet, and likely to remain unsolved.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I BECOME A MULETEER.

MEETING WITH STRANGERS—SIOUX INDIANS ON THE WAR-PATH
—COUNCIL OF WAR—AN OBSTINATE MULE.

As we journeyed along, Bob, who was highly communicative, amused us with his anecdotes of Indian and prairie life.

"I rather cotton on to you, Cap," said he; "you and your pard are made up of the right stuff, and I guess you have seen a bit of roughing it in your time. You're a bit different from some of these 'ere coves that come our way,—all frills and collars. That style don't wash out here on the front. Why, last Fall we had a live lord out here. He weren't a bad shot; but as for biling a billy, making a Johnny cake, or following a trail, why he weren't in it."

"Ah! well, mate, the silver-tails from the old country are mostly good shots, not afraid to rough it, but, of course, lack the experience of you frontier men."

"You won't find myself or Dick lack much in the ordinary routine of roagn life. We have both had our ups and downs, and, I am thankful to say, up to the present have proved ourselves equal to the occasion."

And so our first day's journey passed, till, finally, we reached a small creek or branch of the Platte River, where there were signs, or rather many signs, of vegetation. On the banks of this creek we camped for the night. We were up at dawn the next morning, and, having partaken of a substantial breakfast, once more proceeded.

It was on our third day out from Laramie that, a little

after noon, having finished our mid-day repast, we lay basking in the sun, and giving our wearied quadrupeds a chance to rest and graze on the now rather luxuriant herbage, when our half-breed cook drew Bob's attention to a cloud of dust some miles away to the eastward. Dick and I were in high glee, thinking it might be buffalo, and that we were so soon to have a chance of (we hoped) distinguishing ourselves as thorough hunters. Unfortunately, our hopes were not to be realised. Gradually the dust approached us—I say dust, for the cause of it was quite invisible. It became evident it must be either Indians on the trail, or army scouts returning from Camp Robinson, which lay some miles to the N.W., across the North Platte River. In less than an hour from the time our Indian cook first saw the clouds of dust, two men came into view. I can't say they were riding a race against each other; but, from the strides these wiry little quadrupeds were making, they were evidently in a hurry. They turned out to be a couple of hunters who were out prospecting for game on the Platte River. As they drew rein close to where we lay stretched on the ground, we saluted them, and, as customary in the West, bade them welcome.

“You seem in a bit of a hurry, boys,” said Bob, as the strangers dismounted. “Which way be you steering? Any game out your way?”

“Well, gentlemen,” replied one of the strangers, acting as spokesman, “we are making for Fort Laramie or Fort Steele, whichever is the nighest. We are, as you say, in a mighty big hurry, and so will you be, if you want to save your scalps. My mate and I, with a few more hunters, have been out some forty odd miles from here to the nor'west in search of buffalo. We learnt from a couple of half-breeds we met on the plains that the Sioux and Blackfeet Indians were all dressed up in paint and feathers, and were about to go on the war-path. The boys have the wagons all drawn up, and

our camp is a kind of fortified; for they don't know the minute the Redskins may swoop down on 'em. We are pushing on to one of the forts to obtain the assistance of some of the troops. Our mates can hold out for a few days; but when the water runs short in the corral, and they have to go to the creek to fill the barrels, they would stand but a poor chance against the Redskins, who are mustering by hundreds. Ever since the white men entered the Black Hills country, the Indians have become more savage and audacious than ever. Some years ago me and my mate used to hunt regular with the Sioux, but we can't do it now—can't tell the moment they'll turn on you, dog gone 'em. Well, gentlemen, we must be making tracks. If you take my advice, you will up stick and return to the fort as quick as them mustangs of yours will carry you. Some of the Redskins will be certain to follow upon our trail before many hoves have passed. Darned if I don't believe that be them a-coming now," continued the spokesman, pointing to an immense cloud of dust in the far distance. "That's them, my head for a cent. But let me round up your quads, and you jump up and get as quick as greased lightning."

The two strangers were not long in rounding up our animals, and, having unhobbled them, we were once more in the saddle, and bearing back on our lately made tracks. To expedite our hasty retreat, we threw away all the cooking utensils except one billy and a frying-pan, and nearly all the grub. As we were, of course, returning to Laramie, the two strangers determined they would push on to Fort Steele so as to be certain of obtaining all the help possible from the military outposts. So, having ridden in our company for some few miles, they drew off in an easterly direction. Although our horses had had a good spell of rest, so tired were they after their exertions on the previous day, that they did not travel with half the speed we would have

wished ; and our party felt rather uneasy lest the wily Redskins should overtake us, and so possibly we might lose our scalps before supper-time. However, the dust-cloud was yet many miles away, when, just before sundown, we pulled up for supper ; although, in my humble opinion, the distance between the Redskins and ourselves had been considerably diminished. We did not on this occasion unsaddle our horses, but simply pegged them out with the lariat till we had finished our hasty meal.

At a council of war, held while we were masticating our bread and fried bacon, we determined to push on as long as we could see, and then camp for a while to rest. No fires were to be lit, and it was determined that even a match should not be struck after dark. We were in great hopes that, should the Indians come up to the place where we parted with the hunters, while it was yet light, the double track might somewhat puzzle the savages and check their pursuit. We wasted little time in discussing our coffee before we were once again in the saddle.

The mule, which was the laziest, although the most valuable of the animals, was a constant source of annoyance to us, as it would not be led. Then we tried our united efforts in driving it ; but it was a mule, and an obstinate one, too, so the effect was not one of increased velocity. At one time we had serious thoughts of letting it go ; but as the landlord of the hotel at Laramie held my purse in hostage, and as I was liable for two-thirds of the expenses, I thought it better to make a desperate effort to save this animal. So the pack-saddle was discarded, and the saddle taken from my mustang and placed on Mr Mule ; thus, for the first time in my life, I became a muleteer. I did not hold the position for long ; for this bright specimen of the asinine tribe, although he had but slight objection to carrying tin pots, pans, and provisions, seemingly had the most utter dislike to being freighted with a human cargo. I had scarcely got into the

saddle when he commenced operations; and although I made strenuous efforts to retain my seat by holding on, as a sailor would say, "with a fore and aft grip," I was eventually dislodged, and struck the ground a little bit harder than what I bargained for.

"Guess you ain't used to buckin' mules, Cap," remarked my hotel friend, as I arose and shook the dirt off my hat and clothes. "Takes one of us out-westerners to ride them 'ere sort."

"I don't believe any one could ride such a brute as that," said I, highly mortified at being so ignominiously brought to earth.

"Oh, it's all right, Cap; I'll ride him, or else I'll kill him."

I wish to heavens you would, thought I, as then the loss would be only your own. "Mount him quick, boss, and ride him if you can; if not, for goodness sake, do kill him. These buck-jumping experiments may prove fatal, and I have not the slightest wish to be turned into a dainty dish for Indian Bucks, or soup for their squaws and popooses."

Bob made no further reply, but mounted the mule, which at once began a regular prairie pantomime. The play was, however, concluded in one short act; for by the persuasive influence of a pair of long Californian spurs, and a very severe kind of whip, which is termed a "quirt," Bob finally mastered the quadruped, and made him travel at a somewhat more lively pace than he had hitherto done. On and on we journeyed, every now and again turning round to see if our pursuers were gaining on us. Our horses began to show decided signs of weariness; and, as it was now quite dark, we decided to camp at the last place where we should strike water, before arriving at Laramie, which was yet a good hard day's ride distant. The grass was now once again beginning to be of inferior quality; and it was absolutely necessary that the animals should have both rest and food;

for, if in the hour of need they failed us, it was a moral certainty that we should be overtaken by the Indians, and this, of course, meant nothing less than death. Having reached a suitable place, we again camped until the moon should rise, which, unfortunately for us, would not be till nearly early morn. The services for the night of the Indian cook, who was only equalled in laziness by the mule, and who, Bob considered, might, on a pinch, not prove quite reliable, were therefore discarded. Dick, Bob, and myself determined to keep watch and watch about, leaving the half-breed to take it out in sleep.

It may not be out of place here to state that the noble-minded Indian depicted by some writers is either a myth, or must entirely have died out before my time. My experience in Labrador, and in British North-West America for some years, never in any way disclosed to me the nobility of the Redskin; and the half-breed, who combines the cunning (without the bravery) of a pure bred Indian, with all the vices of his white parent, is in every way inferior to the "brave" in war paint and feathers. The half-breed is more useful in many ways, and that is about all you can say in his favour. I have come across one or two reliable Indians among the Hydras on Puget Sound, but they were few and far between. The hiring of Indians, either half-breed or otherwise, is a mistake, unless for some special purpose; and it rather reminds me of a remark made by a Southern American, whom I met on my travels, as regards the hiring of niggers.

"Niggers, sir," said this individual, "are all very well in their way. You hire them to do a bit of work; you then hire a mulatto to boss 'em; and you have to sit up half the night to watch the lot."

CHAPTER XIX.

ATTACK AND DEFEAT OF THE REDSKINS.

A HASTY RETREAT—FIGHT WITH THE INDIANS—RESCUED BY
CAVALRY.

BUT to resume my narrative. By mutual consent the first watch was to be mine, as it would not require so much careful watching. I badly needed rest, as, besides the constant riding, I was somewhat shaken by my fall from off the mule. There is no use in denying it, but I certainly felt nervous as regards our safety; and I was very thankful when my hour and a half was up and I could call Dick to relieve me. Notwithstanding my anxiety, when I once got rolled up in my blanket, with my saddle for a pillow, I quickly fell into sweet slumber. The time must have passed rapidly away, as it seemed to me but a few minutes since I had lain down, when I was aroused by Dick, who whispered in my ear:—

“Get up quick. Bob says he has seen a light away back, and the Redskins can't be more than a few miles off.”

In the meantime Bob and the half-breed were getting the horses ready, which was soon accomplished; and once more we were in the saddle. To lighten the burden on our animals, we pitched away our blankets; and my horse, which was the worst of the lot, was turned loose on the prairie, I taking Bob's horse, while he again mounted the mule, which on this occasion was, I am glad to say, quite docile. We wasted no time at breakfast, but, taking the

fragments of bacon and Johnny-cake, made them into impromptu sandwiches, and ate them as we cantered along.

"We shall have a narrow squeal for it, old pard," remarked Bob to me, as we jogged along; "they ain't many miles behind us by the distant light I saw. If they be Blackfeet they have some smart ponies; and as they always have plenty of 'em, too, I'm thinking we will have our work cut out with these tired quads, to reach the settlement 'ere these red devils overtake us. Well, if they do, there is no help for it. Stick close together and earth 'em before they get to close quarters with their bows and arrows. This little creature," said he, holding up the Winchester he had in his hand, "is good for a dozen of 'em any way. I guess you and your mate have been under fire before now, so I reckon you won't scare."

"Well, Bob, I don't know about the scare part; but I'll promise you both Dick and I will stand by you as long as there's a shot in the locker. How about you half-breed?"

"Oh! he will be all right. He knows me too well to play any smart trick when I've my eye on him. If he did I'd down him, first act."

After about two hours hard riding daylight gradually began to appear, and a little later on the sun in all its western splendour broke forth in the distant horizon.

"We have a good start of 'em, Cap," remarked Bob; "but they have been up and about some time, and are once more following up our trail. Look at you dust! That's them; and see, by heavens, there's more of 'em," said he, pointing to the east; "the cunning devils must have followed up the trail to the spot where we parted company with the two hunters; some of 'em must have then separated from the tribe and run on their tracks. Those two men, however, were well mounted; so the Redskins evidently gave up that chase, and are now trying to cut off our retreat. We may thank our stars that the bulk of 'em are behind us. There

hain't but a few comin' from the east. They'll be down on us in another half hour, and then—well! keep your heart in the right place, and keep your shooting-iron straight."

Our animals were now so wearied with their exertions that we were only travelling at a kind of jog-trot. The Indians in rear were yet some considerable way off; but those coming from the eastward were rapidly approaching us. Presently we could hear the yells and war cries of the savages, and in a few minutes later the mighty warriors were in view. As they approached us on their ponies at a gallop we could distinctly see that there were about a dozen of them, and I was thankful there were no more. On they came, till within about three to four hundred yards of us, when they reined up to a walk, and, gradually decreasing the distance between us, finally let fly a volley of arrows. The direction was good, but fortunately the projectiles fell short, and dropped to earth some yards away from us. At this period a serious accident very nearly befel me. As I was trying to adjust my rifle my horse plunged, and I very nearly dropped my weapon and came another cropper. However, I just managed to recover my balance, and Dick, who was alongside me, grabbed my horse's rein, otherwise it is not improbable I would have been carried, much against my will, into the enemy's lines. This little bit of horse-play only occupied a few seconds; and on my once more resuming a proper cavalry seat, I was just in time to behold some sharpshooting on the part of Bob. Two rapid shots in succession at the foremost savage placed him *hors de combat*. The first knocked over the horse, but the rider was quickly on his feet, when shot number two caught him right in the forehead. I never saw anything like it before or since; for I truly believe he jumped six feet clean up into the air, and then came down with a thud. Then came another volley of arrows from the enemy, and this time the aim was remarkably good; so much so, indeed, that one arrow lodged

in the flap of the saddle on which Dick was seated. We then all three fired twice in succession. So excited was I that I am quite unable to state accurately if my shots took effect. I can only say that, no matter which of us proved the fatal marksman, from six shots five more Redskins bit the earth. The remainder, either from discretion, or thinking the Winchester was a little too much for them, rounded their ponies, and with fearful yells, and a farewell discharge from their bows, made as quickly as their small ponies would carry them towards their now rapidly approaching painted comrades.

