The Desperado Blacklegs, Confronted by the Man Well Named Dick Doom, Were White with Terror and Anger.

Or,
The River Blacklegs' Terror.
A Romance of the Realities of the Secret Service.
By Colonel Prentiss Ingraham.

Chapter I
The Planter's Heirs.
Nor many miles above the city of New Orleans there stands a beautiful home, which, though built many a century ago, was one of the grandest mansions in that part of the country.

It was known as "The Fern," and was the largest estate on the coast, the late owner, Colonel Richard Grayhurst, being a very wealthy planter.
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The mansion was large, rambling, with wide balconies and the grass so soft it was picturesque and beautiful.

In his youth Colonel Grayburn's had died, having been thrown from his horse and killed.

He left two hair, Gordon, a youth verging on manhood, a dashing, whole-souled fellow, and Marion, a fair maiden not very long in her teens, a little fairy in face and form, yet a child in spirit, tender-hearted indeed.

The two, Gordon and Marion, were returning from a delightful picnic, when a woman dressed in gray, a girl whose hair on the road ran through a clump of woodland, with a thicket before her, could not but seem near.

The grand Mississippi rolled by a hundred yards distant, upon its broad, rolling surface, unbroken by a single boulder on it, a sugar-crowned island for miles away.

In the distance was seen the mansion of The Ferrus, and up and down the river were here and there visible other plantation homes.

"Brother Gordon, do you know I never pass this spot without a shudder, and a regret," said Marion, and her eyes fell upon two grass-grown graves just off the highway.

"I do not wonder, sister mine, when here before so nearly lost his life, and you just escaped being kidnapped."

"It is only for that brave boy, Dixie Gray, both would have happened—a boy tramp as himself, who had camped for the night close by that spot."

"There was his little tent, his dog and all, and across the road the two men who lie in those graves, lay in ambush."

"Father and I little dreamed of danger, and certainly of death as we sat on the carriage-box, driving us rapidly home."

"It was late in the afternoon, and a storm was threatening, so Tom rode quickly until he reached this break in the road.

"It was as though it were but yesterday, a shot rung out and one of the horses fell; and as Gordon turned to help, a shot from behind the grass thorned the result.

"Then a mere boy appeared at the door of the carriage and told us that there was no danger, that he had seen the two men land from a canoe, had watched them go into ambush, and came to the rescue."

Marion had told the story, impressively, as though her brother had not heard its score of times before; but he had listened with deepest interest and replied:

"Yes, it was Gray—a boy, yet a man."

"I was so glad that father took him home with him, made him his secretary for a few months and then sent him off to school."

"It was the cause of our having today our inheritance, Gordon, for Latimer had no will to write and took with him all that was his, except for gambling."

"Oh, brother! I hope you will never gambol.

The face of the young man crimsoned, and as though to change the subject, he said:

"Yes, Marion, poor Dixie, after getting Lawyer Thurston's unkind letter, saying that he was not remembered in the will, went his way, and then suddenly turned up here, and finding how we had been defrauded, told us, and showed us that there was a letter, found it, and the witnesses, and sent Thurston flying from the country in disgrace."

"I was never so much afraid as to the legacy in the will for him."

"He refuses it; but he certainly has money, and in confidence, Marion, I will tell you that I believe he is a detective in New Orleans and not afraid."

"It must be so, brother, for see how he unopened the letter."

"It is unsigned, and Dandridge, who, a gentleman in society, was the leader of a band of outlaws."

"What must be that must be how Dixie gets his money."

"You do not go under the name of Dixie Gray."

"No, but it happened to catch sight of a letter that some one else signed, and it was addressed to Dick Doom.

"You do not believe Dixie Gray is his real name."

"Yes, and it could hardly be his real one."

"You do not believe Dixie Gray is his real name."

"I do not.

"He is such a mystery, for we really know nothing of him, have no knowing of him."

"Nothing, yet he is a boy with a history, I am sure. He is true as steel, brave as a lion, and a noble fellow through and through."

"If this trip to school of Dixie Gray, he certainly keeps it well hidden."

"Not, certainly, as he seems to go far back into the past. We will ride on home."

"They went on a gallop, both riding with the grace and skill of the true South. As they neared their house they saw two coaches with horses, and as one coach stopped, it was Dixie cried Marion, and the visitor received a warm greeting from both."

"He was a young man, not too young, not too face almost to womanliness in her beauty, a form at once slender, graceful, yet firmly knit, and muscular."

"I have had time, Marion, to think of this some time, Gordon, so come up to see if you got your affairs all straightened out, after Thurston's handling of them."

"Yes, indeed, thanks to you, Dixie. We got all back, and lost nothing. We have your legacy, too, at your call, my dear fellow, and call for it you must."

"Thanks, I do not need it; but I have come to tell you, in confidence, that I have fully decided upon my future career."

"And what will it be?"

"I feel that this adventure by you, Dixie Gray, shall follow my fate. But, remember: this is a secret."

CHAPTER II."

"polar bear's den."

The chief of police of New Orleans sat in his private office coming over his morning reports, when suddenly the announcement came to the room, that a young woman whom the reader shall see the day before at The Ferrus's, who had a mysterious career had talked over by Gordon Grayburn and his sister.

The chief with a keen-complexion, firm-looking man, one who had been a gallant soldier in his early life and who was the third of the arduous duties devolving upon him as a master for it.

He sprang from his seat at the sight of the morning, and grasping his hands said warmly:

"My dear brother, if you please, I wish to see you."

"So you decided to come back again after all, to the field where you rendered such good service as an Unknown Detective."

"Yes, chief, I decided to come back, after an absence of ten months, in which I have been following a trail of my own."

"I recall that when we first met you told me you had certain Secret Service work to accomplish upon your own hook."

"Yes, chief, but what is it I cannot even tell you."

"I consider that, with others, we were greatly wronged, and I cut loose from home, kin-
dred and all, to track the mystery to the end."

"So far without success, but I have been enabled, while on my own hook, to do a great deal for others."

"You have done well."

"Nearly four years ago, I was, as a tramp, on my way to this city, following my determina-
tions to be my own detective."

"Then, fortunately, I was enabled to serve Colonel Grayburn and his granddaughter, and through his kindness I was greatly aided in my education, and so the better prepared for my chosen vocation."

"When I would receive bounty no longer, after the colonel's death, I again started on foot for this city, and the Chief, while hiding in a lone cabin on the river, I learned of the secret band of villains known as the Royal Legion of the Golden Galleys."

"Yes, and I got the credit for all your splendid work in this matter, too, simply because you insisted upon remaining unknown."

"And I still insist."

"I have in your possession that you captured a dozen criminals, murderers, pickpockets, burg-
lar-skins, and counterfeiters; that you dressed as a girl, took a position as a clerk in the Santa Cruz Cafe, and brought that whole outfit to justice; that you rode as a gigante in the Leagues of the Golden Galleys; sent a dishonest lawyer a message from two men to the French for the results for him when he should call for them."

"His plan was to have us, with what other secret police may have arrived on the river to a certain point."

"We conclude our way by night to the little family burying-ground, dig up the body and carry it to the river, where a boat awaits."

"They could row to the city in this boat in a
Dick Doom's Destiny.

day, and the next night could carry the body to the college, leaving no trace of their going or coming.

"We agreed to the plan, anxious to get a good subject, and we met the man who had visited the prison, and we were all together, and little burying-ground.

"We carried him, carried it to the river, and then started down-stream.

"We camped a dozen miles away, until the next night, and then the man told us that he had come to the Agnold's, and we were all together, and little burying-ground.

"We went, we got the body, undiscovered, into the dissecting-room.

"It was that of a fine-looking, old gentleman of sixty, and in a fine state of preservation.

"He had entered the body in vain searched for the cause of death.

"He seemed to have been in perfect health, until at length I took the contents of the stomach for analysis, and then I discovered poison."  

"Poison!"

"Yes, he had either taken poison to end his life, or been poisoned for some reason known only to those interested."

"What did you do?"

"What could I do?"

"I was, with my companions, in a trap, for we would be sent to prison for robbing the grave of the body.

"But I eaised my conscience by finding what it was, and also writing to his son my idea that he had been poisoned, though I was not sure that it was poison.

"I saw afterward that a large reward was offered for the body. And I found out some of his friends' names from the license and the name of the man who I have now in my trunk, intending it for my office, for it is a valuable receipt for that purpose.

"And the young physician who came to you about it?"

"I did not hear of, or saw him again."

"Did he give any name?"

"Yes, he introduced himself as Doctor Valentine."

"Strange that you never saw him again."

"Oh, I guess he was frightened off by the reward offered by the son, and let the matter drop.

"And you think that is the man?"

"I am almost certain of it."

"Why do you not speak to him?"

"Well, he was coming up from the lower deck; I will head him off."

"Doctor Pasteur hastily left his friend, and went below to the cabin."

But in five minutes he returned and said:"

"He is not a physician, and never saw me before; but all the same, he is the man."

