Deadwood Dick, Jr.'s, Death-Doom:

Over the hard, stony, barren plain, screaming like a demon, dragging Deadwood Dick at the end of the rope.

Or, The Boss Bully of Cold Canyon.

By Edward L. Wheeler, Author of "Deadwood Dick" Novels, Etc.

Chapter I.

Deadwood Dick doomed.

"Deadwood Dick, your race is run." Cold and bitter and vengeful were the words, as they dropped from the speaker's lips.
It was a scene not easily forgotten. The mouth of a dark, dismal canyon, with a stretch of barren plain, and a curtained night of almost too terrible to talk of.

Half a dozen grim-visaged men, four of whom were holding a black horse by the head. The other two held a prisoner, whose ankles were bound, and whose feet were tied together by a rope, a coil of which the man quoted was holding in his hand as he spoke.

The prisoner was dressed in heavy clothing, and was bound fast. His feet were tied together, and he was starved. He was weak, and was half dead with hunger.

" biết, Melvin Munson," interposed Dick.

"Say it quick!" the response.

"If I live through this, you will know me!"

"Live to escape! Ha! ha! ha! If I thought there would be a chance of that happening, I would let you start.

No, no, there is no escape for you at this time. Dick, Bristol, you human hound!"

"Yes, Captain Lucifer!"

"If I live through this, you will know me!"

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"If I live through this, you will know me!"

The prisoner had a gun in his hand, and he aimed it at the head of the man who was speaking. Then, he turned and ran away.

"I have heard that said before," he coolly retorted.

"Well, you have heard it said for the last time, now," was the grim rejoinder.

"Do you know what we are going to do with you?"

"I begin to suspect."

"And you?"

"That you will hang me in a day or two."

"I see."

"His eyes fell on the rope, and he shivered with fear."

"I have heard your threats, Captain Lucifer."

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"Hah! Ha! You don't know my name, do you, Melvin Munson?"

"Yes, I know your name," he exclaimed.

"You have sealed your fate, with those words, Deadwood Dick."

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"I drew the gun, and coolly cocked it, but the other man of the half dozen who had charge of the prisoner with him, extended an arm between them, saying as he did so:"

"Hold on, Captain Lucifer; don't spoil the fun for the boys that way. We will have no use for Black Thunderer if you do, after we have risked our lives in bringing the information here. Let's carry out the original programme, for that will be death, certain enough."

"No, I'll hold him," returned the evident ringleader, shoving the gun back again into its holster.

"Yes, you can hold him."

"No, I'll hold him."

"Yes, you can hold him."

The man's arm was attached to their prisoner where his arms were joined together behind his back.

It was a scene not easily forgotten. The mouth of a dark, dismal canyon, with a stretch of barren plain, and a curtained night of almost too terrible to talk of.

Presently she ceased, and, lifting her head, looked down lovingly at her eyes. Dick turned the horse, struck with her beauty, and wondering who she could be. He drew not what to say.

"How long have I waited for this moment!" she exclaimed. "For days and days you were lying in my arms, trusting in me then, when they said you would get well, there was a doubt as to whether you would recover your mind. You knew the how anxiously I had waited and watched."

Again she kissed him.

"You have broken the heart of one who was to be a mistake here," said Dick. "You—"

"You call me madam! Oh, George! can it be possible that your mind is not right? That—"

"My mind seems to be right enough; but there is some mistake about my identity. You call me George, and that certainly is not my name."

She drew away from him, her eyes open wide and having a look of dismay in their depths.

"George?" she gasped. "Then who are you? Tell me, for heaven's sake before I go mad!"

"I must first learn where I am, lady, and one of the things I am going to learn is the circumstances of my being here. Will you enlighten me on these points?"

"I have some mistrusts! Your voice and your eyes—no one else had such eyes, George. It is as the doctors feared; you do not know yourself."

She wept, and her tears dropped upon his face.

"Dick was distressed. What strange destiny had thrown him into this woman's life and love? He ran events over in his mind, rap idly. He had never heard of her before in his life, and he knew perfectly well who he was—Richard M. Bristol, better known as Deadwood Dick, Junior."

"I have some mistrusts! Your voice and your eyes—no one else had such eyes, George. It is as the doctors feared; you do not know yourself."

It was plain that she was mistaken—love was deceived.

"Lady, there is some great mistake. Whom do you take me to be?"

"Who but my husband—George Griff."

"That is not my name. I never heard it before. I have no right here. You must not kiss me again, for I am not your husband."

"She stood a little distance apart now, looking at him with piercing glance, and Dick, watching her face, could see that she was not convinced her. It was a case of surpassing strange.

Suddenly she turned and went out, but in a few moments, coming in her arms a little boy may three years and a half old.

"Hey! George!" she said, while she held him close to the bed; "who is it?"

"My papa! my papa!" he cried; and he struggled to get down to Dick's face, while tears filled the woman's eyes.

"George," she pleaded, "do you not know, the child—your child and mine? Does not the sight of him, and his voice calling you, bring you back to your identity?"

"Dick was in a quandary. He knew not what to say or do, so greatly was he puzzled."

"You will have to tell me everything," he said, "I insist that there is a terrible mistake here."

"George, everybody who knew you before knows you now, and you have been here these many days."

"Almost a year—and, oh! I feared that you would be dead. You know you said you would not be gone longer than four months at the very most—you expected to return within three months."
And when did I return?"

"You were found, more dead than alive, by a party of men who went looking for you, and they brought you to me. Oh! George! why can you not remember the past? You will break my heart to know that you are not yourself—that you are not mine and I am not yours!"

CHAPTER III.
CAPTAIN LUCERF'S CAPTIVE.

"Well, are you ready yet to tell the secret?"

"Never, never!" The reply was almost simultaneous with the voice, though, I would have your life in one minute!

"Ha! ha! I have not the least doubt of it. But you see, you are my prisoner, safe enough, and there is no help for you. And that little woman of yours is about drying her eyes.

"Curse you, Melvin Munson! Let me out of here!"

"Ha! ha!"

"Curse you! curse you! You are less a man than the wild hyena that prowls the desert, and God that I could get at your throat!"

"Tell the secret, my dear fellow, and you shall have it free without delay. You have been here a long time, now, and if you remain much longer you will find your wife married again when you do return.

"You demon! You dare to mention her with your vile lips?"

The poor prisoner tugged madly at the chains that held him bound to the wall in his rocky prison.

"Oh! I mean it. Women do not mourn their mates forever, as a rule. She already believes you dead, and the first girl that comes along that happens along will undertake to heal the wound—"

The prisoner raved like a maniac, in his excitement, over his tormentor. He pulled at his chains, his eyes almost blazed, and his thin face was horribly distended with passion. What his mental torture was must be left to the imagination.

The other drew back from him involuntarily.

"Will you tell?"

"Never, if I rot here!"

"I mean to be your mate, then, for I am not coming again for six months."

"Six months!"

"That is what I said. The last time I was here was three months ago, and you doubted my word then when I told you that I would not come in three months, yet it has been three months to the very day."

"My God!"

The prisoner buried his face in his hands and sank to the floor.

His captor looked on gloatingly, feeling that he had at last broken his spirit, and that victory was his.

"If you had but six months more, then, I mean six months this time, as sure as you live this minute. Make your mind up quick, for I am in no humor to monkey with you."

"But think of the consequences if I tell. Will you let me take you out and show me like a dog?"

"No, I prefer that you shall stay here and do what you like."

"You are a devil!"

"Men call me Captain Lucifer, that is true!"

"But have I not told you time and again that I do not know the secret you try to force from me?"

"You are a fiend!"

CHAPTER IV.
SCHEMES STARTED.

Cold Cyno's scheme in Cold Canyon, was a hard place.

How it came by its odd name does not concern us, but it more than probably served its purpose.

Cold Canyon was one of the coolest places in summer, and one of the bleakest in winter, he found anywhere in the hills. Somehow the wind seemed to seek that particular thoroughfare.

The camp—it was as hard as it was cold.

The seasons made some difference in the temperament; in the camp's character, none.

It was a hard hole, first, last, and all the time—as hard as could be, and the worthy citizens of the place actually boasted of its hardness. There was not another camp anywhere round about that could at all compare with it.

This was acknowledged.

The chieftain and boss bully of the clan, so to say, was one Dudley Hookman.

Hockman was, in more ways than one, a good specimen of the wild, the vicious, and the evil. What had happened to be sheriff of the county.

Locally, he was owner of the mine that gave Cold Cyno its name and its existing. Not only so, but he was mayor of the camp—and no camp is complete without a mayor, in the "wild and woolly."

Next to Hockman stood Melvin Munson.

He was manager of the mine for Hockman, and, in the latter's absence, ruled in his stead and about the canyon. He understood the man's duties as sheriff and his other interests kept him away a part of the time, and so, in reality, the camp was under the sway of Munson in his stead.

At the time of which we write, Hockman had returned from one of his periodic absences.