We had, of course, no time to lose, so the dead and wounded were left stretched on the plain, and we hurried forward with all the speed we could possibly get out of our animals. The main body of the Indians had gained considerably on us; but the slight skirmish in which we had just been engaged had given our horses breathing time, so with fresh wind they travelled a little more rapidly. It was now a race for life, with the odds very much against us. We had yet fifteen or more miles to travel ere we reached the township, and it was evident from the rapid rate at which the enemy were gaining on us, that unless Divine providence intervened, there was no alternative but to meet death as true Britishers. Judging from the cloud of dust in our rear, it was Bob's opinion that the savages must number over a hundred, perhaps more. We could again hear their savage yells, which became louder and louder every minute.

"It's a mighty close race, Cap," said Bob; "mighty close, and I very much fear we shall make a bad finish of it. Hold!" said he, suddenly, changing his voice. "Saved, by the eternal! Here come the Fourth Cavalry from the fort. Well, by thunder, that's a bit of luck. Just see how they are coming full speed! We will make it hot for them red devils now, or I am much mistaken."

But he was mistaken; for the red devils, as he called

them, had evidently caught sight of the flying squadron, and having experienced the prowess of the Fourth Cavalry on a previous occasion, they evidently did not relish the idea of giving battle in the open; so they scattered all over the plain, beating at the same time a hasty retreat towards the mountains.

As our horses were now quite done up, we halted and dismounted to await the arrival of the troopers. The officer commanding told us that a telegram had been received from Fort Steele to say that we were in danger; and that he had been ordered to proceed with his detachment to our rescue and to follow up the Indians till they disbanded. Thinking our horses would be worn out, they had thoughtfully brought three fresh mounts for us. This we were glad of, as it enabled us to go back with the troopers to the late scene of action. Changing our horses, we sent the half-breed forward with our jaded animals; and now, feeling perfectly safe, under escort, myself and two companions returned to the battlefield. On our arrival on the scene we found the tribe had not carried off their dead, as there they lay, lifeless on the boundless prairie. As I gazed on their distorted faces, a pang of regret passed over me to think that the true lords of the soil should have met with such an ill-fated and untimely end. That night we camped with the troopers, and early next morning they proceeded in their pursuit of the enemy, and we returned to Laramie. This was my first experience of buffalo hunting—without ever seeing the creatures; but I had many a shot at them, in later years, in the western portion of Texas. Alas! the noble bison is now an animal of the past, and the Redskin himself is also rapidly disappearing.

On reaching Laramie, which we did about noon the next day, Dick and I bade farewell to our friend Bob, and once more set out on our travels by the emigrant cars.

CHAPTER XX.

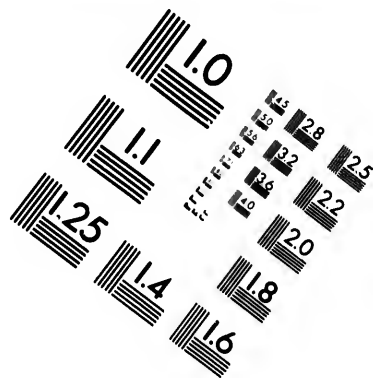
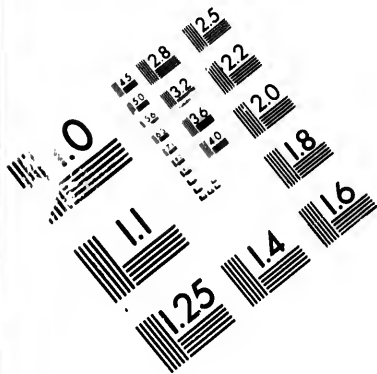
MONTE DEALERS.

ARRIVAL AT OGDEN—A VISIT TO SALT LAKE CITY—JOURNEY
CONTINUED—FIGHT WITH CARD-SHARPERS—ARRIVAL AT
'FRISCO.

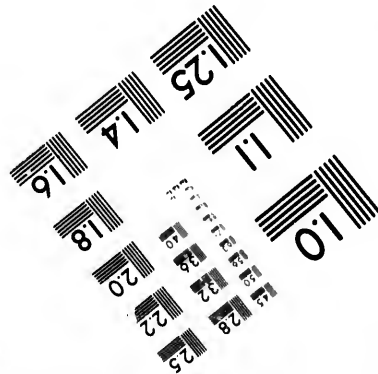
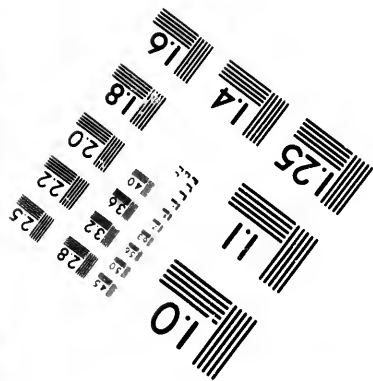
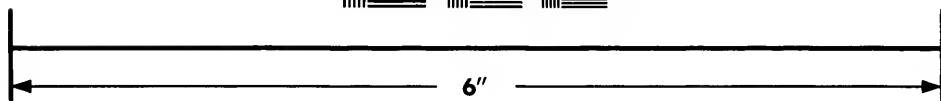
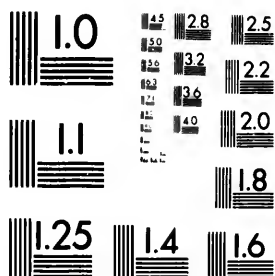
THE next place we stopped at was the junction at Ogden. Here we again halted, and taking a train on the branch line visited Salt Lake City, the splendid capital of the MORMONS. We found the town and its surroundings a perfect paradise. Vineyards and orchards abounded outside the city, while the streets within were neat and regular. Rows of olive and other trees were planted along the sidewalks, and rivulets flowed through the principal streets. Dick and I visited the Tabernacle and many other places of note in the town. The king of the Mormons, Brigham Young, was away from home, so we had not the honour of seeing him; but we got an outside view of the house in which he reigned supreme. As my friend and I were bachelors, and as every one in Salt Lake City appeared to be very much married, we decided to remain but the one night; so after being comfortably housed and fed during our short stay, the next morning we decamped, and again reaching Ogden were once more steaming towards California.

As our funds were now getting low, I determined to push through to 'Frisco without further delay. On leaving Ogden our route lay through the north-western corner of Utah Territory, and thence through the northern part of the State of Nevada. We had a glorious time of it, and everything





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went smoothly till we reached a small station called Battle Mountain. At this place fresh troubles commenced. Some well-known cardsharper—three-card “monte” players—came aboard the cars. The conductor and train officials evidently connived in their thieving conspiracies, as although owing to their disguises as farmers and countrymen the unfortunate emigrants mistook their avocation; yet, as we finally discovered, these very officials, who ought to have been a safeguard to us, were actually standing in with the “Forties,” as they are called, to defraud the travelling public. There were three passenger cars attached to this train, and the centre car in which Dick and I were was the one selected for carrying on the game. At first there was only a little manoeuvring on the part of the cardsharper to select gullible victims after starting from Battle Mountain, and the boss of the gang—who was dressed as a common country bumpkin—in order to make his disguise more complete and less like that of a professional gambler, limped about the aisle of the car on crutches, as if to give the impression that he was recovering from an accident.

At the end of our car were a lot of Germans, lately hailing from the “Vaterland,” and here the scoundrels trusted to find their victims. The man just described rejoiced in the name of Slim Jim, and his right-hand man, who dealt the cards, was a notorious “monte” dealer, Canadian Bill. There was one other noteworthy individual in the crowd, Slippery Bill, and one or two others less famous, made up the sharpers’ party. A green baize cloth and cards were produced, and at first the sharpers played among themselves, Big Jim, the countryman, being the winner, and acting his part to perfection. After some time Slim Jim, who was the cashier and partner of the Canadian, was, by the rules of the game, completely bankrupt, but the Canadian came to the rescue with his watch which he laid down against part of the spoil that the countryman had already annexed. This

time the Canadian won ; but they had a mock dispute over it, and, after some high words on both sides, it was finally left to the arbitration of the unfortunate German onlookers. Thus, after some time, the unwary foreigners were gradually drawn into the game, and one unfortunate Dutchman was eventually fleeced of all his ready cash. He also, thinking to recover his losses, was in the act of mortgaging his watch and chain for a final effort, but his travelling companion persuaded him not to make the venture. This interference caused a general row, for Slim Jim jumped up and gave the unsuspecting foreigner a terrible blow on the side of the head. The latter, however, who was a powerful young fellow and did not lack courage, was just in the act of returning the blow, when Slippery Bill drew his six-shooter, and, placing it against the victim's temple, threatened to send him to eternity if he moved a hand.

I was seated in the centre of the car, watching the game at a distance ; and when, soon after the fracas commenced, the group of "monte" players with the two Germans came up the aisle, I thought there was going to be a free fight. I was just in the act of moving, when a sight caught my eye which made my heart almost cease to beat. The weather being hot, the windows at the ends of the cars were open, and, as I glanced towards the rear car, I caught sight of a gentleman quietly taking aim with a shot-gun at the "monte" players. I quickly dropped behind the seat in front of me, and not one second too soon ; for, although the gentleman aimed at the bull's-eye, owing to a sudden jerk on the part of the train, he made an outer, and nearly the whole of the charge of his gun was lodged in the back of the seat that I had just vacated. This led to a general stampede on the part of the sharpers, some of whom received one or two pellets in their persons. A lot of miners who were in the front car rushed in with loaded revolvers, and the "Forties" made a bolt for the conductor's caboose,

where they took refuge for a time only. The conductor stopped the train, and the scoundrels made their escape; but as they were left some hundreds of miles away from civilisation, they must have had a lively time of it.

The passengers, however, made the conductor pay the penalty; for they locked him up, and one of the miners took charge of the train till we arrived at Reno, on the borders of California. There, in spite of all remonstrance, the conductor was thrust off the train for good; and if I am rightly informed he never regained his position. This was also the last trip of the "monte" players on the Pacific Railroad, as they had to fly for their lives to the wilds of Montana. I may here state that these villains had already sacrificed the lives of over three hundred emigrants. Their favourite mode of operation was to persuade the traveller to come and sit in the cool on the platform outside the car; and then, watching their opportunity, to shove their unsuspecting victim off the car. They would then proceed to the next station, where they would leave the train and obtain horses to ride back and rob the unfortunate dead or badly-mutilated traveller. These land-pirates eventually came to fearful deaths; but, with the exception of Canadian Bill, I never beheld one of them again.

After leaving Reno the train quickly brings you across the borders of California, thence it takes its wending track through the Mountains, passing over trestle bridges, which cross the cañons and mountain passes. Quickly you flash by the old trail, over which so many pioneers steered their way to death or wealth during the first outbreak of the gold fever in '48 and '49. Reaching Sacramento, you pass through the valley of the same name on to Stockton, in the vicinity of which town are the remains of the once famous alluvial diggings, with their sluice-boxes and wing-dams still remaining as monuments of the labours

of the daring miners. Finally, the train comes to its terminus at Oakland, where, taking the ferry, you are quickly landed in the golden city of 'Frisco.

CHAPTER XXI.

SLINGING HASH.

GARÇON IN NAME—DRUMMING FOR A LIQUOR STORE—A SLICE OF LUCK.

ON our arrival at the Californian capital, owing to our Buffalo expenses and other extravagances on the trip, Dick and I found our monetary resources very greatly reduced. We had, however, sufficient funds to carry us on at some cheap hotel for one week. This hotel we found, and having paid for our accommodation in advance, it behooved us to make every exertion to obtain employment at short notice. Dick, being more of an expert than myself in turning his hand to the first chance that offered, succeeded without much difficulty in securing a job in a livery stable; but poor I, after making every effort to obtain some kind of gentlemanly position, was finally reduced to the alternative of becoming a waiter at a hotel, or waiting some considerable time for something better. There was no help for it; so I hired out as what is called, in western phraseology, a "hash-slinger." I am not likely to forget my first experience in that capacity. Of course, under existing circumstances, I had to pretend that I was quite *au fait* in the business; but the hotel steward thought otherwise. So I was told off

to wait on the "Hoosiers" (farmers), only the swells being attended to by the more expert waiters. My *début* on the first evening at 6.30 dinner was a decided failure, inasmuch as owing to my awkwardness in bringing up some dishes from the kitchen, whence I had to ascend several steps, I slipped, and the dishes and their contents were numbered among the fallen. My second attempt was even worse, for, on entering the dining-saloon with two plates of soup, after very careful manipulation in my ascent, I had succeeded in serving one plate, but in setting down number two the gentleman whom I was about to serve bobbed his head to one side. His cranium coming in contact with the dish, the scorching hot fluid was upset, and, much to his annoyance, was discharged down the back of his neck. This caused a fearful row, and thinking it was best to retire, I did so as quickly as possible and took refuge in the pantry. Of course, I felt quite certain I should be ignominiously dismissed; but the steward was a good sort of fellow, and taking compassion on my inexperience, he placed me in the responsible position of boss of the pantry.

My duties in this capacity were easy, and very much more to my taste than those of waiter. My business now was to take charge of and clean the silver and glassware, to arrange the flowers and dessert on the table, and to bear a hand, on a pinch, in the dining-room. By gradual and incessant practice I became quite handy in my vocation, and so far improved in handling dishes that I was quite able to take the onus of serving one or two guests at a time without making any particular *faux pas*. I had held my position as pantryman for close on two months, when, to my surprise, one morning I was told by the steward that the hotel proprietor wished to see me in his office. I was indeed highly delighted when the boss informed me that, if I could read and write, and keep a few accounts, he could give me a little better position. I told him I had been well educated,

and, to prove my abilities, I wrote him a letter as a specimen of my handwriting and orthography. The sample being satisfactory, he informed me that the night-clerk in the office was leaving, and I could fill the vacancy if I chose. This was an unexpected rise, and a very fair berth, the salary being \$60 (equal to £12) per month, with plenty of good food and a nice bed to sleep in.