"And the two physicians walked away while young Hayden ascended, descended to the state-room, and took his trunk and wrote down all that he had heard, names and all."

He was not seen until the ship was looked.  

CHAPTER IV.  
A Man of Mystery.

The fashionable society of New Orleans had had a set back, in the decease of the late, Dick Doom, one of its favorites, who had been known to be the secret leader of a robber band, and for awhile people were shocked into seduction by the discovery of a wolf in the fold.

But the scene was soon forgotten, and when one day a handsome schooner-yard ran up the river, saluted the town with a gun and the dipping of her flag, and her owner sought elegant quarters in the St. Charles Hotel, there were manyHarmony in the music of the state of Maine."

He held no title, was plan Master Valentine Gimble, and had a most distinguishing style of dress for a man that he had been born in the South, west, was left a handsome fortune at the death of his father, and had been educated abroad and living in Paris, Rome, Berlin and London so long as to be a person of taste."

He had come back to America to enjoy his fortune in his native land in a way that suited him.

Handsome, elegant, and brilliant in conversation, and a connoisseur of wines, an art critic, a fair sailor, could shoot, ride, fence and box, and played a very superior game of poker, and, because he did not mean money, it was said he always went his way.

Mr. Gibson soon rented a pleasant little house in the quietest part of the city near the river, and had two servants to look after his convenience and jumping horses in his stable.

He would go for miles upon the lakes, where he kept his yacht anchored in a ship of three men; would drive on the shell road, or ride bareback through the city, with an occasional look in at the clubs and a game of chess now and then in a fashionable gaming-house.

Such was the way he passed his time. He had entered the body in vain searched for the cause of death.

"That there's something lacking of the man, some history, all felt certain."

"What was lacking?"

"Or was it some sorrow upon your youth?"

This one knew, and no one had the remotest idea to the cause of his sorrow.

"And the young physician who came to you about it?"

"I never heard of, or saw him again."

"Did he give any name?"

"Yes, he introduced himself as Doctor Valentine."

"Strange that you never saw him again.

"Oh, I guess he was frightened off by the reward offered by the son, and let the matter drop.

"And you think that is the man?"

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Dick Doom's Destiny.

As he had seemed to surmise, the dead Blackleg's friends were for ever at the lookout for seeing those two men play, for the challenge again is on the lip of the page, and both parties are provided with muskets and rifles.

Damon knew that Blackleg Bill's pluck had turned to the youth and held forth his hand, while his friend was a "rake's face, sir, who will be found at the dog track", and the wanton enjoyment of this interest, Blackleg Bill and his companion slipped out of the nearest lane, and with their dead companion.

In the mean while, Diamond Jack had called for a pack of cards, had drawn off his gloves, thrown off his hat over his head, put on his hat, and black diamond in his valet, and stood on the door of a chair waiting for Blackleg Bill to be seated.

The player was really as courtly and said:

"You are right, sir, but don't yer git him out yer ter git in yerself, for I thinks him to be better matched," said the youth, and he added;

"Now I'm a-going Valentine's a look at yer dander, and if yer wants me yer name is Davy Dun eerie.

"And mine is Gordon Grayhurst, Mr. Dun, and the plunger turned toward the players, while the very youth said:

"The man was caught fairly and cowed. His companion was dead, and Blackleg Bill who had been watching his table was too wise to interfere for he saw that the tide was too strong to stop.

He looked around for the man whom all called his chief.

He entered just then serene and courteous.

"What is the trouble gentleman?" Valentine Grayhurst replied.

These two Blacklegs got this gentleman, whom I have never the honor of knowing, into a game, and a tangle between the two men, as I slipped, a card from that one, who is dead.

"He rightly accused him of fraud, and would have been killed but for that country lad who struck up his arm.

The other man on him too, and as I saw his act, I killed him.

"If you have interest, as it is asserted, in these Blacklegs, you will do well to get them ashes.

These were bold words to address to Diamond Jack.

But the man who uttered them seemed able to back up what he uttered, and he had shown his nerve and fire by shooting one of the Blacklegs between the eyes, and put it on the table.

"All gazed upon the Gambler King,

But he smiled calmly and replied;

"I have not the honor of your acquaintance, sir, though I have heard a great deal of you.

"Did you know me better you would understand that I protect no man who would cheat, or who is cast aside upon an unfaithful man.

"That fellow deserved his fate, and I would advise his companion to go ashore with his body at the first landing the steamer makes.

"Now, sir, it is a game of cards, for really I wish to make your better acquaintance is mutual," said Valentine Grayhurst.

CHAPTER VII.

JACK DILLON'S CHALLENGE.

The fatal scene was upon the cards, and in the act.

Those who were reading laid aside their books and went quickly to the scene.

Fortunately, no one was in the hands of the ship's company, and the stained folding-doors cut off a view of Social Hall from the rear of the boat.

The affair had lasted a few minutes, and yet all had felt that Gordon Grayhurst's charge was just, and his assailant was let down as a man who stood no trifling and was dangerous to himself.

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It needed but a word then to turn the fury of the passengers upon the remaining Blackleg, and this Jack Dillon's challenge the next day to take them as the dead men's ace, and the rest, as we see, the rest of the crowd, the second man, had proposed a game with Valentine Gibson.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DAVY DUN EERIE TO THE RESCUE.

While this scene was being enacted in the nook of the corner, the young man who had been on the watch was taking place upon the cards.

Blackleg Bill and his companion had carried their luggage and hurried to the deck to look into the business of the boat, where the trunks of the passengers were locked up.

Forward of there was a space, and here they had laid him down, and there was a place went to the clerk and got the keys in his hand, and ran up, to carry it ashore.

The clerk then had the clerk that they would go ashore at the next landing, a small clump of trees some miles above where the steamer was.

The clerk had complimented them upon their

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEMPTATION.

The steamers sped up the way up the river, pouring through the passengers that supper was over, and soon the decks were deserted.

A few scene followed for an hour in the cabin, when waiters supplied edibles for hungry men, and a few strolled out upon the guards or deck for a quiet smoke.

The tables were cleared away and some passengers, who were, wrote letters, others to read, and in the ladies' cabin was heard the sound of music and conversation.

Forward, in Social Hall, men were grouped about the captain's office and the bar, and as the everyone occupied, half a dozen tables or more were set for the pleasure of those who wished to indulge in cards, and fortune was the medium of that.

Blackleg Bill and his gang were scattered between these tables, and all readily found people to play with them.

Diamond Jack still paced the deck, cigar between his teeth; and having thrown his weed away, he went dewy, and his face showed that he was fighting a brave battle with himself against temptation.

"It is in my blood," he murmured, "and how I find it is to resist.

"I know how heavily my father played, and that one he lost nearly all his fortune to that lawyer Thurston, whom he believed his best friend, and who, but for Dixie Gray, would have been skilfully and shrewdly swindled.

"I have never played that I have not lost, and yet it seems that luck cannot always go against a man.

"Wonder if I dare risk a few hundred?"

"I only wish that I did not have so much money with me. I'd like to try losing I forgot myself and all.

"All right, I will play.

"Ah! Mr. Grayhurst, I believe

"Take my hand, for I am not feeling well.

"If I leave you a winning hand, you see, go in and keep up the luck.

It was one of Blackleg Bill's men that spoke, as he rose from the table.

He had seen the young plunger standing there, and so rose on purpose to take his pal, who was his partner, a chance to fleece him.

Thus appealed to, Gordon Grayhurst did not resist temptation.

He had inherited the love of gaming from his father's side, and so he sat down, took up the cards, a bet and won.

But suddenly, when there was a large stake up, Gordon Grayhurst lost, and nearly all he had went upon the cards.

A second large stake went the same way, and the young plunger was a hundred out of pocket.

A third stake followed suit, a fourth, and the young plunger would have been broke.

But he was game and did not win.

Another game was being played, when sud-
Dick Doom's Destiny.

"No, no, I have my limit, thank you, and I have lost a thousand dollars, enough for one evening, mister," and Davy Dunn stepped forward, while all laughed.

Taking no notice whatever of him Jack Donned his cocked hat.

"Now, Mr. Grayhurst, I'll oblige you, as you seemed anxious to play awhile since," with pleasure, sir.

"But I comes in ahead," persisted Davy Dunn.

"I do not care to play you," coldly said Diamond Dick.

"Is he scared?"

"Take that in from this, even to the gambler, and answering his question he said:

"I am afraid of you, I admit,"

"Then you don't play me, says I,"

"The gambler bit his lips, while the crowd laughed merrily.

"I am to play with a gentleman, Mr. Grayhurst," he said quietly.

"Ah! I'm a gent too, and don't you forget it.

"But I saved that gent's coconuts from being bored and he is going to take his place,"

"Much as I would like to oblige you, Mr. Dunn, I feel that I am pledged to play with Diamond, said Gordon Grayhurst in a pleasant voice.

"Diamonds?"

"Is that your name?"

"My name is Jack Diamond,"

"The Jack of Diamonds be you?"

"Take a good look at me and see whether it be you, or me, Mr. Grayhurst," said the pretended countryman.