He met Munson in the "Snug Snap" saloon.

They shook hands, took a drink, and set off together for the office of the mine. In the presence of others they had made only commonplace remarks, but, they became more confidential as they proceeded in the direction of the office.

"Well, what is the word?" asked Hockman.

"I will tell you the same, if you mean concerning our man."

"I do."

"Well, there he is, and the devil himself could not make him tell what he knows."

"We'll have to see about that."

"There is only one way open to us, now: we have tried this way long enough."

"And how is that?"

"Torture."

"If he is as stubborn as you have said, I doubt whether that would have the desired effect."

"No knowing till we try it."

"The fact of the business is, he has made up his mind that he will stay there till he eats before he will let us out."

"When did you see him last?"

"A month ago."

"And he say then?"

"The same as he had said three months before."

"If he will not tell, we would not tell, eh?"

"Exactly."

"And what further threats did you make to force him to come to your office?"

"I told him that I would leave him
there six months, but what he should disclose the secret, but still he was stubborn. I could not break him down, though I believed once I was coming near to doing it.

"How was that?"

"When I reminded him of his wife and child."

"That is the one thing that I thought would break him down long before this."

"But you never said for all I was worth, too, but all to no purpose. He would not yield. Reminded me that it was impossible, and all that. Said I had much better shoot him."

"I guess it will have to be torture, as we've agreed."

"And I am doubtful of even that."

"Ha! how so?"

"He would not trust us."

"We are not asking him to trust us, are we?"

"All we have to promise him is his liberty, if he will disclose.""

"And isn't that enough?"

"Ought to be, that is true, after the long years he's been here; but I suspect that we would not keep our word with him."

"The devil."

"And with good reason, too. He argues that once we have had his secret out of him, he would be out of the way to be rid of him, for we would not be likely to let him live for revenge."

"They had by this time come to the office of the mine."

"Hockman was thoughtful, and entered the office with head bowed and lips compressed. His bower, or tool, was close behind him, and closed the door and slipped the bolt."

"Evidently they did not want to be disturbed."

"Munson took some cigars out of a drawer, and offered Hockman his choice, and they lighted and took seats, and for some moments the silence was not broken."

"Hockman was the first to speak."

"Munson," he said, "there is one thing strikes me with force just at this time."

"What is that?"

"That we have fooled away a year or more telling the fellow all for nothing."

"I don't know but you are about right."

"And I am in favor of the other plan without ceremony."

"What other plan?"

"Torture. If he won't tell under torture, what do you suggest?"

"That is about the size of it, I guess."

"Then there is no using losing another day. As I said, we have fooled away a year with him. That is long enough."

"And yet there will have to be a limit to his torture."

"Yes."

"It will not do to risk his life. If we kill him, the secret is sealed forever."

"I have never thought of that.

"That is almost slipped my mind for the time being. Well, we can make it interesting for him without killing him."

"At that moment a hand tried the door. Finding it was fastened, there came an imperative knock, and at the same time a voice said:

"Open up, boss, if you are there."

"Who is it?" inquired Hockman.

"It is Mr. Graham."

"One of your guardsmen! Open the door at once."

"Mr. Graham was already doing that, and the same moment a rough-looking fellow stepped into the room."

"His face was all excitement, and he was so nervous that he could hardly control his voice sufficiently to tell what had brought him there."

"Come, out with it," cried Munson."

"He—he—he's gone!" the fellow exclaimed.

"Gone! Who's gone?"

"Tuer prisoner—"

"Good heavens! you don't mean—"

"As sure as shootin' boss; he's clean gone, and—"

"And your life shall pay for it, mark you that! Where did he get away? How did he do it?"

"I don't know when nor how, but he is gone sure enough, and poor Ned is a-layin' in the cavern as dead as a door nail—"

"Dead? Ned Grady dead?"

"Just so."

"The two men looked at each other, and the newspaper shivered his weight from one foot to the other."

"Tell us about it," said Munson.

"By heavens, Hockman, if this report is true, then are we in a devil of a fix, sure enough! Out with it, Johnny."

"That is all that is of it. I went up there to take Grady some terribler as; I promised him I would do, and that he laid, stone dead, and—"

"And the prisoner gone."

"Clean gone, hide and hair, and I have run all them other way her, almost, ter tell ye quick so's ye could git after him, captain. But he's slipped his chains, and that is poor Grady with a hole plunked clean into his head, where he has been gnawin' with sharp rock. It's too cursed bad, and ef we git hold of them cuss, hangin' will be too good for him!"

"Of a sudden, Munson drew a gun and presented it straight at the fellow's head, almost searing him into fits, if his face was an index to his emotions."

"CHAPTER V."

"SHIMMERS AND MYSTERIES."

"What yer doin'?"

"So cried Johnny Glass, as he tumbled back to get out of the way."

"I'll show you what I am doing," grated Munson. "Get up here, and let me have a square look into your eyes."

"What is the matter?" demanded Hockman.

"You might as well shoot the man as scare him to death. What has the fellow got to do? What is the matter with you?"

"That is just what I want to know."

"That prisoner has swear so that he could not possibly get off without help, and I am inclined to believe that this fellow has held him all, wide and narrow."

"No, I swear I didn't."

"How are we to know that?"

"Would I have waited all this time if I had wanted ter let him go? But I didn't want him ter git away no morn you did."

"And how do we know that?"

"Didn't me and Grady have a snap watchin' him?"

"Well, that's so; but, then, would he have remained all this time if he could have got clear himself?"

"Maybe he just wasn't able to accomplish it," suggested Hockman.

"Maybe this hope was what made him so defiant to the slightest."

"You may be right, but, if I find out that this fellow is lyin', the worse for him. He will wish the devil had taken him before he fell into my hands, I warn him."

"He put away his gun."

"I am growled Johnny Glass, and nuther was Ned Grady. We both stood in ter keep that prisoner there so long as we smarted him, for ef we was good pay and nothin' ter do but eat and watch, and ther watchin' was ther dead easiest part of it."

"Yes, too easy, that is the way it has been," said Munson. "That has led to neglect, and somehow the prisoner got away. Well, if I was going to serve him right. Come, Hockman, we have got to go up there. Here is all our stuff in the fire, now, after all the trouble we have had, and we are no nearer the end than when we commenced."

"He turned suddenly upon the man who had brought the news."

"See here," he cried."

"What is et, boss?"

"You breathe a word of what you hear and said here, and you will hang higher than those ofpromisers."

"I ain't got no notion of tellin'; I know which side of my bread has got butter on, even if I don't know a whole heap besides. I know enough to keep my mouth shut."

"Well, see that you keep it shut, then."

"The manager of the mine grabbed his hat and was ready to set forth."

"How far is it to your cage?" asked the mine owner. "You must remember I have never been there."

"It is a good mile up the canyon," answered Munson.

"Then hadn't we better have horses?"

"I don't care; there aren't. I never told you that?"

"If you have I have clean forgotten it."

"Well, let's be off, then, for it is important."

"You go ahead and lead the way, Glass," directed Munson, "and we'll follow you. We have some private matters to talk over as we go along. Move lively, now."

"Thus they started. They could not be seen from the camp proper."

"The buildings of the mine were some distance removed from the camp, on the side of the gulch."

"Leaving the buildings by the rear way, they could be seen by no one, unless, perchance, by some employee around the mine."

"But that was of little moment, anyhow."

"You have never heard a word from that other party?" inquired the mine owner, as they proceeded."

"You mean Deadwood Dick?"

"Yes."

"Never a word."

"Then you think he was killed?"

"Thunder! can there be a doubt of it?"

"You told me his body was not found, that's all."

"Well, we never heard a word about him after he was carried off by Black Thunderer."

"I would much rather you had hanged him than taken even that risk, for there is now just that slight shadow of uncertainty in the matter, since the body was not found."

"We do not think it is worth mentioning."

"He must have been a surprised man."

"Yes, he was, you know."

"He had no idea that any one here could get on to his identity, of course, not so soon as the slightest. And, in point of fact, no one would have done so had not the sheriff of the county been kind enough to call on us."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Hockman.

"That was something he was not figuring on. Ha! ha! ha! he came to me as innocent as a lamb to consult about the capture of Captain Luftner and his band."

"Ha! ha! ha! And he never smelt a mouse at all, and they running all over him. Oh! it was too good."