This billet, however, I did not hold very long ; for, as luck would have it, after a month's service in the office the proprietor's brother died, and the deceased having made a considerable sum of money, which he bequeathed to the hotel-keeper, the latter determined to leave the business, which was therefore sold, and a fresh landlord took possession. Whether it was that I did not suit the new boss, or that he did not suit me, matters little ; but, within a week after his taking the reins, I resigned my position and left. During my sojourn at the hotel I had made a few friends, or perhaps I had better call them acquaintances.

Now, the height of my ambition was to obtain employment as a commercial traveller, or, as they are called in America, a "drummer." To obtain my object, I entered into negotiations with a wine merchant to make me his traveller, should a vacancy occur. As he had promised faithfully to keep his word, I went to his office on leaving the hotel. I told him how I was situated, and I was glad to hear from him that the chances of my being sent on the road were good, as his traveller was about to leave him in about three weeks' time.

"Meanwhile, Joe," said the merchant, "as you are out of a job, if you don't mind a little hard work, I have a large consignment of goods coming from Europe, and I want a man to help my foreman ; wages, \$3·50 per diem."

"Oh ! that's good enough for me, boss ; I'll accept your offer, with thanks, and will endeavour to give you satisfaction."

I worked away for over two weeks, till the goods were unpacked, repacked, and put away ; and, just as I had completed my job, the traveller left. Of course I felt certain that I should at once step into his shoes ; but in this I was sadly mistaken, inasmuch as, on making my application, the wine merchant informed me he was awfully sorry, but a former traveller of his had applied for the billet, and, as that gentleman knew all his old customers, he had to give him the preference. This I considered to be very sharp practice, and I made up my mind that, if an opportunity occurred, I would have my revenge. That opportunity came sooner than I expected. An Englishman who kept a saloon, whose house I used to patronise for my daily allowance of Lager beer and bread and cheese, was the medium through which I had become acquainted with the wine merchant, and he was one of the latter's best customers. Strolling up as usual about lunch time to the saloon, I informed the proprietor how I had been treated, and he fully concurred with me that the wholesale dealer of wines and spirits had not acted quite on the square ; so it was settled between myself and him that the merchant should suffer for his breach of faith.

On making inquiry of his bar-tender, my saloon-keeper learned that he was in immediate want of a fresh supply of brandy ; so he at once gave me an order for a hogshead, telling me to receive my commission (which would be about £12), and to get the liquor where I pleased, as long as it was three-star Hennessy, cash on delivery. Armed with the order, I at once proceeded to the office of my late employer, whom I met at the entrance of the store, and who, after politely saluting me, told me he had no opening for me that day.

“ Oh ! it's all right, boss,” said I. “ I'm not seeking a job now ; I'm working on my own hook—got a kind of roving commission—and I've just come round to see if you would like to fill an order I have on hand.”

"Oh! certainly, Joe, if it's all right."

"Oh! it's all right enough, and I guess you will say so when I tell you the order comes from W. A. Hughes of Clay Street. He wants a 63-gallon hogshead of brandy sent up at once, c.o.d."

"Oh! yes, he's all right, Joe, and the brandy shall be sent up at once, and thank you very much."

"Oh! no thanks required, boss; it's only a matter of business: how about my little commission?"

"Why, my good man, you don't suppose I'm going to pay you anything on orders from W. A. Hughes? He is one of my best and oldest customers, and I always call on him myself."

"All that may be true, boss, but you missed this time; and I want 60 dollars, hard cash; otherwise don't send it, and I will order it elsewhere."

I was just about to move out of his store, when he called me back; and, of course, in the end I got the dollars. What was more, a friend of mine in the liquor trade took a holiday, and, being well known in the city, introduced me to the proprietors of several saloons. I succeeded, during the course of the afternoon, in obtaining some sixty orders for case goods, quite a number of which proved to be those of old customers of my late employer; so I took them to him to show him that I was a competent traveller. He was anxious to execute one and all of the orders, and offered all kinds of inducements to me to be permitted to do so. But I had made up my mind he should not have them, and he was quite furious when I informed him that I had already made arrangements, and intended taking them to another firm. By working independently I gradually got up quite a nice little trade, and in a few months had some five hundred dollars to my credit at the bank.

It was at this period of my chequered career in America that an opening occurred which, had I taken advantage of

it, might have led to my becoming, if not wealthy, at least tolerably independent. At the time I am now writing of, the silver mines at Virginia City, Nevada, were by far the richest then known in the western hemisphere, or perhaps in the world. The firm of Messrs Mackay, Faire, Flood, and O'Brien, who controlled the famous Comstock Lode, was now at the very zenith of its prosperity; and, probably, since the early days of '49 there was no such speculation in mining operations offered to the public as the Stock Exchange at 'Frisco afforded in '74. Indeed, everyone in the Golden City was more or less interested in the rise and fall of shares in the different mines—from the millionaire to the bootblack, from the wife of the former to her cook and her general help or maid-of-all-work. All were dabbling in shares or mining scrip of some sort or another. The wealthy found themselves ruined, and the poor suddenly awoke to find themselves enriched. It was at the close of the year aforementioned that one day, on going into the saloon for lunch, as was my wont, and having had refreshment, I was surprised by the proprietor beckoning me into his little office. "Trotter," said he, "I have asked you in here to make a proposition for your welfare. Outside my business in the saloon, I speculate a bit on the Stock Exchange. Some old friends of mine have just arrived from Virginia City, and, on the quiet, they have given me to understand that Crown Point Stock is about to run up. I have already invested some few thousand dollars in the mine, and if you have a little spare cash which you are willing to invest, I think I can give you a chance of making some money. The stock is now selling at about two dollars a share, and, according to the information I have received, is likely to go up within the next few weeks." As I placed implicit confidence in my friend's statement, I immediately sat down and wrote him a cheque for \$500. In less than three weeks I found myself the lucky possessor of \$7500, or a

little over £1500. This bit of success, of course, highly elated me, and, had I followed the advice of my friend, there is no doubt that I should have made considerable profits. But success did not suit me, and now, having some means at my command, and, like many others, thinking I knew all about mining speculations, I foolishly made up my mind to act independently. Thus, to my sorrow, I invested my gains, and some few pounds as well, in the Enma Mine. This, I considered, was a good speculation, as it was placed in the English market by one of the most influential financiers at that time in the old country. Alas! it proved to be a bubble, and after vain endeavours to pay the various calls that were levied on me, I eventually had to abandon my rights, and I once more found myself penniless.

CHAPTER XXII.

OLD TOM WHITE.

SANOMA VALLEY—REPAIRING CASTLE REYNOLDS.

THIS last disaster caused me to be very much down on my luck, and what to do next I knew not. I was thinking of once more trying my hand as a waiter, when an unexpected help came to my rescue, in the shape of an old man-o'-wars man. Tom White was one of the right sort, with a big heart—alas! there are no such hearts in these days. We both frequented the same saloon for a midday meal, and many a yarn had the kind old man spun to me of his seafaring life and his early experience in California when

he arrived at the diggings in '49. We became fast friends, and to him I related all my troubles. "Bless your heart," said the old salt; "that's nothing. I've been broke scores of times since I came to California. Many and many's the time every stitch of canvass I possessed has been carried away, and I have had to run under bare poles. This old craft has experienced some heavy gales; but I always managed, somehow or other, to weather the storm and reach land in safety at last. Look here," continued the old sailor, "I've got a few dollars, not many, but sufficient to keep us both for a while. I'm going into the country to-morrow. The pruning season is now on. What say you? will you come along and do a bit of vine-trimming?" Wearied of city life, this new idea quite delighted me, so the next morning found old Tom and myself crossing the bay in a steamer.

Having landed at Pateluma, we took the coach which was awaiting our arrival, and the same evening we were comfortably housed in the village inn at Sanoma. This antiquated place, with its few wooden shanties and old Mexican adoby or mud-houses, takes its name from the county of which it is the capital, situated in one of California's fairest valleys, surrounded by gently sloping hills, covered with vineyards from base to summit, with, here and there scattered, lovely clumps of cedar, and pearly streamlets, dashing from the hill-sides and falling into a larger stream, which seems to dance along as it wends its way to the sea. This beautiful panorama of nature gives to the weary traveller the idea of perfect peace. It did so to me, and I felt happy.

Tom White had a friend in the village, an old English merchant captain. Having partaken of supper, we took a stroll to call on him and his hospitable wife. Warm was the meeting between these two old salts, and they seemed to revel in the delight of recalling to their memories the

days of their early life. The dear old couple invite Tom and myself to share their humble board, till such time as we should succeed in obtaining employment. So, the next day, we took up our abode with them. The sea captain was old, in fact too old to work, so it was decided that, for our board and lodging, Tom and I should set his little home in order. The old captain was unable to do it himself, and, with his scanty means, he could not afford to pay a hired hand; consequently the little place was sadly neglected and out of repair. I and my mate here will soon set everything straight, "for you, Reynolds," said old Tom, as the three of us walked round the premises, Tom taking an inventory of what had to be done. The next morning my mate and I were up with the sun and commenced work gaily; we laboured together, day by day, till at the end of a fortnight you could scarcely recognise the old ramshackle dwelling and its surroundings, so greatly was it changed by the ingenuity of the old seaman. The fence was straightened up and whitewashed, the orchard and tiny vineyard pruned. The creepers on the house were trained, and neatly arranged on the trellis-work of the little home, and many other improvements were made in the general surroundings.

I can see the old sailor's smiling face, as he glanced at the work as it proceeded: "There, Joe, that's ship-shape; ain't it? Can't beat an old navy man for setting things to rights." How he used to storm at poor me when I was awkward, in upsetting a white-wash bucket, letting the brush fall on the ground, or letting go a guy-rope too soon. But of this I took but little notice. Nothing would raise his wrath more than when he used to sing out: "That's the way we do in the navy," and I replied, "Ah! I had a different way of fixing these things when I was in the army."

"How was that? you lobsters are all duffers about painting, polishing up, and hauling on a pulley."

"Simply this, Tom, whenever there was any need of

polishing up, as you call it, I generally used to get another fellow to do it for me, and quietly look on." At these words the angry looks would instantly vanish, and the old Salt would brighten up. The honest hand would be extended, and the sailor, who was a gentleman by nature, would apologise for having hurt my feelings. Tom White knew my early career in the service. Sometimes people passing by and seeing our handiwork would come and compliment us on the improvements we were making, and ask us, when we got through this job, to come round to their places and fix them up. "I'll tell you what it is, Joe," said he to me, one day, after we had been interrogated as to prices, &c., "I believe you and I can make a good business at this kind of work."

"Oh! yes," said I, "Tom, you and I will form a syndicate or a limited liability company of two. No capital and no risks. We will contract and remodel every homestead in the neighbourhood." This to me was a delightful idea, but our hopes were never realised; as, when we went round to some of the parties who had made inquiries of us, they put us off. Some had not the money just then, others would wait a bit, and so on. Thus our schemes came to naught; and having finished the adornment of Castle Reynolds, it behoved us to trespass no longer on the hospitality of our present entertainers. Those were halcyon days to me; but, like a dream, they quickly passed away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I WOULD BE A CARPENTER.

SAWING A TREE—PRUNING A VINEYARD—HOW TO MAKE
A GATE.

THROUGH the influence of his friend Captain Reynolds, Tom, who was very wise in the rearing and bringing up of chickens and other domestic fowls, was offered a position as boss of a small chicken ranche, which he accepted. I therefore bade adieu to my kind host and his wife, and took up my abode at a small inn, in the village, which was frequented by the labouring classes. I felt very very lonely at being separated from my good old partner; and I was not sorry when, two days later, a farmer from the country drove into the village and hired me to help his boy to saw up a large fallen tree. "You can handle a cross-cut saw, I suppose," said the farmer, as he drove me in his cart.

"Oh yes, sir; I'm right good in timber, I was brought up in the backwoods in Ireland."

"In Ireland! why, I thought as how it's all bogs in that country."

"That's true, sir; but in these very bogs flourish the finest trees that grow. You must have heard of the famous Irish bog oak. It's precious costly timber, I can tell you; worth from \$1 to \$1.50 per inch. That's the kind of lumber I've been used to work in."

"Oh! well; my bit of a job won't require so much care; so I guess you and the boy will be able to saw up an old red

wood tree." The next morning, immediately after breakfast, the boy and myself, accompanied by the farmer, repaired to the fallen tree. It was a big tree, several feet in diameter; and I must say I did not half like the look of it: in fact, I quite dreaded the carving of it up. The cross-cut had been sharpened and reset for the occasion, and the farmer and the boy commenced operations. In their skilful hands, the saw seemed to glide through the timber with surprising ease, and within the space of a few minutes a deep incision had been made. The farmer, who had other duties to look after, finally relinquished his end of the saw to me, and I was very thankful when, having given his last injunction to be careful not to bend the teeth, he took himself off. Going to work with a will, for a time, the saw moved smoothly enough; but gradually, I presume through my pressing on it too much, it commenced to drag; until finally it was only by means of terrible tugs we could get it to go at all.

"Something the matter with this blessed saw, mate," said I, pulling up, quite out of breath with over-exertion. "Teeth gone wrong, and have to go to the dentist, I'm thinking, before we can do any more. Guess you ain't used to cross-cut saws, are you?"

"I was just thinking the same of you," said the boy sharply.

"That's where you're out, my lad. I'm used to all kinds of saws, from the ordinary hand-saw to the machine buz-saw. It's no use," said I, making another desperate lunge to try and get the instrument to glide through. "You'd better take it to the boss, and tell him it's got the toothache, and wants resetting."

"Shan't do nothing of the sort. Go yourself," said the boy, now breaking into a whimper.

To the boss I took it, and maybe he did not kick up a row as he glanced his eye down the row of teeth.