"That is fair, certainly," cried a number of voices.

"In fact, the crowd wanted to see the countryman play with Jack Diamond for the fun of it."

"Had they seen his game with Blackleg Bill and his pal, Buck Staples, a few minutes before, they would not have thought that there was so much fun in it as they looked for.

"I'll agree to toss for it, then," said Gordon Grayhurst, "I'll play you for Davy Dunn.

But Jack Diamond tried once more to get rid of him, by saying:

"Take a good look at me, if you will, and see whether it be you, or me, Mr. Grayhurst, for I only play for Davy Dunn.

"A thousand or so, connar yer, if I plays," was the energetic answer, to which the gambler replied.

"I believe, after all, you may be worthy of my esteem."

"You won't steal from me, and I'll give you a pointer on that," and the gambler again joined in the laugh at his expense.

"Now let me suggest that you throw dice, the highest number in three throws," said Jack Diamond.

"What suits me to a tickle," Davy Dunn replied.

"I am willing," came from Gordon Grayhurst.

"I permit me to offer the dice—my diamond dice, and the goliath, which I carry in my pocket, three solid gold dice, with the spots on them represented by diamonds set in, very unique and something of the use of a man of chance, as Jack Diamond was."

CHAPTER IX.

A MAN OF CHANCE.
Dick Doom's Destiny.

"Two sixes and a fifty-five," called out the gambler.

Gordon Grayhurst threw a second time.

"Four of them," said the man in the box, "and two on the table.

Jack Dimond.

Then came the player's third throw.

"Three sixes—eighteen. Total, fifty.

A fine record, Mr. Grayhurst.

"It is, boss, and the gambler turned to the "young man from the Mississippi Hill Country"

"I don't know.

"But I'm a goin' ter try, mister.

He looked at the box and glanced at it admiringly.

Then he looked over the gold dice, examining them minutely.

"Are you trying to charm them?" asked Jack Dimond.

"That's just what I'm doing, and here goes for three more in the bag, mister.

"Three sixes—eighteen!" called out the gambler, while the lookers-on applauded, and the croupier took up the dice and tossed them.

He performed certain signs over it, blew in the box, shook it and again threw the dice.

"What does yer say, card-man, ter another hundred dollars, mister?"

"I'll take your bet."

"Jes' hear me, young man!" cried Davy Dunn, as he revealed his throw, and in the same unvoiced voice as before the gambler cried:

"Jes' hear me, young man! Eighteen—total fifty-four.

"Mr. Grayhurst you have lost, so I play with you and play for five hundred.

"Yer das a fact, mister, jest two hundred I won from yer.

"I take your bet.

"... and he revolved his hand a second time.

"Two hundred dollars against my dice," asked the gambler.

"Yes, that's what I said.

"There are four of them and are of solid gold, with twenty-one diamonds in each one, not to speak of the box of gold and the diamonds that form the word chance on it."

"Well, what is that out of which you are throwing?" coolly asked Davy Dunn.

"The cost was two thousand dollars."

"And you throw it, and he thrust his hand into his bosom, headstaid, then said:

"See here, Mister Grayhurst, I like to have some of your five thousand dollars, and I will give you back, if you let me throw, a bag of gold and a diamond.

"And you gave up the money?

"Yes, sir, and I'll bet my life on it.

"No, but you did what you thought you might.

"This was very much admired, as it was laid upon the table with the remark by the gambler:

"I told you I was a Man of Chance."

**CHAPTER XI.**

**THE DISAPPEARANCE.**

The lookers-on were surprised at the remarkable lack of thought that had looked upon him as being.

He had no money, no clothes, no food, and no place to go.

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"Well, sir, what is the amount it will please you to stake, young man?" asked Diamond Jack complacently.

"I've lost my two thousand on th' table, and as I haven't no money, I'm going to stake my life in a game on my own box, and if I win, I'll put up a like sum.

"So the game goes for two thousand cash from me and the gold and diamond fixings?"

"Yes, and put the money on the table at once.

"The stakes are now out and the interest is fifteen, for the game had been for very big money, and all knew that Jack Diamond was very much in earnest.

"Are you ready?" asked the gambler.

"Yes, and watchin' yer, so keep yer eye on me if I'm devilsly sly with my cards, I declare to Heaven it's a trick.

"If you can cheat me you are welcome to do so."

"Which is the man who has just come in?"

"I'll bet on you, and I'll put up a thousand for your box and my own, and I'll be a devil to cheat you.

"Yes, and watchin' yer, so keep yer eye on me if I'm devilsly sly with my cards, I declare to Heaven it's a trick.

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**CHAPTER XII.**

**THE MYSTERY UNSOLVED.**

Gordon Grayhurst had sought out the stranger character, who had come to his rescue, the next morning to thank him more heartily for his aid.

He felt that the act of the supposed countryman, who, without striking up the revolver of the Blackleg, had saved his life, while he also owed to him every dollar he had lost, which had been returned to him.

So he had sought him out to have a talk with him and ask him how he had come to be there.

"What a strange appearance he must have made, and the title of the story was nothing there was nothing to it.

"He had been seen by the boothman, who had gone on deck, after the hour he had gone to his room, and he had been seen by the clerk and Gordon Grayhurst went to his room.

"The watch was over, and there was something about which he had not gone anywhere to it.

"His appearance was highly suspicious.

"His affair with the Blackleg was recalled, and the fact that he had plenty of money, the diamond dice, and gold box, the diamond star and his own watch and chain.

"It looked like a case of murder for revenge or money.

"Then the thoughts of some turned upon Jack Dimond.

He was known to remain until dinner, and he was at one o'clock on the Mississippi steamers.

But he was called and told of the mysterious box, and he said he was at one o'clock on the Mississippi steamers.

He saw at a glance that he was under some obligation."

"Of course, this reflects upon me: but the last I saw of him was when he was on deck, and I'm sure he didn't go ashore for an hour, then turned in, and that is all I know about it.

"What on earth can he be up to? And he had not gone anywhere to it.

"That settles it, then, that he has been feebly dealt with, but by whom?"
The murder! and the parson started back with a look of horror.

"Yes, a poor woman was robbed and murdered on this boat last night, and all suspicious characters are to be searched and held, if you come on board, I think, sir," asked Jack Dimond.

"And the boat will add another reward," said the clergyman.

"Now let me call upon me for my quota to a subscription for a reward," Valentine Gibson remarked.

The clergyman shook his head.

Then the latter and Gordon Grayhurst walked out of the room together.

They talked together for some time, and could only arrive at the conclusion that the stranger was a solid and serious young man, of moderate means, and that he was looking over his books, and reading the newspapers, as if he believed in the truth of what you have said, and it is your duty now, I must be happy to have you visit me at The Parsonage.

"I shall be honored, Mr. Grayhurst, I assure, and also glad to call myself of your kind invitation. The parson, who prayed for Diamond Jack's soul, and as he spoke, I had seen, was walking with solemn steps toward the two gentlemen who were observing him.

CHAPTER XIII.
A PAGE FROM HIS MILITARY LIFE.

The one who approached Gordon Grayhurst and Mr. Gibson, as they stood together on the steamer's deck, was one of those solemn, self-looking individuals we often find in the ministry, of that stripe who are opposed to everything except prayer and almsgiving.

He was dressed in a suit of severe black, of the most pronounced ecclesiastical cut, wore a snowy collar and necktie, had gray hair, wore a long, and a fringe of gray whiskers running out from his neck over his collar, and his face was lined, and had gold-rimmed spectacles, with double glasses in his eyes, as though he was very near-sighted, a belief that was carried out by his squinting in a pensive manner.

His mouth was drawn down at the corners to a sad expression, had a certain color in his nose, while his cloth, with the exception of a dark silk vest, was of the child-like liquid known as 'old rain.'

His hat was highly polished, his step slow, and had the air of a man who had been a favorite of his brothers who could not have suited the character better.

He bowed as he approached the two gentlemen, and said in a voice that was sepulchral, and while white in it "Good-morning, my friends."

"That is a glorious day, for which we should all give thanks." Did you hear the murder last night?" abruptiy respuned Valentine Gibson.

\[CHAPTER XIV.\]
\[The Parson's Visit.\]

The excitement caused by the unexpected act of the parson was intense. Some laughed, a few wept, many encouraged his policy of attack to his determination to down the sin of gambling, and others were silent.\[Dick Dorn's Destiny.\]

Gordon Grayhurst looked rather offended and annoyed, while Valentine Gibson was cynical.

The gambler showed that he was angry, for his face flushed and his fists clenched. Then, as quiet once more regained, the deep, mysterious voice of the parson was heard: "Your name is Shepherd, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, and I am a sheepherder trying to lead lost sheep, but I am about it in a way that will not pay while I am on this boat."

Jack Dimond's face became very pale, but he said in the same unmoved voice: "If it were not for your white hair and your being a clergyman, I would drive you through that gate and throw you into the Mississippi."\[All stirred at this threat of the gambler, for they knew that he was a man to be feared when his anger was aroused.\]

"And yet just such men often have great influence with people."