"They both laughed heartily."
But one thing," said Munson. 
"What is it?"
"Fer--do you know my name?"
"Know your name?"
"Yes. He called me by name before we come in."
"I do not know. If he had escaped, knowing that you and Captain Lucifer were--"
"But he did not escape. Be sure of that."
"That brings us back to the point of starting. What do you suppose became of the body?"
"It was washed down the creek, of course. Blinder thunderer plunged into the arroyo, and was found there next day when some of the boys tracked him to the penny, but had been of no account."
"But the man was not there?"
"No."
"And the rope, you told me, was broken."
"Yes; but nothing strange about that, considering that Black Thunderer carried a small tree down into the arroyo with him."
"Then your theory is--"
"No theory about it. The trail was perfectly plain. The black devil plunged straight ahead into the arroyo, fouled with a tree. The rope and the brake tumbled in, carrying tree, man and all with him."
"Of what broke the rope?"
"Certainly. There was a mark where the man's boots had dragged through the fresh ground where the tree was uprooted. Growing on the edge of the arroyo, it hadn't a great deal of support, and the weight of the horse carried it over and down the slope."
"And you found the tree, of course?"
"No; it had drifted away, for it was just pouring down that hard rain, and the steam was running full."
"Well, he must be dead, of course, for he had not a chance in a million of coming off with his life, from what you have told me about it. Still, I wish you had put a bullet into his brain."
Their conversation ran to greater length than we can possibly quote—in fact, not all of it would be in line with the purpose of our story. It continued until in due time they arrived at their destination, where, near the entrance to a small cavern, lay the body of Ned Grady.
Inside were found the chains, secure to the floor, and it had so recently held their prisoner, and they were found, upon examination, to be intact in every particular. The prisoner had not even the locks that had disturbed. The three looked at one another, not knowing what to make of it. How had George Grill made his escape?

CHAPTER VI. VENGEANCE VOWED.

"Well, stranger, what's that matter with you?"

It was just growing dusk, and the lights were beginning to appear in the various windows in the village of Silver Butte.

In the westward, ho! of civilization, this place, once a camp, had become, as we said, a village, with a respectable and orderly and orthodox type.

Three, some of its citizens could recall the days when it was young—when it had been in the midst of the then true West; but those days long since gone. George Grill was the man whom we have just quoted, and the man he addressed was certainly a stranger there.

He was a tall, slim man, with long hair and beard, and his keen black eyes seemed aglow with more than natural fire.

He had evidently just come into the village, and he stood knocking at the door of a cabin.

Cabin there were, some three or four here and there about the place, reminders of former days. This one was the largest of the old cabins, and the flower garden was inclosed in a yard where flowers were blooming, although there were no signs that they had had recent cultivation.

The old citizen, as he put the question, had stopped at the gate.

The other leaned against the doorpost.

"Does no one live here?" the stranger asked.

"No, no lives than now," the old citizen answered. "I knew ye didn't know et, ther way ye was a-pounding; and that's ther reason why I asked ye what was ther matter, as I ken along. Ther family went away nigh onto a month ago, I sh'd say."

"The family?"

The man seemed to gasp rather than speak the words, and he leaned the more heavily against the door in his anxiety.

"That was what I said, stranger, ther family. Some relation of your'n, maybe. I ain't never heerd they had much to do with him, but he must 'a' had some, of course. Yes, he moved off with his wife and children about ther time state, and—but, good Lord! what's ther matter?"

With a mean, the man had sunk down to the steps.

The old citizen opened the gate and hastened in, and, stooping down, he lifted the stranger's head.

"What is et, stranger? Aire you sick? Shall I help ye to ther hotel and git a doctor? I just tell me what ter do, and I'll do et."

"Joe, don't you know me?" the man asked.

"Know ye? Blame me fer a lunk if I know ye, stranger. And yet, them thars eyes of your'n— Et ef wasn't that George Grill—"

"I am George Grill—"

"You?"

"Yes. In the name of heaven, tell me what has become of my wife and child. Joe, Old Joe, Old Joe Wilford—you see I know you. Don't look at me like that. Where is Mary? Where is my boy?"

The old man was passing his hand over his eyes in a dazed fashion, as if trying to find out whether he was awake or dreaming. He looked hard at the eyes again, searchingly. It was some moments before he could bring himself to speak.

"Man alive, it can't be!"

"I tell you it is so; I am George Grill. Am I so changed that you don't know me even ye? Well, I hardly wonder."

"You are changed, boy, greatly changed. But I would know ye well enough if I had the choice of you or George Grill, then who was that other? Is that two ye ov?"

"Two ov'em—"

"'Thar sartainly is, boy, sartainly is. And one of ye must be false, that is eloquently certain of ye."

"Old Joe, have I got to prove my identity to you? Say, don't you remember the day that we cornered the bear over there? And don't you remember the scratch old brum gave me on the arm?"

"Enough, boy, enough! Ef is other cum that is false, and you are that true George Grill. But, thundrator! who-bin-thar other be, I wonder. And—Blazes a-burnin', what does ef all mean, anyhow? He was hyer in your name, and your wife went off with him. He took ther arm ther brum scratched fer ye, ef ye kin."

"I got to the lips, hardly able to stand. And, being the bearded man pulled up his left sleeve and displayed his arm. The deep yeer, his wife, who had heard of the old man, slowly, "Et is you; but in the face of all that's gone afore, I had ter take that sartain of yer. Now, who in ther name of greatness was t'other feller?"

"You thought it was I?"

"As much like ye as yer now own twin brother could be, I sh'd say."

"And he was here as George Grill —he was received by my wife as her husban'—she has now taken her away? My God!"

He sank down again, burying his face in his arms.

The old man sat down beside him, placing his hand on his head and trying to comfort him.

The gathering darkness favored them, being back a distance from the street and under the shade of the little porch on the cabin door. They were not likely to be disturbed."

"Et is as ye have said, boy, jest as ye have said," the old man spoke gently, and you don't know where they have gone?"

"No, I do not know."

"Does anybody know?"

"No, a soul her at Silver Bullet, any-how."

"You are sure of that? I must make close inquiries and find a friend somehow."

"Et won't be ther least bit of use, George, boy. We have done that already, out of curiosity, but no sign ken be found. You see, et was a queer way fer George Grill to go away."

"Did they sell the cabin?"

"No, et is nailed up as if they didn't have no idea of returning."

"My God! My God!"

"Thar, thar, George, boy, don't take on like that. I know et is hard on ye, but—"

"Hard! It will kill me, Joe. Where is she—where is my wife? Who is the man who has so cruelly deceived her? God help me! If I meet him I will have his life for this!"

The old man recollected a step, so vengeanceful were the words but faintly whispered."

"Can't blame ye, boy; can't blame ye a bit. Et is ther queerest thing I ever heerd of in all my days, and you ain't no doubtin' you are George Grill, after seein' that arm, but neither did anybody doubt t'oother feller. He was George Grill, too."

"What can it mean, what does it mean? How long was he here, Joe? I want to know all you can tell me about it."

"Must 'a' been nigh onto three months, I think I should say. He was so dead than alive, and your wife nussed him through till he got well. She had to look to and watch over you for a year, and when he was brought home to her aje nigh about went wild wi' joy."

"A great sob from the younger man caused the older to stop.

"Who brought him here?" was eagerly asked. "Where was he found, What made him do it? Is it possible that you—everything, Joe, everything you know about it."

"Why, a party of men from hyer found ef, more dead than alive, fast in a tree that had drifted down ther river to what they war cunnin. Ye war to— with a rope—I mean him, of course—be
was tied with a rope, one arm being free but the other fast to his side, and that rope was caught fast to a part of their tent, held by my woman—ye—he, and he was brought right hyer."

"In the name of heaven, who can it be?"

"That is ther question."

"But, I will know, curse him! I will know, and then let him look out. I will show him no more mercy than I would show to a wolf—no more than I will show to Melvin Munson, when next we meet, unless you intercede for him, he has usurped my name and place—and, Ha! it must be Melvin Munson's work."

"That is the very thing that strikes me as queer, now."

"What is that, Joe?"

"Yer wife."

"What about her?"

"Are ye dead certain that she was as true as ye thought?"

The younger man straightened up, and even in the fast-gathering darkness the glint of his flashing eyes could be seen plainly.

"Old Joe, have a care," he warned. "You know my Mary, and I want to ask you to curse him out and get me out of this."

"She has been deceived, I tell you, and for a purpose. Is it not so?"

"We have been living like the stillness. His voice was husky, and he took the old man by the hand.

"Old Joe, no one but you knows that I am here, and to no one but you, perhaps, could I prove who I am. Keep my secret. I am going to find her—them, and I want you to go with me. Will you come?"

"Boy," and the old man's grip tightened, "it is a good world since these hyer old legs have traveled, but I am with ye, heart and soul. We'll find her—Ye God, we will. We have not been wronged, and yer wrongs must be righted."

They went in the direction of the old man's cabin, talking earnestly and confidentially.

CHAPTER VII

COLD CANYON'S BOOM

Cold Camp had suddenly taken on a new boom. A new gold discovery had been made, and that promised to eclipse entirely the first.

People were thronging into the gulch every day, braving the storms of the reports, and the population had suddenly outgrown the possibilities of accommodations.

Tents and shanty shanties were being erected everywhere where a foothold could be obtained, all up and over the gulch, and along its length in both directions. While called a canyon, and while such it properly was, it here widened into considerable dimensions.

The "Big Nig" mine had been the pride of the region.

Deadwood Dick, Jr., the death-dealer.

