

# WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES ETC. OF WESTERN LIFE.

HARRY E. WOLFF, PUBLISHER, 166 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK.

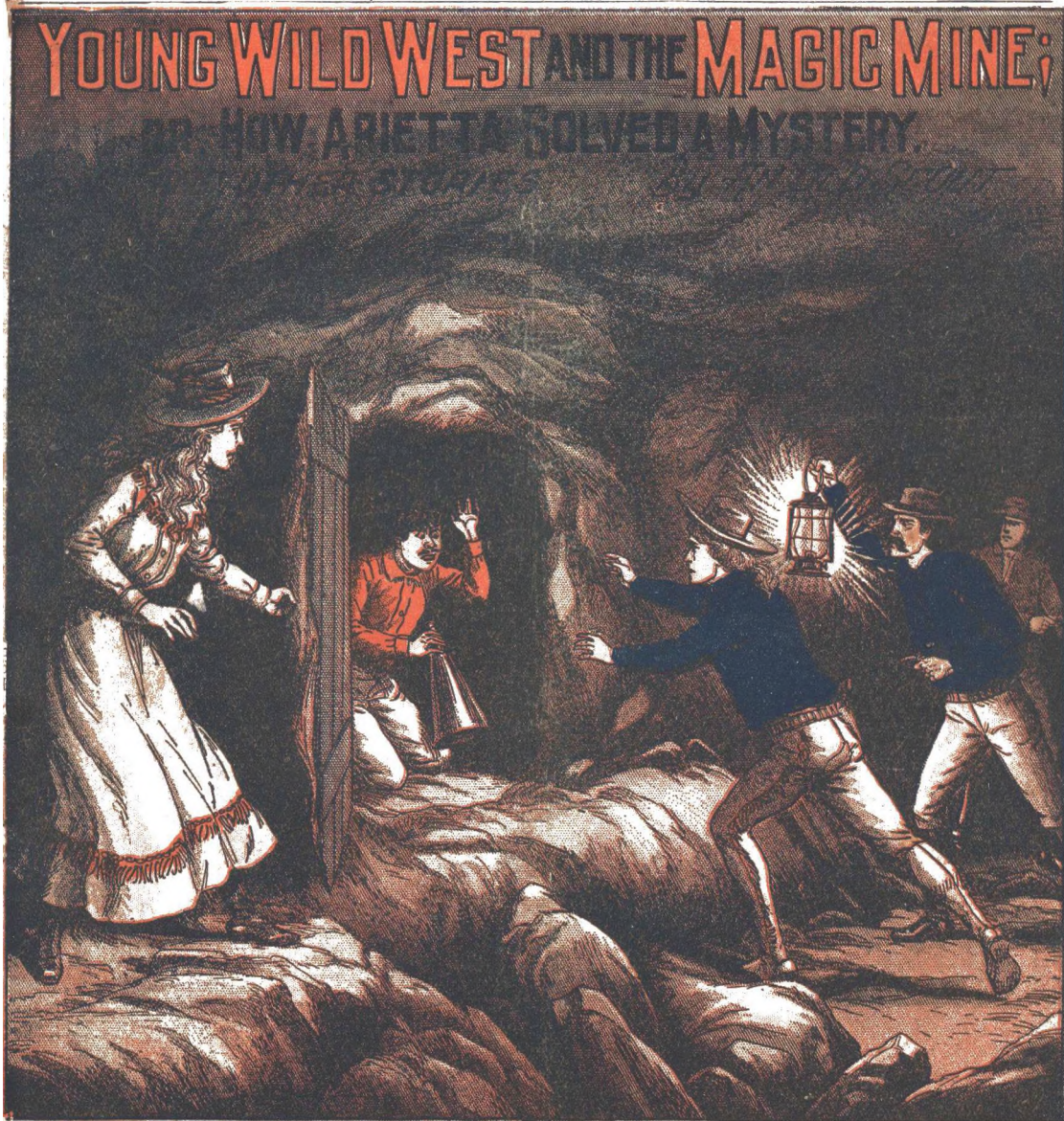
No. 819.

NEW YORK, JUNE 28, 1918.

Price SIX Cents

## YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE MAGIC MINE;

OR HOW ARIETTA SOLVED A MYSTERY.



"I guess I have solved the mystery, Wild," said Arietta. "Just take a peep." She stepped forward and caught hold of the skin, and flung open a door, disclosing the form of a man on his knees, with a look of terror on his face.



# WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$3.00 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1918, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, 166 West 23d Street, New York. Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter.

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## Young Wild West and the Magic Mine

—OR—

### HOW ARIETTA SOLVED A MYSTERY

By AN OLD SCOUT

#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE WAY TO SILVER STRIP.

Cra-ang!  
Cr-r-ash!  
Thud!  
"Wow!"

The four sounds vibrated upon the air in quick succession, the first being the crack of a rifle and the last an exclamation that went up simultaneously from four roughly-attired men seated about a campfire.

The four men jumped to their feet in surprise, for right before them lay a young buck quivering in the throes of death.

The camp was in a little gully, and it was down one of the steep sides that the deer had tumbled.

It did not take the four men two seconds after they saw it lying at their feet to realize that someone had shot the animal and that it had leaped over the bank as the bullet did its work.

The look of surprise quickly faded from the face of the tallest of the quartette and an exultant look took its place.

"Boys, I reckon someone has made us a little present," he observed, and then he calmly proceeded to bleed the slain deer. "Wenison fur breakfast, as sure as my name are Hank Hickey, an' I are a Bad Man from ther Bottom Lands!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when two forms appeared at the top of the bank from which the deer had tumbled.

One was a handsome and dashing-looking young fellow with a wealth of long chestnut hair hanging down over his shoulders, and the other was a Chinaman.

The boy—for he was nothing more, as far as years went—wore a neat-fitting hunting-suit of buckskin that was trimmed rather gaudily with scarlet fringe and was armed with a Winchester rifle, a brace of revolvers and a hunting-knife.

The Chinaman looked just like the general run of his race, only the expression of his face might have been a little more innocent.

The man who had called himself Hank Hickey arose to his feet, and, with the knife he had used to bleed the deer still in his hand, looked up, and in an insolent way exclaimed:

"Well, what about it?"

"I am sorry the deer dropped down there and disturbed you," was the reply. "We will come down and take it away."

"Don't bother about it, young feller. This are our meat now. What we find we always keep."

"Oh! that is your way of doing business, is it?"

"As sure as yer live it is! I'm Hank Hickey, an' I'm a Bad Man from ther Bottom Lands."

The dashing-looking boy in the hunting-suit said no more just then, but, going quickly to the right, he rounded a short turn and came down into the gully where the bank was not steep, followed by the Chinaman.

The four men looked at him impudently.

"They did not like the way he was acting.

"See here, young feller, if you're lookin' fur trouble you'll find it so quick it'll make your head swim!" exclaimed the leader, scowling and placing his hand on the butt of a big revolver.

"Oh! I'm not looking for trouble," was the cool retort; "I just came down after the buck, that's all. Hop, just get hold of that carcass and drag it out of their way and then we will skin it and cut off the haunches. These men can have what's left if they want it."

Hank Hickey looked at his companions with bulging eyes. "Do you hear what ther young galoot says, boys?" he cried, his eyes flashing fiercely.

They nodded to indicate that they did.

The Chinaman stepped over and stooped to take hold of the slain deer.

But before he could do so Hank Hickey grabbed him by the shoulder.

"Touch that carcass, you heathen, an' you'll die!" he said.

"No, he won't die," said the boy, stepping closer and smiling as though it was all a joke. "You just let go of the Chinaman, or something will happen to you!"

As quick as a flash the hands of the boy flew up and in each of them was a revolver.

One was leveled directly at the head of Hickey and the other began to wave back and forth before his three companions.

The hand left the shoulder of the Chinaman instantly, and then, just as though nothing was the matter at all, he seized the deer and proceeded to drag it away from the camp.

There was a deathly silence for the space of half a minute.

Then the dashing young fellow with the flowing chestnut hair said:

"I guess it is all right, isn't it?"

"You've got ther drop on us, young feller," answered Hickey. "If ther buck is yours, take it."

"Ah! that sounds better. Why couldn't you act this way before?"

"How did we know that it was you what shot ther buck?"

"Well, you might have guessed it if you had tried. But never mind; it is all right. You fellows are harmless, I can see that plain enough."

There was such an air of coolness about the boy that the four men were not only amazed, but they feared him.

The Chinaman had started to remove the skin from the

deer now, and the boy turned as though to walk over to him, lowering his revolvers as he did so.

Then it was that Hank Hickey let his hand drop to his six-shooter and pulled it from the holster.

Crack!

The boy turned as quick as a flash and fired, and, with a howl of pain, the villain dropped the weapon and placed the back of his hand to his mouth.

"I thought you would try that game," the handsome young fellow observed, with a smile and acting as coolly as though he was simply rehearsing the part of a play. "You didn't do it, though, did you?"

"Badee Melican man gittee backee hand skinnoc!" exclaimed the Chinaman, looking up from his work and grinning like a monkey.

"That is just what he got, Hop," the boy answered. "I thought I would just try him and see what he would do. Now, then, if he tries it again I am going to put a chunk of lead right through his heart!"

Hank Hickey had found out that he was not hurt much this time, and, with a pale face, he looked at the dashing marksman and said:

"I'd jest like ter know who yer are, boy, if yer don't mind tellin' me."

"Oh, I don't mind telling you, Mr. Hank Hickey. My name is Young Wild West."

"Young Wild West, eh? All right; I'll remember that. You're ther slickest galoot I ever met, an' I ain't ashamed ter own up ter it!"

"Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all jest now."

"Well, I hope you will know how to behave if we happen to meet again."

"Oh, we'll meet ag'in, most likely, an' when we do yer kin bet that I'll know how ter behave."

There was a peculiar ring in his voice as he spoke the last part of the sentence, and the boy who had introduced himself as Young Wild West nodded to let him know that he understood what it meant.

The Celestial was making rapid headway with the slain buck now, and, folding his arms across his breast, his hands still holding his revolvers, the boy watched the four men.

"Can you tell me how far it is to Silver Strip?" he asked, after a pause.

"I reckon you could git there by twelve o'clock ter-night if you had a good horse an' kept right on goin'," answered Hickey.

"Thank you. I guess we will not try to get there to-night, though. We have been riding all day, and it is now getting toward sundown. We are in no particular hurry to get there, anyhow."

"Me gottee skinnoc off allee light, Mislter Wild," spoke up the Chinaman just then.

"All right, Hop; now you just keep an eye on those four fellows, and if they go to trying any game of treachery let them have it good and hot. I'll cut off the haunches and they can have the rest of the carcass, as I told them before."

"Allee light, Mislter Wild."

Hop, as he was called, quickly arose and, drawing a revolver from beneath the loose jacket he wore, smiled blandly at the four rough-looking men.

"Me likee watchee badee men," he observed.

Young Wild West soon had the venison he wanted, and then bidding Hop to pick up the skin, he started from the spot, keeping an eye on the villains as he did so.

But neither Frank nor his men offered to do anything any more than to watch them keenly, and they were soon out of sight.

Young Wild West was known as the Champion Deadshot of the West, and was commonly called the Prince of the Saddle.

Having been born and reared in the wilds of the great West, and being remarkably active and strong, cool and daring to the last degree, as well as a deadshot, he was a real live hero of the wild West, and one who could be emulated for his good deeds and the examples he set.

Our hero, together with his two partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, three young ladies and Hop Wah, the Chinaman, were on their way to a mining camp called Silver Strip, which was situated in the northeastern part of the territory of New Mexico.

It was about midwinter, and the tops of the mountains were covered with snow, though in the valleys it was like summer.

Young Wild West's camp was less than a quarter of a mile from that of the four men, so he soon reached it.

"We heard you shoot, Wild," said a very pretty young girl of eighteen, who was a pronounced blonde, her hair being of a golden yellow and her eyes of that perfect blue that is so rarely seen.

"Yes, Et, we came across a young buck and I dropped him," was the reply. "He jumped over a bank, though, and landed right amongst four rascally fellows, who are camped below here in a gully. We had a little trouble with them, but it did not amount to much."

"We heard the crack of your revolver, too. You didn't have to drop one of the men, did you?" the girl asked.

"No, I simply knocked his shooter from his hand, as I have to do with fellows of his kind sometimes."

The girl, who was no other than pretty Arietta Murdock, the charming sweetheart of Young Wild West, nodded in a satisfied way.

"I reckon this venison will come in mighty handy for breakfast," observed a tall man of thirty with long, black hair and a heavy mustache, as he took the two haunches of venison from the dashing young deadshot.

"That's right!" spoke up a boy of our hero's own age; "we haven't had any venison in four or five days."

These two were Cheyenne Charlie, the ex government scout and Indian fighter, and Jim Dart, the partners of Young Wild West.

They were attired in a style similar to him and looked to be just what they were—experienced Westerners, who hardly knew the meaning of the word fear.

The other ladies in the party were the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, whose name was Anna, and Eloise Gardner, the pretty brunette girl, who was the sweetheart of Jim Dart.

Though the scout's wife was probably twenty-five years of age, Young Wild West always spoke of the three as "the girls," and that is what we will call them.

The girls were used to traveling about over the mountains and plains, and nothing suited them better than to be with the dashing young Prince of the Saddle and his two tried and true partners.

At the time of which we write it was not exactly the thing for small parties to go traveling about the West, as lawless white men and treacherous Indians were in plenty, and many there were who were robbed and murdered by them.

But Young Wild West liked danger and excitement so well that he often courted it. And it was the same way with Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart—if things got too dull and monotonous they would sigh for something startling to turn up.

Our hero always made it a point to rout out all the lawless characters he came across, and when he heard of any particular band of outlaws that was a terror to a certain section he would make it a point to seek them.

Being the owner of several mines throughout the mining regions of the West and also the owner of two ranches, Young Wild West was comfortably fixed in the way of money to buy what he wanted and to travel where he chose to.

Just now we find them on their way to try and solve what was said to be a mystery.

There was a mine in the camp called Silver Strip that everybody steered clear of, and when they heard this our friends felt just the other way—they wanted to get to it as soon as possible.

It was called the Magic Mine, so they had heard, but just what there was magical or mysterious about it that kept the miners of Silver Strip aloof from it they had not been able to find out.

As Cheyenne Charlie took the venison our hero had brought in they all wanted to know just what had happened.

Wild told them just what had occurred, not forgetting to state that he had learned about how far they were from Silver Strip.

"Well, if that galoot told yer anything like right we oughter strike ther camp by to-morrer noon, then," remarked the scout.

"Don't you think they might sneak up here and try and find where you and Hop came from?" Arietta asked, as she stepped out of the hollow beneath the ledge that the camp had been pitched in.

She looked in the direction they had come with the venison and skin and then quickly came back.

"There is a man sneaking this way!" she said, quietly, just as though she had fully expected to see him.

"Good!" Wild exclaimed, as he picked up his lasso. "I'll just rope him in and give him a surprise."

The daring boy started off through the bushes and the rest waited expectantly.

It was not a bit more than five minutes when they heard him coming back.

Young Wild West appeared dragging Hank Hickey by the collar!

## CHAPTER II.

### HANK HICKEY MEETS HIS FRIEND.

Hank Hickey looked like a steer being led to the slaughter-house.

Probably he thought he was going to be severely punished.

Wild now slackened the lariat that was about the villain. "Throw off the rope," he said; "but be mighty careful that you don't put your hands on your shooters after you do it. I've a good notion to mark out my initials on your breast with bullets."

The villain wriggled himself free from the rope and stood waiting for further orders.

"Now take a good look at what is to be seen here and then I want you to light out as though you were being chased by a bull," went on our hero.

Hickey turned and started from the camp, and after a few steps he ran like a deer.

"I guess he won't bother us again right away," Wild remarked.

The rascally fellow did not stop running until he came in sight of his three friends, who were waiting for him at the place they had selected to camp for the night.

They looked surprised when they saw him coming on a run, and, seizing their rifles, they got ready to put up a fight. "What's ther matter, Hank?" one of them asked, looking alarmed.

"Nothin' much," was the reply, "only I was told ter run an' I thought I'd better do it."

"Did Young Wild West catch yer, then?"

"Yes, an' he got me afore I knowed it, 'cause he roped me with a lariat."

"An' what then?" queried one of the others.

"Oh, he jest yanked me ter his camp in a hurry. I did think he meant either ter kill me or hold me a prisoner, but he didn't. He jest told me ter take a good look around an' then light out as if a bull was chasin' me. I ain't ashamed ter own up that I did light out as fast as I could go. It was ther best thing ter do under ther circumstances."

"Well, I reckon it was," the fellow who had first spoken answered. "Diserschun are ther better part of valor, they say, or something like that. You are wise, Hank."

"I reckon he was," spoke up the third man. "That young galoot is about ther toughest customer I've come across in a long time. I don't want ter git in a row with him, not by a jugful. But I would give about all I'm worth if I could git a sly shot at him!"

Hickey seemed to be a bit relieved when he found the men talked in this strain.

He thought they might think him cowardly for acting the way he did.

"Boys," said he in a tone of voice that was meant to be impressive, "I ain't a feller what ever says he's goin' ter do a thing an' then don't do it, an' I want ter tell yer one thing, I'm goin' ter make this Young Wild West suffer fur what he done ter me this day!"

"Good!" the four cried in unison.

"It are ther first time in a long while that any galoot ever got ther best of me when I was lookin' 'em square in ther face," went on the villain, "an' ther way he shot my shooter out of my hand a leetle while ago was enough ter make me feel like puttin' a hole through his gizzard. But I ain't goin' ter be in no hurry about it. Young Wild West an' his gang is bound fur Silver Strip, an' so are we. I reckon we'll find more friends there than they will."

His three followers nodded approvingly at this.

They talked it over for a while and then Hank Hickey surprised them by suddenly saying:

"Boys, I reckon our horses ain't so tired but what we kin make Silver Strip to-night. We may as well git there ahead of this gang, so we kin be ready fur 'em. Dandy Dick Slash ain't a man what goes ter bed early, so we'll have no trouble

in findin' him when we git there. He sent word fur me ter come, an' ter bring three or four men what could be depended on with me. I picked out you fellers 'cause I knowed yer was made out of ther right kind of stuff. We are goin' in a money-makin' business, 'cordin' ter what Dick wrote in his letter. Jest git ready now! Ther horses has had a good hour's rest an' they've takin' ther good of ther rich fodder what is so plentiful here."

The villain's companions did not hesitate to do as he said. The fact was that they were ready to obey him in anything, unless it might have been his order for them to go and attack the camp of Young Wild West.

They had finished their supper just before the slain deer tumbled into their midst from the bank above them, so they quickly gathered up their frying-pan and battered coffee-pot and saddled their bronchos.

Ten minutes from the time Hank Hickey had spoken about resuming the journey that night they were in the saddle and riding toward the setting sun.

In a few minutes the sun would be below the distant range, and then it would not be long before darkness would be upon them.

But the trail was a plain one, since wagons had passed that way not long before, and they could hardly lose it.

The villainous quartette pushed on, allowing their steed to rest now and then, following the trail after darkness came on, eager to reach their destination.

It was just about an hour before midnight when they came in sight of the lights of the camp.

"Booray!" cried Hank Hickey; "boys, I reckon ther blamed old place wasn't as fur away as we thought it waz."

"That's right, Hank," one of them answered.

"We've been comin' at a putty good lick, though," another observed.

"Well, I'm mighty glad that we're here," the remaining villain said.

Five minutes later they rode into Silver Strip, which, by the way, was a mining camp of about a hundred population.

Several shanties had been erected in a little valley through which flowed a little creek and stretched along the creek were several tents, no doubt belonging to those who had struck the diggings but recently and were unable to build shanties as yet.

"It looks like as though it was a putty good camp, boys," the leader of the quartette observed, as he headed for the single street that led through the little flat piece of ground. "Dandy Dick Slash wrote in his letter as how it was a first-rate place fur business. He owns a mine, so he says, but don't work it, 'cause it pays him better not ter. Jest what he meant by that I want ter find out when I see him."

"Didn't yer say he was doin' a little road business?" asked one of them.

"Yes, that an' with what he makes at ther cards is makin' him rich, he said in his letter."

"Well, if he kin make more money that way than he kin by workin' a mine, what's ther use of workin' it?"

"That's so. But he seemed ter make it look as though ther mine he owns had a lot ter do with his makin' money."

"You'll soon be able ter find out now if ther man is here yet," remarked another. "That looks like a putty likely sort of a ginmill there. Let's stop an' put up if they'll take us. I reckon we've got enough money ter foot ther bill."

"That's jest what we'll do, boys. Come on!"

The four halted in front of the hotel, saloon, or whatever it might be called, and dismounted.

A blazing oil torch was burning outside and by its aid they read the sign that was across the door.

"The Miners' Home" was what the sign declared the place to be, and though they were not miners, but villains who did not believe in doing honest work for a living, they decided that it would be a good enough home for them, for the night, anyhow.

There was no one outside, but the sounds that came from within told plainly that there were plenty of customers there.