"Why, dang it! I only had it set this morning, and now it's all out of gear, and as crooked as a ram's horn."

"Yes," said I, "it went all right for a while, but we struck a knot, and so injured it."

The end of it was that the saw was taken to the blacksmith's and once more reset; and, by careful manipulation and plenty of grease, the tree was eventually cut up into blocks. On the ensuing Saturday night I fully expected to receive my walking papers; but, on receiving my week's wages, I was agreeably surprised when the boss inquired if I could prune, and would undertake to cut his vineyard. Of course I replied in the affirmative; but as my knowledge of vines was limited, how to set about the work on the following Monday I knew not; and the only way I could see out of the difficulty was to go into town, spend Sunday there, and endeavour to get some instructions. This plan proved a success, as the innkeeper with whom I stayed fortunately had a few vines in his back garden; and early on Sunday morning he quickly initiated me into the mysteries of pruning them.

"You're working with Mr Downs, ain't you?" said the publican.

"Yes."

"Well, before you go to work, ask him if he wants a real good crop this year, or if you are to cut 'em so as to have a moderate one and a better one the next vintage. He is only a yearly tenant, and will give up the farm after next harvest. He is certain to wish for the former, and this will give you more scope to hack away at the vines and make him think you know all about the business."

On Sunday evening I returned to the farm, so as to be ready to set to work the next morning. I followed the advice of the publican, and interrogated the boss as to his wishes about the vines. The publican proved to be quite right in his conjectures; and a good crop at the coming

grape-picking being the most desirable, I proceeded to strip the vines of their superfluous tendrils. I was getting along, as I considered, first rate, when the boss came along to watch my handiwork.

“Why, darn it all! ye’re aplayin’ the mischief with them vines! Why, ye’re a cutting of ’em all to pieces! they’ll grow nothin’.”

“Well, boss, I don’t know how you folks work vineyards in this country, but in the south of France, where I worked for some time, this is the method used to ensure a big single crop.”

Well, the upshot of my pruning *début* was that he permitted me to finish the work, which took me about ten days. I then left, and never saw him again; but many months afterwards I was rather surprised to hear from old Tom White my pruning had turned out quite a success. I was now not only getting pretty handy at the ordinary routine of farm life, but was also becoming pretty well known in the neighbourhood. So I was not many days out of employment.

I rested for a short time and then hired out to another farmer, an ex-Southern judge. With him I had very comfortable quarters; and he being a gentleman of the good old Southern type, treated his employee with all due respect. The work I had to do was, however, arduous, and especially trying to the hands. My daily task was to point stakes to be driven into the ground, and to which were tied the growing vines. I suffered very much from blisters caused by the continual use of the hatchet; but I stuck to the work manfully, and gave my employer every satisfaction. So pleased was he with the way in which I and another man, named Brookes (who was also engaged at the same work), had completed our task, that, when we had finished all that he had for us to do, he got us immediate employment with another farmer to put up about two miles of post and plank fencing.

This gentleman was immensely wealthy, and, besides owning a large farm, was also the sole proprietor of the Sanoma Bank. It is curious how he came to be worth so much money ; but the history of his obtaining it was simply this. Some few years back he had emigrated with his wife from the State of Missouri. By hard work and prudence he had put together a few dollars, and shortly after his arrival he saw an opening in which to invest his capital. Leaving San Francisco he and his wife travelled south, and hogs being cheap he bought up every one he could get hold of ; and he and his wife together drove their swine back to the city, and sold them at an immense profit. With this money he bought his farm, and, still having a surplus, he lent out the remainder at large interest to the surrounding community. Thus it happened that, at the time I entered his service, this man, who could scarcely read or write, was to all intents and purposes the owner of at least one-third of the lovely valley of Sanoma. He was shrewd and saving, but I can't say he was a hard taskmaster ; inasmuch as he fed us well, housed us well, and as long as we did what he called the square thing, never pushed us in our work. Brookes and myself had been engaged on the plank fence some few days, when, one fine morning after breakfast, the agricultural banker informed me he had another job he wanted done.

“In the lower field, Joe, there is a gap in the fence which is stopped up with a few rails. I want these removed and a gate put up. The posts are all ready set in their proper places, and the top bar for the roller is nailed on ; so there won't be much trouble in hanging the gate.”

“Oh, no, sir ; I think I can do that much. But where is the gate ?”

“Oh ! that's just it ; there's none at present, but there is lots of spare lumber and plenty of tools, and I want you to make one. The old judge in his note to me told me as how

you and Brookes were pretty handy in timber, so I suppose you can execute the job."

This was a regular stumper. I could manage to drive a nail into a plank, but when it came to any mechanical work, why, of course, I was clean out of the hunt. However, I told my boss that I would do my best, and, as he was going away to spend the day at a neighbouring village, I was in hopes I might be able to influence Brookes—who was really a smart hand—to construct the gate. Having seen the banker off the premises, I immediately laid bare to my fellow-labourer my trouble; but he, for reasons best known to himself, refused point-blank to move in the matter. Left to my own resources, I collected the requisite lumber, as it is called in America, and with a box of carpenters' tools—scarcely any of which I knew how to use—I sauntered down the road to inspect the gap. How I hated that gap, and longed for the timely aid of good old Tom White; but he, unfortunately, was some miles off, looking after his hens and roosters. I sat down and commenced to turn over in my mind the best method to begin the work in contemplation. But it was no use; practical knowledge was wanting, and not for the life of me could I hit on any fixed plan. I had almost made up my mind to chuck up the sponge, and inform my employer, on his return in the evening, that the task he had set me was beyond the scope of my mechanical capacity, when on glancing across the road I beheld a gate which was exactly the kind my boss required. "By George!" thought I, "I'm blessed if I don't take that for a sample; and, if I am not much mistaken, I shall yet succeed."

Crossing over I carefully examined the gate; but I was much put out when I found that in order to take the true dimensions it would be necessary to take the gate down. However, I was not to be done; so, putting on as bold a face as possible, I tripped over to the neat little cottage, which was but a few yards off. On my tapping at the door,

a prim, clean-looking widow lady answered the summons, and she was not a little astonished when I informed her of the nature of my errand. At first she refused my request; but, on my explaining to her who I was, and that my employer, the banker, had taken a fancy to her gate, and had ordered me to make one exactly like it, she—chancing to be a little on the wrong side of the banker's books—finally consented.

“You must block up the entrance, and put the gate back before dark,” said she, as I was turning away, which I promised to do, and I kept my word. Having so far gained my ends, I now set to work with a will. I copied that gate with the exactness of the Chinaman, who, when ordered to duplicate an old oil painting, did so, including dilapidations. By sundown the work was completed, which, in the hands of any ordinary carpenter, would have been accomplished in a few hours. Of course the boss asked me on his return in the evening if I had made the gate, and I felt rather proud to be able to answer him in the affirmative. The next morning he came down to inspect the fruits of my previous day's labour, with which he was highly pleased. I, however, felt precious small; and maybe he was not rather astonished, when we came to hang the gate up, to find that although of the proper height, it was just about a foot too long.

“Why! dash it all, this gate's no good; it don't fit, and must be made over again.”

As he was returning to the house he told me he would send Brookes down to help me, and he expected between us the gate would be up by dinner-time. Now I was vexed with Brookes for not helping me, and I determined he should not assist me now. So, as soon as I got the boss off, I once more stepped over to the old lady, and borrowed a spade. I dug up one of the posts, cut off the necessary lengths from the planks of the fence, and, quickly making

a fresh post hole, with the help of a boy who chanced to be passing, in a very short time had the gate up and in running order. Presently the banker reappeared on the scene, accompanied by Brookes, and when he saw the gate up, I explained to him that I had never made one before, and, not knowing how to begin, had taken a true copy of the old lady's gate over the way. But, instead of being angry with me, as I fully expected, he leaned against the fence and roared with laughter. I remained with the banker for some weeks longer after this event, but when the fence was finished, he having no further employment for us at the time, Brookes and I were paid off.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

A FALSE FRIEND—RETURN TO 'FRISCO—START FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND—ARRIVE AT VICTORIA.

As luck would have it, just at this time I received intimation that a remittance had arrived for me from the old country; so I determined to return to 'Frisco, and endeavour to obtain a berth as a reporter on one of the local journals. It was on a Saturday evening when I took leave of my employer, and, as there was no boat till Monday morning crossing the bay, Brookes and I took up our old quarters at the village inn. My fellow-labourer and myself, although we had received very good wages, neither of us having practised economy during our stay in the valley, had no very large sum to our credit. Indeed, when we had paid up our few liabilities, I had but about \$25, equal to £5, and Brookes very little more. We both occupied the same room, and during the course of conversation he gave me to understand he was a cousin of the once famous actor of that name, who went down in the "London." He also informed me he held a certificate as second mate stowed away in a box which the proprietor of a boarding-house in 'Frisco, where he lodged for a while, had detained, he not being able to pay his bill. The sum he now lacked to redeem his sea-chest was about \$15. He had been anything but kind to me during our short acquaintance; nevertheless, out of my hard earnings, I proffered him the amount. He, however, declined the offer. I had in my possession a warm jacket that I had

brought from the old country, and on Sunday morning he came to me and borrowed it, telling me that he intended calling on the manager of the Buena Vista Ranche, where he was told there was a chance of further employment ; but he would be back by supper-time. This was the last I ever saw of the rascal, or the coat either. The Sabbath passed slowly away and no Brookes turned up, and eventually, tired of waiting, I took myself off to bed. My little savings were in my vest pocket, which lay on a chair beside the bed ; and it appeared to me that, during the night, some one entered the chamber, but by morning I had forgotten all about it. Hastily dressing, I descended to the bar, and, some of my old associates being present, I invited them to partake of a farewell glass ; but, on searching my pockets to pay for the refreshments, I was horribly surprised that I had not as much as one cent left.

“You had plenty of money last night, going to bed,” said the landlord ; “where is your partner, Brookes ?”

“Don’t know ; Jemmy have never seen him since he started for the ranche yesterday morning.”

“Well, I did. He returned about one o’clock, and went to your room. I thought he was in bed ; it’s he that has robbed you, and slipped off.”

This theory was corroborated by the roadmaster, who just then drove up in his buggy, and who, on hearing the conversation, told me he had met the thief walking as fast as his legs would carry him in the direction of Nappa. So much for gratitude. The innkeeper, however, would not see me delayed on account of my loss, and kindly lent me sufficient money to defray my expenses back to ’Frisco, which, on my arrival, I honourably returned.

I was successful in obtaining employment on the staff of one of the dailies ; and it was in the capacity of “local itemist” that I became acquainted with one of the best and truest pals I ever had the luck to meet during my rambles

on the American continent. He was clever, amusing, generous to a degree; and, moreover, seemed never at a loss how to act on an emergency. We became fast friends, and made up our minds that we would rough it, and face the world together. In the spring of 1875, hearing wonderful accounts of the Cassiar Mines, as also that there would be plenty of employment on the survey of the then contemplated Canadian Pacific Railway, my friend Vivian and myself made up our minds to leave California, and seek a fortune in British Columbia. It did not take two old Bohemians like ourselves long to make our preparations. Having purchased our tickets, which, by the way, nearly cleared us out of ready cash, one fine morning in the month of April found us aboard the ill-fated ship "Pacific," bound for Victoria, Vancouver's Island.

On the voyage my attention was drawn to a face that seemed particularly familiar to me, but whose it was, and where I had seen it, I was perfectly unable to determine. This face belonged to a gentleman who, in a suit of navy blue, waited behind my chair as one of the under stewards. Thinking I might be mistaken, I questioned him as to where I might have met him, but he gave evasive answers to my inquiries, so for the time I was none the wiser. On reaching Victoria, however, when too late, I found out who he was. It was none other than Canadian Bill, the cardsharp. Two detectives came on board to receive him with open arms, but Canadian Bill was one too many for them, for ere the "Pacific" had entered the harbour the bird had flown. Although diligent search was made for him, he could not be found; so it was supposed that, as we sailed along the coast, he must have slipped over the side and either reached land in safety, and taken to the backwoods, or else he had perished in the attempt. That he was not drowned at the time is, I think, pretty certain, for scarcely two years ago, if so long, when away in the back blocks of northern Queensland, I took up

a not very old edition of an American paper, and, curious to relate, one of the first items that caught my eye was, "Canadian Bill, the outlaw, has just died in Montana." I felt extremely annoyed when I learnt from the detectives that there was a reward of \$2000 offered for the apprehension of my friend the cardsharper. That nice little sum would have come in pretty handy just then, and if ever a man deserved hanging that man was the Canadian "monte" dealer.

It was seven o'clock in the morning when we landed at Victoria. The custom-house officers gave us no trouble, and, indeed, did not even condescend to question us about the contents of our baggage. There were no cabs to meet the steamer, only a few express wagons. As our capital on landing was only 50 cents between us, it behoved my chum and I to study strict economy; so, each of us armed with a bag, and carrying a huge portmanteau between us, we marched up the town to the Angel Hotel. On our arrival we found that the boss, being rather a sleepy angel, was not yet up, and the cherub who was in charge of the office could give us no information regarding accommodation. Being hungry and tired, we determined to leave our baggage and try elsewhere. A loafer in the street recommended us to the American Hotel, and we bent our steps in the direction pointed out by him. On turning the corner of the street which was our destination, we encountered a gentleman in a tall hat, swaggering along as if the whole town belonged to him. I took him to be the head of the detective force in mufti. Vivian, however, maintained that he was either the harbour-master, or perhaps the captain of the port, just returning home from seeing the "Pacific" come in. But we were both out in our calculations, for he turned out to be the proprietor of the very hotel we were seeking. Could he accommodate us? Rather! And he did; and right royally too.