But now the new find—Great Glory—"it was called, owing to the fact that those words had been the first spoken when the find was made—promised to eclipse that to the ground—ye—he, and he was brought right hyer."

"Oh, the name of heaven, who can it be?"

"That is the very question."

"But, I will know, curse him! I will know, and then let him look out. I will show him no more mercy than I would show to a wolf—no more than I will show to Melvin Munson, when next we meet, unless you intercede for him, he has usurped my name and place—and, Ha! it must be Melvin Munson's work."

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Deadwood Dick, Jr., the death-dealer.
Diedrock Dick, Jr.'s, Death-Doom.

...you doing work with pick and shov-
el?" "As a blind, sir. I will continue the
balance of the week, if you wish it.
"Not another minute, do you hear?"
"As you please.
"Well, if you let it go on, it will be war between
me and your company. You shall not enter
the canyon, in the first place, and if you
do, you will get fired out again. It is
why I came to you.
"It will be a war of your making, then, sir.
"What are you afraid of? I will see that
it is carried to the finish, too; do you
understand what I mean? War to the
death.

Hockman was furious, and was not
careful in his threats. For the moment
he appeared to forget that he was sheriff
of the county, and that his duty was
on the side of law and order.

"Very well, I now know what to ex-
pect, then," said Penton, stepping to-
toward the door. "I am in the right, and
if necessary, will call on the sheriff to
protect me in my rights. If there is any
matter for the courts to settle, that can
be carried on quietly.

Hockman opened the door and went
out, leaving the monacle and his man
alone at each other and indigent in
clouds, of which was the begin-
ning of the spread of the report that
another great find had been made in Cold
Canyon.

CHAPTER VII
LAID AS A SCARECROW

Hockman had found that his hands
were more than tied.

In the first place, he knew, better than any
one else, perhaps, that there was a question
to his title.

Then, secondly, he was sheriff of the county,
and that held him to his duty of
office, inasmuch as he had his eye
upon higher honors further ahead, and
could not afford to kick over the traces.

So it was that the new concern was
allowed to start, make its beginning,
and so it was that people began to pour
into the canyon from every direction
under the sun. It needed but the men-
tion of a "find," and there were pros-
pective "finders" by the hundreds.

But if Hockman could not act openly,
he could act secretly.

"The impure of that country, for some
time past, had been an outlaw who was
known as Captain Lucifer.

And it had been made to run
him down, but without avail. He was
to-day, yonder to-morrow, and no
detective had yet been found who could
keep him in sight long enough to take
him.

Rumor had it that even the renowned
Deadwood Dick had tried and failed, and
not only so, but that he had lost his life
in the bargain. Sheriff Hockman was
sure enough that he knew, and when
he told him, had received all the informa-
tion he could furnish, and had not been
heard of since.

Judge, then, of the excitement it oc-
casioned, when, about the time the camp
began to "boom under the new impulse,
Captain Lucifer was heard of far and
off, and the greater excitement when he
actually appeared at Cold Camp.

He held a pixie one night, not a
mile from camp, and robbed it of the
pay money belonging to the mines.

It was not only excitement, but fear
as well.

And well grounded. Captain Lucifer had left a red trail
with his own feet, something stayed his hand, and if now he had his eye on Cold Camp, woe betide it.

So agreed those who claimed to know
anything about it, and the theory was
supported by Melvin Munson, as acting
guard, who had a little company
of his to stand ready to cope with the outlaw
band at a moment's notice.

So matters stood.

Work on the new mine was going for-
ward space, and other prospectors were
working the canyon for its own finds.

Gold Dick had charge of the Great
Glory, and was handling his force of men
like a born manager, to the secret ad-
ministration of even those who opposed him
in his claim.

He still dressed as roughly as ever,
was still as ready to strike at once, but he was evidently the brains to carry out
what he had undertaken. As for his
wife, she stuck close to the cabin, and
was seldom or never seen. There was
a mystery somewhere.

One night Dudley Hockman came into
the camp at a late hour.

He had been absent for some time, and
Munson had been looking for him every
day and every hour in the day.

He now came, and found his man in the
Snug Saloon.

Munson received him. The saloon, by the way, was filled to
doors, almost, and the air was blue
with smoke.

So great had the increase of population been that places of entertainment had
not been able to keep pace, and hence
the Snug Saloon was a little too snug,
of an evening.

Munson had managed to reserve a
couple of chairs in one corner, and he
straightway conducted his liege lord
thither.

They sat down.

"Well?" demanded Munson, in a
low tone, "what word?"

"Your man is right, ten to one it
was. We can put our hand on him
again any minute.

"I was sure of it. He is in part dis
guise, going around as he does, but when
you take all the circumstances into con-
sideration, there you have him.

"Yes, there can hardly be a doubt of
it.

"You went to Silver Bullet?"

"Yes; am just back from there.

"What did you learn that is of inter-
est?"

"I took pains to inquire as little as
possible.

"But enough to get what you wanted,
of course.

"I got it with scarce any inquiries at
all. I met a fellow who was willing
to talk, and I let him tell me.

"Well, what did you get?"

"About this: That George Grill did
reach there, somewhat under the weath-
er, and that he and his wife and child
closed up shop as soon as he got his
strength, and have struck out for parts
unknown.

"You got none of the particulars?"

"Wasn't that enough to get? What
more would you want?"

"I thought maybe you would get the
date of his leaving, if not a full detail
of everything."

"I got that for our purpose, and
came away. Not half a dozen men saw
me there, and only one of those knew
what I was. I was the only one he knew
more than that I mentioned Grill.

"Your man did not know where they
had gone."

"He said no one knew."

"Nor when they would return."

"The cabin was nailed up, and it
did not look as if they were going
away, anything stayed his hand, and if now he had his eye on Cold Camp, woe betide it.

"What do you think, then?"

"That we are on the right track."

"And that this fellow Penton and
George Grill are one and the same?

"Well, that was my suspicion. He
goes dressed so rough that you can
never guess the likeness, but his eyes tell
the tale."

"To say nothing of the fact that he
had his wife and child with him. We
are on the right track again, Munson,
and we must make sure of him and put
him to the torture."

"Will it be safe, now?"

"Why not?"

"See the backing he has here now."

"He will have more than one strike at
once. If we can only get away with him
secretly, that is all we ask for."

"Here is work for Captain Lucifer, I
take it."

"Lucifer is about the right person, I
should say," with a grim tinge of humor.

"Well, when is it to be done?"

"Why not to-night?"

"No reason that I know of."

"The sooner the better. It is plain
that he has not gone to the hiding
place yet.

"How do you know that?"

"The papers would have been entered,
had he secured them."

"Do you not know what he knows about Henry McCassey, though?

I fail to see that we had to know about him in order to
know the secret at all, don't you see?
Part of that is simple enough, to my
mind."

"Yes, yes, you are right, of course.
Well, do you say to-night?"

"Yes, let it be to-night."

"Enough said. I will make the prepa-
"rations, and George Grill will find
himself back again in his chains before
morning.

"It is a wonder to me that place has
not been discovered ere this."

Quite evident that it has not, how-
ever.

"So I suppose, or it would have been
talked of."

"Come, it is difficult of access, and
that makes it all the more secure."

"But, with so many prospectors around, it is likely to be discovered at
any moment, and it will not do to keep him there long."

"It will have no need to keep him long. Torture will make him tell what
he knows, and then it will be an easy matter for Captain Lucifer to put out
his light forever, and who will be the
wise?"

"I guess that is about the size of it."

"Of course it is."

Their conversation ran on to some
length, but was concerning things
foreign to our story from that point.

CHAPTER IX
RAI-TWENTY-THREE

It used to be said of Creedence when that
town was in its morning flush as a mix-
trun, that "it's day all day in the
daytime, and there's no night in Creedence."

Just about this time the same could
well have been said of this town, or
camp, of which we write. It was crowded
full with men and women of every sort,
almost, and it may safely be added that the exterminating was where they
had all come from, no man could have
divined.

The proprietor of the Snug Saloon was
just about in despair. He had more cus-
tom than he could attend to. It had
been his habit to complain of dull times
and lack of business all that he had wished
that things might "pick up a bit;" but
they had improved at such a rate that
he had not been able to keep pace. What was worse, he now saw a rival building, a place four times the size of his. Therefore, however, was of no moment. The new place was in the process of building; the Snug Snap was at present the best of its kind in the camp, and it had been crowded. It was crowded to the doors, as said, and the air was heavy with smoke, spite of the fact that the windows were open and the cool night air was playing through. Not that they were open wide; that would have been too much of a coldness for even Cold Camp. 

As a rule, the denizens preferred things hot. A dance had just ended, and the danc- ers were thronging to the bar, when into the place wandered two creatures not easy to describe.

One of them was old—his face and hair told that—but in spite of his age he was dressed in rather youthful attire. He wore a pants, waist, and jacket, and looked like an overgrown schoolboy.