Hickey led the way in, and in a room full of smoke they saw that they had landed in a typical miners' saloon of the West.

Poker games were going in full blast and a little bar near the door was doing a rushing business.

Naturally the four halted at the bar.

Drink was what they wanted first of all.

"Benzine fur mine," said Rickey, putting on a way of importance. "Jest let us have ther sharpest stuff you've got, too."

"All right, stranger," answered the tough-looking man who was on duty behind the roughly-made counter; "yer kin git ther best liquor what was ever made right here in this shanty. I know what it is, 'cause it is distilled by a second cousin of mine down in Kentucky."

The newcomers poured out their drinks and swallowed the stuff in short order.

Then they all allowed that it was right good, after which they took a look around.

"Kin yer tell me where I kin find a feller by ther name of Dick Slash?" asked Hickey, when he had looked the room over without seeing his friend.

"I reckon I kin," was the reply of the man behind the bar; "he's right in ther back room."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a man of thirty, attired in a velvet suit and of a rather dandified appearance, came hurrying from a room in the rear of the shanty.

He looked keenly at Hank Hickey for a moment and then rushed over to meet him.

"Why, hello, old pard!" he exclaimed, seizing the villain's hand. "I am awful glad to meet you. Where did you come from, anyway?"

"From Clayton, Dick," was the reply, as the two shook hands. "I heard that yer was located here, so I thought I'd hunt yer up. It was only about a hundred miles' ride ter find yer."

"Well, if ever I was glad to see any one it's you," declared the man in the velvet suit, acting just as though he was not expecting his friend at all.

But that is the way it had been understood.

Hank Hickey was not to let on that he had been sent for. Then Hickey introduced his three companions and they had a drink together.

"Dick, do yer s'pose we kin put up here to-night?" asked Hickey, after some more remarks had been exchanged.

"I guess so," was the reply. "How about it, Lucy?"

"They sartainly kin, Dick," was the answer. "Any friends of yours is always welcome ter stop at ther Miners' Home, whether they've got any money or not."

"Well, I reckon we kin scrape up ther money ter pay fur our lodgin' an' breakfast," said Hickey, with a grin.

They quickly arranged matters and a man was sent out to care for their horses.

Then Dick Slash invited them to come into the back room and have a little talk before they turned in.

"I was just thinking of turning in," he observed. "You see, I am generally up all night, and I don't always have the chance to sleep much during the day. I had an appointment with a couple of miners to-night to play a quiet little game of draw. I got all they had, which was about four hundred and fifty, and then they went home. They just went out before you came in, vowing that they would come back for satisfaction as soon as they could get hold of some more dust. This is the room that the big games are played in, boys. Those that are going on out there are not heavy enough for me. I always play straight poker and no limit."

Hank Hickey did not learn just then what his friend was doing with the mine he owned and did not work that made it pay him so well, but he did tell him that he expected a party to arrive in the morning who were very much his enemies.

He related what had taken place back upon the trail before sunset, and when he had listened to the story, Dandy Dick Slush, as he was called, nodded and said:

"Well, I guess it won't take much to get square with Young Wild West, no matter how much of a deadshot he is or how smart he may be. I'll show you fellows something in the morning that will surprise you."

Soon after that they all went to their sleeping quarters.

### CHAPTER III

#### DINKY DOBELHEIMER.

Young Wild West was pretty sure that they would hear or see nothing more of Hank Hickey that night, but, to be on the safe side and guard against a cowardly shot being fired at them, he advised Jim Dart to start right in before dark and keep a watch.

The work of getting the evening meal ready was now begun, and just as the sun was nearing the line of the western horizon they sat down.

Hop Wah was a very good cook, but the girls generally helped him in the preparation of the meals they ate, so they were always bound to have something good to eat.

The articles of food they needed were purchased at the various towns and camps they stopped at, and it was rarely that they were lacking for anything.

They had eaten their supper and were watching the sun as it sank below the distant mountain range, when suddenly they heard the sounds made by an approaching horse.

The camp was not more than thirty yards from the side of the trail, so no one could get past without being seen by them.

Nearer came the hoofbeats, and presently a lone horseman came in view.

He was anything but a graceful rider, and the horse seemed to be nearly worn out.

"That's what I call a tenderfoot, fur fail!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, as the horseman came closer.

The scout was right, for it was evident that the rider had not been in the saddle a great many times.

He was a man of perhaps forty, and the costume he wore indicated that he was a foreigner.

As he saw the camp of our friends and came to a halt they all saw that he was undoubtedly a German, and one who had not been long in America at that.

"Hello!" he shouted, as he steered his jaded horse toward them; "py chimminy; but I feel me glad dot I vos meet somebody. Could I stop me here py der night out?"

"I guess so," answered Wild, smiling at the greenhorn, for he was surely comical to behold, especially in that part of the country.

The stranger slid from the back of the mustang he had been riding and breathed a sigh of relief.

"I vos put me in a couple of very hard days already," he said, as though apologizing for the sigh. "Railroad riding vos better as horsepack, py chimminy."

"I should reckon it was," answered the scout, "fur a galoot what don't know what a saddle was made fur, anyhow."

The German shook his head and looked sad.

Then his face brightened and he added, looking at Charlie: "Could I mine supper buy?"

"No," was the reply, "but I reckon we'll give yer your supper."

"Hop, just get our visitor something to eat," Wild called out to the Chinaman, who was busy clearing away the remainder of the meal.

"Allee light, Misler Wild," was the answer; "me fixee something fur Dutcheeman putty quick, so be."

The stranger nodded and looked pleased.

"I vos glad dot I vos come py friends already," he said. "I did not know me vedder I vos find friends or heoples dot would kill me und steal me mine vatch und money already. Dere vos plenty of bad beoples der vild Vest in."

"I guess you have got that right," remarked our hero, with a laugh, as he assisted him to take the saddle and bridle from the tired mustang. "Who are you, anyway, and where did you come from?"

"I vos Dinky Dobelheim, und I vos come from Shermanny." "Well, Dinky, I suppose you came out West to get rich, like a great many people do?"

The German shook his head.

"No, I vos come here to find mine brudder already," he replied. "He vos make plenty of money py der gold mines und he sende for me to come. He vos put plenty of money der letter in, und I vos hafe some yet. I dinks me I find mine brudder Jake puddy quick already. He lives py der town called Silver Strip."

"Well, if that is the case you will find him to-morrow. Now, just make yourself at home, Dinky. We are going to Silver Strip to-morrow, and you can go right along with us."

A little questioning gleaned the facts that the German had been in New York with another brother for a period of six months before he started West.

He was an innocent sort of a fellow and comical in his way of talking and acting.

All were interested in him, more especially Hop Wah. The Chinaman soon got him something to eat and gave him a steaming cup of coffee to wash it down.

When he got through he lighted his pipe and started in

to tell all about himself after first thanking his newly-found friends for their kindness.

He was very talkative and could use just enough English to make them understand what he said.

Hop soon finished up his work and then he edged up close to the German and remarked:

"Me like Dutcheeman velly muchee."

"That's all right, Hop," said Wild, quickly; "don't try to get him into any gambling game, for I won't have it."

"Me no wantee gamble," and the Celestial put on an injured air; "me wantee show Dutcheeman velly nicee magic tlick."

"All right, then. You can do that. Go ahead."

Hop Wah was anything but the innocent Chinaman that he looked to be.

He had a mania for gambling, and he always won when he played, since he was gifted with the power of sleight-of-hand, if it could be called a power.

When the Celestial proposed to show their German guest a magic trick, our friends promptly came to the conclusion that something amusing was coming.

"You smooke pipe velly nicee," Hop remarked, smiling and nodding at the queer covered pipe the German had in his mouth.

"I vos like me to smoke ven I hafe eated," was the reply.

Out came the big yellow handkerchief the Chinaman always carried.

He flitted it around so part of it fell over the pipe.

The pipe was not obscured from view more than a second, but when the handkerchief was pulled from it the Dutchman uttered a yell and promptly tumbled over backward.

Attached to the little brass chain that was fastened to the cover and sticking right straight upward in the air was what appeared to be a real German sausage.

Dinky Dobelheim did not drop the pipe when he fell over and the sausage clung right to it.

A roar of laughter went up from our friends, for it was certainly a comical move that the man made.

"No likee sausage?" queried Hop, innocently.

"Donnerwetter!" cried Dinky; "vot is dot?"

Then he righted himself, and, holding the pipe in one hand, struck at the sausage with the other.

Puff!

The thing disappeared.

"Py chimminy! Dot vos strange already."

"Velly stlange," Hop quickly admitted. "You eatee up um sausage."

"I vos no eated der sausage; it vos fly away like a bird," the German declared, looking about him in alarm.

The Celestial quickly reached over and took the sausage from the man's mouth, or if it was not the same one it looked to be.

"Vell, dot vos peat me already!" exclaimed Dinky, not getting the least bit offended. "How you vos do dot?"

He made a grab and succeeded in clutching the sausage, but the instant his fingers closed upon it the thing was gone.

Dinky was much mystified.

He did not know that Hop had up his sleeve two thin rubber bags that had been blown up to resemble sausages, and that through his sleight-of-hand he had fooled him.

Young Wild West and his companions knew all about it, though, even if they could not do the trick themselves.

Dinky Dobelheim laid down his pipe and gaped at the Chinaman.

"Dot vos funny!" he gasped.

"Velly goodce tlick," nodded Hop, as he picked up the pipe and lifted the lid. "Whatee covvee um pipe for?"

Before the German could answer he closed the lid and pushed the stem into Dinky's mouth.

"Puffee up," he said; "ppeege go outee."

The astonished fellow did puff up and then something happened that surprised him more than ever.

A myriad of green sparks shot through the small holes in the cover and formed a miniature flower-pot.

Dinky dropped the pipe this time and once more he fell over on his back.

Wild went over and helped him up.

"Don't get frightened, my friend," said he. "It is only a trick the Chinaman has played on you. There is no danger. Pick up the pipe. I won't let him interfere with it again."

"Chimminy!" was all Dinky said, as he rather gingerly picked up the pipe and opened the lid.

Then he dumped it out and replenished it with some fresh tobacco.

When he had lighted it again he looked around and saw the smiling faces and nodded, trying to appear as though he understood it all and enjoyed it as much as the rest.

But suddenly he turned to Hop, just as though he had just thought of something, and said:

"Snhbose you vos show der magic trick vot you vos spoked about?"

Cheyenne Charlie slapped his knee and roared with delight at this.

"Ther blamed galoot don't know what a trick is when he sees it!" he cried. "Great gimlets! that beats anything I ever heard!"

Dinky looked at him innocently and then shrugged his shoulders.

"I was no see vere der laugh vos come in," he observed.

This only caused more merriment, and, realizing that he must be the cause of it all, the German got up and began walking about the camp nervously.

"I vos one big fool already!" he exclaimed; "der beoples laugh, und I vos not know vot dey vos laugh mit."

Then he got real mad, and, turning abruptly, stalked away from the camp.

Wild arose to follow him and explain that it was all a joke when the scream of a wildcat sounded close at hand.

Our hero seized his rifle.

The scream of the cat came from the very direction the excited German had gone.

As he rushed through a narrow belt of bushes Wild saw Dinky standing still in his tracks, while almost directly over him was the wildcat, ready to spring upon him.

The rifle flew to the shoulder of the young deadshot in a twinkling.

Cra-ang!

The sharp report sounded and the animal fell in a quivering heap at the feet of the man.

"Chimminy!" he cried; "vos dot der magic trick already?"

Wild took him by the shoulder and led him back to the camp.

"There was no trick about that, my friend," said he, speaking seriously. "In about two seconds more that cat would have been scratching the map of Germany on your face and ripping your clothes off with its claws. What the Chinaman did to you was a joke. Now sit down and take it easy. The performance is over."

## CHAPTER IV.

### WILD SHOWS WHAT HE IS MADE OF IN SILVER STRIP.

The next morning Young Wild West and his friends were up at daylight and getting ready to finish the journey to Silver Strip.

Dinky Dobelheim had fully recovered from what had happened to him the night before, and was eager to get to the place where his brother was located.

They breakfasted on the venison Wild had brought to the camp after his meeting with the four villains, and then the two pack-horses were loaded.

The steed our hero rode was a magnificent sorrel stallion named Spitfire.

He had tamed the animal himself and had learned it to love and obey him.

Spitfire was full of speed and endurance, and no other horse had yet shown an ability to keep up with him.

The horses that belonged to Wild's partners and the girls were the best that money could buy, so it will be seen that their outfit was as good as it could be.

Though the Chinaman drove the pack-horses, he always rode a piebald mule that could get up a pretty good gait and seemed to appreciate the fact that its master was yellow and wore a queue.

The German's horse, having been rested during the night, was in pretty good shape for the journey.

But that was more than the rider was, for Dinky was so stiff that he had to be assisted into the saddle.

Wild was on the lookout when they came to the spot where the four villains had been camped, for he thought they might not have gone yet.

But he soon saw that they had been gone a long while, for there were no evidences of a recent fire.

"I shouldn't wonder if they started off last night," he said. "It may be that Hank Hickey thought he had better get as far away from us as he could after I told him to light out."

"If they went last night it is most likely ther galoots done it so they could git ter Silver Strip ahead of us, an' be ready fur us when we come," remarked Cheyenne Charlie.

"I rather guess you are right, Charlie," Wild answered.

They rode along for a couple of hours without meeting a human being, and then they suddenly heard the rumbling of wheels.

The next minute a dilapidated stagecoach drawn by four horses came in sight.

Our friends were glad to see this evidence of civilization.

It was just then that they came to a fork in the trail, and as it showed signs of being used a great deal more than that which they had been following, they took it that the stagecoach route led over the fork.

Wild called a halt, for he desired to inquire of the driver how far they were from Silver Streak.

Along came the outfit, and when within a few yards of the party the leaders were hauled up, the brake put on and the lumbering vehicle came to a halt.

"Hello, strangers!" the driver called out, cheerily, while the man who reclined on the top of the coach looked down and nodded.

There were no passengers, so it looked as though the stagecoach was running on schedule, whether it had any passengers or not.

The fact that the man on the top was armed with a rifle made it appear that he was a guard, and that showed that they must be afraid of outlaws.

All this our friends took in very quickly.

Wild returned the driver's salute and then asked him how far they were from the mining camp.

"It's jest about eighteen miles from ther fork here, as near as it kin be got at," was the reply. "A mighty fine day, ain't it?"

"Very fine. What sort of a place is Silver Strip, anyway?"

"Ther place is all right, but there's some mighty queer folks in it, though. We've got a magic mine there, an' there's a mysterious gang of outlaws in ther vicinity, too. They have been makin' it warm fur me lately, an' there ain't any of 'em as has been caught yet. We go prepared fur 'em now, as yer kin see."

The driver jerked his thumb toward the man behind him and nodded.

"I reckon we'll give ther pesky galoots all they want if they tackle us now," spoke up the guard. "I've got jest twenty-eight shots waitin' fur ther road agents what tries ter hold us up, an' Bill has got a pair of Colt's ter help things along when I git 'em goin'." Ther boss of ther line offered us double wages if we could run ther stagecoach through on time fur a month without a passenger losin' anything or ther mail bein' disturbed. We only started in ter try this yisterday, which was ther first of ther month."

"So you have got a band of road agents around Silver Strip, eh? And a magic mine, too? Well, that makes the camp a place worth stopping at for a while."

"An' there's some of ther toughest galoots in Silver Strip what ever drawn breath, too," added the driver.

"Vos mine brudder live in dot place already yet?" queried Dinky Dobelheim, who had been eager to ask the question from the start and had been waiting for a chance to speak.

"Who in thunder is your brother, you galoot?" asked the driver, grinning at the German.

"Vy, Jake Dobelheim. He vos mine brudder vot I vos not see for ten years already."

"Oh! So Jake is your brother, eh? Yes, he's at ther Strip, an' he's doin' fine, too. He keeps ther supply store an' runs ther postoffice. He was ther one that got ther mails through. He may be a Dutchman, but he's a citizen of ther United States now, an', by his talk, no one would ever think he had a brother as green as you be. Good-mornin', everybody! We've got ter be off if we expecta ter git ter Gullins' Gulch on time to-night."

Both men doffed their hats, the whip cracked, the leaders started off and then the outfit proceeded on its way, taking the fork our friends expected it would.

"Well, we got a little information about Silver Strip, anyhow," said Wild, as they started on their way in the direction the stagecoach had come from.

"Yes, an' it looks as though we might have a lively time when we git there," retorted the scout, nodding his head as though it pleased him.

"There you are! Spoiling for a fight again!" exclaimed Anna. "You are never satisfied unless you can get mixed up into trouble, Charlie."

"Well, we made up our minds ter go ter Silver Strip jest because there was a mine there that was said ter have somethin' magic about it, didn't we?" he answered.

His wife was forced to admit that this was the case.

"Never mind," spoke up our hero. "Arietta says she will solve the mystery, if there is one connected with the mining camp, so we'll just go on and get there as soon as possible, so she will have a chance to begin her detective work."

They rode on, and as they neared their destination the German declared that he was getting more used to the saddle, and that riding a horse was not so bad after all.

The fact was that Dinky Dobelheim would not have been compelled to ride horseback at all if he had not got off the train a hundred miles before he should have.

But the name of the station sounded like the one he had been directed in the letter from his brother to get off at, and then he found that it would be about as well to buy a mustang and ride over that way, since he thought every man in the West needed a horse, anyhow.

It was a little before noon when they came in sight of the mining camp, which made quite a pretty picture nestling in the little valley with its verdant foliage and the snow-capped peaks almost surrounding it.

They rode down the gentle slope and then up the single street of the camp, looking for a suitable place to stop at.

They saw the supply store and the three public places where liquor was sold, according to the signs, and when they had looked them over it was decided that they should stop at the "Boss Tavern," as it looked to be the better place of the three.

As is usually the case in a mining camp when a party of prospective guests ride up to a tavern, the proprietor came out.

He took off the soiled Panama hat and bowed politely to the ladies, and then looking at all hands in general, said: "Step right in, ladies an' gents. I reckon you're lookin' fur a decent place ter stop at, an' if yer have you've struck ther right spot. Ther Boss Tavern is run strictly on straight lines, an' any one what stops here once will always come back ag'in. Here, you Pedro! come an' take charge of ther horses of these ladies an' gents. Git a move on yer, yer lazy greaser!"

A Mexican came around the corner of the building in the act of rolling a cigarette, and, for one of his race, he did get quite a lively move on him.

It was always the duty of Hop Wah to assist the hostler when they stopped at a tavern, and he kept his place on the back of the mule and calmly said to the greaser:

"Come on, Misler Greaser; me helpee takee care of um horses."

The proprietor quickly opened a door leading to the private part of the house and ushered our friends inside.

Here they were met by his wife, a motherly-looking woman of fifty, who promptly took charge of the girls and assured them that they should have the best in the land.

"It will take about half an hour to get the dinner ready," she said, " 'cause we wasn't expectin' no extra folks to-day. Days when ther stagecoach comes in we always has extra things, but this is an off day. I've got some chickens all killed an' picked, so it won't take long to fry 'em for you. Ther men folks kin go out in ther bar an' wait if they don't want ter hang around here."

"I guess we had better take the hint, boys," said Wild. "But a dinner of fried chicken won't be bad for a change, will it?"

"I reckon not," and Charlie smacked his lips in anticipation.

The three walked out into the bar of the tavern just as some of the miners came in from work.

It was near twelve, and some of them dined at the place, so they came in a little early.

There were a few there who simply were hangers-on, such as are generally found in resorts of the kind.

Our three friends were not much surprised when they saw that the four villains they had met the day before were among the latter.

Hank Hickey and his three friends were at the further



end of the bar, and as they had seen our friends halt in front of the tavern they did not show surprise when they entered.

They put on an air of indifference and said nothing.

Wild walked up to the little counter and arranged with the landlord to keep them there for a few days and then took a look around the room.

It was just at that moment that Dandy Dick Slash came in.

It was the first appearance of the gambler that day, and, not finding the villains in the place they had stopped at over night, he had come over to the tavern looking for them.

The gambler looked sharply at our friends as he came in, but walked past them and joined the quartette at the other end of the bar.

Wild and his partners could not help taking particular notice of the man, since he was dressed in such a flashy way and had a dandy air about him.

Dandy Dick did not talk with the men more than a couple of minutes before he turned and gazed at the three insolently.

The game was returned with interest.

"You are strangers here. I take it?" he said, suddenly changing his manner and stepping over. "On a hunting trip, I presume?"

"Yes, we are strangers here," Wild answered, coolly, for the impression he had of the man was that he was a villain. It did not take our hero long to put a man down for what he was, and he seldom made a mistake.

"Well, I hope you did not come to Silver Strip for the purpose of hunting up trouble," said the gambler.

"What makes you say that?" Wild asked, looking him squarely in the eyes.

"Oh, I don't know. It struck me, by the cut of you, that you might have come here for that purpose."

"Well, I never hunt up trouble, no matter where I go, my friend. I suppose that sick-looking galoot with the skinned hand over there has been telling you what I did to him, and that you are a friend of his looking for satisfaction for what he got. If that is the case, just sail in! You'll find me right here!"