The eyes of the gambler were on the old man, and he may have his virtues, but I could not tolerate him.

"And the boat will add another reward," said the clergyman.

"Now there is a man you should convert, for he is an aliasing his sin, I assure you."

"What is he, friend?"

"A gambler."

"He may have his hands in horror, muttering something and made a bee-line for Diamond Jack, who was seated forward smirking."

The encouragement he met must have been considerable, for he remained a long while in conversation with the parson, who prayed for Diamond Jack's soul, and as he spoke, I had seen, was walking with solemn steps toward the two gentlemen who were observing him.

The mysterious disappearance of the conspiracy, Dave Dunn, and the universal topic of conversation during the day, and had cast a gloom over all on the steamer, for no one seemed to doubt that the man had been killed and thrown overboard during the hours of the night.

The clerk told me that he had made his report to hand over to the authorities at New Orleans upon his return, and would state that he believed a murder had been committed.

Assembling in Social Hall when night came the missing man was again the subject of conversation, and there was little doubt regarding Jack Dimond's being strongly suspected as his murderer.

When he came in from his smoke upon the deck every one was curious, and a number had gone to the captain and stated that they thought he should hold the gambler and not allow him to leave the boat at the landing.

"That is all arranged for, gentlemen," was the calm and collected voice of Captain Craft, and me he would not say.

"Well, Mr. Grayhurst, what do you say to a game to-night?" said Jack Dimond, as he came up to where the young plater sat with Valentine Gibson.

"I am wholly at your service, sir," was the ready reply, and the two sat down at a table and cards were brought.

Suddenly from his corner arose the parson, and said in a low voice, "I protest, gentlemen."\[Davy Dunn.\]

"I protest, gentlemen." I will not yield to his insight to my gray hairs and my sacred calling, of allowing any game of cards to be played in my presence."

"I say no," wrote the gambler as though ready to knock out any sinner who dared oppose him.
would be no card playing that night on board, after the bombshell which the Reverend Ariel Shepherd had thrown down to the card-players, they decided to go on deck for a walk. They then saw the gambler seated forward, and then two of his friends paced up and down toward the stern of the steamer for a long while, for in the presence of Jack Dimond the parrot was safe, and the parson thought they were watching him.

"There was a moon, in its second quarter, and the night was most inviting to remain on deck so the two friends paced up and down toward the stern of the steamer for a long while, for in the presence of Jack Dimond the parson thought they were watching him.

"There is something strange in all that, Grayhurst," for don't you think it is not a man to be bored by that man without he has some hold upon him?"

"So I think, for surely the parson cannot be converting him from the error of his way," Dr. Gordon Grayhurst laughed.

"If he does it will be a miracle, for Jack Dimond is said to be one who fears neither Heaven, Hades or man;"

"Yes, such is the record I have heard that he be, for my father often spoke of him to me; but see, Social Hall is deserted, and I will say good-night."

"Good-night, and we will meet at breakfast."

CHAPTER XV.

THE PAID PASSENGER.

When the two friends met at breakfast there was a surprise for them, for it was going the round of the cabin that Jack Dimond the gambler had left the steerage during the night, going up to the cabin at Vicksburg.

It was also said that the parson had landed at Vicksburg, also, and people wondered at both together. For Jack Dimond had been known for "Memphis and returns," and the Reverend Shepherd had spoken of him as being on up to the end of the steamer's run. Why the gambler and the clergyman should leave the boat together was something that could not be unraveled by any one.

"What do you think of it, Grayhurst?" asked Mr. Gibson.

"I hardly know; but I thought that the captain was to detain Jack Dimond, on account of the suspicion cast upon him of having murdered someone."

"So I understand; but let me tell you what I heard."

"Well?"

"That neither the parson nor the gambler went ashore at Vicksburg."

"Can this be possible?"

"Yes; I mean so, for I heard one of the passengers say that he could not sleep, so got up, dressed, and went on a seat forward.

While this parson was run on to land at Vicksburg, her lights were in full blazing, and he sat down to his seat, and saw who went ashore and came on board.

"I am the parson or the gambler?"

"No, he did not."

"That is strange."

"Yes, it was quick and strange; but there is a conical-looking duck!" and Gibson nodded toward a youth who was coming along the deck toward them.

He had a red face, and his hair was of almost crimson hue, so fiery red it was.

His head seemed too small for his body, and a Derry hat sat upon it down to his ears, being a size too large for him.

He was what might be called a fat boy, and yearnings and pains were too large for him.

They couldn't have numbered over sixteen, and appeared to make the best of it.

He caught a flew as he came along, and put it in his mouth to hawk from his pocket.

Then, with a snooty spirit of mischief he found inside, he opened his mouth and made a sound on the several of the throns, so that the owners would get excited.

A parrot swinging in a cage attracted his attention next, and near him hung a bunch of bananas two.

Again he was tempted, and after eating four, not the one-five remaining was given to the parrot.

"Good boy," said the bird.

Gibson put his finger in the cage and the boy cribbed another banana, and the parrot did not get the last one of the time.

But he repeated his compliment, hoping in time to get at least as much as one banana, and he seemed to have taken in the sight of the boy, so considered that he would be able to loot the entire bunch.

But the boy went and got another banana, and standing on the deck, ate it all.

The parrot ruffled his feathers and looked uneasy, but returned to the cage at his command, and it was insolent, and his language showed that he could be formidable as well as polite, for he said very decidedly:

"Bait boy,—bad. This time I am going to the parrot until he had him swearing like a sailor.

"For I am I was amused at the exhibition they had witnessed, and the latter determined to draw the conclusion accordingly, so said:

"Do you know when we will reach Memphis, sir?"

"Now?"

"You are going there, I suppose?"

"If the boat don't blow up."

"You are not anticipating such a catastrophe."

"I dunno, bovers often bust, and I've heard the one in this boat was leaky," and the boy was happy in giving the two men a scare, as he thought.

"I think I saw you come on board at Vicksburg."

"That's where I live."

"Do you remember seeing a minister go ashore at Vicksburg?"

"Yes, he went ashore as I come on."

"Ah! and was he alone?"

"There was no one with him."

"What style of man was he?"

"Well, he was dressed to kill, and wore diamond-girded dress."

"Thank you; and they remained ashore at Vicksburg, I guess so, as I didn't see them come on again."

The boy now spied a passenger asleep in a chair.

Instantly he took a box from his pocket containing a white powder, rubbed it on his hand, but it back, and moved on the enemy.

Trippeing purposely over a cuspidor, he slapped his powdered hand full on the back of the sitting passenger, awakening him with a start of fright.

"Excuse me, mister, I tumorled," he said, innocently, and went on his way, while in the center of the passenger's back was the white imprint of his spread hand.

Both Gordon Grayhurst and Gibson were concerned with laughter, and the former said:

"Well, that boy has got more deviltry in him to the square inch than any one I ever saw."

"Somebody will kill him yet."

"No fear of that, for he is too sharp to be caught."

Did you notice his face, that in spite of his fat cheeks and red face he was really handsome?"

"Yes, I observed that; but you heard what he said about the gambler and the parson."

"Yes, they went ashore after all, and escaped the gazes of the passenger who said that they had not."

I wish I knew how it was the parson could drive Jack Dimond off of this boat."

"So do I," was Gordon Grayhurst's response.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PARSON MAKES A POINT.

When Jack Dimond left the Social Hall, after his discouragement at the hands of the Reverend Shepherd, he dashed off a drink of brandy and soda at the bar, lighted a cigar, and walked out upon the gunwale of the sloping deck. He stood there a minute, glancing in through the glass windows, and seeing that the parson was coming he went on deck.

There were always a dozen or more easy-chairs forward, near the stern bell of the steamer, and now none of them were occupied. Jack Dimond came up to one, and a moment after a step resonated behind him and the Reverend Shepherd came and sat by his side.

"A fine blade, brother," said the clergyman.

"Beat out," was the somewhat blunt response of the gambler.

"Oh, certainly."

"Thanks, mister," answered Dimond.

And the parson drew his chair very close to the gambler, who could not move further away, as the bell-ringing him.

"I'm going to sit on that it was not, sir."

"True, very true; but I should think you would avoid sitting along with your kindred, friend."

"How, pray?"

"On account of the memories the weird, grim phantoms of the night of that river must call up into your mind the scenes of death."

"I am surely at a loss to comprehend you," said Dimond.

"What do you mean?"

"My whispered words."

"Ah, yes, I recall that you made a charge against me, in a manner which you dared not make aloud."

"That leads me to the cabin and I will repeat the charge, and aloud."

"Do you dare accuse me of the murder of that fellow together?"

"Of course I do."

"How dare you have the brazen effrontery to tell me so to your face?"

"You have never marred the charge behind your back, as others have."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, yes, others of the people on this boat believe that you murdered Davy Dunn."

"That's right!"

"Yes."" They are fools.

"They don't think that they are."

"Why should I kill him?"