The other was younger—his face and the color of his hair and beard declared it out he was such a man would have become an old man. He was a big hat, a long coat, his vest was of an ancient pattern, and he carried a cane and walked with a slight stoop. He wore great glaring goggles.

The age of the first was fully seventy, and the age of the second was the latter than half that number of years. They paused just within the door and looked around.

The elder was the taller of the two, it might be mentioned, and he had held of his companion’s hand.

For the moment the crowd was silent, or that portion of it that saw the two men come in, and while the silence lasted the old man in the juvenile attire looked up into the face of his companion and asked:

“Dad, whur in thunderation we be, anyhow?”

The crowd broke out into a roar of laughter immediately, and the attention of the whole room was drawn.

The younger man lifted his cane and brought it down across the old fellow’s shoulders with a sound whack, and, lifting his voice at the same time, he cried:

“Tell me, mister, did you ever hear of a man got to wear glasses against swearin’ son? If you hear you do it again, mark me, I’ll break this hyer cane in a dozen pieces across your back! Do you mind what I’m sayin’? And he shook his cane and his head with great energy.

“Yep, I mind, dad,” said the old fellow, cringing as if he expected to get another one with the cane. “I didn’t go to do et; but whur in—in—in—”

“Look out, now, sir!” lifting the cane and shaking his head terribly at the door.

“Whur in misery be we?” the old fellow got it out.

His eyes were laughing; so that but few of his number overheard all that was said, but all could see the actions.

The old man was of no moment longer. He had been trimmed all around just even with the collar of his coat, and it would have been hard to tell just what to liken him to.

Said one man:

“He looks like a cross ‘ween a parson and a man’s rights suffragist, he be- in’ ther sufferer.”

We might attempt a closer description and a quotation again as well let that stand. He certainly was a peculiar-look-
One of the oldest buildings at Cold Camp was the cabin up on the side of the rock, not occupied by Gold Dick and his wife and child.

No one had cared to occupy it, because of the cliff to guard against intruders and because the cliff was in the process of being undermined by the elements.

There was a rumor that it had once been occupied by one "Mountain Guerrilla," an outlaw who had been famous throughout that region some years before. He had, then, been the only vacant one in the camp at that time. His name had been remembered.

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The door did not seem likely to yield to them, and Captain Lucifer looked around for a weapon. There was an axe in one corner of the kitchen, and he seized it and sprang again to the attack. In a few moments, there was the sound of the door open, and they hastened into the other part of the cabin.

All save one, who remained to guard their prisoner.

They were gone some minutes, and when they did return it was with muffled curses. No trace of the woman and child had they been able to discover, and it was taken as evidence that she must have escaped from the cabin somehow. They had seen no place where she could be concealed.

"We have got to get out of this," cried Captain Lucifer. "She may be half way to the camp by this time, and we'll have to hustle a escape a brush with Melvin Munson and his picked lot.

"Yes, you are right. They clearly had not heard Gold Dick's directions to the woman, and now they'll ever so much to do to get to the camp.

"Now, you walk lively, and without giving me trouble, or I'll drop you by the road belonging to.

He clearly meant it, and the prisoner could only obey. The others came after, cursing roughly.

Thus they fled down to the gulch bottom, and thence along the west and into the mountains.

Going perhaps a mile, they came finally to a place where the two were caught and the wounded man came to a halt, and the wounded man was allowed to lie down.

He had been begging that privilege ever since the start.

"We can't carry this load no further, captain," said one of the men.

"What will you do with it, then? You can't leave him here, for he will be known as the owner of the fortune."

"We kin bury him, while you go on with yer prisoner."

"I'll carry on that. One of you come with me, and the rest remain and do that."

The man carried on, Captain Lucifer and this one with the prisoner, and made all haste to the place of their destination.

It was a hard climb to an out-of-the-way spot, but they got there at last. They entered a kind of cavern, or tunnel.

"Here we are," cried Captain Lucifer. "Does the air smell natural to you, George Grill? Wait, we will have a light, and you can tell then whether it looks familiar."

A prisoner, gagged, could not respond. After some moments a battered old lantern was brought and lighted, and the place was revealed.

The prisoner looked around, and a few moments later opened his eyes. Something like a chill seized him, when he caught sight of some chains secured to the walls.

"Well, does it seem like home?" Captain Lucifer demanded.

"How do you expect him to answer?" asked the other.

"Ha! sure enough. Remove the gag." This was done.

"Now, then, answer my question," ordered the outlaw chiefman.

"I cannot say that it looks like home, seeing that I have never been here before," said the prisoner.

"What is the use of your holding out, George Grill? I've been here with you there with your wife and child, and you came here to Cold Camp and located under an assumed name. Don't I know you?"

"You certainly do not, sir. That is not my name."

"Don't lie to us fools. You came back there with the hope of winning your revenge, no doubt, but you see we were slipping in the mud, as it were. I do not know how you managed your escape before, leaving your chains intact and locked, but, depend on it, you won't escape again."

"You puzzle me, sir."

"I will puzzle you worse, to get out of here after I am done with you. Are you willing yet to reveal that secret?"

"What do you mean?"

"Ph! You dissuage me! You almost tempt me to strike you, bound as you are. You know you are with me, and I am after the birds for which you were held here in these chains more than a year. I promise you that you will not remain so long this time. Do you understand what plan I am going to adopt with you now?"

"How can 1? I know nothing of what you are talking about."

"It would serve him right to shoot him," cried the other man.

"You are right; it would," was agreed.

"I am almost tempted to do it, too."

"There is some terrible mistake here," said the prisoner. "There are two facts: I am not George Grill, and I was never in this hole before in my life; make what you please of that."

Captain Lucifer leaped forward, as if he would strike him, but he did not do so. He turned to the other, or I would knock you to the floor!" he hissed. "You have tried my patience to the last degree. I am going to put you in these chains, and you will be left for twenty-four hours. At the end of that time, if you not ready to speak, you will be put to torture until you will be forced out of you. Nothing shall change my purpose.

"It will be useless," was the calm rejoinder. "What I do not know cannot be told, that is certain.

"We'll see about that, curse you!"

The chains were unlocked, and were put around the prisoner's body and tightly secured there, and thus he was left. Deadwood Dick was in a desperate dilemma again, in the hands of the very man who had once before doomed him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DISCOVERY OF A CRIME.

Morning dawned.

Cold Camp awoke to the duties of another day.

When Melvin Munson made his appearance he was not a bit out of balance at the cabin on the plateau.

Nothing had been seen or heard of the woman since she had gone greatly at 1 understand what it meant. Where was she? Why did she not give the alarm?"

Dudley Hockman, too, was out early, and Munson sought him as soon as he appeared, and immediately after they had breakfasted, Hockman put on his overcoat.

They had conversed in low tones about the matter while eating.

"No, sir, I'm hanged if I understand it," Munson declared aloud, as soon as they entered the office.

"Somehow I must have happened to her, that is certain, or nothing would keep her from rushing down here and giving me a signal to know what can be the matter."

"We'll have to wait."

"For the alarm."

"But, she don't give it."

"No, no, the other don't understand?"

I guess I don't. Speak right out; don't talk in riddles when you talk to me.

"No riddle about that. When Gold Dick does not appear at the Great Glory his men will want to know where he is and what the matter, and some one will be sent up to the cabin."

"Ha! now I comprehend."

"He will be missing, the broken doors and the blood will be discovered, and the scene will be to pay and no pot hitch."

"I see, I see. And then they will appear to you, and tell you out with your picked body of makers, and the case will have to be investigated. And then the argument will go like this:

"That is just it. We have got to wait."

"They waited with what patience they could, and watched the slope of the ledge from the office windows.

Within the hour they saw a couple of men belonging to the Great Glory climb up the ledge path that led to the cabin, and watched them until they reached the plateau.

They disappeared behind the cabin.

"Now for it," whispered Hockman.

"Yes, now for it, and we will be greatly surprised when we hear it. We'll wait for them to bring the news to us."

They continued watching, and in a few moments the two men reappeared in the greatest haste from the rear of the cabin and ran to the edge of the plateau, where they waved their hats and were evidently shouting.

No sound of their voices reached the ears of the two men in the office of the Big Nig, but they could guess closely what their shout was.

And it was right that the camp could not be had from the Big Nig.

This has been stated before.

It was not until a few minutes after the two men ran out from the direction of the Great Glory, and approached the side of the gulch where the cabin stood, that the two watchers could see anything more.

They then witnessed the wildest gesticulating on the part of the two men in the plateau, and the crowd below showed the greatest excitement.

There was a little delay: then a rush was made for the office of the Big Nig. "Ha! now they are coming!" exclaimed Munson.

"Yes, and now for it.""

"Be natural, when they arrive here."

"Do not trouble yourself about me; see what you are doing."

"Ha! ha! ha! That is a pretty good one, Sheriff Hockman, a pretty good one."

They turned away from the windows, and Munson opened the safe and got out money enough to pay into the office he and Hockman were busily consulting.