This was evidently more than Dandy Dick Slash expected, for he stepped back with a look of genuine surprise on his face.

But he was a pretty cool hand, for all that, and, quickly recovering, retorted:

"I thought I was not mistaken. You are looking for trouble, young fellow."

"Ah, shet up, you measly coyote!" spoke up, Cheyenne Charlie, who could not hold himself in check. "I kin tell by your looks that yer never earned an honest dollar in your life! Jest sneak over there by your friends an' let folks wash their mindin' their own business alone."

"Never mind, Charlie," interrupted Wild. "It is me he is after. Just take it easy."

The brow of the gambler darkened.

"I am not in the habit of taking such talk," he said, keeping his temper by a great effort. "I don't want trouble with any of you people. I don't know who you are, and I don't want to know."

"If you say you don't know who I am, you tell a falsehood," retorted Wild. "Hank Hickey, over there, has told you all about me, and that is why you stepped up and began to talk to me. Now, if you don't get out of this room in exactly ten seconds I will shoot that diamond out of your shirt-front! Move!"

Dandy Dick Slash did not wait a second.

As Wild said, he knew all about him, and when he saw the boy's hand slide toward a six-shooter he came to the conclusion that it was time to go.

Out he went as fast as he could move without running, and a low murmur of astonishment went up from those who knew the gambler.

But Young Wild West did not stop here.

His blood was up, and he was going to show the people of Silver Strip that there was nothing slow about him when he once got started.

Walking up to Hank Hickey, he exclaimed:

"You put up the fancy-looking galoot to pick a row with me, so he could drop me, I suppose. Now, I want you to do the same as he did—light out!"

"Let me chuck him out, Wild," said the scout, in a tone of voice that was almost pleading.

Hickey looked about him in a helpless sort of a way.

But he had no friends there—no one to offer to take his part.

"All right!" he said, hotly; "I'll go out. But it is a blamed queer sort of a landlord what will see a customer treated like this."

The proprietor said not a word to this.

The villain went out and his three companions followed without being told to do so.

But the door had not closed behind them when a revolver cracked and a bullet clipped a lock of hair from Cheyenne Charlie's head!

## CHAPTER V.

### WILD AND HIS FRIENDS LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THE MAGIC MINE.

Young Wild West bounded forward, his revolver in his hand ready to fire a shot at the scoundrel who had sent the bullet at Cheyenne Charlie.

As he got out of the tavern he saw the four men crossing the street and making for the saloon that was called the Miners' Home.

Dandy Dick Slash was just going in the door at the time, and the others were hurrying to join him.

"Hey, there!" called out our hero; "just wait a minute!"

"I'll fill ther galoot full of holes what shot at me!" roared the scout, who was as mad as a hornet.

Wild caught him by the arm.

"Wait, Charlie," he said. "I guess we had better leave it till some other time. That isn't the last we will see of them."

"Jest as you say, Wild," was the reply.

Charlie was always ready to give in to anything that the young deadshot said.

He relied upon the boy's judgment as being better than his own.

They walked back into the tavern.

"That was a cowardly trick," said the landlord, as he met them. "I reckon them four fellers is a bad lot."

"Yes, and the other fellow is just as bad," answered Jim Dart.

"Well, I don't know as I've ever seen anything real bad out of Dandy Dick. He's a card sharp, an' makes his livin' that way. But if he is able ter win money from them what plays with him, let him win it. They don't have ter play with him, an' everybody knows that he kin handle ther cards so that nobody kin catch him cheatin'."

"So they call him Dandy Dick, and he is a card sharp, eh?" observed our hero. "Well, if he is nothing worse than that I must say that he keeps bad company."

"Well, I reckon he has ter in order ter carry along his business, which is ter win money from them what works an' not work himself."

"I sorter think our heathen Chinees could show ther galoot a few things about draw poker if he was ter git in a game with ther galoot," said Charlie.

"What!" exclaimed the landlord, looking surprised; "a heathen Chinees play poker?"

"Yes, but don't say anything about it," answered Wild. "I think I will arrange to have them play in a game together, just to find out what kind of a man this Dandy Dick is."

"I'd like ter see that game," and the proprietor smiled as though he thought it must be a joke our friends were putting up.

It was at this moment that Dinky Dobelheim came in with his brother, the storekeeper.

Though they resembled each other in features, there was nothing green about the storekeeper.

He had all the appearance of one who had roughed it and worked himself up from nothing.

"Shentlemen, I vos introduction you to mine brudder, Jake," said Dinky, stepping up and pointing out his companion.

"Glad ter see yer, boys," said the storekeeper. "My brother has been telling me about you. He fell into good hands when he came across your party, I guess."

They shook hands, and then looking at Wild, the storekeeper said:

"Who was it that galoot fired at after he come out of here? Was it one of you fellers?"

"I was ther one what come mighty near gittin' it," answered Charlie. "Ther bullet clipped a lock of hair from my head."

"It was meant for either of us, but me in particular," Wild observed. "So you saw the fellow who fired the shot, did you?"

"Yes, I seen him. He fired and then run like thunder."

"You would know him if you saw him again, of course?" "Sartin."

"Well, I'll have you point him out to me the first chance we get. I just want to show that fellow that he don't know how to shoot straight, that's all."

"All right," answered the brother of Dinky; "you kin bet I'll do that."

The German, who had come to the West something like two years before, had become so used to the ways of the miners and cowboys he had come in contact with that he now talked and acted like them.

He had been pretty successful at mining and but recently had started the supply store.

Being well liked, he was making money.

Dinky was to go in his employ and learn to be a clerk, so he said, and our friends could not help smiling when they thought of how he would be made the subject of ridicule by the rough men of the camp.

But there was no doubt but that Dinky would make a success of it.

"Come der store in puddy soon," he said to Wild and his partners, as they were called to dinner.

"All right," answered our hero; "we will be over after dinner."

The tavern-keeper's wife had a very fine meal prepared for them, and when they sat down it is needless to state that they did full justice to it.

"Have you heard anything about the Magic Mine?" Arietta asked Wild, as they were eating.

"Not a word, Et," was the reply. "I haven't tried to find out anything about it yet. I thought I would wait and let some one who belongs here bring up the subject."

"We'll take a little jaunt around the town putty soon an' see what we kin find out," remarked the scout, who was pretty busy with the fried chicken. "I reckon we'll have a look at ther outside of ther wonderful mine, anyhow."

"You bet we will!" exclaimed Dart.

"I suppose you are going to let us go with you?" Arietta observed. "You must know that we are as interested in the mystery as any one else."

"Of course you girls will have to make the rounds of the camp with us," laughed Wild. "Why not? I guess there will be no danger attached to it."

The girls looked pleased when they heard this.

No doubt they had been of the opinion that they would not be asked to go on the first trip around the camp.

After dinner our hero and his partners went out in the bar-room, telling the girls as they went that they would be ready to take a walk in about half an hour.

They wanted to have a smoke and see what was going on in the place before they went.

They bought some cigars, and, after lighting them, stood around and watched the landlord do business with the miners who had stopped in on their way back to their work.

The class of trade at the Boss Tavern seemed to be pretty good, for there were no boisterous characters there.

By one o'clock they had all gone, and then our three friends were alone with the proprietor.

"Goin' ter stay long in Silver Strip?" the latter asked.

"Only a few days," Wild replied. "We are simply riding around the country for the sport there is in it. Of course we prospect a bit now and then, but we are out mostly for the adventures that are to be found throughout the country."

"Adventures, eh? Well, I reckon yer ought ter pay a visit ter ther Magic Mine then. I guess you'll find there's somethin' peculiar about that place."

"The driver of the stagecoach told us when we met him this morning that there was a sort of magic mine here. What about it, anyhow?" queried our hero, acting as though he had just thought of it.

"Ther whole thing is a mystery," said the proprietor, shaking his head. "Most people around here thinks ther mine is haunted, 'cause some of ther blamedest queer noises is heard in it that ever was!"

"Who owns the mine, anyhow?"

"Nobody. It was abandoned about a month ago by ther

galoot what owned it, partly because there was nothin' more ter be got out of it an' partly 'cause of ther queer noises he heard there. He told me jest afore he quit ther camp that only ther day before a voice what come from way down in ther earth said: 'This are a magic mine, an' some of these days them what come down here will be turned inter underground goblins, like I am. I'm all alone jest now, but you'll all be like me afore long, an' then you'll never dare ter go in ther light of day ag'in, fur fear of bein' struck blind!' Then there was an awful roar an' all was still ag'in." "Didn't he try to find where the voice came from?" Wild asked.

"Oh, yes! He'd tried that fur a week, but there was no place where it could come from but ther solid rock an' dirt in ther mine, so he give it up. Nearly everybody in ther camp has been there an' heard ther mysterious voice. But now it has got so that no one won't go there, fur fear that they will be turned inter underground goblins what can't be seen. It's a mighty funny thing about that mine."

"I should say it was. I think we will have to go and see the Magic Mine this afternoon. I, for one, like things that are wonderful and mysterious."

"Well, I wouldn't advise yer ter go down ther shaft," and the landlord shook his head.

"Oh, we want to hear all we can and see what we can, you know. We couldn't hear the mysterious voice from the outside, could we?"

"Oh, yes! yer kin hear it quite plain. It always talks when any one goes ter ther shaft."

Just then the proprietor's man came to take charge of the business while he went to dinner, so that broke up the conversation.

"Well, boys, what do you think of what we just heard?" Wild asked, looking at his partners and smiling.

"It looks as though there is some smart fellow around here who is having a whole lot of fun scaring the superstitious people," Jim answered.

The scout shrugged his shoulders.

"I won't give my opinion till I have heard this mysterious voice," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jim. "Wild, don't you know that Charlie is a bit superstitious?"

"No, I ain't," retorted the scout. "But there is queer things what happen sometimes that no one kin account fur. This might be one of 'em."

A little later the girls came out of the front door of the building, and then Wild, Charlie and Jim joined them.

As they had not found out yet where the Magic Mine was located, Wild went back and asked the man in charge of the bar.

The fellow looked surprised, but quickly answered:

"It's about five minutes' walk straight back to ther cliffs. You can't miss it, 'cause it's ther only lonely place around ther camp. A tree what was struck by lightning is layin' right close ter ther derrick at ther mouth of ther shaft, so yer can't miss it. Yer ain't goin' ter take ther women folks up there, are yer?"

"Yes, they are interested in this mystery you have here in Silver Streak, and there is nothing like giving them a chance to satisfy their curiosity."

The man shook his head as our hero went out.

"Well, as it is only a short distance from here, we won't bother taking the horses," said Wild to his waiting companions. "Come on; the Magic Mine lies straight back from here—right over at the foot of those cliffs you see."

The cliffs the bartender had spoken of could be seen plainly, since there were few trees to shut off the view.

It was certainly a rugged-looking scene in all its natural wildness back there.

By some freak of nature what would have been otherwise a long, irregular cliff was split in several places, giving it the proper appellation of "the cliffs."

Our friends started briskly for the scene.

They passed several claims on their way and the miners paused in their work and looked at them.

It was plain that they had an idea where the strangers in the camp were going, and they no doubt wondered why the girls were taking the risk of paying a visit to the Magic Mine.

But the girls, when they had heard the story that the tavern-keeper had related to Wild, Charlie and Jim, were not the least bit afraid to go.

They were anything but superstitious, and attributed the

so-called mystery to some one who was having a joke on the miners.

The nearest claim that was being worked was fully two hundred yards from the abandoned mine, and when they were passing it a man called out to them:

"Don't go any further than ther mouth of ther shaft, strangers. Don't run inter danger jest 'cause yer think it don't amount ter nothin'; I ain't no fool, an' I've give up tryin' ter solve ther mystery. Jest take my advice now."

Wild saw that the miner was very earnest in what he said. "What is your name, my friend?" he asked.

"Bob Harris," was the reply.

"Well, Mr. Harris, we will show you that we won't be very long in finding out the mystery of the Magic Mine. Much obliged to you for the interest you take in us, though."

The man nodded as though he felt that he had done his full duty, and they passed on.

Arietta ran ahead of them and was the first to get to the shaft.

The rusty bucket was hanging there, ready to go down, for apparently without the least cause the bucket shot down, taking her with it!

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SECRET OF THE MAGIC MINE.

Though he had often boasted that there was not a cowardly drop of blood in his veins, Dandy Dick Slash breathed a sigh of relief when he got inside the saloon called the Miners' Home after his meeting with Young Wild West.

He had friends there who would back him up in a fight, and he knew it.

Hank Hickey came in two seconds later, and then the other three villains followed, all looking as though they were afraid that something was going to happen to them.

A few of the worst characters of the mining camp were gathered there, and they looked a bit surprised at the hasty entrance of the five.

"What's up, Dick?" asked a hangdog-looking fellow.

"Oh, I just had a little trouble over at the Boss Tavern with a young fellow who just arrived a little while ago," was the reply. "One of my friends here fired a shot as we came away from the tavern, and I don't know whether it hit any one or not. I did not feel in the humor for a shooting match, so I hurried a bit."

The gambler walked on into the back room, followed by his three friends.

"Who was it who fired that shot?" he queried in a low tone of voice. "I was in such a hurry that I didn't see who did it."

"It was Stakey," promptly retorted Hank Hickey. "I don't think he oughter done it jest then. What's ther use of shootin' when yer ain't sure that you're goin' ter hit your man?"

"That's right, Hank. You think the same way that I do. Now the chances are that this Young Wild West and his partners will find out who it was that fired the shot, and that means that they will make it very warm for him. You shouldn't have fired."

The gambler directed the last remark to the villain who had taken the risk to shoot at our friends as he left the tavern.

"Well, I thought if I could drop Young Wild West it would be gittin' square fur ther way he treated us back on ther trail last night," was the reply. "I ain't afraid of him, anyhow."

The look of reproach on Dandy Dick's face quickly changed to one of admiration.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed; "I believe you are speaking right from the heart, old man! I have an idea that you are a good one."

"I always believe in workin' out a grudge as quick as I kin, boss," replied Stakey, brightening up and putting on a wise look.

"Good! Now you must be on the lookout for these three fellows, or they may down you for firing that shot. I hardly believe they will go about it in an underhand way, though; they will most likely pick a row with you and then drop you if you show fight."

"I won't let 'em pick a row with me. I'll jest let 'em pile

it on if they want ter, an' then, when I gits ther chance I'll git in my work. I thought it was a sort of a chance a little while ago, an' I jest up an' shot. I reckon I must have come puddy close to 'em if I didn't hit one of 'em."

Dandy Dick expected to see Young Wild West and his partners come in every minute, but when five minutes had elapsed and they did not show up, he came to the conclusion that they had not followed them.

They had some drinks and then the gambler told the four men to get their horses and give it out that they were going to leave the camp and ride over to Gullet's Gulch.

"Ride out along the trail for a mile and you will come to a brook that crosses it. Just wait there until I show up; I won't be long."

"What's this fur, Dick?" asked Hank Hickey, looking surprised.

"I'll show you," was the retort. "You are not going to leave Silver Strip; you are simply making out that you are. You can come back at any time and show yourselves, you know. You do just as I say, now, and you will find that you have struck the softest snap of your lives."

"You said as how you was goin' ter show us this here magic mine an' somethin' about ther road agent business," ventured Stakey.

"Confound it all! That's just what I am going to do. Don't speak so loud about it. Go and get your horses and ride off. Wait for me at the brook, as I said."

Without another word the gambler arose from his chair and left the saloon.

"It's all right, boys, I reckon," observed Hickey. "Dick always was a peculiar sort of a feller. He knows what he's doin', though, yer kin bet! We'll do jest as he says."

"Sartin," said Stakey. "Only it did seem ter be rather queer at his sayin' that all at once."

"He's goin' ter take us ter ther headquarters of his gang, yer kin bet," observed one of the other villains.

The remaining one declared that he thought that, too, and then they went out into the bar of the place and told the boss they were going to ride over to Gullet's Gulch, and that they might be back in a couple of days or so.

Their horses were soon ready, and then mounting, they rode away without getting their dinner.

The villains were not long in reaching the brook Dandy Dick had spoken of, and once there they came to a halt and prepared to wait the coming of the gambler road agent.

The quartette waited about ten minutes before they heard any one coming.

Then they became aware that a horse was wading along through the brook.

"It's Dick," said Hickey, his face brightening; "he's ridin' through ther brook ter hide his trail, I reckon."

His companions nodded, for they had done the same thing themselves on more than one occasion.

A minute later a horse and rider came to view through the broken foliage that grew on either side of the brook.

It was Dandy Dick Slasher.

He was mounted on a fine looking bay horse that was stepping through the water of the brook on a walk.

Once he saw them, the gambler came to a halt.

"There is no one coming from either way, is there, boys?" he called out in a low voice.

"No," answered Hickey, as he looked both ways and saw no signs of anybody.

"Take to the brook in single file and follow me, then."

With that the dandified-looking scoundrel wheeled his horse around and started back in the direction he had come.

Hank Hickey went first and the others right after him, and the next minute they were riding up the brook after their leader.

"You're takin' us ter yer private headquarters, ain't yer, Dick?" asked Hickey.

"That is just what I am doing," was the reply. "Come on, and don't make any more noise than you can help, for we can't be too careful."

Stakey was trying hard to get the full confidence of the gambler, and he was making pretty good headway.

The five scoundrels rode up the brook for a distance of nearly a hundred yards, and then Dandy Dick Slasher left the brook and took to a piece of ground that was rather hard and stony.

A narrow gorge was right ahead of them now, and into this the gambler led the way.

It was barely wide enough for them to ride through with-

out the horses touching the sides, but they went right on, the other horses following the bay, as a matter of course.

In many places the sky was entirely shut out from their view by the shrubbery and vines that crossed over the narrow place.

The gorge ran pretty straight for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then it swerved first to the right and then to the left.

Finally, after a ride of five minutes, half of which was in the gloom, they came to the end of the gorge.

The gambler chuckled as he noticed the looks of surprise that were on the faces of his followers.

"I suppose you fellows think you can't get any further in this direction?" he queried.

"It looks as though we couldn't, but we're leavin' it ter you, boss," answered Stakey, grinning, as though he took it for granted that Dandy Dick would find a way.

The leader nodded. "All right," he said. "Now just keep a watch right straight ahead of you."

Then with a smile on his rather handsome countenance he placed a small whistle to his lips and blew once upon it and made a sound like the call of a bird.

There was silence of probably half a minute, and then a portion of the rocky wall at the head of the gorge moved away from them and the figure of a man appeared before them.

A simultaneous gasp of amazement left the lips of the four men who had been following the gambler.

"That is all right, boys, isn't it?" asked Dandy Dick, a smile of pleasure playing about his mouth.

"I reckon so!" answered Stakey, who was bound to be the first to answer.

"Well, just ride on in behind me. You will have to lower your heads a little, though, so look out. Is everything all right, Dismal?"

The last remark was addressed to the man who had opened the way for them.

"Everything is all right, Captain Dick," he answered.

He was a sort of idiotic-looking fellow, with a sharp nose and smooth face.

Dismal, as he had been called, did not appear to be surprised at the fact that there were four strangers with Dandy Dick, but grinned at them as they rode in and nodded as though he was welcoming them.

"Joe and Mike are inside, I suppose, Dismal?" the captain observed, as he rode on into the darkness.

"Yes, Captain," was the reply. "Wait till I light a lantern. I'm so used ter their place now that I kin find my way in their dark."

"You are all right, Dismal. You are true to your name, I see; you like dismál surroundings."

"You bet I do, Captain Dick," was the reply, and the man chuckled as he struck a match and lighted a lantern.

He started ahead to light the way for them, and then the five men rode along a gallery that was propped here and there by posts and crossbeams.

Only for a hundred feet did they proceed in this way, when they came into a rocky chamber of irregular formation which was lighted by a swinging oil lamp that hung from the ceiling.

In this two horses were stalled and there were other evidences that it was a sort of underground stable, since a pile of hay and some bags of grain were stored there.

"Just make room for the extra horses, Dismal," said the gambler, as he dismounted. "Come on, boys."

He walked over to a rough-looking door that was made of planks and pushed it open.

Through a short passage the four followed him and then they came to another door.

As this opened they saw a chamber that was about twenty feet square before them, furnished with carpet, chairs, tables and beds.

It was lighted by a swinging lamp, the same as the stable, only the lamp was a much better one and gave a brighter light.

"Here we are, boys!" exclaimed Dandy Dick Slasher, throwing out his chest and looking around the room with an air of pride. "What do you think of the hidden chamber of the Magic Mine?"

"Ther Magic Mine!" gasped Hank Hickey. "Yer don't say that we're in a mine, Dick?"

"That's just what I do say, Hank. This is a secret cham-

ber in the mine that the people of Silver Strip call the Magic Mine. Isn't it a fine place?"

"Thunder!" cried Stakey; "any one as would say it ain't a fine place must be a sick galoot with no sense. This are what I calls a dandy hangout."

"It is a dandy hangout and Dandy Dick is the boss of it," replied the gambler, with a laugh.