"Why?"

"For the best of reasons."

"Name them."

"Well, you are a man who has played cards with much continuous gambling, ten years, that you have been suspected of cheating."

"Who says so?"

"What are you to know about such things?"

"I have ears, and have heard men talk.

"Well, no one has accused me of cheating."

"You are mistaken."

"Who did?"

"Hugh Dunwood."

"Yes, he did.

"That I claim that I played an unfair game."

"You that you shot him."

"I had to uphold my honor, your honor."

"Who was your opponent?"

"Vandoo Buckner."

"Yes, so he did.

"Did you arrange your honor in his case?"

"Not then; I gave him back all I had won from him and challenged him."

"Well?"

"We went ashore at a landing and fought a duel."

"With what result?"

"I killed him of course."

"And you recall no one else who charged you to your face with cheating?"

"Yes, one other."

"What did he say?"

"I do not know."

"What was his name?"

"Stanton Buckner, I believe."

"And why did you not kill him?"

"That was a quick, thought, covered me with his revolver and I was searched by the crowd."

"With what result?"

"It was shown that I had not played with two packs, and marked cards as he accused me of doing."

"Well?"

"He left the steamer that night, and I never met him again."

"Is this true?"

"Do you accuse me of lying?"

"No, I recall no one else who charged you to your face with cheating."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that some weeks after Stanton Buckner took passage on a steamer which you were on board of as a passenger, you were in the steerage at eight, entered the cabin and seeing you passed on to his state-}

"The next morning he was not found on board, and no one knew what had become of him."

"What is this?"

"His clothes and baggage were in his state-}

"That was as near to something which you dared not say aloud."

"Yes, I remember the excitement it occasioned the time.

"No doubt, but do you recall that there was
CHAPTER XVII

The Secret

Wynn the skill of a pickpocket the person had, while talking to Jack Dimond, slipped the revoler out of the holster on one hip, his knife from the other.

He had also been toying with a pair of steel muscles last night, and at last he had decided to act, he had slipped, with lightning rapidity, the steel upon his wrists and snapped them. Thus entrapped, and with a revolver cocking in his face, the gambler had not dared offer any resistance.

He had felt that he had been disarmed most cleverly, and caught with equal cleverness. He could do nothing else than obey his uncaptured captor.

He was led down to the deck below, out on the guards of the office window, up which the person stepped.

The clerk showed the glass aside.

"The keys of the safe are in 13 and 15, please," Mr. Butler."

"Yes, sir," and the keys were handed out.

It was evident that the captain and clerk both knew the person.

Passing along on the outer guard, the person led his prisoner to Number 15.

Unlocking the door, he bade him enter, and then flicked a candle.

There was seen to be a door communicating with the next state-room, and this was placed around the headboard and made fast through the maimings under the gambler's head, as below.

"You have space to undress and move about, sir, and the state-room on each side of you is not occupied."

"The promised, but I shall take one, so as to keep him eye upon you."

"Is Heaven's name, who are you?"

"Do you recognize this?"

He unbuttoned his coat as he spoke, and revealed the gambler's diamond star.

"My God!"

"Do not wonder that you are amazed."

"Shall I tell you how I got it?"

"I won it."

"Won it?"

"How and when and where?"

"Von you."

"It is false;"

"Don't be too certain."

"Let me tell you that you made a very sad mistake."

Remember, you did not kill my man,"

"Davy Dunn,"

"the gambler, in spite of his position of peril and captivity laughed."

"I repeat it, you did not kill him."

"Who says that I tried to do so?"

"I say so."

"You pretended to have seen me fall to the deck."

"I did see it."

"It is false."

"You went to his door, the outer one, and had on a master's jacket all the time, the sheriff tied over your face.

"He called him to the door and told him in a whisper that you feared the steamer was on fire.

He stepped out, dressed as he was, and you dealt him what you intended should be a deadly blow.

"But he had in his hat a wire frame, and it saved him, though the blow stunned him."

"You searched him and found nothing.

"He was too smart for you there."

"You threw him overboard, and then searched his state-room for your gold box, diamond disc, this star I wear and my money,"

"You failed to find anything."

"Then you sought your state-room."

"You got the cold water revived him, and he began to swim."

"He saw the steamer going rapidly away from him, but she had been running very close inshore, so he had but a short distance to swim to reach it."

Fortunately he found a residence near where he landed, and aware that the steamer was running around one of the ends for which this river is noted, he felt that he could get a horse and by riding ten miles head her off at the town above, and which she had to go forty miles to reach.

"He got some clothes from the people, a man to drive him to the town and started."

"He reached the town ahead of the steamer, and when he landed went on board."

"He made his way to his state-room and found it unlocked."

"But that was not the only state-room he had contrived; for he came prepared for emergencies."

"Do you follow me, Jack Dimond?"

"Go on!"

"I was sure that my story would interest your Excellency."

"Go on, I say."

"The number is this, asked the gambler quickly, and with a certain superstitious dread."

"Number Fifteen."

"I am sure it is not thirteen."

"Yes, that room is thirteen, and now fifteen is your unlucky number."

"I do not know whether you are as first."

"I shall tell you how I got it?"

"Yes, sir,"

"and the keys were handed out."

"It was evident that the captain and clerk both knew the person.

"This is not true."

"Whether it be not his cards and yours can be examined together to verify my charge against you."

"Well, have you done with your charges?"

"I wish to return to the death of Stanton Buckner, and as running his state-room with a skeleton key, chloroformed him while asleep, took his body and all by the wheelhouse and tossed it overboard."

The gambler laughed.

"The surprise seems to amuse you, of the manner in which you got rid of your victim."

"It is so perfectly absurd."

"Yes."

"Did you know that the body of the dead man was found?"

"It was never."

"It was picked up on the shore of a planter, who happened to be a physician as well as a soldier."

"He examined the body carefully, divested it and discovered that the lungs showed chloroform and that death had not come from drowning."

"The body was buried on his plantation, and as he was just starting on an extended trip North, he merely reported the finding of the body and the murder."

"And that he had placed him in his own burying-ground."

"You seem to well acquainted with the affair."

"I am;"

"And to have had much in my affair."

"I have."

"Did you ever stop to consider what it might lead to?"

"No."

"Well, suppose you would like to know?"

"Yes, being forewarned is being forearmed."

"Well, it might lead to your death."

"It might, but I doubt it."

"You seem to have no dread of it?"

"Don't take it to see if those in the pilot-house can see you, for they cannot, as the moon is going down, and the two gentlemen who were walking the deck awhile since have retired."

"But let me tell you what I saw last night."

"What did you see?"

"A man called from his state-room and dealt a blow over his head, which felled him to the deck."

"Then the murderer bent over him, secured his stars, and state that you entered the pilot-house, and throw it deep over the guard into the river."

"Then the captain went to his victim's state-room, searched it and found—nothing."

"The victim was the country youth, and the murderer was you, as I have you confessed, Jack Dimond, and more, here are steel bracelets for the Preisler."

"They clasped easily, you see."

"Now, come with me, Jack Dimond, to the deck below. A movement to resist, or a word, will be the signal for your death," warned the person in a low, determined tone.
CHAPTER XIX.

To dance, to play, to win.

That clump will get himself into trouble, you know, Valentine Gibson to Gordon Greyhurst, for the two had become inseparable now. He alluded to the fat boy, who seemed to exist simply for his own satisfaction, independent of all others. The pranks were not for show, apparently, for he went about everything in a business way, turning from one piece of mischief to another just as he might attend to duties devolving upon him.

He was the first at the table when meals were announced, and the last to leave it. If a tempting morsel was brought his next nearer, he appropriated it when the other's face was turned, and looked as innocent as a babe.

Gordon and Gibson found real delight in following him up and watching him.

He got the parlor goad and mad, tortured him into profanity, and then hung him back by the ladies' cabin when he was on his way to the steamery in Flanders.

One morning he spied an Italian organ grinder with a monkey, upon the deck below. The Italian went to sleep, and the fat boy made friends with the monkey, gave him a few nickels, some cake and candy, lowering all to hide something in his back pocket. Then he got the monkey to catch hold of the rope end and handed him up to the cabin deck.

He was happy then and went on a search for mischief.

He found a negro waiter asleep on the guard, and the monkey near him on the floor. Then he put an orange on the negro's head and said:

"Get, mammon!"

The monkey obeyed with promptness, sprang upon the fruit and ripped it open, and grabbed at the orange, awakening the sleeping waiter who gave a yell of terror.

The monkey scrambled along the guards in fright, the fat boy after him, and finding a door of the cabin room opened.

The boy closed the door and then went into the cabin and sat down. When he had the whole lower deck in a state of excitement over the loss of his meal.

"Ma monka gone, ma poor good monka."

"He good monka, name Garibaldi."

"I give five dollas to find ma monka."

This encouraged a general search, but no one seemed to be able to get the reward.

The boy meanwhile sat in the cabin awaiting developments.

He learned he was to come over and be seemed to understand that the owner of the state-room must soon return.