"Munson!" cried Munson. "What's the matter, boys?"

"Blinzes is to pay, cried the spokesman for the crowd. There has been a death, and the Great Glory died.

"Murder!" cried the two men in the same breath.
"Yes, a murderer."

"Who has been killed?" demanded Rockman.

"Gold Dick, and mebbe his wife and child; we don't know for sure."

"What?" cried Rockman. "How did you find it out, my man?"

"Why, he didn't come to work, and we couldn't go ahead without him, so we sent for you."

"And he is there dead?"

"No, not a hair of him. They two men had gone down to us; that is as far as we know yet."

"But what do they say?"

"They say it's nobody there, but ther doors are broke in, and that's blood on ther floor in two places."

"This looks serious," said Rockman. "We must go up there at once, Munson, and see what can be made of it. If a murder has been done, there shall be a hanging from it."

They all hurriedly left the office and hastened toward the path that led to the plateau.

By this time the whole camp had been alarmed, and men and women by the hundreds stood under the cliff, looking upward, and nearly every face was blanched.

"We've heard of the name of Captain Lucifer, and that was enough to cause them to pale. If they had only known that Mr. Harker was around, who would suffer next?"

The mayor and his bowser led the way and hastened in the direction of the cave, where the two men who had gone before were awaiting their coming. And, as they went along, they noted now and again traces of blood, on each one of which they were careful to step.

The other two had evidently not noticed the traces.

By the time they reached the cabin, with all the crowd at their heels, every trace of that trail had been obliterated.

What might have served as a clue for a detective had thus been purposely rubbed out. It was a case that was likely to end in mystery—it certainly would, if left to the two arch villains.

Reaching the cabin, Hockman and Munson entered at once.

Others crowded in after them, until the cabin was full, and the whole plateau waslooking down to the old log cabin.

There were enough in there to have taken the cabin up bodily, almost, and hurled it down on the floor, and the walls of the bottom of the gulch below. They were desperate.

But the sound of the blood seemed to enrage them the more, and they openly avowed their intention of taking the law into their own hands if they could get hold of the wretch who had done the deed. But the bodies, where were they? That was a puzzle.

"We must search the old cabin thoroughly," said Hockman.

"And more of it, if it must be overhauled," said Munson. "It may be the bodies have been concealed here somewhere."

Of course, their purpose was to find the woman and the child, or some trace of them.

Every part of the cabin was explored, and thoroughly, but to no purpose.

At last the two searchers gave it up.

"We are stuck," said Munson, gravely.

"It looks that way, truly," agreed Rockman.

"What more can they do?"

They had returned to the kitchen, after the search in the other parts of the cabin.

"Somebody here can suggest something."

"We want to know what has become of our boss; that is the thing we want to know," said the man who had acted as mayor, speaking to the mine offices for the mayor.

"And that is what we are most eager to ascertain," said Rockman, "but you can see for yourself that we are without a clue of any kind to work on. It is a mysterious matter, wholly. In fact, it is not certain that there was the work of Captain Lucifer, as some here seem to think."

"I agree with ye, said," said the mayor from the Great Glory.

"His name, by the way, was Rube Smith."

"What is your idea, then?" asked the mayor.

"Well, I ain't got none, clear, but et strikes me that Gold Dick has been done up by some enemy right here in camp."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Munson, though he slightly paled at the mention of it. Or, if he had such an enemy, no one knows who it was, so we are just as much in the dark as before."

The point was discussed at length, but nothing came of it. They gave over further search and descended to the gulch bottom.

While Rockman and Hockman were two greatly puzzled men.

There was no chance to converse on the way back, as they would like to have done, so they had to await opportunity.

Down in the bottom, the population of Cold Camp eagerly awaited news, and when informed that there was no news for them, they looked sullen and desperate enough.

Gold Dick, who had become a favorite with many people, had been murdered, and his murderer to be allowed to escape? They argued not!

CHAPTER XIII.
COVERING THE MORTALITY.

The excitement was red-hot.

And the mystery of it all made it the greater.

If the bodies had been found, that would have been something, but no bodies were found.

Neither could any trail be discovered—might as well have looked for the fabled needle in the haystack as for a trail there in Cold Canyon.

Even if there had been one at first, hundreds of feet had now trampled every place, and it would be utterly useless to look for it. No, they were at a loss, and knew not how to turn.

Said Rube Smith: "Et is a blamed shame, that such a crime should be done byer in Cold Camp, and nobody be able ter clear et up. Mayor Hockman, what is goin' ter be done about et, anyhow?"

"That is just what, Rube, what is going to be done? It will depend on such men as you to find us the clue. As sheriff of the county, I have a reward of five hundred dollars to the man who will discover a clue that will lead to the discovery."

"I have just thought of something else," said Munson.

"What is that?" asked Rockman.

"We have been taking it for granted that Gold Dick is dead."

"What else are we to think of him?"

"Sometimes, I think, me. It is a little strange that his wife and child are gone, isn't it?"

"That is one of the greatest points of the mystery."

"Just so. Well, suppose Gold Dick himself is the murder, and that he has killed some one else, and has made off with his wife and child in order to escape."
CHAPTER XIV.

FOUND AT LAST.

Meantime, "Phineas Brown" and his "boy" "Ezekiel" were climbing up the path to the cabin.

Others were ahead of them, some followed after them, and they met many on the way who had been up to the cliff, or plateau, and were returning, their curiosity satisfied.

When they alighted they conversed in low tones, when no one was near to overhear.

"Heaven's name, Old Joe, what do you make of it?" asked "Phineas."

"Blame me if I know, George, boy," was the response.

"Do you think these are the ones?"

"I hope not, God knows." "But it was a man and wife and child, and they were picked up they have been here about the right length of time."

"Yes, I have ter admit it, boy."

"And if it is my wife—My God! If it is she, is it not proof that she was false to me?"

"Wait, George, boy, wait and see. Don't condemn until you hear, no matter what. You have no right to do that. It is a terrible mystery."

"It is a maddening mystery, old friend."

"Do you think you are safe? Do you think they didn't recognize you?"

"I am sure they have not recognized me, yet. I would know it, if they had. I think I would see that score."

"But who was the man? If it was your wife, who was he? And where are you now? If it was killed? And if they have killed somebody else, what are they all the same?"

"Mystery, mystery. It is enough to drive one insane."

"Ye aint right, et is."

"Play your part; here come some of the people of the camp."

The old man grasped his companion's hand, as before and trotted along by his side in a most boyish fashion.

They had adopted a unique disguise, as will be admitted. It was one calculated to deceive them, yet at the same time one in complete contrast to their real purpose.

By the time they reached the cabin on the cliff, few persons were there, all having satisfied their curiosity.

They entered and looked curiously around.

Others who had followed them up the path, came in also, and what they saw hardly helped them in their task.

As they were eager to be with the crowd below, where all the excitement was, they made their stay short at the cabin, and on departing, left the two men resting on a stone in the rear.

"Now for George Gril," when the last one had gone from sight.

"Yes, and make haste, fer no knowin' how soon a'v them may come up to take a look."

"You remain here to warn me."

"Low kin I do, sir."

"Play your part. If any one comes this way they will stop to look at you, and that will give me time not to be caught."

"It is a blamed fool game fer a man of my years to be playing George, boy, but you fer good with them for their pains."

"Yes, I know you will, old friend."

So saying, George Gril entered the cabin again.

This time he could look around more leisurely, more critically, and he did so. In the kitchen he discovered nothing, but when he passed on into the other rooms and searched there a sudden cry escaped him.

He ran to a corner where lay a woman's garment, and catching it up he stared at it with dilated eyes.

He ran back through the rooms with it to where his companion sat.

"See?" he cried. "Don't you know it?"

"Tery Mary's cape, as I live!"

"It is! It is!"

"Then eber her that was her."

"No longer a doubt of it. Heavens! I dare not look further."

"But ye must. Nothing would hold ye back from et now, not even their evil one himself."

"You are right, you right. Wait for me here."

Back into the rooms the almost distracted George Gril was chimneyed to the place that stood in the center of the cabin.

The main room of the cabin—what we have said that it was a large one, and all the smoke ascended one common flue.

Pressing with his hand on the flue, he used the light on the entry, that portion of the wall moved in at the top and out at the bottom, revealing a set of sharp, narrow steps. He must, boy, ye go up and down on the other side, and disappeared.

When he had gone from sight the wall reassumed its natural position. It was a clever hiding-place, truly.

On the other side was a longer flight of steps, with a rail to guide the hand, and a high, dark wall behind them.

Down these steps he passed, till he reached the bottom, and then along a passage where he stepped with greatest care until finally he came to a door in the solid rock.

Here he felt around in the darkness, but seemingly could not find what he desired.

With an impatience, he lighted a match.

"Ha! the latch has been broken," he said to himself. "Lucky for me that I have a key on this side of the door, or I would be a helpless prisoner, unless there is another outlet of which I know nothing."