At this juncture two men left the beds they had been lying upon, unobserved by the strangers, and came over.

Dandy Dick introduced them as Joe and Mike, and they all shook hands and became friends right away.

After a short conversation regarding the addition of four men to his gang the leader turned to one of the men and said:

"Did you rig the bucket so it could be hauled down in a hurry, in case it became necessary, Joe?"

"Yes, Cap," was the reply.

"Good! Has any one been around to-day?"

"Not a soul."

One of the men then got dinner ready, showing that they were well supplied with provisions, and the four new members of the gang were invited to sit down and eat.

They did not refuse the invitation, as may be supposed.

"How is it that there is sich good air in here, Cap?" asked Stakey, as he sipped his coffee.

"Oh, there is a draught of air that goes through from the top of the shaft to the passage we came in," was the reply.

"This mine is dug right under a cliff, and we are now just about thirty feet below the level where the shaft opens. I'll show you around after a while."

After the meal was over the captain produced a box of cigars and passed them around.

The fellow called Dismal came in just then and sat down to get his dinner.

"Now that we are all here together, I must swear you four fellows in as members of our band of road agents," said the gambler. "Just hold up your right hands and repeat after me."

They held up their hands, and then he administered a short obligation to them, which was to the effect that if they ever disclosed the secret headquarters of the band or went back on one another in any way they were to die horrible deaths, after first having their right hands cut off.

Then Dandy Dick explained that he and the man called Dismal had accidentally come across the chamber they were in while they were sneaking through the galleries of the mine one night for the purpose of robbing the owner of some of his dust.

A cave-in had occurred and they had found the big chamber and the one that was now used as a stable adjoining it.

They also found a natural passage leading to the narrow ravine, and when they found that they could get out that way the fertile brain of the gamblers devised a plan to close up the entrance, so the secret natural chambers would not be discovered, and later on utilize the place for some purpose.

The part where the cave-in had occurred happened to be one that was not much frequented by the owner of the mine and the men he had working for him, so they easily closed up the break and kept it concealed from them.

Then Dandy Dick took the two men called Joe and Mike into his confidence and they were not many days in fixing up the underground place in its present style, they coming and going to it in the night by means of the ravine.

They had enlarged the passage so they could ride right on their horses and propped up the roof, or ceiling, to avo a possible cave-in.

The furnishings the headquarters contained had been taken from two wagons belonging to emigrants who were coming that way, and the robbery had remained a mystery to this day.

Several successful holdups had been made, too, and Dandy Dick and his three men were prospering, as successful thieves sometimes do.

It was not long after they had installed themselves in the underground place that the owner of the mine abandoned it under the plea that there was nothing more to be taken from it.

But the fact was that the man called Dismal had frightened him away by the queer noises he had made from shouting through a megaphone the villains had stolen from a peddler who happened to visit Silver Strip.

"Now I will show you how we get out into the regular

mine," said Dandy Dick, after he had explained everything to his new members.

He walked over to a corner of the chamber, and, taking a bar down, opened a door that was plenty large enough to permit a man to crawl through. The door was covered on the outside with a skin that was covered with cement, so it looked like the regular rock.

The five went out through a passage and reached the foot of the shaft, down which came the light of day.

It was just at that moment that Arietta appeared and stepped into the bucket, and as he saw her, Dandy Dick gave a pull on a rope and down came the bucket!

## CHAPTER VII.

### ARIETTA'S REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE.

Young Wild West was less than ten feet from the mouth of the shaft when the bucket went down, carrying Arietta with it.

It was such an unexpected thing that the boy was bewildered for the space of a second.

"Great gimlets!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, as he rushed forward and looked down the shaft.

Just then a cry for help was heard from Arietta, and then they all knew that it had not been an accident that made the bucket descend so suddenly.

Wild was himself now.

He did not wait an instant, but, seizing the chain that ran over the pulley-wheel at the top of the derrick, he started to descend the shaft.

Down he went as fast as he could, and after him came Cheyenne Charlie.

When Wild was within three feet of the bottom he let go the chain and dropped.

It was too slow getting down that way, he thought just then.

He looked around, but not the least sign of Arietta could he see.

Down came the scout.

"Where is she, Wild?" he asked, excitedly.

"Gone," was the reply. "There is the empty bucket, just as it came down. It could not have struck so hard, for there it is right in position. But come! We must find Arietta. She is somewhere, and it must be that someone had seized her and placed her in a hiding-place."

Just then Jim Dart came sliding down the chain.

Jim was very anxious to know what had become of Arietta.

"Some scoundrel has caught her," Wild answered, as Dart questioned him.

"So that is why they call this the Magic Mine, eh? Because it is occupied by some scoundrel it is a Magic Mine! Well, I guess we'll soon find whoever it is and break up this magic business."

"Go back! Go back!" came to their ears in sepulchral tones. "The girl is lost, and you will never see her again! She has been swallowed up by the earth and she will never see the light of day. The gnomes have got her!"

The startling words came to their ears so plainly that they looked about them, expecting to see the person who uttered them.

But there was no one to be seen.

"Did you catch the direction that voice came from?" asked our hero of his partners.

"No," they both replied.

"It seemed to come all around me," added Jim.

"Go back! Leave the Magic Mine! You will never see the girl again!"

Once more the sepulchral voice sounded.

But there was no telling which direction it came from.

That was a puzzle that Young Wild West could not understand.

"Well, boys," he said, keeping wonderful cool, considering the circumstances, "we know that Arietta is down here, and that the man who just spoke has got her in his power. Now we must find her and make that fellow wish he had never seen such a thing as a mine!"

Wild now stepped over so he could look up the shaft.

Anna and Eloise were looking down.

"Run over to the nearest man at work and borrow a lantern," he said to them.

"Can't you find Arietta, Wild?" came from Anna, in an anxious voice.

"We will find her, but we have got to have a light. Hurry and get a lantern."

The two girls immediately disappeared from the opening. "Stay here and get the lantern when they come back with it, Jim," our hero observed.

Then he beckoned to Charlie, and they started to make a search of the mine as far as they could see.

But there was nothing there that would indicate that there was a hiding-place that would conceal the missing girl.

Arietta had really vanished as though the earth had opened and swallowed her.

It was not long before Anna called out from above that she had a lantern.

She got it off Bob Harris, the miner they had talked to as they came along.

He was with her, too, and at once began hoisting the bucket.

Down he came a few minutes later, and, arriving at the bottom, he handed Jim the lantern, remarking as he did so:

"I told you folks ter steer clear of this place; now ther underground goblins has got ther young lady; an' it is a putty sure thing that you'll never see her ag'in."

"Oh, yes, we will," said Wild, coming forward just then.

"There are no such things as underground goblins, and you ought to know that, Mr. Harris. Such things only appear in fairy tales. We know that there is at least one scoundrel of a man down here, and he has caught the girl and hid her somewhere. But you can bet all you're worth that we will find her!"

"I hope so from ther very bottom of my heart, young feller. But it's my opinion that you'll never see her ag'in. There's something magic about this mine, an' I know it! I wouldn't come down here alone for all ther gold there is in Silver Strip!"

"You'll come down here all right inside of twenty-four hours, and then you'll say that you can't understand why you was such a fool for believing that there was anything supernatural about the mine. Can't you tell a human voice when you hear it?"

"But goblins an' gnomes an' sich like always has human voices, leas'twise all I ever heard of did. If it's a man what does ther talkin' down here why ain't he been found? Ther blamed mine has been searched high an' low lots of times, an' ther voice would keep right on talkin' while it was bein' done. No, yer couldn't make me believe it is anything but a goblin what does ther talkin'. He's given lots of warnin's, an' now he has gone an' gobbled up ther gal. It's too bad, that's what I say. You hadn't oughter come here."

Wild took the lantern and lighted it.

He saw that there was no use in wasting his breath talking to the miner.

Harris began hauling himself up in the bucket.

"I'll wait up there with ther two gals," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Again the hidden voice sounded, this time in a mocking laugh, and the miner coused the bucket to go up in a hurry, using all his strength on the chain.

Young Wild West started in to make a thorough search of the mine.

But there were not many places to make the search in, for the mine had never been dug out a great deal.

They searched every nook and corner in it and were forced to acknowledge themselves stumped.

During the search they heard the mysterious voice several times, but try as they might, they could not locate the spot where it came from.

There was certainly a mystery to be solved, even if they did know for certain that it was due to some human agency.

For over an hour they remained in the mine, but the result was the same.

They had even struck places on the rocky wall with a pick, thinking there might be a hidden door of some kind, but they failed to gain anything by doing it.

All was still in the Magic Mine when they were finally forced to give it up.

"Poor Et," said Wild, shaking his head. "I hope she has not been harmed. We'll find her before morning, boys, and that I am certain of. And then the villains who are responsible for this had better look out!"

Reluctantly they left the mine and went to the bucket. Jim and the scout went up first.

Then, after one more search about the place, Wild followed them.

The dashing young deadshot had scarcely stepped out of the bucket, when—

"Wild! Wild! Take me out of here!" came from below. It was the voice of Arietta!

There was no mistaking it.

Into the bucket our hero leaped and then Charlie and Jim let him down with a rush.

Young Wild West could scarcely believe his eyes when he found his pretty sweetheart standing there waiting for him.

"Oh, Wild!" she cried, flinging her arms about his neck.

He drew her into the bucket in a hurry, for he did not want to get in a fight with anyone while she was with him in that state of terror and bewilderment.

"Haul us up, boys!" he cried, as he held Arietta around the waist with his left hand and grasped his six-shooter with his right, ready to drop the first man who appeared.

The two were hauled up in a hurry, and as they stepped out a shout of joy went up.

Anna and Eloise hugged Arietta with delight, weeping tears of joy.

Bob Harris, the miner, who had remained with the two girls, as he said he would, could scarcely believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"The gnomes must have let her go," he said, with a gasp.

"Where were you, Et? What happened to you?" our hero asked, as he led the girl away from the spot, followed by the rest.

"I—I don't really know," was the reply. "I could see nothing while I was down there. I only know that I was seized and blindfolded the moment the bucket reached the bottom of the shaft. Then I was carried off somewhere and that awful voice sounded. It was the queerest experience I ever had. But give me time to think and I may be able to solve the mystery."

"Take all the time you want, Et," answered her dashing young lover. "We will go back to the tavern, and after you have collected your scattered senses you can tell us all about it."

They promptly started off.

Harris left them when he reached his claim and advised them not to have anything further to do with the Magic Mine and its underground goblins.

"That's all right," our hero answered. "I am more anxious than ever to expose the fraud. You can bet I won't leave Silver Slip till I do, either."

The miner shook his head as though he had an idea that the boy was getting crazy.

By the time our friends reached the tavern Arietta had regained her composure.

The experience she had undergone was so different from anything else that had ever happened to her that she had really been badly frightened.

As they were entering the tavern the proprietor came running out in great excitement.

"I wish you'd git that Chinaman of yours out of here, Young Wild West!" he exclaimed. "He's scared ther three customers I had in here out of their wits, an' they're in ther back room now. Ther heathen is a regular witch, I reckon."

Wild rushed into the barroom, followed by Charlie and Jim, while the girls went on in the house.

They saw Hop leaning against the bar, a bottle and glass before him, while he calmly puffed away on a big black cigar.

Hop was slightly under the influence of liquor, but otherwise he seemed to be all right.

"What's the matter with you, Hop?" Wild asked, angrily, for he knew the Celestial must have been playing some of his tricks.

"Me allee light, Mislter Wild," was the reply; "me velly nicee Chinaman; me gooddee, allee samee Sunday school teacher in 'Flisco."

"What has he been doing?" our hero asked the landlord.

"Why, he was talkin' with three of ther men what comes in, regular an' spends a good deal of money with me, when all of a sudden they sees little snakes wrigglin' around in ther whisky. Ther Chinaman put ther snakes in ther glasses, I'm sure! He laughed like anything, an' then another snake crawled right out of ther end of ther cigar he's smokin'. He's a regular witch, I say!"

Cheyenne Charlie broke into a loud laugh and then the

door opened from the rear room and three cowboys came out rather gingerly.

They had been drinking, and the sight of the make-believe snakes Hop had produced for their benefit made them think, no doubt, that they were being attacked with delirium tremens.

They looked at the innocent-looking Chinaman, then at our friends, and finally at each other.

"Was it a joke?" asked one of them.

"I guess so, my friends," our hero answered. "The Chinaman is given to playing tricks on people sometimes."

"Then I'm goin' ter give him a dose of lead!"

As the man said this he jerked his revolver from the holster.

"Put that up!"

The command came from Young Wild West.

He had the fellow covered, and, realizing that everything was against him, he obeyed.

"Now, Hop, you get out of here, and see to it that you let strangers alone in the future."

"Allee light, Mislter Wad," and away went the Chinaman, puffing away at his cigar and smiling blandly.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ROAD AGENTS DO A LITTLE BUSINESS.

Dandy Dick Slash had caught Arietta so suddenly that, as she had stated, she had no chance to see any one.

He clapped his hat over her face, but not in time to prevent her from uttering the scream.

Then the four new members of his band sprang to assist him, and the struggling girl was swiftly carried to the open door in the secret chamber of the mine.

"That was what I call a fine play," the leader of the gang whispered, as the girl's hands were bound and a cloth tied over her eyes and a gag placed in her mouth.

The men nodded, for they had been cautioned not to speak aloud.

The secret door had been closed immediately, and standing before it was Dismal, a big megaphone in his hand.

Dandy Dick nodded to him, and then it was that the fellow began his sepulchral talking.

The helpless girl sat in a dark corner of the underground chamber, while the villains took their seats at the table and grinned.

It was great fun for Hank Hickey and his friends to hear the simple-looking fellow talking through the megaphone.

And when they heard the sounds of voices and people walking about in the mine outside they thought it the greatest piece of business they had ever seen.

The gambler again cautioned them to remain perfectly silent, and then he produced a bottle and some glasses from a shelf at one side of the chamber.

Then all but Dismal had a drink.

After a while Dandy Dick whispered to Joe and Mike to carry the girl out in the passage, so they could talk without being heard by her.

This was quickly done.

"You see," said the leader of the band, smiling at his companions, "I don't intend to keep the girl here very long. Experience has taught me that keeping prisoners is not a good thing to do. It makes those who are searching for them altogether too persistent, and I wouldn't have this place discovered for a good deal. I am going to let the girl go just as soon as they give up the search. She won't know what happened to her, and the Magic Mine will be more of a mystery than ever when she tells as much as she knows about it."

They all nodded to this, for not a man there but thought that the leader was all right in the view he took of the case.

They could hear the searchers going back and forth outside, though the sounds were rather faint, since it was quite a thick wall that was between them, and the door was built in such a way that it shut out sound remarkably well.

That was why the megaphone was used by Dismal.

The reverberating tones that came from it made it appear that they came from all parts of the mine at once. To pass away the time while the search was being made

by the girl's friends the villains played cards, taking a drink now and then and smoking cigars.

Dismal had very sharp ears, it seemed, and finally when he passed the word that Young Wild West and his partners had given up the search Dandy Dick ordered the captive girl to be carried in.

Not a word did any one say as it was done.

Dismal knew it was safe to open the secret door, so he did so.

He was always in charge of the door, anyhow, and his keen judgment was relied upon by the captain.

Dismal nodded, and then Joe and Mike carried the helpless girl out into the mine.

They cut loose the rope that bound her hands behind her, and, leaving the blindfold and gag upon her, darted noiselessly back and got into the secret chamber.

Just as the door was shutting Arietta cried out to her friends.

"I rather think that will fool them," observed Dandy Dick Slash with a chuckle.

"Wouldn't it have been a good idea if we'd collared Young Wild West while he was out there?" queried Hickey.

"No, not now," was the reply. "That can be done later, for it is a sure thing that the boy will come here again to try and find where the girl was and who caught her. This will scare the miners of the camp more than ever when they hear it."

Dismal nodded, grinning in his monkey fashion.

"I jest like ter scare ther foolish galoots," he observed. "I could set here all day an' do it. They think I'm a goblin. Ha, ha, ha!"

That his heart and soul was in the business he was engaged in was evident.

But there was a weak spot in the fellow's brain, so it was not strange that he could find so much enjoyment in frightening the superstitious miners.

When they had been in the underground place for a couple of hours the four new members began to grow a little restless.

They were not used to being confined that way.

Dandy Dick noticed this.

"I guess we can venture out," he said, after a while. "There is a wagon-load of stuff due here this afternoon for the Boss Tavern. It will do me good to hold up the outfit and clean out the load, just because Jenks, the proprietor, went against us this noon when Young Wild West ordered us out of the place."

"An' ther tanglefoot will come in blamed handy, too," added Hickey, with a nod.

"You bet!" the others chimed in.

"We will all go out but Dismal. He likes to stay here alone, don't you, Dismal?"

"Nothin' suits me better," replied the man, as he looked at his megaphone and grinned. "I jest hope they'll come around putty soon, fur I does like ter scare 'em."

"Well, we'll fix the bucket so it will drop again if any one is foolish enough to get in it. But we will have to wait till night, I suppose, as we don't want to be seen riding around the mouth of the shaft."

The villains seemed eager to get out into the open air, without any further loss of time, the gambler led the way out to where the horses were.

"We'll take a ride down the trail a ways, anyhow," said he. "If we don't meet the wagon it will give us a little outing, anyhow."

The horses were soon saddled and then the seven villains mounted and rode through the passage, Dismal lighting the way for them with a lantern and laughing in an idiotic way.

Once out into the narrow ravine, the four new members were handed masks.

"We will put them on in case we do any business," said Dandy Dick. "We don't want any one to know who we are, you know, though strangers will be in charge of the wagon, no doubt. Still, they would be apt to pick us out if they saw, us around the camp some time."

They rode along in single file, and soon came to the place where they were to take to the brook to hide their trail.

It was all new to Hickey and the three who had come with him to join Dandy Dick Slash's gang of road agents, and they felt highly pleased at what they had experienced so far.

When they left the brook and took the regular trail that led to the fork the gambler smiled and said:

"I rather think Young Wild West, or any one else, would have a hard time following us to our retreat. That brook is just the thing, and I knew it would be the minute I found that we could get out this way."

"I should reckon so!" exclaimed Stakey, nodding approval at what the leader said. "You knows a whole lot that no one would think of tryin' ter find out, aptain Dick."

The seven road agents rode leisurely along the trail for a mile or so, and then, as luck would have it, they heard the sounds made by rumbling wagon wheels.

"I judged pretty nearly right, I guess," observed the gambler road agent, with a smile. "I heard Jenks say that he expected the stuff some time to-day, and as it didn't arrive this morning, I thought it might come along this afternoon. Everything is working our way, boys. Now, put on your masks and don't no one say a word. I'll do all the talking that is to be done."

The villains had scarcely put on the black masks that reached way below their chins when the wagon rounded the bend right ahead of them.

Four mules were hitched to the load and but two men were in charge of the outfit.

They saw the masked band, but it was too late for them to do anything to save them from being held up, and when the road agents dashed up they both put up their hands without being told to do so.

"We ain't got no money worth speakin' about," said the driver, "so yer may as well let us go on about our business."

"Get down off that wagon!" thundered Dandy Dick, changing his voice so that no one would have recognized him had they not known it was he.

The men got down, losing no time about it, either.

"Take all you can carry of the liquors, boys, and destroy the rest!"

His followers started in to obey the command.

"You see," went on the bold road agent, laughing at the look of dismay that came over the faces of the two men, "we are temperance fellows. We don't believe in allowing liquor to be sold in mining camps."

There was half a dozen two-gallon jugs in the wagon that were filled with the very best of liquor, so one of the villains declared, as he sampled them.

The barrels contained the common whisky such as is generally sold in mining camps.

Besides the barrels and jugs, there were bottles of wine and a lot of eatables, which showed that the proprietor of the Boss Tavern did not altogether patronize the supply store at the camp.

The masked villains picked out all they could take with them in short order.

Then they destroyed the rest, and, after advising the two men to be good boys and drive on as fast as the mules could go, Dandy Dick nodded for his men to follow him and rode off.

They reached the brook far in advance of the mule wagon, and, making sure that they were not observed by prying eyes, they headed for the narrow ravine that led to their hidden retreat.

"That was a very good haul, even if we did not get any money," observed the captain, as they came to a halt in front of the entrance to the secret part of the Magic Mine. "I shouldn't have done this if it had not been that Jenks took the side of Young Wild West this noon at the tavern."

"Well, we can find mighty good use fur all we've got here," retorted the man called Joe. "We've got a putty good stock of grub on hand, but there's nothin' like havin' plenty."

Dismal opened the door in answer to the signal the captain gave, and when he saw that each of the men had about all he could carry on his horse, he grinned and gave a nod of approval.

"I guess yer found ther wagon all right," he exclaimed. "You're bully boys, you are!"

"That's right, Dismal," answered Dandy Dick.

They all went inside, and then the captain declared that he was going over to the Miners' Home, where he really boarded.

He never stayed long at the Magic Mine, for fear it would be suspicioned by somebody that he had something to do with the mystery connected with it.