Fortunately for us I came across an old friend whom I had known when he was a youngster in the navy. He had been settled on the island for some time, and now held a good government position. I got him to come over to the hotel and guarantee my *bona fides*, and he also lent me a few dollars as pocket money to carry me on. The town was full of miners on their way to Cassiar, Caraboo, and other well-known mining districts, and the staff, with quite a number of Canadian axemen had just arrived from Ottawa to commence the survey of the railroad. I was in great hopes that Vivian and I would get on one of the parties together; but, fortunately for him, through the influence of a friend whom he knew in Canada, he obtained a first-rate billet as purser of a river steamer running up the Stickeen.

My mate got his sailing orders within a week of our arrival on the island, and I can't say I relished the idea of being once more alone. However, after he had taken his departure I had but little time to waste in brooding over the loss of his companionship. The various survey parties were being rapidly formed, and as there were hundreds of applicants in the field, I had to bestir myself a little in order to make quite certain of obtaining employment myself. Through the influence of my old naval acquaintance, together with what I shall call a considerable amount of push, I was finally successful.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN GOVERNMENT EMPLOY.

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC SURVEY—FRASER RIVER—THE
GOVERNMENT OUTFIT—ON THE MARCH.

By the first of May of the year '75 I was duly enrolled as a surveyor, with the rank and pay of head-chairman. It was a lovely bright spring morning as we steamed out of the harbour, and I felt as gay as a lark at being once more in some employment. The same evening we reached New Westminster, on the mainland, at the mouth of the Fraser River. This town was at one time the seat of government for the colony of British Columbia, but the officials have long since taken up their present quarters in Victoria, V.I. Here we disembarked and were billeted on the few hotels the town afforded.

Early the next morning we were once more afloat on the river boat on our way to Yale, an inland town of no small pretensions. Here the river, owing to the course it takes through cañons and mountain gorges, becomes quite unnavigable; and we therefore had to continue our journey by coach, which was waiting our arrival. Leaving Yale, we followed the course of the river for many miles, the road (which was originally the old Government trail) running along its very banks, being totally unprotected from the surging waters that ran many feet below, whilst, on the opposite side, were straight cliffs, rising to a great height

above our heads. As one rattled along, the driver would point out the various objects of note; among others the most distant point reached by Lady Franklin, as she proceeded in a canoe up the river in search of some trace of her lost husband. He then related how, in the early days, hundreds of reckless and inexperienced pioneers had lost their lives in their endeavours to ascend the rapids in canoes. Occasionally he would vary the scene at the same time by tickling up the ear of one of the leaders with his whip, in order, I suppose, to show his expertness as a jehu—or he would drive so alarmingly close to the unprotected bank of the mighty Fraser—which, by the way, owing to undercurrents, never gives up its dead—as to cause one's blood almost to run chill. "That 'ere leader there, on the off side, is a greenhorn. Never been in harness before to-day; in fact, none of 'em have ever run together till they were hitched up this morning." In this strain he continued for some time; but, as we were mostly old hands, and he found we would not take the bait, he finally desisted. After a while, we left the course of the river, and the road wound its way over mountain passes and through valleys; and, having passed through the inland villages, Lytton and Lillooet, we finally strike the Fraser again at Soda Creek. Here we finally alighted from the coach. Here travellers *en route* for Caraboo again take the steamer, as the river at this point widens out; and at the head of the navigation they strike the trail which takes them to the mines.

At Soda Creek we crossed the river in boats and went into camp. At this point we were joined by the mule-train, which came up from the Government reserves at a place called Kamloops. The stores and other requisites for the trip were quickly got together and packed; and within forty-eight hours after alighting from the coach, the mules were packed, and the party had commenced its long march. There were several parties out, making different surveys,

both on the mainland and the island of Vancouver, each having its own engineer and an efficient staff, over which was a travelling boss, or, as he was called, the "Head Tyee," whose duty it was to periodically visit each camp and report progress to the authorities at Ottawa. Besides the officials I have mentioned, the party consisted of axemen, rodmen, picketmen, pegmakers, chainmen, muleteers, cook and baker, and last, though perhaps not least, the boss's Indian boy, whose duties consisted in pitching the staff tents and hunting the game, which abounded, for the use of the camp.

To say that the Canadian Government were liberal in the Commissariat Department would be to throw a slur on their generosity. It was simply immense! Tinned fruits, jams, California butter, potatoes, bacon, rice, and many other luxuries too numerous to mention, were provided. They also supplied a tent for every two men, warm blankets, medical comforts for the sick, and even stamps and stationery wherewith to communicate with your distant relations. There was fish in the rivers, and game abounded in the hills and valleys; and, to make doubly sure that a constant supply of fresh meat should always be on hand, a small herd of cattle was bought and driven along from camp to camp. Surely, with such a supply, and with the excellent *menu* our good cook invariably set before us, there should have been no grounds for complaint! and yet, there were some who growled, and a few who actually came to the conclusion they were half starved. Many is the day, in after years, I would have been glad of some of the fragments that were then thrown away!

Our first day's march was but a short one: about fifteen miles. The workmen, among whom your humble servant was classed, went on foot; the staff were mounted, but they were by no means selfish as regards the horses they rode, for on seeing any of their subordinates wearied or in

distress, one of them would at once dismount and give the sub a spell on the quadruped. We camped early that evening, which was to be the last within the pale of civilisation till we reached Bute Inlet on Puget Sound. Close to where our tents were pitched was the log home of a cattle-rancher, and with him our boss invested some Canadian dollars in the purchase of beeves for our trip. The next morning found us once again on the trail betimes, moving in the same order of horse and foot, the Indian boy, armed with a Winchester rifle, acting as light artillery. The half-wild steers, so lately purchased, were put in the charge of the commissariat officer. This gentleman, however, although first-rate with the pen, was anything but efficient with the stock whip. At last the beaets broke away, and some of them commenced the ascent of the mountains. I can see him now vainly endeavouring to follow them; but the cattle were somewhat too agile for him, and he finally gave up the chase. However, one of the staff (the leveller), who had vast experience in droving in the wilds, I believe, of South America, came to the rescue, and after much difficulty succeeded in rounding up the animals, but not without the serious loss of three head.

On the fourth day's march from the Fraser River we again camped early in a lovely fertile valley on the banks of as pretty a trout-stream as one could wish for. It was at this point that the boss informed us that, on the coming morn, we were to have everything in readiness to commence the permanent survey of the Great Canadian Pacific Railway. Without much delay the grindstone was up and in grinding order, the axes were sharpened and the chains tested, and the staff adjusted their instruments.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN EXCITING DEER-HUNT.

A NARROW ESCAPE—WOLVES.

To expedite the work our party was formed into two divisions, the first of which, under the personal command of the boss himself, acted as an advance guard, exploring the country and cutting a trail line, from which division number two, under the supervision of the Transitman, following in its wake, was to locate the permanent survey. As each member of the party had his own especial daily duties to perform, the work itself would have been monotonous indeed, had it not been for the glorious uncertainty, and the possibility of adventures to be encountered in passing through an unexplored country. Through fertile valleys, over hills and grassy mountains, we wandered, crossing glacier streams and morasses, scaling precipices, and hacking our way through heavy timber and thick underbush: such were the daily and hourly obstacles the hardy surveyor had to contend with.

The first little adventure worth recounting on our travels occurred after we had been out about a month. It was a beautiful summer's evening towards the end of June that we were camped in the forest. Owing to the thickness of the trees the tents were scattered here and there in its midst. A young gentleman, who was the leveller's assistant as rodman, being anxious to try his skill as an axeman, commenced cutting into a small tree close to where myself

and mate had pitched our sleeping apartment. Not being used to the work, and, I presume, being wearied of the experiment, the young rodman left his task but half finished. During the night when the party were in sweet slumber a strong wind arose, and, striking the half-cut tree, caused it to come down with a crash on the top of our tent, breaking the ridge-pole and causing general confusion. My partner and I thought we were attacked by Redskins, and we both yelled like fiends. This, of course, woke up the entire camp, and everybody rushed out of their tents *en deshabelle* to see what was wrong. After some little delay we were extricated, and every one joined in a hearty laugh. It, however, gave my partner and myself a pretty good fright, for had the tree fallen a few feet either way to the right or left, one or the other of us must have met with an untimely end. There was no repetition of this wicked waste of energy in a homicidal direction on the part of our young friend during the remainder of the trip.

It was during the month of July that a second adventure occurred, and this time I was the sole actor in the drama. We were camped close to a small lake, and during the afternoon, while at work, I had noticed the fresh tracks of deer, made on their way to water. It was on a Saturday, and the next day being a *dies non*, I determined to try my luck. After supper I proceeded to the lake, armed with a Winchester, and placing myself in ambush, awaited the arrival of the deer. It was a lovely moonlig't night, and I had waited patiently for over an hour, but without any result. I had very nearly fallen asleep, when suddenly I was awakened from my reverie by the sound of what seemed to me the yelp of dogs. By George! thought I, this must be some daring Britisher out for a moonlight hunt with his hounds. Presently, crash through the underwood, close to where I was seated, came a splendid buck. I was about to raise my rifle and fire, but this I considered unsportsman-

like, so I desisted, and the frightened deer plunged into the lake. Momentarily I expected the huntsman and his hounds to appear; but as the distance between myself and the pursuers diminished, and the yelping of the animals more distinct, full well I knew that I was mistaken. They were not hounds, but wolves. I was seated at the time beneath a goodly pine, and jumping up, if ever a fellow swarmed up a tree in a hurry, I did then. Scarcely had I reached a place of safety when the savage brutes came racing down to the spot where the deer had taken to the water. Here, for a second or more, there was a check, of which, taking advantage, I fired. My aim, owing to excitement, must have been wide of the mark, for not one wolf fell to the shot. It, however, scared the pack; for instead of further pursuit after their victim, they immediately wheeled about, and were quickly lost to view in the thick scrub. I remained on my perch of safety for some considerable time, but eventually took courage and descended. The deer must have reached the opposite shore of the lake, being no longer visible in the water, and, having had sufficient hunting for one night, I returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RESULT OF A "SMUDGE."

EAGLE LAKE—A BIG FIRE IN THE BUSH—THE ARRIVAL OF
THE HEAD TYEE—MARCH TO THE COAST.

JULY passed away, and then August, without any particular event taking place worth recording; and it was not until the first week in September that an accident occurred, which was very nearly causing the destruction of almost the entire party. The summer months had been exceptionally fine, no rain having fallen, save, once or twice, a slight thunder shower. We had made considerable progress in our survey, and in spare moments had some capital shooting and fishing; and, had it not been for the persecution of mosquitoes, we should have had what the American terms a "right good time of it." It was, as I have stated, early in the first month of the Fall, that we were camped on the shores of one of the largest lakes we had yet seen. The whole party were assembled here, with the exception, fortunately, of the pack-mules and their attendants, who were at the further end of the lake, some eight or nine miles distant. This lake was named by the boss Eagle Lake, from the number of the birds of prey of this name which frequented that expanse of water. Many and many a specimen of this noble bird fell a victim to the unerring aim of our sporting leveller; and so accurate was his line of fire, that, had he come in contact with a Beaugardis or Dr Carver, I can truly assert they would have found in this staff officer no mean opponent. Eagle Lake had to be traversed, and in order to effect the crossing,

there being no boats, rafts had to be made. So the expert axemen of the advanced guard set to work to construct them, and, being only for temporary use, the rafts were very quickly made. In the meantime, the division under the transitman, which was a mile or so in rear, were gradually working up to the lake with the permanent line. The fallen timber, which lay on the ground in huge piles, was now, owing to the lack of rainfall, as dry as tinder; and the undergrowth, which in the early spring was one mass of verdure, was now withered. It was the usual custom for each man to carry his lunch out with him; and when the hour of midday arrived we would seat ourselves on a log and partake of our frugal repast. Now, as long as we were on the move, the mosquitoes, of which there were myriads, would not be very troublesome; but on coming to a halt these blood-sucking insects would make such fearful attacks on the exposed parts of the person as to be quite intolerable. To keep them at bay it was therefore necessary to light small fires, called in the North-West "smudges." These were made up of a few twigs and dead leaves, so as to cause plenty of smoke. Time and again had our boss warned us of the fearful results that might occur if these "smudges" were not quite extinguished before being left. On this occasion some one of the party neglected to carry out the order; and, as I have already said, his neglect very nearly proved fatal to the entire party.

It was on a Saturday night, and we were all looking forward the next day to having a grand bath, and some little fun in exploring the lake on the rafts, which consisted of one large and two smaller ones. It must have been close on midnight when some one, more wakeful than the rest, gave the alarm of fire; and on turning out from our tents there certainly was a terrible spectacle. The whole country in our rear seemed ablaze. I witnessed the last great fire in Chicago in '74, and I have seen many a prairie fire, but

I sincerely trust I shall never again behold a burning Canadian forest. The wind was blowing our way, and the flames rapidly approaching, so there was no time to lose. The tents were quickly struck, and, as fast as men could act, our belongings were pitched on to the rafts, which, with ourselves on board, were poled out into the middle of the lake. As we were at the extreme end of the lake, the flames spread on both sides of it, and so intense was the heat and smoke that many of us jumped into the water and held on to the rafts. For some hours we remained in this semi-amphibious state, till finally, through the intervention of a divine Providence, the wind changed and blew a regular gale. This, in conjunction with a heavy downpour of rain, somewhat abated the flames; and we eventually landed at our old camping-ground, which was now one mass of smouldering ashes.

At the close of September the visiting Head Tyee came on the scene, accompanied by a posse of Indians, whom he had brought from down country to assist us. Having inspected the work, found our progress, I believe, highly satisfactory, and given his final orders regarding the survey, he left us. On 1st October, we having now entered the mountains of the Cascade ranges, we bade adieu to our mule-train, which returned to its winter quarters. With the Indians as packers, we continued the work to the middle of the month. The fine weather then suddenly broke up, and, lest we should get snowed up and be further delayed, orders were given that the survey for the year was at an end, and we were to march to the coast with the utmost despatch.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SAVED FROM A WATERY GRAVE.