All around was solid rock.

This passage had been bored through the solid material of the hill with terrors.

Lifting the part of the latch that held the door, he opened the door, taking care that the latch could not again fall into its place, that portion of the wall might be the death of him.

Here he paused for a moment, and while he waited a whispered voice was heard.

"Dick?"

It was a woman's voice.

"George Gril!" it said. "I have a great start, for he recognized it."

It was the voice of his wife—the woman from whom he had been held a prisoner so long.

Had she been true to him? What was she doing here? Where was the man she took him to be? Whose blood was it on the floor of the cabin? All these thoughts flashed through his mind.

"Dick?" was repeated.

"Who are you, woman?" he demanded, changing his natural order.

"Tell me who you are," he almost asked. "Where is my—where is my husband? Have they killed him? Tell me, tell me, I implore you, who you are."

"Your husband?" George Gril demanded, severely.

"Yes, yes—Mr. Fenton."

"And gray, how has your name been Fenton, madam?"

"In heaven's name, who are you?" she almost shrieked. "Declare yourself before I go mad."

At that a child began to cry, and she tried to soothe it.

"Answer my question. Upon your answer depends your life, it may be," the woman added. In his excitement he allowed his voice to take its natural tone.

"Heaven's! You be Light! Light! Light!" Impelled by her cry, he struck a match and they looked at each other for the first time.

An instant she hesitated, then, with a scream, she ran forward and threw herself upon his breast, crying—"George, George. Found at last!"
CHAPTER XV.
EXPLANATION AND RESOLVE.

She was coldly received.

"You have failed," said Griff's breast heaved, his breath came hard, but he did not embrace her.

This she realized, the first burst of her joy had gone, her eyes drew away from him and the match died out, leaving them once more in darkness.

"Oh, George, to me," she gasped.

"Is it possible that I have made another mistake? Are you not George Griff?" "You are George Griff, madam," was the cold response.

"And do you not know me, Mary, you who destroyed me?"

"You are here as the wife of another—what is the meaning of it? Who is he? Where is he? Who has been murdered?"

"Heavens! you think me false to you? George, I am here to find you, I am playing a part to enable that noble man to avenge his own wrongs and yours and mine. Hear me, I implore."

"Go on."

"Woodrow brought me to George, and they all said it was you. Indeed, I thought it was you. I nursed him until his head cleared, and then he almost broke my heart by declaring that he was not George Griff."

"I must have looked like me, indeed."

"Yes, yes, he did—he does. Then, too, his hair was all and bruised, and I would have been hard to tell. They all took him to be you, and I was mistaken with the rest, until he declared the truth, which he nobly and honorably did, the moment he regained consciousness. Believe me, George, believe me."

"Why are you here as his wife?"

"I have told you. We came to find you, and to avenge his wrongs and mine. He is here for the purpose of running Captain Lucifer to earth, of bringing him to justice for the crimes he has done, and for the sake of the true, noble, and honorable; and, believe me, I have been true to you in thought, and deed. God only knows the Joy I feel at finding you alive."

She embraced him again, and this time he enclosed her in his arms and kissed her.

The child was clinging to its mother's skirt, pleading to be taken up. As soon as he had grasped his wife, the man took the child in his arms.

"Papa! my papa!" the little fellow exclaimed.

"Yes, Mary, I believe you, your greeting proves it," said George. "But is all this mystery? Enlighten me, I beg. I went to Silver Bullet, and was almost crazed by what I heard there, that you had gone away with another man, who had assumed my name. In heaven's name, who is he?"

"He is Mr. Bristol, better known as Deadwood Dick, Jr."

"Deadwood Dick?"

"Yes.

"Great heavens! And where is he now? Quick, tell me the rest of the story."

Question and answer were asked and given as fast as words could be spoken, eagerly.

"They have captured him, believing him to be you," was the response. "They intend to kill him—I suppose they have long since done so."

"Tell me, what do you mean?"

"Captain Lucifer and his band."

"Good heavens!"

"Can't you save him, George? He was determined to find you or average you."

"Do you know where they have taken him?"

"No, no. He hurried me off here to hide—he had found the retreat, and the last I heard was the fight, and then that they had him prisoner. Fearing they would take me, I did not hesitate another minute, but came here. When I closed the door, something fell on the other side, and I could not open it again. Heavens! you do not know what I have suffered."

"I am trying to imagine, my darling, I can imagine. Whose blood is on it, the floor?"

"I do not know, but I heard the shooting. I think I heard at least one of them before they covered me."

"Then he was alone in the kitchen part of the cabin when the attack was made?"

"Yes; he slept there alone, and I and Georgie occupied the other part of the cabin. The door between was bolted, which circumstance saved me from falling into their hands."

"Did you hear anything that was said?"

"Yes, Mary? Anything that will give me a clew to where they have taken him?"

"I heard him ask them where they intended taking him."

"Ha! And what did they say?"

"One said—you know well enough, without asking that, George Griff. Only know this, the same thing, this time."

"Ah! I well know where he is, then. God knows I pity him."

"Can you help him?"

"Yes, and will."

"Thank God!"

"You think well of him."

"He was determined to save you, or avenge you, and he has been so good and kind to me and Georgie."

"Yes, yes, I understand. It was his plan, then, to let people at Silver Bullet still continue thinking he was George Griff, then to rescue him."

"Yes. He said it might help to find you, in some way or another. If they had killed you, he said it would have puzzled them, and maybe give the clew. If they had not killed you, he might by the same means find you."

"And he was bold enough to come here."

"Yes, after he had been here once, and had almost given up his life at the hands of Captain Lucifer."

"Ha! then he knows him."

"Yes, and he has exposed him here, this, only he has been playing to get some tidings of you."

"Enough, enough. If I misjudged you, I beg your pardon humbly. I will find him, now, and if there is not a day of reckoning then, it will be a strange thing."

"And what about me?"

"Ha! I dare not rescue you, for that would make it necessary for you to tell the people of Cold Camp all that has happened."

"I can do that, and still keep the leading secret."

"Yes, but it would compromise me, for they would demand to know how I had found you, and they might accuse me of being in with Captain Lucifer. The people are in no mood to be trifled with, tell you. They might hang me on short order."

"What then, George?"

"Are you brave enough to remain here for a time?"

"If you require it, but it is cold, and we are hungry, Georgie and I. How long must it be?"

"No longer than necessary. I will bring you food for one night, from the cabin above, if the coast is clear, and you can then make yourself to a degree comfortable."

""I will do anything you say, George, only do not fail to come to my rescue."

"You need have no fear of that, unless."

"What?"

"But the door will not entrap you again, and if I fail to return you can make your signal."

"You hint that you may be killed. Heavens! you must take care of your self."

"I fear nothing. A just God will not allow them to triumph. Their race is not yet run, and it rests for me to rescue Deadwood Dick and join with him."

"But you are two against many."

"Two are a host when right is on their side. But I must hasten away, before others discover that I am for the time missing."

With fond words they parted, and the husband went up to the cabin. No one was there, and he speedily found food and bedding, which he handed down to his wife, together with a lamp.

CHAPTER XVI.
THE MEN OF DESTINY MEET.

Meanwhile, when Munson and Hockman returned to the office, Hockman exclaimed:

"Munson, I have made a discovery. It is no use longer your trying to fool yourself with the belief that Deadwood Dick is dead."

Munson was pale.

"I have the same suspicion myself, he agreed. "I am afraid that you are right, and that this fellow Phineas Brown is no other than Deadwood Dick in disguise."

"I am just so sure of him that I am going to find out."

"How—when?"

"To-night, if no opportunity offers itself."

"But if it is Deadwood Dick, he will be wary of us, and we will not catch him napping."

"Then we must take him unawares. He is likely to roam around in the hills, according to the part he is playing, and he must be followed and held up."

"And what then?"

"If suspicion proves correct, then he must die."

"Care must be taken so that no suspicion can fall on us. We are handling a delicate affair."

"I know we are, but it is now coming to a head. One or two bold moves, and the whole thing is done, and we are safe. But those moves must not miss, or we are in trouble."

"And we are at a point where there is no drawing back."

"No; we have got to go on."

"Well, let us keep watch of this fellow, and see what his moves are."

"Yes, that we will do, and, if they are favorable to us, he will himself held up at the end of a gun before this day passes. Anyhow, we will go for him to-night."

When George Griff came out of the cabin he found his "boy" waiting in the same place where he had left him.

"I'll only go, but there were several men from the town around him, and the old man was rubbing his eyes on his sleeves as if on the verge of crying, and the men were laughing."

"See yonder," one of them called out at the top of his voice, "Georgy says Mr. Brown must keep yer kid in sight, Mr. Brown."

"Make 'em let me be, dad. They been asking me, tryin' to make me sin, and I won't do it."