While nearly every bad man in the mining camp was

his friend, none of them suspected that he was anything more than a man who made his living by gambling, and that he used unfair means in the games he played to do it sometimes.

The villain was shrewd enough to know that it would not do to take too many in his confidence.

He had known Hank Hickey so long, and was acquainted with him so well that he had sent for him to come, and left it to him to pick out two or three men to bring with him.

That was better than taking up with some of the rascals around Silver Strip, he thought.

So, after leaving what he had carried at the underground headquarters, he told Joe and Mike that they might come over to the camp after dark if they wanted to, and then ride on through the ravine again.

That meant that the rest were to remain there.

But it would not do for the four who had given it out that they were going to Gullet's Gulch to go back for a day or two.

Gullet's Gulch was where the villains were always supposed to be when not at the mining camp.

Dandy Dick reached the trail and rode along at an easy gait until he came to the saloon he made his headquarters at.

He took note of the fact that Young Wild West and his two partners were on the stoop of the supply store talking to the man who kept it and the German who had come to the camp with them.

But they did not pay any particular attention to him, so he did not let on that he saw them, but dismounted and went into the saloon.

The first thing he noticed when he went in was a Chinaman apparently very drunk, who was seated at one of the tables playing cards with three miners.

It was Hop Wah, as might be supposed.

The Chinaman had come over to the saloon right after Young Wild West had told him to leave the tavern bar-room, and he had been there ever since.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GAMBLER MEETS HIS MATCH.

Hop Wah was possessed of pretty sharp ears, and he had learned by using them that there was a professional gambler who made his living in Silver Strip by playing draw poker.

"Hello, Dick," said one of the miners, turning as the gambler entered; "you'd better get into this game of fan-tan with us."

Hop Wah promptly took it for granted that this was the wonderful gambler who made his living by fleecing the innocent ones out of their hard-earned money.

He slid his hand under the loose-fitting garment he wore and pulled out a roll of bills.

Dandy Dick looked interested right away.

He could tell that there must be a couple of hundred at least in the roll, and there was half that much in gold.

He walked over and the miners made room for him at the table.

"I'll play poker for an hour or so, just to pass away the time," he said.

"Play fan-tan," Hop suggested; "me no likee pokee."

"Poker is the real American game," Dandy Dick insisted. "Why don't you learn to be an American? I guess you have been in the country long enough, by the way you talk."

"Me know how to play pokee, but not velly goodee," Hop answered hesitatingly.

"That is all right," said one of the miners, who thought it would be great fun to see the gambler fleece the Chinaman out of his money, "we'll show yer anything yer don't know."

"Allee light; me play, len."

This was said after the innocent-looking Mongolian had remained in a thoughtful attitude for a moment.

When Dandy Dick played in a game he always attracted the attention of those who were in the room, as they were anxious to get points from him.

But he was so slick at it that they could not catch him cheating, not even when they stood behind him and watched.

The cards were shuffled and then the game started.

Strange as it seemed, Hop won the deal.

"Me velly lucky," he piped in his childish way. "You bet!" retorted one of the miners, who knew quite well that the deal did not mean much, unless the dealer knew how to stack the cards.

Of course he did not think that Hop did.

Had he been told so just then he would have called it a great joke.

The man on his left put up a dollar for the ante.

It was to be a game with no limit unless it was a case of a showdown, which meant that a player was allowed to call after he had put up his last dollar.

This was explained to the Chinaman, and he listened just as though he wanted to catch every word that was said.

Hop was dealing the cards around at the commencement when who should walk in but Wild and his two partners.

Our three friends had known that the Chinaman was in the saloon, and when they saw the gambler ride up and enter the place they concluded to drop in and see what was going on.

Hop looked a bit uneasy when he saw them.

But when he found that Wild did not tell him he had better quit, he felt better.

He knew then that his boss had no objections to his playing.

The cards being dealt around, the celestial looked at the four who were in the game with him as much as to say "What is next?"

"I'll fill!" exclaimed the man next to the miner who held the edge, "an' it'll cost five dollars more ter draw cards."

"I'll make it ten dollars to draw altogether," calmly observed Dandy Dick, who sat next, in the easy way common to a professional card sharp.

The next man threw down his hand, declaring that he did not have a pair, and that he would not risk it.

Then it was up to Hop.

"He no know," he said slowly, as he looked his cards over, holding them close to his breast, "but me better put in ten doller."

As he put up the money Cheyenne Charlie whispered to Wild and Jim:

"Ain't that heathen a sly galoot? You'd think he'd never seen ther cards more'n a couple of times in his life. I'll jest bet a hundred that he makes that gambler feller sick if he stays long enough!"

"That is a sure bet, Charlie," our hero answered. "Hop's sleight-of-hand will carry him through."

Meanwhile, Hop picked up the cards and looked at the two who stayed in for the hand.

"How many?" he asked innocently.

"Three," answered the miner, who had made the first raise.

He got his cards, Hop dealing them out in a clumsy way.

Then he looked at Dandy Dick.

"How many you wantee, Misler Velvet Clothes?" he queried, smiling so sweetly that the gambler felt that he could not get mad at the reflection cast upon his apparel.

"I want three cards," he said.

"Allee light. Now me wantee thlee; then we play pokee, allee samee sixty!"

He discarded and took the three cards from the pack.

He might have done more than this, but no one, not even our friends, saw it.

"It is your bet," said the miner.

Hop looked surprised, but promptly put a ten-dollar gold-piece in the pot.

The miner nodded, met it and then raised it ten.

"I guess I'll keep right up with the procession," remarked Dandy Dick, and then he lifted it ten more.

Hop appeared to be a little puzzled, but after a moment's look at his cards he met the raises and lifted it twenty dollars.

Then it was that the miner shrugged his shoulders and looked questioningly at the gambler.

The glance that he got in return meant that he had better drop out, and he did so.

Dandy Dick had held a pair of jacks on the start and had neatly palmed the other two.

He was of the opinion that the Chinaman was bluffing, and he meant to bet him to a standstill.

He did not know that Hop held in his possession two hands that would beat his.

One of them was up his sleeve, but no one knew this.

After looking at his opponent closely, Dandy Dick slash came to the same conclusion that he had arrived at on



the start, which was that the Chinaman was just as innocent as he looked to be.

"I'll meet you and raise you fifty," he said calmly. Just then he happened to look over his shoulder and see Young Wild West standing near by, an intensitive watcher of the game.

His face paled slightly, but quickly regaining his composure, he went on with the game.

Hop studied a while and then put down a hundred-dollar bill.

"Fifty more!" he said; "me play poken allee samee dlunken cowboy!"

There was a laugh at this, and all those who were not engaged in gambling in the saloon crowded around to see the fun.

There was not one there outside of Wild and his partners but what thought that the innocent Chinaman was going to lose all he had if he stuck to it the way he had started.

The raise just suited Dandy Dick.

He met it and lifted it a hundred.

Hop pondered as usual and then fished out double that amount.

"Me make hundled more," he piped; "me go bloke or winnee biggee pill."

The gambler began to think pretty strong just then.

He realized that the Chinaman had three chances of beating him.

And it might be that he had a better four of a kind than he did.

But Dandy Dick was dead game when poker was being played, and he went in to win all the celestial had.

He had plenty of money and he raised it another hundred.

There was now a pretty large sum of money on the table. It was the biggest game Hop Wah had been in for a year, but he never once lost his nerve.

There was no reason for him to lose it.

But his capital was beginning to get low now.

He counted up what he had left and found there was but ten dollars more than enough to meet the raise.

"Me have to callee," he said regretfully; "me only gottee ten doller more."

"All right," answered the gambler with a laugh. "Just as you say."

"Whatee you got?"

"Four jacks! There they are; don't they look nice?"

He threw down the cards so they could be seen as he spoke and reached over to scoop in the pile of money.

"Waitee lillie bit," said Hop, smiling blandly; "me gottee four lillie kings!"

A hoarse cry of amazement went up from the crowd standing around.

They now realized that the "heathen Chinee" was not such a fool, after all.

Dandy Dick's face paled and then quickly changed to red. What he might have done if Young Wild West and his partners had not been in the place is hard to imagine.

But as it was, he sat there and allowed his opponent to take the pile of money.

Into one of the Chinaman's pockets it went, and then Hop began humming a weird sort of tune that sounded as though it had been composed ages before by some of his yellow ancestors.

Dandy Dick got up from the table.

He had lost heavily, and though he was game to the backbone, he somehow could not get the courage to play any more just then.

"You've got too much luck for me," he observed, speaking in an offhand way. "I'll try you again some time. I don't feel in the humor to play just now, anyhow."

"Allee light," answered Hop, smiling and looking at the cards he had laid on the table.

Then he pushed them to the miner next to him and added:

"You dealee now."

"No!" was the quick reply. "I reckon I don't want ter play with a galoot that's got ther luck you've got."

He arose from the table and then the other two did likewise.

It was the first time that his friends had ever seen Dandy Dick lose like that, and they were surprised to see him quit. The gambler went over and had a drink with the man who owned the place and then retired to the room he had upstairs.

Wild caught the Chinaman's eye and nodded for him to leave the place.

He knew that there were those who would try to get his money from him by other means than gambling for it, providing they got only half a chance.

Hop took the hint and got up and started for the door.

He had no sooner gone out when two of the men who had been in the game went into the back room.

"Them galoots is after ther yaller heathen," whispered Cheyenne Charlie. "I'll jest step out an' head 'em off."

The scout walked out in an offhand way.

He was right in his suspicions, for he was just in time to meet the two men, who appeared around the corner of the building and were making straight for the Chinaman.

"You galoots had better make up your minds that you don't need any of ther money ther Chinaman's got," said the scout, tapping the butt of his revolver significantly.

"What do yer mean?" was the angry retort from one of the men.

"Jest what I said. Now you leave him alone or you'll git a lead pill so quick yer won't know what struck yer!"

Wild and Jim came out just then, and the miners wisely started for the rear of the building.

## CHAPTER X.

### A FAILURE.

Wild, Charlie and Jim followed Hop Wah to the tavern.

They knew there were enough bad men in the camp who would be anxious to get hold of the money they had seen the Chinaman have, but they were determined that they should not get it.

"Hop," said our hero, as he found him a few minutes later in the kitchen with the cook, whom he had just begun to relate a wonderful story to, "you have got to keep your eyes open now."

"Me know, Misler Wild," was the quick reply; "bad Melican mans wantee money me havee, but no gettee. Me hiddee velly quick."

A little later the celestial went out to the stable and hid the greater part of the money in his saddle-bags.

The afternoon passed away without our friends going near the Magic Mine.

But Wild had no idea of going there that afternoon. He meant to pay a visit to the place that night, though.

As he had not had a good talk with Arietta about her experience in the place, he thought it would be a good idea to question her before undertaking to solve the mystery again.

It was just before supper that night that he broached the subject to her.

"Et," said Wild, "about how far from the bottom of the shaft was it that the villains carried you after they had seized you and covered your face?"

"Let me see," answered Arietta, her face brightening. "It could not have been more than thirty feet, I should judge."

"Good! Was it a large opening they took you through, or can't you say?"

"It couldn't have been a very large opening, for I was handed to some one when they reached a certain point, and then I heard some one coming through after me. I know there were more than two men in the place, because I could hear their footsteps. I heard a door shut, and it sounded as though it was made of stone."

"Well, I imagine that the door that opened to let you in the hiding-place of the villains is made of stone. It must be, for that is all there is to be seen in the mine except ordinary earth. You couldn't tell whether it was a big or small place they took you in, could you?"

"No, but after they put me down in a corner—I know it was a corner, for my head leaned into the angle—they came and picked me up and carried me about twenty feet and put me down again. I had the use of my feet and limbs, but my hands were bound so tightly behind my back that I knew it would be useless for me to try and get away. Then I was blindfolded and gagged, too. I could not much more than breathe comfortably, much less do anything else."

"And then?" queried our hero, who was trying to get down to the fine point of the thing.

"Probably it was a distance of fifteen feet that I was carried before I was put down the first time."

"Ah! And you were brought out the same way after you were moved and they got ready to let you go?"

"Yes."

"How were you standing—in what direction were you facing when you took the blindfold from your eyes?"

"I was facing the bucket. I did not move until I got the gag out of my mouth, and then I called out to you as loud as I could."

"Well, we have got something to go by, boys," our hero said, as he turned to his partners. "We will take a run over to the mine after dark and try not to let any one know of it. It is quite likely that those who are responsible for the so-called mystery are right in the camp at this minute—or some of them, anyhow."

"How about the gambler feller?" spoke up the scout.

"Well, I have already set him down in my mind as being one who knows something about it," answered Wild.

Our friends chatted and laughed at the supper-table that night just as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

But the story of Arietta's remarkable adventure in the Magic Mine had leaked out long before this, as Bob Harris, the miner, had told it.

By the majority of the inhabitants of Silver Strip the incident was regarded as a warning to others to keep away from the place.

It was not until an hour after dark that Wild and his two partners left the tavern.

They got a lantern at the stable, and then, under our hero's direction, each got the lariat that was hanging to the pommels of their saddles.

Then they struck out for the Magic Mine, taking a course through the bushes back of the stable.

They had no difficulty in reaching the cliffs without meeting any one, and then they got ready for business.

"Now," whispered Wild, "you want to be sure that you don't even touch the bucket. I am going to let you fellows lower me down with my lariat."

His companions nodded.

"When I get down, if I give a gentle pull on the lariat, it will mean that you are to follow me, Charlie. Jim, you will remain up here and keep a watch."

Again they nodded.

Wild put his arms through the handle of the lantern and then proceeded to loop the lariat under his arms.

The shaft was plenty wide enough for him to go down without interfering with the chain, and he meant to keep from touching it if possible.

When he was ready our hero swung himself over the edge of the opening and then Charlie and Jim lowered him slowly downward.

It was not such a great distance he had to go, but he went down so slowly that it seemed a long ways.

But at length his feet struck the ground below, and then standing perfectly still for a moment, he removed the lariat from his body and was just about to give the signal for Charlie to come on down, when a startling thing happened.

A blow struck him on the arm and he went staggering backward.

There was a ripping, cutting sound when the blow came and it instantly flashed upon his mind that he had been struck at with a knife.

Wild was quick to think and act.

It occurred to him that there might be only one man that he had to contend with, and if he called out to his partners he would bring others to pounce upon him.

In one quick instant he decided to fight it out alone. So the blow had no sooner been struck than he was at his antagonist.

Wild grappled with him, and he was lucky enough to clutch him by the throat at the very start.

A faint, gasping cry came from the man, and then Wild swung his left hand around and caught hold of an arm.

It was the right arm of his assailant, as he knew, and that meant that it was a hundred chances to one that it was the one that had the knife.

A quick twist from the active young deadshot and the arm went up and back like a shot.

The man surged toward him at the very same instant,

and there was a spurt of something warm upon our hero's hand.

Wild knew what had happened.

His assailant, by his lunge forward, had sent the knife into his own body!

And the point must have touched a vital spot, too, for the villain struggled and gasped convulsively.

Then his weight began to sag upon our hero, and when he was ready to drop Wild let him go.

Thud!

The body struck the ground and then all was still.

"It was his life or mine, I suppose," thought Wild. "I would not have hurt him, though, if he had given up, and I think he would have, for I had an awful grip on his throat."

After listening for a moment and hearing nothing that would indicate the presence of any one else in the mine, Wild reached for the rope and gave the signal for Charlie to come down.

The scout was not long in obeying.

He landed lightly.

"Keep still," our hero whispered, leaning so his mouth came to his ear.

Not a sound did Charlie utter.

For the space of several seconds both remained silent. Then our hero whispered softly:

"I just had a fight in the dark, Charlie."

"What!" came the reply.

"Yes, a fellow tackled me the moment I got down here and he got his own knife in him."

"Great gimlets!!"

"He lies almost at your feet."

Just then there was a sound on the ground near them, and then up jumped the supposed dead man.

He ran away in the darkness like a shot, leaving our two friends standing there in amazement.

"I guess I made a mistake, Charlie. There he goes!"

Wild, in his excitement, spoke aloud.

Crack!

A pistol shot sounded and a bullet whizzed over their heads.

"We had better get out of here, Charlie."

"I reckon so."

Rattlety-bang! Clink-clink!

Down came the bucket with no end of noise.

But the moment it landed the two sprang into it and the next moment they were going up.

Jim Dart had heard the shot and that was enough to make him act.

He knew he could not haul them both up at one time with the lariat, so he did the first thing that came into his head, and that was to send the bucket down.

Up they went, not another sound coming from below to show that there was anyone there.

Both breathed sighs of relief when they stepped out upon the ground.

"What was the trouble?" asked Jim Dart, eagerly.

"There was a fellow down there waiting for us, I guess," answered our hero. "We have made a failure of it."

He motioned for them to leave the spot and they started back for the tavern.

On the way Jim learned what had happened, and he was not a little surprised.

"Never mind. We will try again tomorrow," said Young Wild West.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DANDY DICK LOSES HIS TEMPER.

It was not until after dark that Dandy Dick Slash appeared in the gambling saloon again.

He had taken a sleep in an upper room which he hired of the owner.

The loss of the money did not worry him much, but he knew he had lost caste with some of the miners.

However, he meant to get square by winning that much from someone else before morning.

And when his men, Joe and Mike, came over he thought it would be a good idea to put them on the Chinaman and let them rob him.

After he had something to eat the villain felt better.

Then he lighted a cigar and strolled leisurely into the apartment used for gambling purposes, ready for business.

Men came in and passed remarks about the poker game of the afternoon, for they had all heard about it by this time.

Dandy Dick did not have much to say on that point, but he freely discussed what had happened at the Magic Mine, which was one of the leading topics of the conversation.

"Young Wild West has give it out that he ain't goin' ter leave ther camp until he finds out ther mystery of that mine," said one.

"He will be lucky if he ever leaves the camp if he's got any such notion as that," observed another.

The gambler nodded and smiled.

"I don't think I'll undertake to interfere with the mysterious business of the Magic Mine," he said. "I have always found it best to let well enough alone, and that is what I intend to do in this case."

"I don't believe it's anything like goblins or gnomes what's down in that mine," remarked a miner who always went contrary to what others said. "Do yer know what I think about it?"

"I jest think that there's a gang of men down there somewhere, an' that they are ther same crowd what has been makin' ther holdups. They must have some other way ter git in an' out, an' they do all that hollerin' ter keep people away from there. You'll all find out that my opinion is correct when ther mystery is solved. This young feller called Wild West has got ther reputation of always doin' what he starts ter do, so they say, an' I wouldn't wonder a bit if he found ther whole thing out, jest as he says he will."

Dandy Dick looked at the man keenly for a moment and then his face resumed a look of indifference.

The miner had hit the nail squarely on the head in giving his opinion, and it seemed a little strange that he should.

It was pretty close to nine o'clock when the villains Joe and Mike appeared at the saloon.

The moment Dandy Dick saw the two men he knew that something was on their minds.

They were acting as though they wanted to see him alone the worst kind of way.

He soon gave them the chance, for he walked through and went out of the back door of the saloon.

The villains quickly followed him.

"What's up, boys?" queried the captain of the road agents, showing that he was a little anxious.

"Young Wild West was down in ther mine a little while ago," answered Joe.

"Yes, an' he had a tussle with Hank Hickey, too."

"Is that so? How did Hank make out?"

"Oh, he got putty near choked ter death, an' his own knife got turned on him an' give him a pretty good dig in ther shoulder. Ther blamed fool said he fainted an' that's why he didn't get ther best of ther boy, but I don't think that was it, nor does any of ther rest of ther gang."

The gambler thought a moment and then said:

"I don't like the way Young Wild West is acting. He is altogether too persistent to suit me. I think that the quicker he is put out of the way the better it will be for us. He will surely find out where we are and what we are up to if he is allowed to have his way about it."

"That's what we all think, Cap."

"Well, I will try to think up some scheme that will settle him before to-morrow night, boys. In the meantime we will let things go on the same as they have been, only I want you all to keep out of the mine until I get back. Don't open the secret door on any condition."

"All right, Cap," answered the two men.

They talked in low tones for a few minutes longer and then went back into the saloon.

It so happened that there were a couple of miners there with plenty of money who wanted to play ~~draw~~ power with Dandy Dick, so the villain got right into the game.

His two men remained there a while and then headed for the Boss Tavern.

Dandy Dick played in his usual form and the game soon got to be interesting.

He was well on the road to make up for his loss of the afternoon.

It was just about this time that his man Joe came in.

The man's face was very pale and he was much agitated, but he stepped up to the captain and whispered something in his ear.

"What!" cried Dandy Dick, forgetting about the game and jumping to his feet.

But he quickly calmed himself and sat down again.

Joe went up to the bar and began to drink heavily.

Something had gone wrong, surely.

Where was Mike?

The question is easily answered.

Mike was dead!

The two villains had gone over to the Boss Tavern, and they had found the Chinaman without much trouble.

They followed him as he went out of the place toward the stable in the rear, and then it was that they attacked him.

But it so happened that Hop Wah was equal to the occasion, and he promptly opened fire on them with the big revolver he always carried.