He had read aright, for his patience was rewarded, as well as were Gordon Greyhurst and Gibson for waiting, for suddenly a series of uneasy yells were heard and bust dust what appeared to be a general alarm.

But it was a lady of uncertain age, one who came in the category of old maid.

She had disdained to retire, wearing a wig had laid it aside with her false teeth, when sudden steps were heard by the waiter, and then beheld the monkey in her bed.

The scene that followed was indescribable, andswallowed the monkey close at her heels.

She was frightened and darted down the cabin toward the forward part of the boat, spied the fat boy and leaped into his arms.

CHAPTER XX.

The Fat Boy Holds Trumps.

BORN Gordon Greyhurst and Valentine Gibson had been to New Orleans.

The fat boy had told them that he was going to do the same, so they felt sure down the river the water would not be tedious.

Complaints had been made to the captain about the pranks of the fat boy, but Captain C—— had only promised that he should be taken in hand, and laughed silently at the fun of the young passenger.

The run down the river was a series of jokes on the part of the serious-faced fat boy, and from the clerk to the bootblack all had to suffer in some way or other.

When the steamer arrived at Vicksburg it was at night and after eleven o'clock.

But the fat boy was up, as were also the two young men, and all who came on board were critically examined as they did so by the three.

During the run down there hadn't been card-playing, but no games for big money, and Gordon Greyhurst and Valentine Gibson had played, but with nothing staked upon the game.

The fat boy had watched them with such interest that he invited by Valentine Gibson to play a game but got no offer.

"I'm your horse," said the fat boy, and he won five straight games in a series of Gibson and announced Gordon Greyhurst.

"Where did you learn to play cards, sonny?"

"At Sunday-school picnics," was the reply, and the fat boy went then to watch a game at another table.

There were two men there who had come aboard at Vicksburg.

They had at first been very wary, but seeing that all other passengers were strangers to them they sat down and began to play with two men from up country, who had plenty of money and bets high.

These two men were none other than Blackleg Bill and Buck Stapley.

They had been told by the captain that he would take them back to New Orleans, but never again should they travel on his boat, and if they created any disturbance he would kick them off.

They were very humble for awhile, then caught sight of the up-countrymen, and got into a game as before.

The countrymen were good players, and won steadily for awhile.

But just as the fat boy took a seat to watch the game they began to lose.

Gordon Greyhurst and Valentine Gibson sat apart, also watching the game, though not appearing to do so.

The fat boy somehow misconceived both Blackleg Bill and Buck Stapley, by "chipping in" his half of the pot and watching the two friends, until at last the former said, as he lost a game which he had staked sure to win, "With this sort of play I don't care who you beat, but if you keep your mouth shut and stop watchin' of me, I'll beat you."

And as long as you watched the game the boy would yet get into trouble.

The two friends walked out upon the gunwale, and falling down on the deck.

"Yes, and the fat boy, Grayhurst, did you notice how fat he looked when those games were going on?"

"Yes, and disconcerted them, it seemed to me.

"It is so, and he asked them to play with him."

"So I heard."

"Now he has boldly followed them out of the cabin."

"I saw that he did, and only hope he will not get into any trouble with them, for they are in a bad humor, after their affair going up the river, and just now having just five hundred dollars."

"Complainance as to how we go out and see if he is cutting up any of his pranks with them?"

"With pleasure, for I would not see the boy hurt if I could prevent it."

So the two friends walked out upon the gunwale, and falling down on the deck:

"Yes, and the fat boy is with them."

"He is, and they appear to be getting along without any trouble now, without any worry now, without any trouble now, without any trouble now, without any trouble now, without any trouble now."

"Let us call him and give him warning."

"I will see you later, gent; I'm playing a little game now and can't afford the time."

With this the two friends returned to the cabin.

"What is that boy to me?"

CHAPTER XXI.

The Little Game That Was Played.

When the two gamblers left the Social Hall of the Eclipse, they went upon deck and took seats, as they had lost about five hundred, Blackleg Bill said:

"Well, mates, that takes my pile, so I quits."

"Me, too," was Buck Stapley's remark, and the two arose from the table.

"What the Mcrete is that boy playing with kids," and the two men took a drink at the bar, lighted their cigars and went out upon the gunwale.

"Yes, and the fat boy, Grayhurst, did you notice how fat he looked when those games were going on?"

"Yes, and disconcerted them, it seemed to me."

"I saw that he did, and only hope he will not get into any trouble with them, for they are in a bad humor, after their affair going up the river, and just now having just five hundred dollars."

"Complainance as to how we go out and see if he is cutting up any of his pranks with them?"

"With pleasure, for I would not see the boy hurt if I could prevent it."

So the two friends walked out upon the gunwale, and falling down on the deck:

"Yes, and the fat boy is with them."

"He is, and they appear to be getting along without any trouble now, without any worry now, without any trouble now, without any trouble now, without any trouble now, without any trouble now."

"Let us call him and give him warning."

"I will see you later, gent; I'm playing a little game now and can't afford the time."

With this the two friends returned to the cabin.

"What is that boy to me?"
Dick Doom's Destiny.

CHAPTER XXII.

BROUGHT TO TERMS.

The man Staples seemed to have fallen wholly under the influence of the fat boy.

He sat in silence and heard what he had to say, and then said:

"What do you want me to do?"

"I am aware that there are a number of dangerous thieves up the Mississippi River, and they are known as Blackleg gamblers. A number of gamblers are square, good fellows, who trust to chance wholly, and their nerve and skill enable them to win big money. But there are those who play with marked cards, who play into each other's hands, who pay their losses in counterfeit money, and who have been banded together to rob innocent players."

"This band is under the lead of Jack Dimond, alias Diamond Jack, and Blackleg Bill is his lieutenant."

"I have evidence to hang Jack Dimond and Blackleg Bill and to send you to prison for a long term."

"But there are more of your band whom I want, and I wish to know who they are."

"To betray them?"

"That is just it,"

"They are my friends,"

"They will do no such thing."

"I know we are,"

"I know that they will be all either hanged or imprisoned, so how can they harm you?"

"They may have help from those who are their friends."

"There is no fear of that, but you must take the chance of losing these friends."

"I know my laws, and it would be death to me."

"Your captain, Jack Dimond, Blackleg Bill, and the man who was killed going up the river by your gang are four, so how many more make up the band?"

"Six, now that our mate was killed."

"Well, I can account for four, so where are the other two?"

"I don't know."

"Well, as you do not seem to care to accept my offer, I will find them out, and make terms with them, and you are in a bull-pen."

"In fact, I will even offer Blackleg Bill his pardon but will not change the whole band."

"Where is the captain?"

"A prisoner."

"Surely?"

"Yes."

"I can't believe it."

"I can show him to you."

"Seeing is believing."

"The fat boy arose and taking Blackegg Bill with him led to state-room number fifteen. He opened the door on the guard and said:

"Well, Dimond, I have gotten your friends Staples and Blackleg Bill."

"The derer what have?"

"Come in the voice of Jack Dimond, but Blackegill recognized it and by the dim light saw a man chained to the bed.

"You is right," he said, and he was glad to get out.

Then he was led back to another state-room.

"This is where you are to stay, Staples, and I will have to chain you as I did the others."

"I can't help it."

"You are convinced."

"I saw him."

"It was your captain."

"Yes."

"And now?"

"What will you do?"

"I've got some marks."

"That means that you will squeal."

"I'll do it if it's not known to come from me."

"No, I'll do it that."

"Has the power to keep your promise?"

"Yes, I will keep it on the square with you."

"All right."

"You come to my terms?"

"I want the cash my mates has about ten, for now I'm going to be hanged and go to prison they won't want money."

"You will get your freedom alone, for you already have money."

"How do you know?"

"I saw it."

"It's counterfeited."

"Give me your counterfeited money."

The man asked. These were from him, but the fat boy searched him and found two rolls of two cent pieces and a bunch of skeleton keys, a revolver and a knife.

"This roll of money is counterfeited, and this is good."

"You have some hundreds of dollars here of good bills, so that is all you will get."

"Then I won't talk."

"All right; I know who will."

"Well?"

"I'll squeal."

"And I'll listen,"

"Where shall I begin?"

"Answer my questions,"

"All right, fat."

"Jack Dimond is your captain?"

"Sure."

"Blackleg Bill your lieutenant."

"Sure."

"Now, there were seven members in the band."

"Sure."

"There were nine."

"Where are the others?"

"Went same way our pard went other night."

"I see."

"And you are bound by laws?"

"Want it kind."

"You have to give up a certain per cent to the others."

"Yes, and he finds our pigeons to pluck, and has to help us out if we get into trouble, or prison."

"Now, who are the other two?"

"One is named Paw Paw, and Soot is his wife."

"Ah! a woman in the band!"

"She's useful."

"Doublet! but what are her duties?"

"Well, she and Sam travels to do the light-fingered work."

"Rob state-rooms, pick pockets and such?"

"Just that."

"Where are they?"

"Now, good-night, and remember I am watching you."