"No, but he kem mighty near cryin'," declared one of the men. "What is ther
matter with him, anyhow? What makes him think he is a kid? He is their oldest baby that I ever seen in my life, I be blamed if he ain’t. Don’t you want a stick of candy, boy?"

"You lemmie be," was the whine.

"There, there, do not mind the gentleman. He never saw any man come along, and we will go down, now."

He offered his hand, and the old fellow took it eagerly, and as they turned away George turned and touched his forehead, as if to say that his companion was not right in the head.

They went down the path, and the man entered the cabin to explore it.

"I played em,” said the old fellow, with a chuckle, “I thought you had found somethin’, seein’ that you didn’t come right back, so I entertained ’em a little.

"And I am glad you did, Joe. I have found her."

"Then she is alive and kickin’, is she? Glory! but I am glad of that!"

George quickly told the story, as it was more directly to him, and the old man hardly contains himself.

They went leisurely down to the bottom, and, as nothing was hurrying them and they had all day nothing in, and there some of the men wanted to know what they had found.

"Nothin’ at all, but we worked with them, playing the parts they had assumed, and presently moved away in the direction of the Big Nig."

They were seen from the office of the mine.

When they had come abreast with the office, on their way up the gulch, the door opened.

Hockman came out and greeted them, asking them if they had been able to discover anything—about the same question, the others had asked, and George made similar response.

He noted that Hockman eyed him closely, and made that remark to his companion when they passed on.

"Well, let him,” said Old Joe. "Little good et will do him.

"I know, but it makes it all the more necessary to play the part to a nicety. I am all too eager now for the end."

"Yes, and then a sharp climb up to a ledge leads to a cavern. There is another way, but that is too open for our purpose."

At last right, I am with ye, dad, only don’t ye go too fast for my old legs.

George led the way, and in a little time the ledge had scaled the ascent and were upon a ledge.

Along this they passed, till finally they came to a place where rock overhung a fine place for a man to remain on guard, and here George requested his companion to sit down.

"We must take no chances of being overcome and taken prisoners."

"Go right ahead, George, boy, and rely on me."

"I know I can do that. A shot will apprise me that danger is at hand, and you can hold a score at bay here for a few minutes."

"Yas, and you kin bet your life that I will do it, too. I will make ’em think that yer the one that could put the whole leg, dad, you bet I will, if they show their teeth."

Satisfied, George pressed on.

A few moments more, and he entered a cavern, where he found a man in chains.

He ran forward eagerly, and the first thing he did was to grasp the man by the hand, in spite of the fact that he was bound, and he eagerly cried:

"Thank God I have found you, Deadwood Dick! I will free you, and together we will run them to their doom!"

"Who are you?” Dick asked, in great surprise.

"I am George Grill, the man you have been searching for. I spent more than a year in these chains that hold you, until I came to find you. I last I could slip out of them—they never thought of that, nor did I, till I made the discovery."

It was question and answer, with lightning rapidity, until they worked at the locks that held the chains, and by the time the locks had been forced they had an understanding with each other.

As soon as Deadwood Dick had been freed the two shook hands, and there and then vowed the ending of their foes.

CHAPTER XVII.

CAPTAIN LUCIFER RETURNED.

Meantime, something was taking place out on the ledge.

George Grill had not been gone a long time from the place where he had left Old Joe when a man came sneaking along up the trail.

He was masked, and carried a gun in his hand. Clad in a dilapidated suit of overalls and jumper, there was no possibility of his identity being discovered while his face was masked.

The old man saw him, and his eyes flashed. He had his gun and waited for the man to come nearer before he revealed his presence.

He of the mask came on slowly, stealthily.

Old Joe was behind a shoulder of rock, as has been mentioned, and all the advantage of position was his.

Waiting until the man was at hand, he suddenly reached his arm over the projection, and the gun in his fist almost came into contact with the other’s head.

"Are you a lookin’ fer my papa?” he asked naively.

The man of the mask gave a great start, as he looked up, and was on the point of lifting his gun.

There was a gleam in the eyes of the old fellow, and in the dangerous proximity of the gun, however, that caused him to desist, and told him that he was caught.

"If you are, sir,” the old man added, "you know I’ll shot you on till my dad comes back, that is all. He told me ter let nobody pass."

The dense take you and your dad, old fellow. I ain’t scared, I don’t suppose you will have no objection to my going back the way I came? Tell your dad for me that you have seen Captain Lucifer—dead, a-mighty!” ejaculated the old fellow.

"Be you that varmint? I reckon you will have to stay right where you are, for drop that gun and I will see what effect a bullet will have, plump in the eye—Ha! no foolin’; drop it, I tell you.

There was no use trying to dodge it, that gun had to be dropped; Old Joe held the drop in grim control of the rules of the outlaw were futile.

Old Joe held him right there until George Grill and Deadwood Dick made their appearance.

The explanation of the situation was immediate; then they seized the prisoner and tore the mask from his face.

The man was Melvin Munson.

"At last!” cried Dick and George, in the same breath.

At sight of them, both together, the man had paled to the lips, and he could not speak.

"The tables are turned,” remarked Deadwood Dick, grimly. "What we have suffered at your hands, we will be returned with interest, Melvin Munson, you detestable human brute!"

And it was looked to by the other of the two men, in a haze of dismay.

They looked alike—their eyes, the color of their hair and beard, and their voice, too, had a similarity. No wonder that he was puzzled.

"In heaven’s name, who are you?" he managed to inquire.

"I am Deadwood Dick, betrayed into your clutches by Dudley Hockman, whom, as sheriff, I consigned when I came to this part of the country to run down Captain Lucifer. I am the man whom you doomed to death, and now I am supposed, by tying me to that mad horse and sending it shrieking across the barren plain some months ago.

"And I,” said the other, promptly, "am George Grill, whom you confined here in these chains for a year and more, trying to make me give up the secret I hold. I am the only man who knows the hiding-place of Mountain Huckle’s big store of plunder, and you knew that I knew it. But, wot that you are, that secret should never be yours!"

"And what am I to expect?”

"Mercy, of course,” said Dick, with a sneer.

"Mercy, to be sure,” sneered George.

"I do not ask it—I dare not ask it. You have got me in your power, and I am at your mercy. But, you have only got half of me.

"What mean you?” demanded Dick.

"I mean that there is another as deep in the mud as I am in the mire."

"And you will insist on some terms at our hands before you will tell who that other is, I suppose."

"You have hit it. There is another, who has been played off Captain Lucifer a full half the time, in order that suspicion could not fall on either of us.”

"Promise that you will spare my life, and I will tell you."

"We promise nothing. The man is Dudley Hockman. I know the scheme."

With a moan, the wretch sunk down, and with his dying breath, he could look for no mercy at the hands of these two, whom he had so greatly misused. Instantly he tried to leap to his death from the ledge.

He was held back, however.

We have something better in store for you than we promised Dick.

"The chains are awaiting you."
They shaved and washed up, and that was done. Then morning came. The snow was seen in the
looks, although the likeness was still somewhat remarkable. They would have been taken for brothers, anywhere.

Dick still carried some of the scars which he had received at the time of his cruel death. The wound of the knife was in the cheek of Black Thunderer, but no disfigured his face. Grill was still thin, but his face showed that he was regaining his strength.

"Well, now for the finale," said Dick. "Yes: now to deliver these wretches up to the person whom they have imposed so long.

No, not that, for they are my pris-

oners, proved me from the empty gun, but the ex-

plosive was made in public, and they

shall be made to feel the shame for

their crimes, as a foretaste. I will fetch

the other.

Leaving Grill in charge, he set out and

in due season returned with Munson, ac-

companied by Old Joe. The two were then chained together, and in that fash-

ion were marched down the slope and into the current proper, where the natives were amazed beyond measure.

At sight of them, the word was quickly passed, and all the people of the camp they reached the open space in front of the Snug Snap, the whole camp population, or nearly so, gathered there to hear and see the proceedings. A table was brought, and from that Deadwood Dick made known the whole matter to the old chief.

Dudley Hockman, the bosh-bully, it was shown, had been one of the band of the once infamous outlaw, Mountain Guinea. They had quarrelled and murdered Grenville, and had escaped arrest at the time when sousdurnal was hanged. He was eager to find the―― and believed that George Grill knew where it was hid, owing to the fact that Grill had been in the hands of the Mountain Guin-

The man reached for a gun, but Dick was upon him like a tiger, and a brace of handcuffs were snapped on his wrists in a trice.

"You see, sight is bound to triumph," cried Dick. "Wrong may ride for a time, but in the end truth and justice are bound to prevail. What do you suppose the people of Old Camp will think of you and mine, now?"

"Do not expose me here, for heaven's sake, do not expose me here," the man pleaded. "I am in the right mood for a lynching, and nothing would stop them!"

"You are mercy shown to either of us? Do not die here at our hands. If they hang you, so much the better for the place at large."

The wretch was hushed, but they were dead to his entreaties.

Nothing of it was yet known in the camp.

Dick and George secured the doors of the mine office, and there made changes in their appearance.