ON THE HOOMATHCO RIVER—SALMON—RETURN TO VICTORIA
—LOSS OF THE “PACIFIC.”

A “CACHE,” as it is called, was now made, in which all our superfluous stores were deposited, to be used in the following year; and with the Indians the Tyee had brought, supplemented by some of the wandering Chilacootans that we pressed into the service, we started on our final march to the sea-coast. Now it was that our real troubles commenced, and truly the last fortnight of the expedition was a rough one. Everything superfluous was now chucked away, and, with our blankets, one change of raiment, and a day's rations, we marched along. On our first day after leaving the regular survey line I had a narrow escape of losing my life. Being an old soldier, I had my pack made up in military fashion, shoulder-straps and all. In the middle of the day we came to a wide glacier stream, and as an impromptu bridge was necessary, a tree which grew convenient to the bank was felled, over which we were to cross. Neglecting—contrary to all army rules—to take off my pack, I attempted the passage; but on arriving about midway the tree bent under me, and I was precipitated into the surging waters. Luckily for me, I managed to grasp the fallen log, otherwise, owing to the pack and the velocity of the mountain-torrent, I must have been swept away. I was, however, rescued and hauled out of the water, half frozen. As my pack now weighed about a ton, and my

rations were spoilt, I threw them away, divested myself of my garments, and a good Samaritan having helped me to wring them out, as also my blankets, I continued my march. I solemnly declare that from that day until I finally reached Victoria, some two weeks later, I never had a dry stitch on me.

Having crossed the spurs of the Coast Range Mountains, we finally got into the valley of the Hoomatheo River, which we followed downwards. And now we were once more in explored country, a survey having been made some years previously in these parts. Of the party who had done the work none remained, they having all been killed by Indians. On reaching this river we lost an Indian, and a good one too. He had been across the Hoomatheo, hunting in the mountains, and had succeeded in killing a wild sheep. This he cut up into quarters, and he had already brought over one half of the animal; but on making his second attempt, he suddenly disappeared in the stream. After a long search his body was recovered, and his widow (who was also one of our packers) was endowed with several spare blankets and much provisions, which seemed to allay her grief considerably. On passing along the banks of the river, it was curious to behold the number of salmon, which had been coming up to spawn at flood-time, and, owing to the sudden fall of the waters, were left to die. We came to one small fork where, I truly believe, we could have walked on dead and dying salmon for quite a quarter of a mile. It is needless to say they were quite useless for food. Towards the close of October we reached a navigable portion of the aforementioned river. Here we obtained canoes, which, within two days, conveyed us to Bute Inlet, where the Government steamer awaited our arrival. Our trip aboard the "Birtie" was of short duration, as within forty-eight hours of our going on board we were once more safely landed in the gay little city of Victoria.

Our acquaintances of both sexes met us at the wharf, and

among whom I had a few friends. I felt rather uncomfortable at being obliged to put in such a ragged appearance. However, the hospitable Victorians cared but little for our tattered garments, and pressing invitations were offered on all sides to spend the evening. Most of the other survey parties had already arrived, and the town was once more alive with miners and explorers. My friend Vivian was still up country, but was expected in a few days. This I learnt from the proprietor of the American hotel, where I again took up my quarters, and remained till Vivian eventually joined me, although it was more by good luck than good management that I ever once again beheld him, as the sequel will prove.

Among the numerous surveyors who were out in the field during the past season there had been a cook, whom I will call George. He was a gentleman, and being as jovial a fellow as one could possibly wish for, he was highly popular with all his comrades. I had the pleasure, at a convivial meeting of surveyors, of being introduced to him, and I was rather astonished to learn from him that he was not only a countryman of mine, but also hailed from my own county. I was still more astonished, on his relating to me some of his past history, to find that he was the son of a gentleman of good social standing with whom I was well acquainted. He informed me that, some twelve years previously, when he was yet a lad, he had a row with his poor old governor. Being high-spirited, he had left his home, and ever since had been abroad, roughing it. On his return to Victoria, his father, now growing old, having discovered his whereabouts, had written to him, offering him his full forgiveness, and begging the prodigal to return home and partake of the fatted calf. This he determined upon, and after some persuasion, I consented to accompany him. The "Pacific" s.s., on which I came to Victoria some months previously, was again in port, and about to return to San Francisco in two days. Nearly all

the miners were going to California for the winter months, and the surveyors (most of whom were Canadians) were returning to their eastern homes. So it was finally settled that George and I should cross the plains and return to the Emerald Isle together.

Our tickets were taken for the journey to 'Frisco, but, fortunately for me, I was not among the number that started in the ill-fated vessel. On the day previous to the sailing of the "Pacific," I bethought me of an old soldier friend of mine, living some ten miles out of town, and to him I resolved to pay a farewell visit. Hiring a buggy, and telling George I would be certain to return in time, I drove off to call on the ex-Lancer. He, poor fellow, entertained me as if we were both back at the old regimental mess, and the small hours of the morning had already arrived ere I arose to take my departure. During my return drive, owing to the darkness, when a little over half-way, I had the misfortune to strike a stump, and in so doing smashed the axle of the front wheels. This, of course, was to me a sad mishap, as unless I could obtain some assistance, it was obvious that the delay would end by my missing the steamer. The required aid, however, arrived sooner than I expected, in the shape of a milkman, who was driving into town to dispose of his "sky-blue." He kindly offered me a seat. So tying the horse behind his cart, and having taken the cushions and placed them on his seat, we drove into town. On arriving at the hotel, I learnt that my friend George had already gone on board, so, quickly collecting my traps, I hurried to the wharf. To my utter disgust, on reaching it the steamer was just passing out of the harbour. I was naturally very much put out by the occurrence, and offered \$10 to a boatman if he would put me on board; but the only reply I got was a shake of the head. It was generally remarked by those assembled on the wharf that the "Pacific" had a peculiar list to port; and it is curious to relate that, as she steamed

out of the narrow entrance, passing close to the rocks, a Chinaman jumped ashore. I immediately went to the telegraph office, and sent off a despatch to my friend, to the hotel where we had proposed to stay in 'Frisco, asking him to wait, and saying that I should be with him by the next steamer. Alas! that message never reached him. Great was the consternation when, at nine o'clock on the evening of the departure of the "Pacific," a telegram was received, stating that she had been run into by a sailing-ship, called the "Orpheus," and had foundered with all hands aboard. This melancholy catastrophe, through which so many of my late comrades met with a watery grave, caused me great sorrow, and for the time depressed me very much; and, indeed, so much did it unnerve me that nothing would have persuaded me then to take a sea voyage.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JOURNEY TO THE GOLD MINES.

THE BUNGALOW—FORT WRANGLE—UP THE STICKEEN RIVER
—ARRIVAL AT THE GOLD MINES.

I WAS truly thankful when, a few days later, my friend Vivian arrived in Victoria. As we had a long winter before us, and only a certain amount of money between us for our maintenance, we left the hotel, and renting a small wooden shanty, which we called the "Bungalow," and having furnished it, we took up our quarters in bachelor's hall. Time works wonders; and under the cheerful influence of my friend, I gradually regained my usual spirits. We made lots of friends during our residence at the Bungalow; and what

with shooting, buggy-driving, skating, and other innocent amusements, the winter months passed pleasantly enough.

When the spring of the ensuing year arrived Vivian and I agreed to go to the Cassiars mines together. The Toll Bridge—which, by the way, was a private speculation—had been bought up by the Government, and the toll had been abolished, so that my friend's services were no longer required. He had, however, taken time by the forelock, and obtained an appointment as bookkeeper to a mining company on Dease Creek, Cassiar. It was therefore arranged that I should proceed with him, and live at his expense until such time as I should obtain employment. When the time arrived for starting, it is needless to say that my friend and I found our banking account at a very low ebb; but by the sale of our furniture we scraped up sufficient money to defray our expenses by the steamer to Fort Wrangle, as also by the river boat thence to the head of the navigation. After that we should have to chance our luck until we arrived at the diggings. It was nearly the middle of May when my mate and I bade adieu to our friends and set off on our rambles. The steamer touched at several places *en route*, so we did not reach the Fort (which is situated on one of the Aleutian Islands, at the mouth of the Stickeen River) for some days. Eventually, however, we arrived there in safety; but owing to the ice not having broken up in the river, we met with a further delay of nearly a fortnight.

Of all the outlandish places I have ever been in before or since, without exception, Fort Wrangle takes the cake. The Fort itself may have been comfortable enough, but the interior of this stronghold was not on view during my stay in this remote region. The scattered village, consisting of a few wooden shanties, was built on a small plateau, a few feet above the level of the sea-beach; while in the rear was a cold, dreary-looking mountain, the very sight of which, even in the middle of summer, made one feel quite chilly. To

add to our discomfort, it rained incessantly while we were there ; indeed, from information I received, it appeared that it either rained, sleeted, or snowed in those parts from the 1st of January to the 31st of December. A storekeeper, who had been a resident for two years, told me that during his stay he had known but two fine days. With no provisions in stock, and no funds wherewith to purchase any, this prolonged delay was certainly not only a wet but also a gloomy outlook for myself and friend. Most of the miners, like ourselves, had reached their bottom dollar ; and as for obtaining credit in the township, it was just like asking a beggar for the loan of a diamond ring. There was not the least occasion to interrogate the wily storekeeper on the subject, as on entering his shop you would behold small placards, placed so as to catch the eye, on which were printed in large type, "Good old Trust is Dead. This clock was never known to Tick."

Well, there was no help for it but to make the best of it. We had our tent and blankets, so we pitched the former, and with the help of the latter and a few planks, we made ourselves a bunk on which to sleep. Luckily, Vivian had many acquaintances among the miners ; and although it was impossible to borrow any money, he succeeded in getting a little coffee and sugar from one, and a few pounds of flour and bacon from another. These few groceries, supplemented by some shrimps which we obtained from native Indians, mussels which we gathered from the rocks, and a few snipe which I shot with a borrowed gun, kept the wolf from our tent-entrance. There is a certain amount of truth in the old adage that everything comes to him who waits. The ice on the river broke up, and the skipper announced his intention to start at once. So Vivian and I packed up our traps and quickly got aboard, very thankful at being released from our prolonged imprisonment. The Stickeen River, owing to the melting snow, was now greatly swollen ; our progress

was therefore much retarded. On the evening of our first day's trip, we got as far as the cañon, which was some twenty miles up-stream. Here the boat was moored for the night.

The next morning, notwithstanding the strong and rapid current that was running through the mountain gorge, the skipper determined to proceed. A few of the passengers remained aboard, myself and mate among the number. Others made their way through the bush, with the intention of boarding the boat again at the upper end of the cañon; while the remainder volunteered to haul, from the heights above, on the rope which was fastened to the boom of the boat. The stern-wheeler was shoved off from the bank and entered the seething water; the engines were put to their utmost pressure, and, with the aid of the hands on the heights above, we succeeded in getting about midway through the rushing torrent. Suddenly the rope broke, and the engines not being powerful enough for the emergency, all control was for the time being lost. To make matters worse, the old skipper, who was himself steering, lost his head, and deserted his post at the helm; so that the boat was practically left to the mercies of the roaring torrent. Every moment we expected the boat to be dashed to pieces against the rocks. The mate, who was the skipper's son, was in the bow, and immediately seeing how things were, he very quickly took possession of the deserted wheel; and, after great difficulty and no end of bumps, he succeeded in running the boat on to the banks, where she had been berthed but a few hours before. Here we again camped for the night. Next morning, the mighty rush of water having considerably abated, a second attempt was made to pass through the cañon, and this time we were successful. The worst part of our passage was now over, and we finally reached the head of the navigation without further mishap.

Here we took the trail; and, for two fellows who had

been leading a rather luxurious life for the past six months, it required a little bit of pluck to face a 125-mile tramp with over 70 lbs. each to carry. On our way up we met a Government working party putting up bridges. As luck would have it, the cook who had been out on the survey party with me during the previous summer was now officiating for this crowd; and from him I obtained all the provisions I required, as well as a few dollars to put in my pocket. On arrival at the end of the trail, at Dease Lake, the usual method of reaching the mines was by boat; but the ice, even at this advanced period of the year, had not yet quite disappeared so we had to continue our journey by a cattle-trail, which is only occasionally used for the transit of these animals. This was by far the roughest part of our march; but by dint of perseverance we eventually reached the head mining camp at Dease Creek.

CHAPTER XXX.

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

UP THE LIARD RIVER—WRECK IN A CAÑON—NO NIGHT—
A LATE BREAKFAST.

My mate wasted no time in getting to work ; and within a day or so of our arrival in the mines he was busily engaged in the accounts of a mining company. I also was successful in finding employment in one of the claims ; and, had I stuck to it, the wages being \$10 per diem, I might possibly have made a good stake, as it is called.

In placer-diggings, however, every one likes, if possible, to be his own boss and work for himself. It so happened that I learnt that a certain village blacksmith, who had taken up the calling of a digger, had, on the previous season, been up to the head waters of the Liard River ; and, after finding some fine specimens of gold, had returned to the head camp for a stock of provisions. I therefore made up my mind to join his party. For reasons unknown, the blacksmith never returned to his Bonanza, but went south instead. However, the party he had formed set out ; and they had already started some days before I heard of their exodus. Nevertheless, having once made up my mind, I determined to go at all risks and see the elephant. So, one day, meeting an old acquaintance of mine, who was an expert in gold digging, I asked him how he would like to make the venture, "Nothing stops me, Cap, but the means," was the reply ; so as I knew I could get all the necessary supplies

from the storekeepers, with whom I was well acquainted, I bade my friend and his mate hold themselves in readiness to make an immediate start. I had, as I anticipated, no difficulty in procuring everything I required in the way of provisions from the merchants, who willingly took my note of hand for the amount; and through the generosity of Vivian I got sufficient money wherewith to purchase a boat. As luck would have it, there was another small party just at this time starting for the same destination as ourselves, so I made arrangements for us all to travel together. This was likely to facilitate matters very greatly; as, in case of need, one party would help the other.