Mike received a bullet in the heart, and Joe ran for his life, for the report of the Chinaman's revolver brought a crowd out of the tavern.

Joe managed to elude them all, however, and after a while he left the place he had been hiding in and went over to the Miners' Home.

Dandy Dick played two or three more hands and then excused himself and went out.

Joe quickly followed him, as a matter of course.

The gambler road agent listened to his story in silence.

"Well, Joe, what has happened can't be helped. I suppose it won't do for you to go and claim the body, for it is known that Mike was a pard of yours, and that will make it appear that you were the other fellow who attacked the Chinaman. The best thing you can do is to go to the retreat and stay there."

"I reckon that's right," and Joe shrugged his shoulders.

The villain did not wait any longer.

He started for the door, and just as he reached it who should come in but Young Wild West!

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were with him, as well as half a dozen miners.

"There's ther galoot!" cried one of the miners, pointing at Joe. "He's ther pard of ther galoot ther Chinese killed!"

Joe turned and made a rush for the back door.

He had succeeded in throwing it open, when—

Bump—thud!

A head butted him in the stomach with great force and down he went on his back.

It was Hop Wah who had appeared at the back door in time to do this trick.

"Me know bad Molkan man!" he piped, shrilly; "me catchee putty quick, allee samee Jack Lobinson!"

Before he could get upon his feet Joe was seized by half a dozen hands and dragged back into the saloon.

"Gentlemen," said Young Wild West, speaking loud enough for everybody in the place to hear him, "this man was one of two who tried to kill and rob the Chinaman. The other fellow got his medicine and is waiting for the undertaker to bury him."

"You lie if you say this man tried to kill and rob your Chinaman, Young Wild West!" exclaimed Dandy Dick, pulling his shooter and facing the dazing young deadshot.

Crack!

But it was Wild who had fired, and as the report rang out Dandy Dick's right arm dropped limp at his side and the revolver fell to the floor.

"You are the man who put the two scoundrels up to rob the Chinaman," our hero said, coolly. "Now, if you are not satisfied with what you have got, just say so!"

This was too much for the gambler.

He completely lost all caution, and, crippled as he was, he pulled a knife from his belt and leaped toward the dashing young deadshot.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

"I'll kill you, Young Wild West!" the gambler shrieked, and then he made a slash at the boy, notwithstanding that the muzzle of a revolver was staring him right in the face.

But Wild did not fire again.

He simply stepped aside and then thrust his revolver in his belt.

Then, drawing his knife with his left hand, he placed his right in his trousers pocket and said:

"I will fight you on even terms, Dandy Dick! I never yet took a mean advantage of a man, no matter how bad he was!"

The road agent made another lunge at him and then the two knives came together.

Clash-clash!

The knife flew from the hand of the gambler so suddenly that it hardly seemed possible that one could have performed the feat.

At the same moment Dandy Dick dropped and fell upon his knee.

His hand came down upon the floor, and as it did it came in contact with the revolver that had been shot from his hand.

He grasped the weapon quickly and raised it to fire.

Wild realized his danger, and with all his strength he lunged forward with his knife.

The point struck the right spot and the gambler let the revolver fall, staggered to his feet and then fell.

"Gentlemen, I am sorry I had to do that," said our hero. "You all saw that there was no help for it."

No one offered to take it up for the dead gambler, so our friends soon left the gambling saloon and went back to the tavern.

They retired early that night and the next morning they were up bright and early, ready to pursue the search in the Magic Mine.

Somehow our hero could not help thinking that the mystery would be solved in short order now.

"Et," said he, after they had eaten breakfast, "I want you to go with us to the Magic Mine, so get ready. I think you will be able to lead us right to that secret door."

Arietta was delighted at the chance to go with them.

Wild thought that Anna and Eloise would be perfectly safe at the tavern, so a few minutes later the four started out.

Making sure that the bucket was secure, our hero stepped into it, followed by the scout.

They gave the word, and with anxious faces the miners lowered them to the bottom of the shaft.

They had no sooner got out of the bucket when the sepulchral voice was heard.

"Go back! Go back, before it is too late! The underground goblins will surely seize those who venture here this day. The time is up."

Then an unearthly shriek sounded, the echoes sounding throughout the mine.

The bucket went up, and down it came again with Jim and Arietta.

A lantern was lighted, and with the sepulchral voice ringing in their ears, they started to find where it came from. Arietta took the lead.

Arietta quickly stepped forward to the end of the gallery, for at that instant she had seen something move just a particle.

She reached out against what appeared to be the solid rock, and her fingers came in contact with a piece of skin from some animal.

"I guess I have solved the mystery, Wild," said Arietta. "Just take a peep!"

She stepped forward and caught hold of the skin and flung open a door, disclosing the form of a man on his knees with a look of terror on his face.

It was Dismal!

He held the megaphone in his hand and he was one of the most astonished mortals that ever breathed.

Cheyenne Charlie seized him and jerked him through the opening in a jiffy.

Wild did not hesitate to go into the secret chamber, and,

leaving Jim in charge of the captured man, the scout followed him.

They were just in time to hear the sounds made by horses walking on a rocky floor.

The rest of the villains had put out the light the instant the door was flung open, and then with one accord they rushed for their horses and started for the ravine.

By the time our friends discovered the way to get to the place where the horses had been stabled they were gone.

To make matters worse, the lantern Charlie had went out just then. It was lighted quickly and then they made a short search of the place, but failed to discover the way the villains had got out.

They went back through the hidden rendezvous of the road agents, noting that it was quite a snug hiding-place, and then passed out into the mine.

Jim was just going up in the bucket with the prisoner, while Arietta stood at the foot of the shaft with the megaphone, a look of joy on her face.

The bucket soon came down for them and then Wild and his charming sweetheart went up.

Charlie's turn came next.

There were as many as twenty-five of the miners there now, and they were listening to Jim as he told them what a hoax the mystery had turned out to be.

Then they all headed for the Boss Tavern, our friends leading the way in triumph with their prisoner.

They did not undertake to question him until they came to a halt in front of the tavern.

By this time nearly every man in the camp was on hand, for it had spread about like wildfire that the mystery of the Magic Mine had been solved.

Wild faced the prisoner, who stood like a trembling dog before the crowd.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Dismal is ther name I go by," was the reply.

"You are the man who has been doing all the talking down in the mine for the purpose of scaring people away, are you not?"

"Yes, I'm ther man," and the fellow's face lighted up for a moment.

Then he told the whole story, mentioning the name of every man connected with it.

The miners listened with interest.

But when they heard that Dandy Dick Slash was the leader of the gang they were further amazed.

A rousing cheer went up for Young Wild West and his pard, not forgetting the brave girl who had been the means of solving the mystery, and then a party was organized quickly and started off in the search of the villains who had escaped.

But right here we will state that Hank Hickey and the others with him were never caught.

Judge Lynch settled the cases of Dismal and the man called Joe, for that was the way they did business in that part of the country.

Our friends had gained their point, so they left the camp the next day and started in search of further adventures, wishing Dinky Dohelheim the best of luck and leaving the citizens of Silver Strip in a very happy frame of mind.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AS A CAVAIKY SCOUT; OR, SAVING THE SETTLERS."

## TAKE NOTICE!

Stories by the very best writers of fiction are appearing in MYSTERY MAGAZINE. Here is a list of a few whose names are a guarantee of the high quality of their work:

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# TO YOU EMPLOYERS!

## DUTY OF EMPLOYERS IN RECONSTRUCTION OF CRIPPLED SOLDIERS

By DOUGLAS C. McMURTRIE, Director Red Cross Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men, New York.

We must count on the return from the front of thousands of crippled soldiers. We must plan to give them on their return the best possible chance for the future.

Dependence cannot be placed on monetary compensation in the way of a pension, for in the past the pension system has proved a distinct failure insofar as constructive ends are involved.

The only compensation of real value for physical disability is rehabilitation for self-support. Make a man again capable of earning his own living and the chief burden of his handicap drops away.

The disability of some crippled soldiers is no bar to returning to their former trade, but the injuries of many disqualify them from pursuing again their past occupation. The schools of training prepare these men for some work in which their physical handicap will not materially interfere with their production.

The one-armed soldier is equipped with working appliances which have supplanted the old familiar artificial limb. The new appliances are designed with a practical aim only in view; they vary according to the trade in which the individual is to engage. For example, the appliance for a machinist would be quite different from that with which a wood-turner would be provided. Some appliances have attached to the stump a chuck in which various tools or hooks can interchangeably be held. The wearer uses these devices only while at work; for evenings and holidays he is provided with a "dress arm," which is made in imitation of the lost natural member.

An important factor in the success of re-educational work is an early start, so that the disabled man shall have no chance to go out unemployed into the community. In even a short period of exposure to the sentimental sympathy of family and friends, his "will to work" is so broken down that it becomes difficult again to restore him to a stand of independence and ambition. For this reason, therefore, the plan for his future is made at as early a date as his physical condition admits, and training is actually under way before the patient is out of the hospital.

In the readjustment of the crippled soldier to civilian life, his placement in employment is a matter of the greatest moment. In this field the employer has a very definite responsibility.

But the employer's duty is not entirely obvious. It is, on the contrary, almost diametrically opposite to what one might superficially infer it to be. The duty is not to "take care of" from patriotic motives, a given number of disabled men, finding for them any odd jobs which are available, and putting the ex-soldiers in them without much regard to whether they can earn the wages paid or not.

Yet this method is all too common. A local committee of employers will deliberate about as follows: "Here are a dozen crippled soldiers for whom we must find jobs. Jones, you have a large factory; you should be able to take of six of them. Brown, can you not find places for four of them in your warehouse? And, Smith, you ought to place at least a couple in your store."

Such a procedure cannot have other than pernicious results. In the first years of war the spirit of patriotism runs high, but experience has shown that men placed on this basis alone find themselves out of a job after the war has been over several years, or, in fact, after it has been in progress for a considerable period of time.

A second weakness in this method is that a man who is

patronized by giving him a charity job, comes to expect as a right such semi-gratuitous support. Such a situation breaks down rather than builds up character, and makes the man progressively a weaker rather than a stronger member of the community. We must not do our returned men such injury.

The third difficulty is that such a system does not take into account the man's future. Casual placement means employment either in a make-shift job as watchman or elevator operator such as we should not offer our disabled men except as a last resort—or in a job beyond the man, one in which, on the cold-blooded considerations of product and wages, he cannot hold his own. Jobs of the first type have for the worker a future of monotony and discouragement. Jobs of the second type are frequently disastrous, for in them a man, instead of becoming steadily more competent and building up confidence in himself, stands still as regards improvement and loses confidence every day. When he is dropped or goes to some other employment, the job will have had for him no permanent benefit.

Twelve men sent to twelve jobs may all be seriously misplaced, while the same twelve placed with thought and wisdom and differently assigned to the same twelve jobs may be ideally located. If normal workers require expert and careful placement, crippled candidates for employment require it even more.

The positive aspect of the employer's duty is to find for the disabled man a constructive job which he can hold on the basis of competency alone. In such a job he can be self-respecting, be happy, and look forward to a future. This is the definite patriotic duty.

Thousands of cripples are now holding important jobs in the industrial world. But they are men of exceptional character and initiative and have, in general, made their way in spite of employers rather than because of them. Too many employers are ready to give the cripple alms, but not willing to expend the thought necessary to place him in a suitable job. This attitude has helped to make many cripples dependent. With our new responsibilities to the men disabled in fighting for us, the point of view must certainly be changed. What some cripples have done other cripples can do—if only given an even chance.

The industrial cripple should be considered as well as the military cripple, for in these days of national demand for the greatest possible output there should not be left idle any men who can be made into productive workers.

With thoughtful placement effort, many men can be employed directly on the basis of their past experience. With the disabled soldiers who profit by the training facilities the government will provide, the task should be easier.

This, then, constitutes the charge of patriotic duty upon the employer:

To study the jobs under his jurisdiction to determine what ones might be satisfactorily held by cripples. To give the cripples preference for these jobs. To consider thoughtfully the applications of disabled men for employment, bearing in mind the importance of utilizing to as great an extent as possible labor which would otherwise be unproductive. To do the returned soldier the honor of offering him real employment, rather than proffering him the ignominy of a charity job.

If the employer will do this, it will be a great factor in making the complete elimination of the dependent cripple a real and inspiring possibility.

# LOST IN THE SAHARA DESERT

—OR—

## THE PLUCK AND LUCK OF A BOY EXPLORER

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER VI.

#### AT THE WELLS OF ERG.

As the frightened ship-of-the-desert seemed to increase his stride every minute, poor Leo felt as if each pitch of that great back would certainly send him headforemost into the stony, bushy, sandy trail along which the camel was traveling.

Mirza concealed his knife, and as the flying monster vanished from sight the landlord muttered to himself:

"Allah be merciful! How headstrong these white infidels be. Lo! The young man hath ridden into the desert upon another man's beast, and without paying for it, I mistrust. Alas! I fear this will make trouble, much trouble."

Probably to save his own skin, should his wife hear that he had been concerned in this, he managed to sneak back home without being seen by the camel traders in the market.

When the loss of the camel was noticed morning had come again. At the time when the tricky Mirza—revengeful because Leo had innocently caused the landlady to more than once beat her husband—persuaded the boy to visit and mount the swift mehari, night had fallen. The drivers and others had attended to the beasts for the night.

The few who remained on watch at the market were snoozing in odd corners. But at the Inn of the Half Moon, great was the confusion when young Jerome failed to turn up at midnight.

When Clancy heard that Leo had started towards the southern side of town and had bidden the landlady goodby, and tipped the servants, he somehow concluded that the boy had gone on ahead on foot.

"It's a plain trail for miles out, and the lad is restless. Still, he might have left word—ah, Mirzy, you old rescal?"

"Surely, noble sir, he did mention something of being weary and anxious to get on, and I saw one who looked like him beyond the south gate. Now I think of it, he said he would look at the further market, and the others could follow."

This was Mirza's way of twisting the truth. It answered the purpose well enough to send Clancy, Bema, and two armed servants vouched for by the landlady, and their train of saddle and pack-mules off at the appointed time.

"The lad's been mooning long enough, Bema. We'll find him plugging along a few miles out, glad to straddle his mule again, but all the better for his tramp."

When the first fright was over Leo began to think of the absurd features of the situation.

His legs were claspng the crupper of the peculiar back gear of the mehari, and he felt as if every bone in him was being jarred apart. The whole amazing adventure was terrible and ridiculous.

"He goes like a steam engine, and before long he will surely tire himself down," thought the boy.

As a matter of fact the camel was traveling at about a dozen miles an hour. This gait these enduring desert racers can maintain easily for many hours, even days.

He tried at various times to stop the beast, but not knowing the cries and the language used by the natives, the animal gave no heed, other than to continue his tireless stride, ever heading southward.

Whether from ignorance, or not knowing how to adapt his seat to its colossal heave and swing, he did not know; but as hour after hour passed, Leo's pain and fatigue grew more and more insupportable.

He groaned, exclaimed, and cried out with the unaccustomed pains his bones and sinews were undergoing.

They passed salty lagoons, interspersed with sand-hills, covered with thistles, dwarfed and stunted palms. Through these the southward trail kept ever winding amid long undulations, like gentle ocean swells that were no longer in motion.

Finally his throat became so dry and his tongue so parched that his groans and cries changed into a sort of loud throat-rattling, guttural exclamations.

Leo did not notice it, but just then they were approaching clumps of tall date trees, and loftier palms, with a moist cloak of herbage about the center thereof.

All at once the mehari suddenly pulled up short with an abruptness that sent young Jerome flying head over heels upon a thick patch of this grass close to the spring or well, which was the reason for all this verdure.

The shock made him unconscious. For how long he did not know; but when he revived the sun was already above the horizon.

A fierce headache and a feeling of great stiffness

let Leo know he was still alive, but of his strange desert mount no sign was visible from where he lay. He sat up and found that he had his revolver and hunting knife, though but little else.

"Where the dickens am I?" he wondered, getting up and securing a grateful drink from the spring, which was surrounded by a low stone wall, after the manner of wells in desert oases.

No sign of the mehari was there, and too many recent camel tracks followed the trail southward and northward for Leo to determine which, if any, might be that of the camel to whose long legs he owed his present lost condition.

"This is about the worst fix I ever was in," he concluded. "I wish——"

"Help—h-e-l-p! Help, I say!"

A peal of strident laughter drowned this out. It wound up in a snarl so wild and greedy that Leo's hair rose.

"H-e-l-p!" again came another burst of wild, fierce laughing, and the lad sprang limping to his feet and seized his pistol. He was thankful that one trusty firearm was between him and this unknown maniac, for such it seemed to Leo.

And now the laughing was multiplied, as if more than one throat was the cause. He limped through the nearer palm trees, where the desert came closest, shouting encouragement as he went.

"Help is coming! Brace up, whoever you are."

A lithe, agile figure tore through the bushes toward young Jerome, swinging a stick about him and followed by two hideous hyenas, that were taking advantage of the fugitive's small size and evident fear.

"Oh, Leo! Is this you——" began the new arrival.

"Hah—ha-ha-a-a-ah!" came the same horrid interruption.

"Drop down, please," cried Leo, still uncertain who addressed him. "I want to fire at them; whatever they are, they're not human."

The dark-skinned fugitive fell flat, while the hyenas, halting, checked their laughing yells.

Crack! crack! crack!

Down went one of the brutes, while the second trailed limping into the prickly desert scrub edging the oasis.

Leo let the wounded one go and turned to the boy, who was clasping his arm, in a strangely familiar way.

"What a mercy that you should appear here all by your lonesome! Where did you come from? Where are the others—o-o-oh—o-o-oh—ugh!" Then, without further explanation, this queer fly-away further complicated matters by fainting away.

Leo gave no further heed to the hyenas, dead or alive, but managed to drag the boyish stranger back to the well, and seized a gourd of water to bathe the dark forehead.

"Great Cæsar!" he ejaculated. "I might have known this, after she called me by name. "Oh, you poor, darling little girl!"

To his joy, the fainting one sat up and seized the gourd.

"Don't, Leo," putting the gourd to her lips. "I can take it inside, but not outside. I'm all right."

Aside from a streak of white skin, where Leo had applied a dash of water, and a nervous, feminine, panting bosom, the rescued one was little the worse for wear.

"You are Lelia Delbrul, of all people. Did I not see you in this disguise at the Half Moon?"

"Yes, but I had to take this way of dodging my father and Al-Siddra, who is somewhere ahead on his way to the governorship of Ghurat. But how did you come here alone? Where are the others?"

Leo explained, and then asked:

"But how is it I find you alone, chased by these hyenas, for such I suppose they are?"

"I and two trusty servants who will guide us are camped at the further of these wells of Erg. Along came a stray mehari, and my servants took after it to catch it, for it is valuable. I suppose it must be the one that threw you. Mcantime I strolled here to see if the water was better, and without any weapon but a walking stick. These creatures somehow got on my trail and followed. I became frightened, and screamed. Then, Leo—you came."

As soon as Lelia was strong enough she took Leo to the other well, where the two guides provided from the Half Moon hostess were already leading back the stray dromedary.

The party were already wishing for Clancy and the rest of Leo's party to arrive, when an unlooked-for interruption came, that changed the present aspect of our little group most woefully, for a while.

They were quietly eating breakfast at this camp, when no less than six armed Arabs, swarthy, stalwart sons of the Great Sahara, rode into the camp.

One, the leader, pointed his long musket at the stray mehari, then quietly feeding near by.

"That beast is mine," he announced. "It was stolen from the market place at Nalu. Which one of you is the thief?"

## CHAPTER VII.

### TROUBLE WITH WILD ARABS.

Probably everyone present understood what the Arab leader meant clearly, unless it might be Leo Jerome.

From the gesture and manner of the speaker, however, he caught a pretty definite idea.

Moreover, during the short time he had been in the country, he had made a point of learning all he could along the sign language in vogue among differing tribes in the desert. He also knew some of the common terms in general use where people of white and dark races met on a common footing, using somewhat of the various languages in vogue.

(To be continued.)

## CURRENT NEWS

### HAS CROSS; HATES KAISER.

Otto Heyden, a bookkeeper for a coal company of Terre Haute, Ind., is a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War and is the possessor of a German Iron Cross. But, he despises the Kaiser and "the New Germany of the militarists," as he calls it. Heyden has bought \$1,000 worth of Third Liberty Loan bonds, and is one of the most patriotic native Germans in this part of the country.

### GIRLS SUPPLANT MEN.

Four young women now are employed as depot operators on the Minnesota division of the Northwestern Railway, the headquarters of which are in Winona, Kans. They are taking the place of young men released to meet military needs.

These are the first women used in that branch of the railroad in history.

The female depot employees all are third track operators and are working nights. Officials say their work, in spite of the fact that they are beginners, has been highly satisfactory.

### HOW TO SAVE SOAP.

When you hand the druggist a dime for your favorite cake of toilet soap and he announces that a brand has just gone up to fifteen cents, you naturally make up your mind to be just a little bit more sparing of soap. One way to do this is to buy a wire soap holder, if you do not already possess one, suggests the Illustrated World.