With this the prisoner was locked to his bed, and the fat boy left him, going to his own state-room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FAIR PASSENGER.

The morning came, and Gordon Grayhurst and Valentine Gilson met at breakfast.

The fat boy was not in his accustomed place, and the waiter said that he had not yet appear ed.

The two friends glanced at each other significantly.

They glanced up the table at the line of faces, but now here were visible the evil countenances of the two gamblers.

This looked suspicious the friends thought, after finishing their breakfast they strolled to the door.

"Mr. Butler, where is our amusing fat boy this morning?" asked Gordon Grayhurst.

"He went ashore at Grand Gulf, sir."

"Indeed! he did not speak of leaving us so."

The clerk laughed and responded:

"He was a queer one, Mr. Grayhurst."

"I know he was."

"But our two gambler friends are not visible either."

"No, they have gone too, for the captain would stand no nonsense from them."

"My new passengers?"

"No, sir, and yet a young lady did come aboard at the Kitty plantation early this morning."

"And she's pretty too,"

"I think that is a rum speculation, Grayhurst."

"We must cultivate her acquaintance," said Gilson.

Then the two friends walked on deck and went to the pilot-house.
The lady knocked at the door to say that she might open the door when she went to bed and leave it ajar.

"Miss Cassell thanked her kindly, and soon after did as she was directed.

The lights being low in the steamer, all was quiet on board, save the rattle of the paddle-wheels and the creak of the edge-ropes, with the occasional crack of a bell from the pilot-house.

Just at midnight the door of Miss Cassell's room opened softly.

The old lady appeared, and went noiselessly to the sleeper's bed.

She held something in her hand which she laid softly upon the man's breast.

The things taken from the trunk of Miss Cassell were then placed in the secret receptacle in the bustle worn by the old lady.

"Now, we are all right," whispered the man.

"Yes, please, my money, jewels and other things.

"We must be hard to rove, too, for of course we were robbed as well, and the trawl of their trunk was left out, and their valuable papers in the accompaniment of the old lady.

Having secured their treasure, they dropped on and slept, as though with the consciousness of having done a good action.

When the dawn brought the man and the sturdy, strong breathing of the woman showed that the two slumbered seriously, Miss Cassell awoke.

She did not awake like one who had been under the influence of a drug, for she was wide awake in an instant.

She arose softly, and opening the door, which was ajar, stepped quietly to the other room.

Then she tied about her face a handkerchief, covering mouth and nostrils, and began to spray the two sleepers with chloroform.

She soon felt that she had done her work sufficiently, and then opened the door and stepped back into the pure air of her own room.

Then she proceeded to dress, and having complete her toilet, stepped back into the state-room of the sleepers.

Their slumber was so profound that they did not feel her take their hands and slip upon the waist of empty blouses, which were then attached to the bed by a chain, the latter being also locked.

Then the door was opened to admit fresh air, and Miss Cassell threw herself upon her bed to get some more rest.

She was at last awakened by low voices, and rising, found that dawn had come, and the rising sun was tinting the glass windows of the outer door.

She at once entered the next state room, and said pleasantly:

"Good morning!

"We have been chloroformed and robbed," said the man, in a husky tone.

"Yes, our money, jewels, all gone," wailed the woman.

"Don't talk about those things, my dear friends, for I can tell you where they are.

"You don't believe me, do you?"

"We will leave the door ajar, my dear, so that you can see that I am not lying," said the old gentleman, and Miss Cassell looked pleased and said:

"Then I am no longer in dread."

CHAPTER XXV.

On the Mississippi.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Miss Cassell retired to her state-room.

The old couple had already retired, but the

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that last night I had a dream."

"A dream, was it?"

"A woman came into my room and placed a handkerchief saturated with chloroform upon my face."

"Ooh!"

"I removed it at once, folded it in the bedding, and replaced it with one of my own."

"The woman came back again, with another handkerchief, and again I thwarted her."

"Believing me under the influence of the drug, she and her husband robbed me."

"Here is money, here my jewels, all in your bunks."

"Is it not strange?"

"Strange indeed," and the woman whimpered.

"So I played the chloroform act, got them under its influence, put them in irons and spoiled their little game."

"It was a clever one, I admit, for they cut a piece of glass out of my door, with a diamond-cutter, to make believe the robber had entered that way.

"Now I'll just take my money and valuables, also your cash and jewelry, even to the counterfeit money you have with you, Sam Sykes and wife."

"Who are you?" gasped the man.

"Miss Cassell, the Lady Detective," was the smiling answer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

They knew not why or wherefore, but there they were in irons, confining and keeping the fact, too, that Sam Sykes wore a white wig, made up as an old man, as an additional protection.

They had long played a bold game, robbing fellow-travelers, and passing counterfeit money about.

Calling the stewardesses, Miss Cassell sent a note to the captain, the defenses were so strong in place.

"Now you can get up and dress yourselves, as well as you can, and then remain in your state-room."

"Keep your outer door locked and simply say you are not awake, and they will leave you alone.

"I have written to have your breakfast sent to my room, so you shall not suffer.

"We will reach New Orleans this afternoon, and then, I will find you safer quarters, though not near so pleasant."

"Here, woman, who are you?" asked Sam Sykes.

"Miss Cassell the Detective, I told you."

"What is your charge against us?"

"Robbery and passing counterfeit money."

"You have no proof."

"What am I here for, why are you disguised, and what is the meaning of all this counterfeit money and your possession?"

The man groaned, the woman looked defiant, and said nothing more."

"I want you, Mrs. Sykes."

"Who told you my name was Sykes?"

"Do you deny it?"

"You are a fool."

"Well, you love money do you not?"

"Not as much as you do, to rob and cheat for it."

"We'll pay you big money to hush this up.

"There's a very snug sum in a reward offered for the perpetrators of certain robberies you have been guilty of."

"Who do you see?"

"I do, for I know you both well, now, and let me tell you that I know old Sam, and his handkerchiefs worn by the young woman.

"I believe your state-room adjoining mine, and has a communicating door.

"I am so glad, for I feel very timid as I have considerable money in my purse, and as you see, quite a number of jewels, so have dreaded being robbed by a lady."

"We will leave the door ajar, my dear, so that you can see that I am not lying," said the old gentleman, and Miss Cassell looked pleased and said:

"Then I am no longer in dread."
Dick Doom’s Destiny.

"Yes," said the lady detective, "I have just seen Miss Cassell, and she is with me."

"Miss Cassell is here," said the chief. "I have just seen her."

"I am glad to hear it," said the lady detective. "I have been looking for her."

"I have been looking for her too," said the chief. "I have been looking for her for some time."
Dick Domick’s Destiny.

"That was my strong point, sir, and I had more fun than a basket of puppies.

The child laughed in spite of the seriousness of the situation.

"Yes, I’ll warrant you got all the fun out of Dick Domick, for somehow, you can’t find amusement at a funeral.

"Yes, Dick Domick had his sides of life, sir.

"But you have seen me as Chumley, the fat boy, for I did enjoy it, and Mr. Grayhurst and Mr. Gibson fairly shadowed me to see the fun.

"Well, I saw it!"

"Oh, yes, sir; for with a parrot, Italian, monkey, old maid and some colored folk, I certainly thought there was a chance for a circus.

"How many disguises have you got?"

"Several, sir, and all perfect!"

"And as they can be, sir.

"All the time you have been a prisoner in your state-room?"

"Yes, sir.

"And then?"

"I went on up to Memphis, and Mr. Grayhurst, after allowing me and them somehow to get under cover, and somehow to keep them.

"I still remained as the fat boy, and as I had hoped, I caught my man.

"New York.

"Black Bill and Bock Staples.

"They boarded the boat again, then?"

"Yes, sir, at Vicksburg, and they had the check to get two upriver men into a game with them.

"And cheated them?

"They were beginning to do so, when I took a lawyer from there, and somehow to get that, and couldn’t catch.

"But you were down in the fat boy then?

"Yes, yes.

"And then?"

"They gave them money and then paid it in counterfeit bills.

"Oh!"

"I followed out of the cabin, got my revolver muzzles against their backs, so managed to walk off to a state-room, where I trousted them.

"When I led Bock Staples to another state-room, offered him his freedom, as I had no murder charge against him, and so got the whole story from him.

"I also learned how two of the band, Sam Sykes and his wife were playing their game of roving passengers, so I let the fat boy go ashore, was metamorphosed into a ladie detective, after allowing them to rob me, and then the check to get two upriver men into a game with them.

"I think, though I may be wrong, that he won his money at a gambling table, and sold his notes back to him for this man’s freedom, for she was infatuated with Gibson, I have heard, and the brother stood in the way.

"What is it, Dick?"

"I made a mistake not to sift the past record of that man before I went away, for I think it was a case of John Doe.

"What reason have you?"

"Well, sir, I will tell you.

"He stands well here.

"That, my boy, I do not hear my story.

"All right, Dick.

"I asked the captain what the matter was, and he said they would pay all expenses for the recovering of his body.