Everything being arranged, one fine summer's morning the boats were launched, and amid the cheers and waving of hats of our friends who came to say farewell, we entered the stream and were rapidly carried along by the current. Quickly we glided down Dease and Nahany Rivers, and on the afternoon of our second days' trip came to the junction of the Liard, which flows into the Great Slave River that takes its rise at Lake Athabasca, and these two when united form the great Mackenzie River, which flowing north eventually empties itself into the Arctic Ocean. Our course lay up the Liard, which may be regarded as the head-waters of the Great Mackenzie, its source being our ultimate destination. It was now that our troubles commenced, for so rapid was the stream, and our boat so heavily laden, that it was quite impossible with oars only to make any headway against the current. We, therefore, had recourse to the tow-rope; even by this method, owing to the numerous obstacles we had to contend with as we walked along the bank, our progress was but slow. However, the two little bands, who were full of life and hope, manfully persevered; and, despite the thorny bushes, and the everlasting torment of blood-thirsty mosquitoes, which even in these northern latitudes baffles all description, we toiled along without a murmur.

It was, I think, on our fifth day after leaving the main river that, while seated on the bank for our midday meal, we could hear the not far distant roar of mighty waters, and we knew from the sound that we must be gradually approaching a large cañon. This surmise proved to be quite correct; for early in the afternoon we reached the mouth of the cañon. Tying up our boats we proceeded along the bank to inspect the gorge. We soon satisfied ourselves that, whatever chance we might have of getting the boats through this formidable torrent on the opposite bank of the river, it would be quite impossible to do so by the bank we were then on. We decided, therefore, that it would be necessary to cross, which we succeeded in doing in safety, although we were carried down stream for some considerable distance. However, we once more set to work with a will, and, after some hard tugging, again brought our boats back to the entrance of the gorge. Once again we tied up our boats, and inspected the foaming waters. The bank on this side not being so high as that by which we had come, we made up our minds to make the attempt. The plan adopted was that the one party should man their own boat, in order to keep it off the rocks, while the other party hauled on the tow-rope, which was passed round the bluff from the heights above. This plan proved successful with the first boat, which, though with great difficulty, was finally hauled through in safety. Unfortunately, however, this was not the result with my craft, which was the smaller and by far the heavier laden. In the hope of avoiding accidents, I took out about 5 cwt. of flour, but even this proved insufficient. I was posted in the stern of the boat, while my two mates took up their positions, one in the centre and the other in the bow. While we shoved out into the stream the party on the bank began to haul on the rope. Somehow or other the boat got broadside on across the stream and quickly filled. Just as she was sinking, the stern came in contact with a small pinnacle of

rock, on which, with the agility of a monkey, I quickly threw myself. Nothing but the bare top of the rock was exposed to view above the gurgling water, and, with my body in the river, and my arms clutching the rock with a death-like grip, there I lay, until I was finally rescued by one of the party from the bank. This, as I afterwards learnt, was accomplished with the utmost difficulty. They had to take everything out of the boat that still remained, and then, putting one man in to guide her, the other two, holding the rope, let her glide down until she came close enough to me for the man to seize me. Twice in his attempts to save me he nearly capsized the boat; and he had the greatest difficulty in making me loose my hold. Indeed, as he afterwards informed me, he was very nearly driven to cut off my fingers with his jack-knife; but in the end he managed by great exertions to slip my arms over the pointed rock. On being brought to the bank I lay for hours quite unconscious, and when at last I came to, it was only to learn that my unfortunate companions and the boat had been swept away in the mighty torrent. Although diligent search was made during a whole day, nothing was ever found but one oar. I am never likely to forget this terrible accident, and, although years have now rolled over my head, I sometimes awake from my slumbers fancying I can hear the noise of the rushing waters.

My mates and boat now being gone, I had no alternative but to proceed with the remaining party, they having kindly offered me a place in their boat. My few sacks of flour, which was all I now had left to me, were "cached" till we should be returning. There being no more cañons to pass, and there now being an extra hand on the tow-line of the remaining boat, we proceeded more rapidly. We had now arrived at the time of year when in these northern latitudes there is, for a short time, perpetual sun. As the summer was advancing we were all anxious to arrive at our journey's

end, to try our luck before the winter. How many hours a day we used to toil it was quite impossible to say. One of my poor mates had been the only one in the crowd who possessed a watch, and this he had on him when he met his untimely end; so that we finally lost all record of time, and indeed did not even know the day of the week or month. This was verified a day or so before our arrival at the mythical Bonanza at the Liard head waters. Seated on the banks, as we thought at breakfast, one day, after sleeping a number of hours of which we had lost all count, we espied coming down stream a man in a canoe. This gentleman turned out to be one of the blacksmith's party who, having his own skiff, was returning, having had, as he expressed it, enough of it. As he hauled up his little craft on the sand, we invited him to partake of breakfast; and we were not a little astonished when he laughingly exclaimed, "Boys, ye are rather late risers, or else off your chump. Why! dang it all!" continued he, pulling out a timepiece, "it's arter four o'clock in the evening." In further conversation, the traveller tried to dissuade us from proceeding any further, telling us there was no paying gold and the blacksmith ought to be horsewhipped for misleading people. As he was a stranger we thought he might be taking us in; so we determined at all hazards to go on, and see for ourselves; so bidding him adieu we once more manned the tow-rope, and proceeded.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A BOGUS BONANZA—A TURN OF GOOD LUCK.

DISAPPOINTMENT—DOWN THE RIVER—A KIND FRIEND—IN
CHARGE OF A PRISONER.

WE had now got into a part of the world where, for those requiring what is called in England perfect quiet, it would, I should say, be just the place for them to find it. Not an animal or tree of any kind was to be seen; not a fish to be caught in the river; no notes of birds; in fact, with the exception of the buzzing of mosquitoes, the rippling of the water, and now and again the crash of a land-slide caused by the melting snow, everything was as still as death itself. Two days later than our meeting with the stranger, we reached our destination. Here we found the remainder of the blacksmith's party, who also vowed vengeance against him. They, too, had had a rough time of it, and had lost one or two members of their mess from the ravages of scurvy. We remained at this mining camp for over a month, and although we worked hard and found some gold, yet at the end of that time we also had had quite enough of it. So the claims were abandoned, and all hands once more paddled down stream wiser but very much poorer and sadder men. We spent several days *en route*, prospecting for gold in the sand bars and up some of the creeks. Everywhere the colour, as it is called, could be found, but not in anything like sufficient quantities to cause much excitement.

On repassing through the cañon where I had lost my mates, I could distinctly see the rock to which I had clung, which was now high out of the water, the river being low. It gave me quite a cold shiver to look at it, and I was thankful when we had passed it and I should see it no more. Of my five sacks of flour, that I had left behind me, two were completely destroyed by mice; the others, being intact, were placed in the boat for my future benefit. After passing through the cañon, we had some capital fishing, and caught several large White and Arctic trout. We had also some rare good fun chasing wild geese which breed in these latitudes, and which, from moulting their wing feathers, are unable to fly at this season of the year. We finally reached the camp at Dease Lake in safety, towards the end of September.

Here I disposed of my flour, for which I received \$60; but as I, of course, had to pay for the provisions lent to me by my companions when my own were lost, I had but little left out of the proceeds. I was rather calculating on being able to borrow sufficient money from my friend Vivian to defray my expenses back to Victoria; but he, poor fellow, had also had some bad luck. He bought a claim and hired men to work it for him; but as it did not even pay expenses, he was just as hard up as I was myself. Some of the miners, who knew of my misfortunes, kindly volunteered to get up some money for me by subscription; but although I felt grateful to them, I declined their offer. The darkest hour of night is just before the dawn—so goes the old saying—and really it seemed that, when my darkest came, something or somebody invariably turned up to once more set me on my feet. During my stay in Victoria I became acquainted with several miners, and among others an Irishman who, like poor George, hailed from my own county. Shortly after my return to the lake from my adventurous expedition, I met this worthy digger in one of the stores. He expressed great sorrow for my heavy losses, and kindly invited me to come

up and partake of some supper with him at his little shanty that evening. As it was close on the hour for that meal when we met, I accordingly accompanied him, and having feasted on all the luxuries a mining camp affords, and also talked over my adventures, I was about to bid him good-night. As I was in the act of doing so, he unlocked a small wooden box, from which he drew forth two small chamois-leather bags; and well I knew that they were the receptacles used by all miners for carrying gold dust. These he presented to me, telling me there was \$50 worth in each.

“You need not be the least uneasy about accepting it, Joe, I have plenty. I don't tell everybody, but the brother and I have ‘struck it rich.’ For five-and-twenty long years he and I have been mining together with indifferent luck; but this has been a grand season for us, for we have cleared over \$30,000 by our two claims; and you see,” continued he, “after so great a success, it would be hard if I could not lend a helping hand to an old countryman. You must never think of offering it me back. If you do, I shall be offended. I have heard all about you, and full well I know that, should you by any chance find me once more down the ladder, you would be the first to come forward to help me up again.”

This was, indeed, an unexpected piece of good fortune; but there was a “run on the colour,” and my luck was in. A couple of days later the sailing cutter would be leaving for the head of the lake. It was now October; and as the miners' season was nearly over, nearly all the diggers were about to proceed south. So Vivian and I made up our minds to go south also. When the morning of our departure arrived, as I was passing through the street of the little mining village, I was rather taken by surprise by one of the clerks in the merchants' store (from whom I had purchased the provisions for my late trip) coming over to me with a request from one of the firm that I would come and

see him. For the time I was somewhat disconcerted, thinking it was money he wanted on my bills. However, I was greatly delighted when I found that, instead of asking for money, he was actually going to put some into my pocket. In the mines at Cassiar there was no regular convoy for taking down the gold dust to civilisation; neither was there, strange to say, any bank. Money itself was scarce; goods being paid for in gold by weight. The merchants, therefore, at the end of each season, had some thousands of ounces which have to be sent to the banks at Victoria by some trustworthy person going to that city. This now, luckily for me, was to be my mission. I can't exactly state the number of ounces consigned to my care, but I knew it was a valuable little cargo. The dross was all properly packed and labelled, and finally placed in leather pouches. It was agreed that I should have a horse to ride, and another on which to pack the cargo, and that for my trouble I should receive mining wages (\$10 per day), and my expenses, till I delivered the same at the bank in Victoria.

Everything being ready, and all hands aboard, the cutter weighed anchor, and, with a fair wind, and without any accidents, that evening we landed at the head of the lake. Here there was a small shanty, or public-house. A pack-train was about to start the next day, so I hired three horses, for myself, Vivian, and the freight. Now, it so happened that the visiting judge had been on Dease Creek during the past month trying cases of various kinds, and among others was one of serious assault on the sheriff, who acted in that capacity as well as chief-constable. The culprit, who, from having a red head, was called Brick Top, was duly tried and convicted, and sentenced by the learned judge to be incarcerated in the Victoria Prison for the term of seven calendar months. This individual and his escort, we found, were staying at the wayside public, where they had arrived a few days previously. The prisoner himself, in spite of his un-

ornamental bracelets and leg shackles, looked the very picture of health ; but I can't say so much for the special constables who were guarding him. These gentlemen, two in number, seemed to have lately had a pretty rough time of it. One of them was quite *hors de combat*, while the other showed decided evidence of having come out of a rather unequal scrimmage. From the information that I gathered from the proprietor of the shanty, the escort had given the prisoner a little too much law, and he, taking advantage of their kindness, had watched his opportunity, seized a rifle which one of them had carelessly set down by a tree, shot one of them through the arm, and clubbed the other with the butt end of the gun. It was lucky for these constables that the prisoner's legs were fettered ; otherwise it is more than probable they would have been numbered among the slain. Brick Top, however, slipped, and help arriving at this critical moment, he was eventually overpowered and handcuffed. Neither of the constables being now fit for further duty, they had sent word by an Indian to his Honour the Judge for instructions, and were now awaiting his orders.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON ESCORT DUTY.

ON THE TRAIL—DEATH OF AN OLD MINER—ONCE AGAIN AT
VICTORIA.

THE next morning, before I was up, the Judge's boat, with the Head Constable, had arrived on the scene, and I was aroused from my slumbers by the boss of the shanty, who told me I was wanted. I immediately arose, and having made a hasty toilet, went out to interview the official, who, having asked me if my name was Trotter, handed me a paper, and informed me that the Judge had deputed me and my friend Vivian, as special constables, to take charge of the prisoner; and at the same time presenting me with a brace of revolvers, he said that the Judge's orders were for us to take the prisoner down to Victoria, dead or alive. I had really no wish to become an officer of the law; nor did I much relish the idea of having charge of so desperate a character. But the Sheriff said the order was imperative; and as I should receive all my expenses, and \$10 a day till the end of the trip, I naturally assented, and Vivian and I were duly sworn in, and took over the charge of the prisoner.

The pack train was now ready to move down the trail; so, bidding the Sheriff adieu, off we started. During the journey we treated Brick Top with every consideration; but as my friend and I had no intention of allowing him to commit a murderous attack on us, we watched him carefully,

and further, gave him fully to understand that if he tried on any of his games with us we would put a bullet through him without the slightest compunction. This threat, I am thankful to say, neither of us had occasion to carry out. We reached the head of the navigation in about five days without accident; and here we were delayed for nearly a week on account of the non-arrival of the steamer. Finally, we received word that, owing to the shallow water at present in the river, the boat had made its last trip for the season, and in a few days would sail for Vancouver's Island. Further delay being useless, I chartered a large canoe, and my party, accompanied by a few miners, proceeded down the river.