Nail this, or fasten it to the wall in the bathroom so that air will circulate around and beneath it. When the soap is put into the holder it dries very quickly. This will save a considerable amount of the bar, as against the loss occasioned by letting the soap rest in the wet, slimy holder. It is well to remember in buying toilet soap that oval cakes of soap waste less than those having square corners.

### FINDS FOUR WOLVES.

Four wolves were discovered on the farm of Seymour Merriman, west of Fort Atkinson, Miss. The hired man noticed that the dog had tracked something to a haystack.

He went to see what it was and a large wolf ran out of the stack toward some marshy land. Upon hearing this story, one of the other men took a gun and went back to the stack with him, where the dog was still holding guard. Their efforts ousted three more of the wolves, all of which made off in the same direction.

The gun missed fire. The carcass of a cow, in a strip of woods, was doubtless the cause of the animals venturing so near civilization. It had been torn and partially eaten by the wolves.

### MAKE MONEY BY BOARDING PETS.

A country boy or girl, if he or she loves to care for animals, may combine profit and pleasure by keeping some city child's pets during the family's summer vacation or while away on a trip, suggests the Farm Journal.

City people will pay well for good care given to prized pets during their absence. A Shetland pony, a canary, Angora cat or a fine-blooded dog will prove a pleasant companion for the boy or girl on the farm, and require little outlay for food.

If the animals are in first-class condition when the owner comes to claim them, he will recommend the keeper to his city friends.

### FOLLOWS BOY TO JAIL.

Fourteen-year-old Lewis Foster of Ash Grove is in jail at Springfield, Mo., and "Gyp," his dog, is making the neighborhood of the prisoner untenable by his howls. The dog has taken up his stand beneath the boy's window.

This is the second time Lewis has been in trouble in a week. First he was brought up for stealing a horse, which he sold for \$3 to get money for a trip around the world. He was warned and released. Upon his return home young Lewis had a brass medallion about the size of a half-dollar. Ash Grove has a blind beggar. Lewis marched up to the indigent one and, throwing the medal into his tin cup, exclaimed:

"Here's a half-dollar; keep a nickel and give me 45 cents change." When brought here Lewis refused to come unless he could bring his dog. Now the dog refuses to move without Lewis.

### NO PAY FOR WOODEN LEG.

A man who breaks his wooden leg is not entitled to compensation for the loss of a leg or the loss of a foot, it was held by the State Industrial Committee, Oklahoma City, Okla., in the case of A. H. Stewart against an oil company.

Thirty years ago Stewart lost a leg in a railroad wreck. She whittled out a wooden leg which he used for a leg up until last August when, while in the oil company's employ, he fell from a motor car and broke the pegleg and injured his knee.

Stewart took the splinters of his leg to A. A. McDonald, Chairman of the Industrial Commission, and filed a claim for 175 weeks' compensation, as is provided by State law for the loss of a leg. The commission decided that the injured man could not collect 175 weeks' compensation for the loss of a leg or for the loss of the foot thirty years ago.

He was entitled to some pay for the injury to the knee, however, it was decided, so he was given the difference between the loss of a leg and the loss of a foot, or compensation for twenty-five weeks.



## ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

### HAD HIS MONUMENT READY.

Phineas Gardner Wright, aged eighty-nine, died in Putnam, Conn., May 2, from shock. Twelve years ago he ordered a monument for himself in Grove Street Cemetery. This was to be topped with a bust. The sculptor by mistake parted the flowing whiskers and Wright had another bust cut to make the likeness of himself correct.

Wright is believed to have had considerable means, though he was employed on the railroad and in local mills. For years, in summer, he went bare-foot because he thought that was a health measure.

### TOBACCO MADE PART OF ARMY RATIONS.

Tobacco, which heretofore has been purchased by the soldiers or issued by the Red Cross and other agencies, will be made a part of the regular rations. On the recommendation of General Pershing, the War Department has decided upon this action. As soon as the new order goes into effect, which will be in a few days, there will be issued to each soldier of the American expeditionary forces daily four-tenths of an ounce of smoking tobacco and ten cigarette papers. Certain other articles may be substituted.

The manner in which this fraction of an ounce will be issued has not been determined, but the quartermaster is working out a plan.

### ALL THEIR DOGS EATEN.

Knud Rasmussen, a Danish explorer, has reached Long's Firth with his Arctic expedition which left Denmark in April, 1916, and has charted all the firths of Northern Greenland.

He telegraphs that his progress was attended with the greatest difficulties and that two of the party, Hendrick Olsen and Dr. Wulff, perished.

After Olsen died the party started home and reached Cape Agassiz August 24 in a bad plight, without provisions, having eaten all the dogs.

Rasmussen says he and a companion walked to Etah, whence they sent provisions for the rest of the party, but the relief arrived too late to save Dr. Wulff, who had been unable to stand the last efforts.

### WHY COLD IS BRACING.

The proper thing to do for that feeling of hopeless drowsiness which overcomes us so often when we are busy on an important job after lunch is to hurry off to a drug store. Choose, however, a drug store half a mile away and don't go in it; just make the round trip at your best speed. The brisk walk in the cold air will wake you up, and this is the reason why?

The nerves which control the brain are connected with several areas of the surface of the body, the palms of the hands, the feet, the face and the fore-

head, and if cold be applied to any of them the brain is stimulated. A walk on a cold day or washing the face and hands in cold water and then rubbing them vigorously will have this effect. Very hot water will also stimulate the brain, but the reaction is not so pleasant.

### WHY HE WAS IN JAIL.

Fred Baker has been in the county jail in Muncie, Ind., so long that nearly everybody has forgotten why he was put there, that is, nearly everybody except Baker.

He complained that he thought it was too long a period for a man to be detained as a witness when he was not charged with any offense, but was held only because it was feared he might run away before the trial of Elmer Schell, charged with the theft of automobile tires.

Baker said that he did not wish to be mean about the thing, but that he really would like to get out of jail for a while, after being in for about nine months without having done anything wrong that he could recall. Schell himself was released under bond several months ago. Baker, on making the complaint, was released under a recognizance bond of \$300.

### NEW THINGS.

Since the ruler of Afghanistan became the owner of an automobile he has ordered the construction of more than 10,000 miles of macadam roads.

The principle of the opaque post card projector has been utilized in a new machine for registering color printing plates on a printing press.

A Parisian has invented roller skates propelled by one-quarter horse-power gasoline motors, the fuel tank being carried on the wearer's belt.

To protect metal workers' hands from flying fragments a glove has been invented with a screen guard projecting from the side opposite the thumb.

After a controversy that lasted ten years French scientists have decided that the use of old corks in wine bottles is not detrimental to health.

The National Department of Health has refused to permit telephone operators in Argentina to work one hour daily more than their regular time.

Less expensive than the usual wax figures on which women's attire is displayed is a recently patented figure made of heavy cardboard, suitably colored and with jointed limbs.

To prevent spontaneous combustion in large coal piers British scientists have found that iron or earthenware pipes should be inserted to afford ventilation as the coal is piled.

The capacity of a flat top office desk recently patented can be increased by raising a set of pigeon holes at the back, the attachment being lowered for security when not in use.

## FROM ALL POINTS

### SHOES FOR SAMMIES.

Carrying a sign saying "Saving Shoe Leather for the Sammies," Letha May Owens, aged nine, the daughter of Clay Owens, of Terre Haute, Ind., led thirty barefooted pupils of Collett Park school in a parade in the north end of the city the other night. The parade gathered strength as it passed along until the total seemed a small army.

### WHITE MICE FARM GOOD.

Pleasanton is perhaps the only town in Southwestern Texas that can claim a white mice farm. It is owned by E. H. Armand at this time. The Government is using many of these little animals for various purposes and every day's mail brings letters asking for from ten to fifty for private individuals. Mr. Armstrong says that considering the amount invested, raising white mice is more profitable than raising cattle.

### WATER WILL NOT HARM NEW LEATHER SUBSTITUTES.

The extremely high price of leather has been a factor in producing a new substitute which is already being used substantially in making workmen's gloves and other articles, and is proving to be more durable than the split leather used for that purpose, it is claimed. The new material, says Popular Mechanics, has a base of strongly woven cotton fabric, on one side of which is a heavy nan that takes the place of a lining in a glove. The other side is finished with a pliable coating that is impervious to grease and dirt. Unlike leather, this substitute does not harden after being wet, but dries soft and pliable.

### KITTEN RUNS AUTO.

An electric coupe, owned by J. P. Rice of No. 5231A Von Versen Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., traveled more than two blocks on Union Boulevard the other night with an Angora cat as its only occupant, the kitten apparently having started the machine while it was parked in front of the Cabanne library.

The coupe traveled south, ran into the rear of the automobile of Allen W. Clark of No. 5524 Maple Avenue and pushing it more than a block until Clark got out of his own car and climbed into the coupe, turning off the power in the latter. When he got in the kitten got out.

Rice told the police that the kitten was not his and must have crawled into the machine after he had left it. It is possible for a cat to start an electric if the switch is not thrown out. The only movement necessary is the pushing of a lever at the side of the driver's seat. A cat playing on the seat cushion might do this.

### GIVE UP CANDY.

Saguache, Cal., public school assays 100 per cent pure when it comes to patriotism.

The pupils of Saguache—there are two of them—come from the same home. It is a home of extreme poverty. The youngsters attend classes in their bare feet when the weather permits and their clothing has an appearance that might be associated with the present-day Belgian kiddies.

Yet, when the Junior Red Cross wave struck Saguache the two ragged little fellows shyly edged their way to the teacher's desk one morning and deposited thereon fifteen pennies with the query:

"Is that enough to make us members of the Red Cross?"

The teacher didn't have the heart to say "No." She knew the youngsters had sacrificed their winter's candy allowance, and she made up the 85 cents difference.

### PNEUMATIC CAULKING GUN.

A pneumatic caulking machine which, it is said, will do the work of 10 men, has been tried out at the Vancouver yard of the G. M. Standifer Construction Corporation. The test is said to have been a complete success. James F. Clarkson, General Manager of the plant, declares the machine will prove to be a great labor-saving device. Thirty-one hundred feet of single thread oakum was driven home by the machine. A time test showed 35 feet of one seam on the deck of a vessel completed in three and one-half minutes.

The machine was demonstrated recently to Emergency Fleet Corporation representatives, including James O. Heyworth and James B. Bell, of the Division of Wood Ship Construction.

Like riveting "guns" the caulking machine is driven by air, fed through a hose from a compressor line. The "gun" is double action. The principle is similar to that of a sewing machine. The oakum used is received in a woven state and women are employed to arrange the material in hanks, which are fed into the machine on one side. The machine travels on three small wheels, and the oakum is twisted automatically as it is driven into the seams.

Mr. Clarkson said there were about 300 orders placed by Puget Sound builders. The machine now in operation is the first received on the coast, and several more are promised in the next few weeks.

A number of caulkers are working at the Vancouver and North Portland yards, and they will be given the machines, each caulkers having a helper. Not only is the machine much speedier than hand caulking, says Mr. Clarkson, but the cost of caulking one of the big wooden hulls will be lowered to little more than one-tenth of what some hulls have represented.

## INTERESTING TOPICS

### STARVING RUSSIANS FOR SUICIDE CLUBS.

Advices from Russia show that Petrograd is afflicted with a desperate food shortage. Each citizen gets only 100 grams of bread daily. Social disorder is increasing steadily. Hundreds of "free love" societies and circles are being established in the rich quarters.

Among the poor suicides are increasing. Dozens of "suicide clubs" have been formed. The prospect of a Finnish-German march on the capital leaves the population of Petrograd indifferent.

### EVIDENCE OF NEW COPPER FIELD IN CANADA.

Indications of the presence of copper deposits over a large district in Northern Canada have of late attracted attention. Study of specimens has given rise to the belief that the geological formation is similar to that of the Lake Superior region, renowned for its highly productive mines, says Popular Mechanics. The new area lies east of Great Bear Lake and seems to follow the course of the Copper Mine River, which discharges into Coronation Gulf. Reports of evidences of copper have come from points as far east as Bathurst Inlet, and also from Victoria Island. The possibility of there being a great copper field somewhere in the region seems strong.

### SOME LIBERTY LOAN PURCHASES.

It is estimated that the Americans of foreign birth or extraction purchased \$350,000,000 of the Third Liberty Loan; the number of such bond buyers is estimated at over 5,000,000.

A consular telegram from Shanghai, China, states that subscriptions to the Third Liberty Loan in Shanghai amounted to over \$600,000.

The American Embassy in Mexico states that the subscriptions in that city are more than \$384,000, more than double the quota set for the Americans living there.

The Shah of Persia purchased a \$10,000 Liberty Bond.

### COLLEGE GIRLS PLANT.

More than fifty young women, who are students at the Western College for Women, Oxford, O., assisted in planting a twenty-acre field in potatoes on the college farm recently.

Dr. W. W. Boyd, President of the Institution, has announced that all of the young women who desire may remain after commencement on July 10 and work in the gardens. They will work eight hours a day and receive \$5 a week in addition to their board and room.

The students are showing much interest in the project, and many have enrolled for a period of four weeks.

### DAYLIGHT SAVING NO WORRY THERE.

Daylight saving does not worry the people of Alaska, according to G. S. Cullen of Anchorage, who is here. "On June 21, last year, they started a baseball game at 9 o'clock in the evening," said Cullen. "Saving daylight is not a vital matter in the northern territory during the summer. A man can work sixteen hours a day if he wants to."

### PORTO RICO CLOSED TO GERMAN AGENTS.

Porto Rico as a gateway for the passage of German agents from South America to New York has been closed. New regulations ordered by Commissioner of Immigration Evans have been put into effect, and it is no longer possible for the German agent to come from South America on a passport, destroy the passport and sail for New York on the simple assertion he was a Porto Rican.

Under the new regulations he will not be permitted to sail without a passport bearing his photograph.

### CUNNING OF CROWS.

Travelers in the Orient have much to say about the Indian crow, a bird that for uncanny knowledge and prankish audacity has perhaps no equal.

*Corvus splendens*—thus have ornithologists labeled him; but a famous naturalist who knows the breed at first hand has called them "shreds of Satan, cinders from Tartarus." To give these impish creatures their due, however, it should be said that life in India is not a little enlivened by their presence. Here is a characteristic incident in this relation:

A small hawk had seized a little bird and perched on a leafless branch to devour his prey. The spectacle drew two crows to the spot. They hopped and flapped from branch to branch, noisily discussing the strategy of their intended raid.

Then one of them quietly slipped away through the surrounding foliage. At the same time his mate flew in front of the perching hawk, and hovering steadily within a foot of his beak maintained a bustling menace of snatching the titbit.

That effectively compelled the attention of the hawk. His prey grasped firmly beneath his feet, he angrily hissed and lunged at the hovering nuisance. So lively was the skirmish that the human onlooker forgot the existence of the second crow. But now that wily bird reappeared some distance in the rear of his destined victim.

With stealthy sidlings and short, noiseless flights he drew near. Then he made a swift dash, seized the hawk's long, barred tail by the tip, hung on with his full weight and toppled the luckless hawk in a complete back somersault from the branch. The released titbit was instantly seized by the first crow, and the clever pair bore off their booty with much triumphant cawing.

# WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JUNE 28, 1918.

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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

The United States Bureau of Standards has just issued a report on its tests of American-made glass for chemical use, which shows all the new American brands to be superior to the Kavalier and equal or superior to the Lena, both German glass that was almost universally used before the war.

An infantry regiment now consists of 3,755 officers and men, as follows: Officers, 103; headquarters and headquarters company, 303 men; three battalions of four rifle companies each, 3,078; one supply company, 140; one machine-gun company, 173; one medical detachment, 56. Each rifle company has a strength of 250 men and 6 officers.

The \$75,000,000 United States ordnance plant, giving America the biggest gun factory in the world, will be built in the Chicago steel district, east of the United States Steel Corporation's plant at Gary, on the lake front. Surveyors are already laying out the site. Negotiations for the land were completed the other day. Guy R. Cockley owned part of the site and the Consumers Company another big parcel.

Experiments with seaweed as a diet for horses, made by M. Adrian of the French Ministry of War, first upon sick horses and then upon strong cavalry mounts, demonstrated that not only would the animals eat the seaweed but that those fed upon it instead of oats grew heavier than those fed upon oats. M. Adrian says 75 pounds of seaweed equals 100 pounds of oats. The salt is extracted from the seaweed by a special process.

Arrangements have been completed for the summer practice cruise of the midshipmen of the U. S. Naval Academy, but no details are to be disclosed. It may, however, be stated that the midshipmen will receive their course of training during the cruise on battleships and armored cruisers and the course

will be in accordance with the recently adopted plans for intensive training for the classes now in the Academy and which will enter next month. The plan which was carried out in former years of organizing a special training fleet for the cruise will not be followed this year, as the ships are not available for this duty, and it is believed that the work with the regular fleet will be of greater advantage under present conditions. The midshipmen will go aboard the ships shortly after the graduation exercises have been held and will be returned to the Naval Academy early enough in the fall to permit a short leave before resuming their work there. The absence of the midshipmen on this cruise will enable the Navy Department to house at the Academy the students of the Training School for Reserve Officers and provide ample accommodations for the class of approximately 700, which started June 10.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"I shall jump into the river, father, if Ella rejects me!" "Don't do it, Karl—you know so little about water."

Candidate for Employment (to foreman)—You want a character from my last employer? Why, he has been dead these twenty years.

In a cemetery at Middlebury, Vt., is a stone, erected by a widow to her loving husband, bearing this inscription: "Rest in peace—until we meet again."

Enthusiastic Auditor (at the opera)—Didn't she do the aria divinely! Boarding-House Miss—Huh! You ought to hear that on our graphophone!

Mrs. Knicker—That little Jones boy has such beautiful table manners. Mrs. Borker—Yes, his mother always feeds him at home before he is invited out.

Mamma—Come now, Harry, it's past your time to get up! Harry—Never mind, mamma. I'll just stay in bed till my time comes around again.

She—I see an average of 800 persons are killed in the United States each year by lightning. He—Then, dear, that should be a warning to you not to make yourself too attractive.

It is claimed that printers are peculiarly liable to consumption, and those who doubt this should take a day off and watch the squad around Newspaper Row at lunch time any week-day.

Little Bella—Mr. Squire, do drink your tea. I am awfully anxious to see you drink. Mr. Squire—What makes you so anxious, dear? Little Bella—Oh, ma said you drink like a fish.

## THE HAND OF DEATH

By Horace Appleton

The night was intensely dark. The old Hudson was foaming with waves. The vessels anchored in the New York harbor were plunging and tossing, threatening at every lunge to break away from their moorings, and either run ashore or be swept out to sea.

Intense darkness settled over the waters, save where now and then a vivid flash of lightning played upon the scene, lighting them up with a lurid glare.

Three men were in a boat pulling directly across from the Battery, inclining their boat just a little up the river. The beautiful Hudson seemed on this particular night to be in a rage. The waves leaped high about the prow of the small boat, threatening each moment to engulf its occupants.

Those dark mysterious waters that have concealed so much of the crimes of the great city seemed now to hiss and dance with fury as the boat leaped successfully from wave to wave.

Two men were at the oars, and another sat in the stern. The oarsmen were thirty-five and forty-five years of age. Both experienced boatmen, and had evidently made the river their occupation for years.

The man in the stern of the boat was not over twenty-two or three years of age. He had a boat cloak fastened about his neck, which fell off at the shoulders, leaving the arms free. His hat had blown off, and he was bareheaded.

His eyes were glaring wildly into the dark waters which hissed and foamed about them.

"Pull, men, pull!" he almost shrieked in order to be heard above the roaring storm.

"Ay, ay, my hearties!" responded the elder of the boatmen in a voice of thunder, that had long grown accustomed to the roar of the ocean. "But I tell ye, my friend, I don't think it's worth while."

"It is worth while!" shrieked the hatless young man in the stern of the boat. "We must find them before the fiendish deed is accomplished."

A flash of lightning now showed how strangely wild the face of the young man was in the boat. His hair was blown back from his forehead, and his eyes were wildly searching the darkness. His face, once the pride of thousands, had in one brief hour of horror grown appalling.

"We'll go wherever ye say," replied the elder of the boatmen, "but it seems to me as though we're on the wrong tack."

"No, no, we must be right, we shall be right," cried the young man in the stern, who was none other than Johnnie Collins, once the pride of song and dance men of America.

He and his brother Jimmie Collins were, a few years ago, the most promising stars of the stage. It was just at the time that their fame was becoming known. Just as they were emerging from ob-

scurity into fame and fortune, we find Johnnie, the oldest of the Collins brothers, on the Hudson in this darkness, almost distracted, as we have seen.

"This is dark sailin'," said Jack Noel to his companion at the oar. "I am sure, Joe, it is the darkest night I ever dipped an oar in my life."

"I believe you, Jack," said his companion, Joe Johnson. "One can't see an oar's length, and we are liable to run into some ship's riggin' an' be dashed to pieces at any moment."

"Come, Joe, don't prove yourself a coward an' disgrace the name o' a salt."