"This item, and the affairs discovered that the man was in good health, and had died by poison.

"The doctor, Parsons was his name, he had no other call from Doctor Valentine, and just John Doe, and had lost most a remarkable case.

"It was a wealthy planter, and as the family would not submit to a post-mortem, he wished to know what was the matter with the man, and he said he would pay all expenses for the recovering of his body.

"This he did, and the students discovered that the man was in good health, and had died by poison.

"The doctor, Parsons was his name, he had no other call from Doctor Valentine, and so decided that the old planter had been put out of the way purposely.

"He said the planter’s name was Gibson.

"Ah!

"I wrote all down, as soon as I went to my state-room, with him, and I wrote it on the wall, and so on.

"Yes, sir, and Doctor Parsons furthermore said that he had the skeleton of the old planter and intended putting it into his office.

"He has settled here, for I have seen him often, and I shall go and ask him just where that planter lived.

"Then I shall go there and see if Valentine Gibson is known in those parts.

"Yes, I will go and see him, and see if he has any news of the old planter.

"Tracked.

"Two weeks after the conversation just related here, the New York chief of police and Dick Domick, the latter came again into the office.

"Dick once more, Dick.

"I am glad to see you.

"Thank you, sir, and Dick Domick dropped into a chair in a way.

"Well, Dick, what news?"

"I saw Doctor Parsons, sir.

"Yes,"

"I told him that I knew, no matter how, of his having been given the body of the planter to dissect, and asked him simply to give me the location.

"Which he did.

"It seemed to regret exceedingly the affair, for he had no idea that he was playing into the hands of a designing man, and told me just how it was.

"I went up the river to the place nearest where the planter lived, drove to his home and found strange persons there.

"The home had been sold out by the heir.

"Yes, sir, a son, and he had gotten cash for everything and gone away, no one knew where.

"That was this boy, and I promised to dig up the body and investigate.

"Very bad, sir, and it was said that his father had murdered and made away with, and disinterred him, when he was suddenly taken ill and died.

"A few hints at his being poisoned, and at least there were a few sketches to dig up the body and investigate.

"But that very night the grave was opened and it was said that the medical students took the body.

"Ah, yes."

"Public opinion was, however, so bitter, sir, against the son, that, as I stated, he left, converting all his belongings into cash.

"And the name of this heir?"

"It is Valentine Gibson.

"The chief whistled.

"I crossed the world and at last came here.

"You are sure it is the same man?"

"Yes, Mr. Gibson, sir.

"Oh, yes.

"Now form is a photograph of the Valentine Gibson who was the heir of the old planter.

"This photograph, Dick, was taken some years ago, but it is the same man.

"So I felt sure, sir.

"Another thing, Dick.

"Yes, sir.

"Have you seen the papers lately?"

"No, sir, not one.

"You know nothing of what has happened to Mr. Gibson?"

"My God! what has happened now, sir?"

"Mr. Gordon Grayhurst is dead.

"Good God! Gordon Dead?"

"Yes, I am sorry to tell you.

"Poor Gordon!"

"It is sad, Dick, but worst of all was he killed in a duel.

"Killed in a duel!" and Dick Domick’s lips quivered.

"Yes, he was killed ten days ago.

"Who killed him?"

"A fast young fellow by the name of Clyde Carlyle.

"Clyde Carlyle?"

"Yes, a man about town of late, but who is a stranger here.

"He is?"

"I never heard of him, sir.

"Dear friend of Valentine Gibson.

"A friend of Valentine Gibson, and yet kill Gordon Grayhurst.

"It looks bad, Dick.

"It does, sir, very bad, after the record I have discovered of this same Gibson.

"It was a quarrel at the club, and Carlyle intruded himself, and his friend was flown down.

"Then Carlyle challenged him, and as Gibson was not there, Grayhurst asked a man to be his second, when he had no friendship, and as his brother-in-law just then came up, Carlyle accepted, and the duel followed.

"Gibson stated that he did so, hoping to be a better able to arrange matters.

"But the duel was fought!

"Yes, and Grayhurst was shot dead.

"A gallant soldier.

"Was unhurt.

"Poor Gibson.

"Went home to break the news to his child wife."
Dick Doom's Destiny.

CHAPTER XXX.

A foot half crushed, evidently trod upon by one of the horses, was under the chief.

"And his head has been badly injured," said Doctor Stone.

"Almost any one else would have let go thus far," added the doctor.

"But he saved the lives of two ladies and three children from the chief.

A splendid fellow," Doctor Stone said.

"We must bring him out as good as new," said Doctor Stone.

"Yes, but it will take a long time," was the answer.

"If devolved nursing will help, he shall have it," the chief said.

"Who is it?"

"A young man who often comes to visit us, sir, and whom you call Dick Doom.""}

A strange name.

"What does he do?"

"Travels." Then the arm and collar-bone were perfectly set, the crushed foot put in position and dressed, and the patient left to rally from the shock.

But fever set in, and it was months before Dick Doom was able to sit up and gaze out upon the flowers in the chief's garden.

He was as weak as a child, but soon began to rally, and a few weeks after began to feel like his old self again.

"Ah, I am a long time have I been dead to the world," he said.

"But I saved those ladies, did I not?"

"Yes, and a splendid deed," the chief said.

"That is a recompense." They continued to nurse him when he was so ill to see you, and send you flowers daily.

"They are very kind," he said.

"Mr. Adam was a very rich merchant, the husband of one of the ladies, and father of the children, and the government is going to make you junior partner of his firm." He was very good indeed, but I was born for a detective, and my only destiny and none other will I follow.

"No, no, nothing can win me from being a ferret." After a short silence Dick Doom resumed:

"And I recall now that I had some secret work to do when I was hurt." The voice of the chief's wife was low and sympathetic.

"Yes, madam.

"Are you strong enough for me to tell you some bad news?"

"Oh, yes, for nothing can hurt me now," he said with a sad smile.

"It is about the friends of The Ferns."

"Of Marion, for Gurdon is dead!"

"Yes, sir.

"Has Gibson deserted her?"

"She has left him.

"He left Gibson, her husband!"

"Yes, forever.

"Ahh! you mean that Marion is dead?"

"Yes, she is dead.

"Happy Marion.

"Shall I tell you of her?"

"Yes.

"You are strong enough to bear it?"

"Oh, yes.

"Well, Dick, I am sorry that you did not see her, and that you have not met with her, father.

"But she was watched after her brother's death, for she might take her own life, for all feared that her mind was impaired by her sorrow.

"And she did take her own life?"

"Yes, Dick, she did believe it.

"Tell me about it?"

"Well, she got away from her attendant one evening, took a rowing boat off to sleep, and going to the river she went off in her little boat. The boat was found, with her hat and gloves in it, and she showed that she had evidently sprung into the river and thus ended her life.

"Aha! what a fate, what a cruel fate!"

"It was, Dick,

"Her father killed by being thrown from his horse, Marion becoming the wife of Valentine Gibson, Gibbons killed in a duel, and now Marion dying by her own hand.

"How strange it has pursued them, while I, without home, kindred, yes, excepting you, and the chief, with no friends, I live on and prosper,

"Nothing takes me off, I am hard to kill, and so far as I can carry on my dead career.

"You are spared from all the dangers you have passed through for some good purpose, Dick.

"It may be, and it may not be, where is Valentine Gibbons?"

"He has gone, sir."

"And one knows; but his grief was so great that he settled up his affairs, sold the property he did not love, he went away, some say to foreign lands, but no one seems to know where.

"He began to drink heavily, and it is thought that he will soon and his life in a drunkard's grave."

"Or on the gallows," muttered Dick Doom.

Then he asked:

"What does the chief think of all this?"

"Her is here, so ask him, Dick," and as the lady spoke the chief rode up to the gate, sprang from his buggy and entering the cottage gave the young detective his usual hearty greeting.

"You see, Dick, remembering the secret we kept, I was afraid Gibbons, I believe, was prejudiced against him.

"When the news of his wife's death came I went myself to The Ferns to investigate.

"Every one on the place, and around it, I questioned, and I put Gibson through a cross-examination that would break down almost any man.

"From the people I learned only of his perfect devotion to his wife, but I also discovered that she did not love him.

"No; had she loved her husband she would never have taken her own life from grief for her dead brothers, in my opinion," said Dick Doom, quickly.

"You have hit the nail upon the head, I feel sure, believe she married the man to save her brother, and when she was far from him, then she was glad to go, too.

"I took her own life, I am convinced."

"And Valentine Gibbons?"

"Well, I rather liked the fellow, and certainly pleased his grief.

"He spent large sums in an effort to find his wife's body, and failing, was almost crazed.

"At last he got rid of his property at great sacrifice, and set off on his travels, going no one knows where.

"Chief!"

"Yes, Dick.

"Somewhere I am suspicious of that man, I cannot help it, and some day I shall ferret out all the secrets of the defeated Gordon Grayhurst and his sister Marion."

And Dick Doom kept his word, for he followed blindly on in the destiny in which he felt in his heart shaped his ends.

THE END.

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