During this, my final trip on the Stickeen, a sad event took place. One of the passengers, who had been an old miner, but who, owing to ill-health, had taken to gambling for a living, died. He was in the last stage of consumption, and looked fearfully ill when we started. We buried him on the bank, and he is now long forgotten, and the site of his lonely grave, I should say, unknown. I had met this poor fellow the previous year when I returned from the surveying expedition; and well do I remember that one night he and his mate, who had arrived from the Caraboo mines with considerable gold, quarrelled in one of the principal streets of Victoria. I am sorry to say both were under the influence of liquor, and not being able to settle their dispute by a stand-up fight, they peppered one another with dollar pieces, till finally they were taken up by the police. Sad to relate, this unfortunate man's sole worldly wealth the evening we laid him in his last resting-place was just one quarter of a dollar, or a little more than a shilling.

On once more reaching the sea-coast at Fort Wrangle, we found the steamer all ready to set sail; and as a secure compartment had been constructed for the especial accommodation of the prisoner in the stern of the vessel, we

had little or no further trouble with him. Nothing of any particular moment occurred on this, the last part of our long expedition, with the exception that one evening a heavy fog set in, and the passengers were rather alarmed, when a brave Irishman, who had been relating some of his courageous adventures with Indians, came down to the cabin where we were seated, and informed us that Ould Billy, the captain, had lost his way, and there was every likelihood of the vessel running on to the rocks. There was a regular panic for a few minutes, every one rushing on deck clothed in life-preservers. Presently the fog cleared away, and the ship proceeded; and in due course we were once more all safely landed on the wharf at Victoria. Here I was met by the police authorities, who took over Brick Top; and having delivered my parcel of gold dust to the merchant's clerk, who was also there to receive me, I immediately made my way to the American Hotel.

Could we have afforded it, Vivian and I would have liked to have taken up our old quarters at the Bungalow; but although for the last three weeks, at \$20 a day, I had earned a considerable sum of money, and had besides received a draft of £50 from home, yet in settling up my accounts with the merchant for my Mackenzie trip, I had but a small surplus to my credit at the bank. Vivian, who, I have already stated, had been unlucky in his mining speculations, was also low in funds. The Bungalow scheme was therefore abandoned as impracticable. After remaining at the hotel for about a fortnight, my friend once more determined to try his luck in 'Frisko; and as there was a small party being formed to explore and prospect the western shores of Vancouver's Island, I made up my mind to make one of the party. The expedition was aided by some of the merchants, who supplied us with two months' rations gratis; and this help was further supplemented by

the Government, who advanced a sum of \$200 in money, and provided us with guns, ammunition, charts, and compasses.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NOT A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION—ON BOARD HUDSON BAY CUTTER
—LAMENTATIONS OF AN INDIAN SQUAW—A PERILOUS
VOYAGE—A HUNGRY CHRISTMAS.

It was early in December when myself and three expert miners set sail in one of the Hudson Bay cutters for Berkeley Sound, where we safely arrived two days later. In this bay the aforementioned company had a trading post; and having landed our cargo, we took up our abode for a day or so with the gentleman in charge. Having purchased a canoe and hired an Indian who was acquainted with the coast, we re-shipped our goods and were ready for a start. As we were about to enter our canoe, we were rather surprised at the terrible lamentations of an Indian squaw who was seated on the rocks close by, and reminded us of the wail of the weepers at an Irish wake or funeral in days gone by. Our friend the storekeeper gave us no end of guesses as regards what might be the reason for so many bitter tears, but it was a conundrum; and, like "Bones" in a nigger troupe, we had to "gib it up." We were certainly highly amused when our informant explained to us that the lady in question was bemoaning the loss of her beloved grandmother, who had joined the spirits in the happy hunting-ground some twenty years ago.

We left Berkeley Sound in high spirits, and with a fair

but light breeze, our destination being Titino Inlet, some twenty odd miles up the coast. During the afternoon, however, our transports, as Charles Dickens was wont to call it, considerably moderated, and the gentle zephyr turned into a westerly gale; and had it not been that a much larger canoe than our own overtook us, we must have either thrown all our supplies overboard or else been swamped. The owner of the larger craft, who was a trader, kindly took on board two of our party and at least one-third of our cargo, and this so relieved our own frail bark that we reached our destination that evening with no further discomfort than a wet jacket. Our next camping-place was to be at Clayoquit Sound; so, in order as much as possible to avoid any further chance of disaster, we hired another canoe and a couple more Indians. In charge of one of our party, all the provisions we could spare were sent ahead of us to be left in charge of another Hudson Bay storekeeper, while the canoe was to return and meet us at an intermediate point.

As I had had some experience in sailing canoes, it was arranged that myself and the Indian should take charge of the transport department, while the remainder of the party would travel on foot along the coast, exploring such creeks and rivulets as they might chance to come across. Day by day the Indian and I guided our frail bark through the foaming billows, sometimes on the top of a monster wave, at others descending into the trough of the sea, to such a depth as completely to cut off from our view the tops of the mountains of no small height which ranged along the coast. At other times we would be steering our course through some narrow passage between the outlying rocks and the perpendicular cliffs of the shore, knowing full well that the slightest error of judgment on our part would be fatal. Truly, it was an anxious time; and I can solemnly declare that for the space of three weeks there was scarcely one

day that our lives were not in imminent danger. There was one day, in particular, just before we reached Clayoquit Sound, that in rounding one of the numerous headlands the canoe nearly capsized. Owing to the cliffs rising sheer from the water, there were but few landing-places. The weather had been quite moderate when we started, but as usual, as the hour of noon drew nigh, it would become rough and rougher, until at last, towards evening, it blew a regular gale. We had to make a long reach out to sea to clear the last headland we would have to pass prior to our arrival in the Sound. All our canvas was set, and we were scudding before the wind at a rapid rate, when suddenly a heavy sea struck us amid-ships, and we all but capsized. The Indian and I were both at the moment at the helm, which consisted of a long oar, and I had also hold of the main sheet. Without giving me any warning, the Siwash let go his hold on the sweep, and burst out crying. It was a critical moment, but, still keeping my grip, I managed to pull out my revolver, and placing the muzzle to his forehead, threatened to fire if he did not instantly resume his post. This had the desired effect; and after much difficulty we weathered the point and ran the canoe on shore on a narrow sand bar.

It was on Christmas Eve that we once more rejoined our companions, who had gone ahead with our provisions. As we had by this time considerably reduced our stores, we had no further use for the extra Indians and their canoe, so their services were dispensed with. In the afternoon of this day, leaving our own especial Indian in charge of our camp, we started off in our canoe to do a little prospecting on a creek where, we were informed by the Indians, gold had been traced. On our way, as usual, the wind got up, and so violently did it blow that we were thankful to take refuge on a small island, not more than twenty yards square. On this little piece of rocky land there was one solitary tree,

and under its shade we passed the night, as also the whole of Christmas day and night. As it had been our intention when we started to return to our camp early, we had brought no food, and of course no blankets; and, as it rained in torrents, the few matches that we had were soon thoroughly wet, so that a fire was out of the question. Our first night we spent standing under the poor shelter of the tree, and it was lucky for us that we had our oilskins with us. When morning came the rain had passed off, but it was still blowing a regular hurricane. We did not spend what one would call a very happy Christmas Day, neither did we partake of the good old English cheer usually spread at this festive season. No! our *menu* was decidedly limited, and consisted of mussels, which we picked off the rocks, with an occasional chew of plug-tobacco. These concomitants were washed down with good old rain-water, which we lapped up out of the crevices of the rock—simply, I suppose, because drinking utensils were not in vogue on this island. However, bad weather, like everything else, must have an end; and on the morning of the 26th, the wind moderating, we once more set sail, and in a couple of hours were back at our camp.

On leaving Clayoquit Sound, myself and the Indian once more took charge of the canoe, the remainder of the party proceeding as before, by land. After a tempestuous voyage of rather more than a week we landed at Nootka Sound. *En route* to this inlet we met several canoes with Nootka Indians on their way to Berkeley Sound, where they were going to have what is termed in Chinook Indian (the language spoken on the coast by the various tribes) "a Hy-ifu time," and present a "Potlatch" to their distant brethren. The potlatch is rather a curious custom among the coast Indians. The visitors generally bring with them large supplies of dried venison and salmon, also furs and blankets. The viands are consumed by all hands, amid the discordant

music of the tom-tom, and other equally unmusical sounds. The blankets and furs are then presented in great state by the guests to the Tyee, or chief of the tribe visited. Some months later the call is returned, and the feast having been again repeated, the original furs and blankets are once more placed in the custody of their owners, the donors on the first occasion. Thus it happens that the same goods are continually changing hands between the natives.

Strange to say, the coast Indians are great gamblers. To those accustomed to play at cards or handle the dice it might appear but poor sport; nevertheless, the Indian game is exciting to them, and in its way highly speculative. On one occasion our Indian, who was a confirmed gambler, returned to our camp, after a night's dissipation, with such a load of furs which he had won that he could scarcely carry them. But he, like the many who frequent Monte Carlo, knew not when to stop, and he finally lost all his winnings and several pounds of tobacco as well. The game is very simple, and consists of two pieces of wood, one of which is at first held in each hand. The pieces are then passed from one hand to the other with great rapidity, and finally both the pieces are together in one hand. The Indian who, either by luck or quickness of vision, discovers the hand which for the time contains the two, takes the pot.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONCLUSION.

LOSS OF A CANOE—AN ACCIDENT—RETURN TO VICTORIA—
BACK TO THE OLD COUNTRY.

INTO Nootka Sound flows a good-sized stream, called the Quaguina; this we determined to explore and prospect for minerals. Owing to the rapidity with which the water flows we had to tow the canoe. Having reached up as far as it was possible to go, the canoe was hauled up the steep bank to a considerable height, while the stores were carried up to a plateau above. The miners, with two days' rations, and accompanied by the Indian, proceeded up-stream on foot, while I remained behind to look after the camp. During the night it rained a perfect deluge, and it was lucky for me that I had pitched my tent so as to be out of all danger, as the river, in the course of a few hours, rose some twenty feet. The following morning I found our canoe had been carried away by the mountain torrent and dashed to pieces on the rocks. The bow end, which had been attached by a rope to a tree, was all that remained. On the return of the party from their trip, there was no alternative but to pack our provisions and carry them down to the coast. This portage we accomplished with the aid of some Indians with whom we fell in.

It was during this short trip, of some three miles only, that an accident befel me that eventually was the cause of my being obliged to give up any further exploration with the

party. I was carrying a sack of flour on my back over a very rough trail, and in stepping over a fallen log my foot slipped, and I fell, my knee at the same time coming in contact with a broken bough, which pierced my flesh considerably, making a nasty wound. By the time we arrived at the coast my leg was so swollen as to be quite painful. Having procured another canoe, we left the sound and crossed over to another Hudson Bay post on Nootka Island. On our arrival we found that one of the company's cutters had arrived, and was leaving for Victoria the next day. As I was now crippled and utterly useless, I bade my companions God-speed, and sailed in her. During the voyage we had another terrible gale, and we were obliged to run into shelter, owing to which delay, and having to call in at one or two trading stations besides, the vessel was three days overdue when we eventually arrived at Victoria. It was a terrible shock to me to learn on landing that, on the evening of the very day when I sailed from Nootka Island, the plucky little party that I had so lately left hale and hearty had all been lost.

At first I refused to believe the sad news; but a few days later a trader arrived at Victoria, and from him I learnt that my late comrades had foolishly discharged their Indian, and, late in the evening, the three miners had set out to round the lighthouse point, where they intended to camp, and do some prospecting. They were evidently caught in the same gale that we had experienced, and, none of them being expert canoeists, the boat must have been capsized by a heavy squall. The men in charge of the lighthouse could hear their cries for help; but, alas! no timely aid was at hand, so my poor mates were drowned, and no trace of their lifeless bodies could subsequently be discovered, although the canoe was afterwards found some distance down the coast, bottom upwards. Thus on

three occasions, within a little over two years, did it please a Divine Providence to spare me, while all my companions were taken.

I remained but two weeks in Victoria, during which time I was kept under the doctor's hands. I had seen enough of rough life to last me for some little time; so on receipt of letters, and a day or so later a cablegram, from the old country, I said good-bye to my kind Victorian friends, and started for dear old Ireland, where I was duly landed in safety in March '77.

Of my old pals, whose names figure in this narrative, but few, if any, remain, as I have heard nothing of them for many years. I received but one letter from Vivian after his arrival in 'Frisco, telling me that he was going to South America as purser of a vessel. This ship was lost some months later; and as I never heard from my friend again, there is no doubt he was among those who perished. The souls of old Tom White and his sailor companion, Captain Reynolds, have long since gone aloft to join Tom Bowling. Dick wrote to me at Victoria, B.C. He had saved some money, got married, and was then the landlord of a small hotel in the suburbs of San Francisco.

I have now given the reader a true account of some of the principal adventures that I experienced during my first three years' visit to the Western Continent. Had I exercised as much caution as I did perseverance, there is but little doubt that I would have made an independent fortune; but, like many more, I was in too great a hurry to become rich, and was therefore continually killing the goose that laid the golden egg. To those of my readers who may contemplate trying their luck in search of gold in one or other of the distant Colonies, my advice is—if you are young, strong, willing to work, and steady, take the first ship and go. If, however, you are weak, sickly, or past the heyday

of life, I strongly advise you to remain at home. But—be ye old or young—take warning by my example, and remember that there is a very true moral attached to the good old adage—

“Slow and steady wins the race.”

“And all that glitters is not

GOLD.”

be ye
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