Joe was silenced. The insinuation doubting his courage had effectually stopped his murmurs.

The boat dashed on amid the roaring waves. The eyes of Johnnie Collins were wildly staring over the dark waters, waiting to take in all that the vivid flash of lightning might reveal.

Heavy peals of thunder rolled along the horizon and shook the earth. The lightning leaped from wave to wave along the waters, or danced on the shore. There was one sharp peal more heavy than any that had preceded it. At the same moment the lurid glare of livid sheets of flame encompassed a noble brig that stood at anchor near.

Mast, shroud, and rigging were one living blaze of fire. The boat sheered off from the burning ship and soon passed beyond the circle of its light, into the impenetrable darkness.

"Pull, for the love of heaven, pull!" cried the excited actor, now standing up in the stern of the boat, and wildly urging the men onward.

His eyes had caught sight of a boat half a mile in the distance, pulling toward the pier.

The men redoubled their strokes, and the boat skimmed over the water like a storm-bird.

"Heaven grant we may be in time! Heaven spare him until I come to his assistance! The accursed villains! I have watched them for a week, and feared that they would yet overcome my poor brother. Oh, I felt it, and I feel it now, that when they induced him to go off with them to-day that his destruction would be the result. When I found that he had today given a check for all we both have made, I knew that he was ruined. When the detective told me that he had traced them to the boat-house on the river I had my fears realized."

The above soliloquy was loud enough for the keen ears of the boatmen to hear it. Old Jack Noel was so inquisitive that he again ventured to ask:

"Do you think the sharks has got some one?"

They have—they have! You could find no more appropriate name for them than sharks."

"Who is it, shipmate?"

"My brother."

"An' they've robbed him?"

"Yes—yes."

"An' goin' to drown him?"

"Yes, yes, unless we get to them in time," cried Johnnie, wild with fears. "Pull, men, pull, as you value your lives."

Another vivid flash of lightning, and Johnnie

Collins, who had again seated himself at the stern, started up with a cry.

"Sit down, shipmate—sit down!" yelled Jack Noel, with a loud stentorian voice. "You'll fall overboard ef ye don't keep yer seat."

The vivid flash of lightning had revealed a boat in the distance, with three or four occupants.

"Heavens, we move too slow!" cried the brother, almost distracted.

"We are goin' as fast as mortals kin drive the boat," answered Jack Noel.

A wild cry now arose over the water. The young actor in the stern of Jack Noel's boat again sprang to his feet.

"Sit down, young man, as yer value your life—sit down!" cried old Jack.

Thus admonished Johnnie Collins took his seat.

"It is his voice—it is Jimmie!" cried the young actor.

"Help, help!" came the gurgling cry, borne on the stormy winds to their ears.

"Keep yer seat, young man!" cried the old boatman. "We'll get there much sooner by yer remainin' still."

Another gurgling cry came in the darkness, this time not a dozen oars' lengths away.

The plunge of a heavy body in the waters immediately followed.

The rain had been falling in perfect torrents for the last five minutes.

"Hold, hold!" cried Johnnie Collins, as the boat came to the spot where the last gurgling cry and plunge had been heard. "He has been thrown overboard here somewhere. Look, look, for the love of Heaven!—look now with all your eyes when the next flash of lightning reveals the face of the waters."

It came.

A crack of thunder seemed to rend the sphere in twain, and a lurid glare of lightning lit up the entire scene for many rods around.

Johnnie Collins uttered a cry of horror.

"Back, back on your oars!" he shrieked.

Not half a cable's length in their wake was a hand—a single human hand—protruding above the dark waters.

Old Jack Noel saw it, and shudered. It looked like the icy hand of death. Pushing back on their oars, the boat glided stern foremost toward the fearful object. Johnnie Collins sat in the stern of the boat, ready to grasp it.

The lightning's constant play revealed it. Nearer and nearer, until they were on the object. The young actor, bending forward, grasped it. Old Jack came to his assistance, and they dragged the body into the boat.

A single glance told Johnnie Collins that it was his brother, and that he had been slain for his money.

"Revenge—revenge!" shrieked the young actor, dropping the body of his dead brother and drawing his revolver. "Pull, pull after that boat!"

A flash of lightning revealed the boat, with only three men in it, not more than a dozen cable lengths away.

Crack!

A pistol shot whizzed above the boat.

"Let me in the bow," said Johnnie, in a cool, determined voice.

Clutching his heavy revolver, he took his position. He cocked his pistol, and awaited the next friendly blaze of lightning that was to reveal to him the murderers of his brother.

He held the pistol in a firm hand that was steadied by determination. He spoke no word; he hardly breathed. His hand was as steady as a rock.

The flash of lightning came.

Crack—crack! went two revolver shots. A bullet let grazed the head of the young actor, and one of the oarsmen of the flying boat lay struggling in the bottom, a bullet through his body.

"Forward, faster!" cried Johnnie. "One of the demons has met a just retribution."

The oarsmen in both boats now rowed for life. Old Jack Noel and Joe Johnson had never found their equal, and were not to be outdone on this night. Their boat bounded over the waters, and as the next flash of lightning came they were fairly against the stern of the boat of the murderers.

Johnnie Collins, like an avenging Nemesis, sprang from his own boat into the one occupied by the murderers of his brother.

Crack! crack! crack! Bang! bang! bang! rang out the rapid report of firearms sharp and clear above the roaring of the storm. Bullets flew thick and fast.

The young actor, regardless of the shots that struck his body, pressed forward on his antagonists, and shot down first one and then the other.

All three of the murderers lay dead in the bottom of their boat just as old Jack and Joe Johnson, armed with their oars, sprang into the boat to aid the young avenger.

A vivid flash of lightning revealed the result of the battle.

"By the powers o' the deep, but, shipmate, ye've brought 'em all up standin' hain't ye?" cried old Jack.

"Are ye hurt?"

"Killed!" was the answer.

"Heavens, it's so!" cried the kind-hearted old sailor. "We must get these two boats in to shore at once, Joe," he added.

Johnnie Collins lived long enough after the shore was reached to give a full account of the murder at the police station. The money taken from his brother was found in the murderers' boat.

It amounted to nearly four thousand dollars.

Having no relatives, he willed it to the two faithful boatmen.

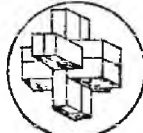
"We well earned it," said old Jack, after the two brothers were buried in one grave. "I wouldn't again look on that Hand of Death for twice that much money."

**WILLARD-JOHNSON PRIZE-FIGHT PUZZLE.**



Four strips of cardboard, each three inches by one and a half inches, showing Willard and Johnson in various absurd postures. The solution in the puzzle lies in so arranging the strips that they show Willard in the complete picture, the heavy weight champion. Price, 10c, by mail postpaid, with directions. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

**MIKADO BLOCK PUZZLE.**



Imported from Japan. This neat little puzzle consists of six strikingly cut pieces of white wood unassembled. The trick is to so assemble the blocks as to form a six pointed star. Price, 12c, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., Bklyn., N. Y.

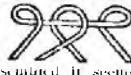
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This little steel puzzle is one of the most perplexing and interesting that you master it a child could do it. It means to cut out words as indicated on the cut. Price 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

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**THE TANTALIZER PUZZLE.**



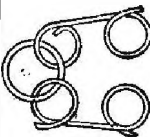
Consists of one horizontal and one perpendicular piece of highly polished metal bent in such a manner that when assembled it seems utterly impossible to get them apart, but by following the directions it is very easily accomplished. This one is a brain twister. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

**MARBLE VASE.**



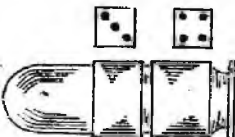
A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined, but a marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase. Price, 20c, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

**DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.**



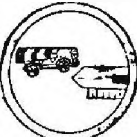
Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shafts of this puzzle are always in the way. Get one and learn how to take the ring off. Price, 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

**DICE BULLET.**



This Bullet and contents will afford you lots of "game." Not, however, the kind of game usually "got" with bullets. The illustration may suggest the idea. This little novelty consists of a real shell fitted with a hollow "bullet," and contains two small dice. This will make a very acceptable gift to any of your soldier friends. Each 15 cents, by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

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A circular metal box with a glass top. Inside is a toy garage and a loose traveling jitney. It requires an expert to get the swiftly moving auto into the garage. This one grabs your interest, holds it, and almost makes you wild when you find after repeated trials how hard it is to do the trick. Price 12c by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

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This famous trick gets them all. You pick up a card and when you look at it you find you haven't got the card you thought you had. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

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**OLD MONEY WANTED**

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# Wonderful Victory Over BALDNESS

HAIR GROWN ON MR. BRITTAIN'S BALD HEAD BY INDIANS' MYSTERIOUS OINTMENT

Now Has Prolific Hair and Will Give True Recipe Free; It is Scientifically Verified

My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth. Yet now, at the age of 63, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness.

## Indians' Secret of Hair Growth

At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian "medicine man" who had an ointment that he guaranteed would grow my hair. Although I had no faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement a light fuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day into a regular healthy growth and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was amazed and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly.

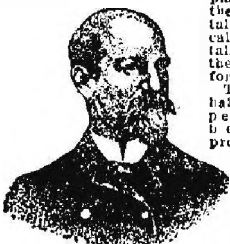
## Hair Grew Luxuriantly

Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade.

It became my sudden determination to possess the recipe or secret if I could. Having used my most persuasive arguments which convinced the aged savant of my sincerity and that he had only fairness to expect from me, I succeeded in gaining the secret recipe by giving him a valuable rifle in exchange.

## I Put the Secret Away

My regular business took all my time, however, and I was compelled to forego my plans to introduce the wonderful Kotalko (which I call for short Kotalko) and I put the secret aside for some years.



When I was Bald.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved.

My honest belief is that hair roots rarely die even when the hair falls out through dandruff, fever,

excessive dryness or other disorders. I am convinced, and am sure many scientists will agree, that the hair roots become imbedded in the scalp, covered by hard skin, so that they are like bulbs or seeds in soil until which will grow when fertilized. Shampoos (which contain alkalis) and hair lotions which contain alcohol are enemies to the hair, as they dry it, making it brittle.



Plenty of Hair Now.

## The Secret Now Revealed

Recently I was induced, while on a business trip to London, to introduce Kotalko, the Indian hair ointment. It met with an immediate demand and has since been introduced throughout England and France, where, despite the war, it is having a great sale. Its popularity comes chiefly from the voluntary endorsements of users. Many persons—men, women and children—are reporting new hair growth. Some cases were really more extraordinary than my own. For instance, a lady reported that Kotalko grew a beautiful supply of blond hair (her natural shade) after her head had been completely bald since a fever nine years previously and she had worn a wig ever since.

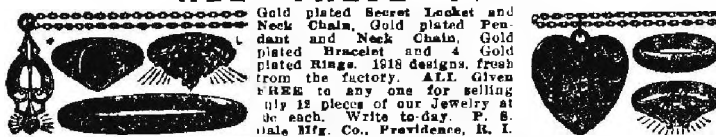
A military officer had a bald spot which had been growing larger for some time. Within a few weeks it was completely covered.

I could mention numerous examples. Now, having made arrangements here, I intend to supply Kotalko, according to the genuine Indians' formula to whomsoever wishes to obtain it.

## Recipe Given Free

The recipe I shall be pleased to mail, free. Address: John Hart Brittain, BG-103, Station F, New York, N. Y. When you have grown new hair please send me a letter giving the facts for my files.

## ALL THESE FREE



Gold plated Secret Locket and Neck Chain, Gold plated Pendant and Neck Chain, Gold plated Bracelet and 4 Gold plated Rings, 1618 designs, fresh from the factory. ALL GIVEN FREE to any one for selling only 12 pieces of our Jewelry at 2c each. Write to-day, F. B. Hale Mfg. Co., Providence, R. I.

## MOUSTACHE

To accelerate the growth of a Moustache use KOTALKO. A small box will be mailed for 25 cents; a large box, for \$1.00. Postage in plain package. Fine reports from many users. Send cash or stamps to John Hart Brittain, 150 East 22d St., (BC-103), New York, N. Y.

## Who will write the SONG-HIT OF THE WAR?

With this country entering its second year in the World War it is doubtful if the song which will be known as the "Hit of the War" has as yet made its appearance. While it is true that such War Songs as "Over There" and "Liberty Bell" have made some impression, here our hope is on another "It's A Long Way to Tipperary" which has been the great favorite with the "English Tommies." Inasmuch as several Commanders of our fighting contingents have requested boys in the service to write such a song, it appears to be still wanting.

Have you an idea which you think might be used as the subject for a Patriotic or War Song? If so, you may secure some valuable information and assistance by writing for a Free Copy of our new booklet entitled "SONG WRITERS' MANUAL AND GUIDE." We will send you some poems, outlines and arrange music, secure copyright and facilitate free publication or outright sale. Poems should be signed J. R. E. KNICKERBOCKER STUDIOS 53 Bldg. N. Y. C.

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## FRECKLES

Now is the Time to Get Rid of These Ugly Spots. There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as Orbine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these blemish spots.

Simply get an ounce of Orbine—double strength—from your druggists, and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is eridion that more than one ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Orbine as this is so under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.



**Finds Cure For Rheumatism After Suffering 50 Years**

Now 83 Years Old—Regains Strength and laughs at "URIC ACID"

Goes Fishing; Back to Business. Feels Fine! How Others May Do It!



"I am eighty-three years old and I doctored for rheumatism ever since I came out of the army over fifty years ago. Like many others, I spent money freely for so-called 'cures,' and I have read about 'Uric Acid' until I could almost taste it. I could not sleep nights or walk without pain; my hands were so sore and stiff I could not hold a pen. But now I am again in active business and can walk with ease or write all day with comfort. Friends are surprised at the change."

**HOW IT HAPPENED.**

Mr. Ashelman is only one of thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints, by taking treatment supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that Uric Acid never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe, and that without it we could not live!

**HOW OTHERS MAY BENEFIT FROM A GENEROUS GIFT.**

These statements may seem strange to some folks, because nearly all sufferers have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" humbug. It took Mr. Ashelman fifty years to find out this truth. He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders and recover his strength from "The Inner Mystery," a remarkable book that is now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble. If any reader of the "Touzey's Weeklies" wishes a copy of this book that reveals startling facts overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past, simply send a post-card or letter to H. P. Clearwater, 534 Water street, Hallowell, Maine, and it will be sent by return mail without any charge whatever. Send now. You may never get this opportunity again. If not a sufferer yourself, hand this good news to some friend who may be afflicted.

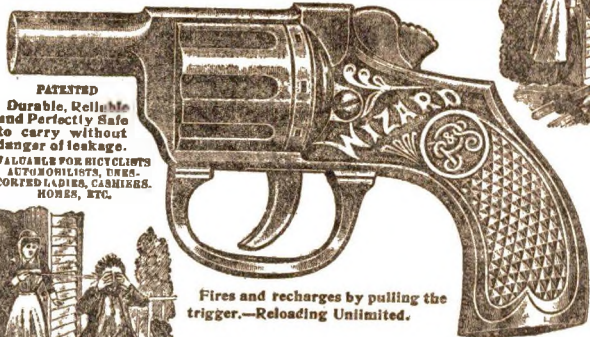
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NOT A LEAD PRODUCT  
NOT A TOY

**WILL STOP THE MOST VICIOUS DOG (OR MAN) WITHOUT PERMANENT INJURY.**

**BOYS** Have great fun with the WIZARD PISTOL. For sniping dogs, cats, hooligans, slackers, lazybones—and for having a lot of fun with JOKES. The Wizard Pistol is harmless, although it certainly does puzzle and worry the one that is hit. We have seen one boy frighten away a whole crowd of rough-necks by using one of these Wizard Pistols. Price, postpaid, 60 cents; two for \$1.00. Sent anywhere. Enclose stamps or cash.

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Get a box of Woods V Tablets at the drug store. Safe and reliable. Guaranteed weight increase from money back. Improve health, strength; gain efficiency, personality, normal figure, vigor—enjoy life. Many report 5 to 30 pounds increase. Prove for yourself.

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Tobacco Redeemer contains no habit-forming drugs of any kind. It is in no sense a substitute for tobacco. After finishing the treatment you have absolutely no desire to use tobacco again or to continue the use of the remedy. It makes not a particle of difference how long you have been using tobacco, how much you use or in what form you use it—whether you smoke cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chew plug or fine cut or use snuff, Tobacco Redeemer will positively banish every trace of desire in from 48 to 72 hours. This we absolutely guarantee in every case or money refunded.

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# Here's YOUR Chance

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U. S. Naval Radio Operator E. R. Scribner uses K. I. Shorthand in government service.

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO YOU

### TRY THIS LESSON

Here is a  Just a tiny circle This is t |

So here is at | Here's k —

act  Spelled as pronounced cat (kat) 

ng or ing  acting 

TO WRITE "ACTING" IN THE ORDINARY WAY REQUIRES 21 PEN MOVEMENTS—ONLY 4 IN THE PERFECTED AND SIMPLIFIED K. I. SHORTHAND.

See how easily you have learned to use four signs in K. I. SHORTHAND. Quickly, like a parrot, you can learn the whole set of 30 and then attain speed so you may write in a quarter to a tenth of the time needed for writing in the ordinary way. Thus you may write as rapidly as the words are spoken.

Young man, there's no fiction in what we say here. It is a proposition of facts—your opportunity to make good. Prove to all that you are a go-getter, that you are able to do what many others cannot.

See the picture (from a photo) of Naval Radio Operator E. R. Scribner who is making rapid progress. To aid him in his career, he took up K. I. SHORTHAND and learned it in spare quarter hours when off duty at his wireless station. Soon he was able to take radio messages by stenography, accurately and with advantage in his position.

Many young fellows have learned stenography before joining the Army or Navy and have started with superior ratings. One boy, drafted, took up K. I. Shorthand and in a few days was able to say that he understood it. He was gaining speed by spare-time practice when, because of this special knowledge, he was given an important position in a department of aviation supplies in France where he has already advanced.

Uncle Sam wants young men who know how to write shorthand. There is a tremendous demand and the opportunities are exceptional.

In civilian life—professional or business there are the best chances ever for rapid progress. You may learn stenography for the purpose of using it as your regular work or you may learn it as an aid to other duties.

You can easily see what a boost you will get when you can step forward and are ready instantly to take down any orders, telephone message, conversation or speech in shorthand.

The very best method for you to learn is K. I. Shorthand. In ten simple lessons, of less than a half hour each, you will learn the principles thoroughly. Then you need only to practice. This you can do by having others read or dictate to you, or by listening to others who are speaking.

Gradually you will develop speed and after a short time should be able to take down accurate notes as fast as a person ordinarily talks.

You will then be able to transcribe these notes in plain words by longhand (ordinary) writing, or by the use of a typewriter.

K. I. SHORTHAND is the best simplified method of stenography in the world. It is practical and most easily learned. No other method can compare with this. There are the extensive, complicated systems of Pitman, Gregg, Graham, etc., that take months of intensive study and after learning one of those methods you must always keep in practice or you will lose your hold. There is the Farragon method which sells in small book form for five dollars, but if you want the regular correspondence course, you must pay twenty-five dollars!

With K. I. Shorthand, you have the benefit of correspondence instruction, and the whole cost for all the lessons with special mail tuition, etc., is only five dollars—one-fifth of the cost of Farragon and from one-tenth to one-twentieth of the cost of the other systems. Think, too, of the great saving in time! The specimen lesson above shows how easily K. I. Shorthand may be learned.

This is the perfected quick and easy method. If you wish to know how fast it is possible to write by K. I. Shorthand, ask somebody to read this whole advertisement within a few minutes by your watch. Thus you'll realize the speed with which you should write after pleasant home or office practice. Hindrance of old systems eliminated; no shading, no worry about position over, on or under lines—and you can read your own notes readily after months or years. Hence K. I. Shorthand is valuable for private notes, diary, messages, etc. Used in rapid secret service work.

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If you will be interested in our Brochure, it tells more about K. I. Shorthand System. It is free. Simply write asking for Brochure No. EC-103, or fill out, clip and send us the coupon printed here. Write to either our New York City or Chicago address—which ever is the more convenient to you.

Do not delay. This is YOUR OPPORTUNITY and it is likely to mean your success and your fame. You will learn at home in your room, or in the office, on the farm, on the trolley car—or wherever you may have spare quarter hours. We teach both sexes and our students range from 12 to 84 years! Many who were rather dull in school have amazed everybody by their remarkable capability in writing K. I. Shorthand.



"Speak as fast as you like, Sir; I am taking it down in K. I. Shorthand."

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-  **Association**  
 This word takes 64 pen movements in ordinary writing—only 2 in K. I. Shorthand. See how many times you can write it while your friend writes in the usual way.
-  **Notwithstanding**  
 Takes 54 movements in longhand; only 3 in K. I. Shorthand. The whole method is surprisingly easy to learn.
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 Takes 41 movements in longhand; only 2 in K. I. Shorthand. Learners, all ages, are delighted with their quickly attained speed.

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EC-103



# WILD WEST WEEKLY

## LATEST ISSUES

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