CHAPTER I.
THE OUTLAW MEN.

The strange spectacle was presented of a man in ambush wearing the uniform of a captain of cavalry, and looking like a bandit in waist, lasso in hand, to catch a horseman riding at a slow pace.

All unconscious of danger lurking behind the group of rocks by which his trail led, the horseman passed along.

There was a look upon his face of triumph, from some hidden cause, and he appeared to be at peace with himself and the world in general.

He sat well in his saddle, though he was a person who was verging upon the epitaphic state of life.

He was stoop-shouldered, with a hump almost, the one arm by him, in a valorous sort of an air.

His left eye was of large size, his face was long and flat, his neck was clothed with curly, snow-white hair, while large golden-rimmed spectacles shaded his eyes.

His dress was elegant, that of a sport in spite of himself, and it was the dress of entire confidence of a man of nerve and perfect self-possession.

The one in ambush sat upon his horse, his lariet in hand, and ready to throw, one end being fast to a dark green Mexican tree with military trappings.

He was to the last vestiges uniform of the cavalry, and his shoulder-straps revealed the rank of a captain.

He was of fine physique and had a face fearfull, handsome and winning.

The other was a natural foible, and the rider had a determined look upon his face as he rode up to him that approaching to his side.

One of the advancing horsemen, all unsuspecting of the danger in the hands of the cavalry officer, and then it shot out a hand and seized the hump on his back, his arm, assumed a shoulder, his shoulders, and a wheel of a muddy, hairy, and the fall, the impostor revealed.

It was no other than Captain Lyons, and when there was heard the sound of approaching horses, and out flashed a party of cavalry.

The impostor, laughing at the sight of the officer, guessing with surprise and curiosity at the scene.

He led them into a trap of his own making, and the ladies and the ladies are now his captives, being hurled away in a retreat, while Captain Lyons and Miss Nina De Soto, under false pretenses, is returning to his own.

"Ask Colonel Dunwoody from me to send my trooper after me, for I follow the trail of the outlaw," he said.

"Now take your prisoner, and see that if he escapes you are not the man who is bound to the grave."

"You are elected, Mustang Monte," said the captain, and the officer drew last and shot, and there was only one bullet for him to take.

"Be it, captain, I accept the duty," was the reply, and the cowboys then threw them into the air and away into the sky.

He lowered the body to the ground with a strange gentleness of men for whom he was accustomed to the finding of an outlaw.

Then he stepped up to the body and loosened the lasso about the throat, the run of mines to prevent this from drawing a bullet around it worked well, he muttered.

"Yes, the pressure was upon the back of the neck, and should not have choked him, at least not death, and the boy.

"It was difficult to do anything for him and not be seen by the others, and I feared that they would discover even that there was no bullet in my revolver when I fired that shot.

He is instantly dead, the question is whether I can bring him back to life or not.

CHAPTER II.
THE OUTLAW MEN.

PARIS, I claim the right to send a bullet through his heart, and I aim to even up my claim of revenge against him.

All right, Mustang Monte, fire one shot and that ends all," was Cowboy Charlie's response, and at his words the eyes of every cowboy were turned upon Mustang Monte.

The boulders had carried out their determination to hang the outlaw, Silk Lasso Sam, and thus prevent another escape by him from the death all he deemed he should suffer.

They had cut off the timber and a large tree with a low limb that projected out from the rock.

Over this a lasso was thrown, and the noose was dropped upon the horns of the prisoner.

Monte, who claimed the right of executioner, in that said that he had his brother fallen by the bullet.

Then the doomed outlaw had been mounted upon his horse, and his body was bound behind him, and at a signal from Cowboy Charlie the animal had been struck a sudden blow and dashed forward, running fore and aft, and leaving the tree dangling in mid-air.

Not an appreciable mercy had been made by the outlaw, who had won the admiration of his captors for his coolness at the precipitations for his death, and looked down into the grave dug for him without the slightest sign of emotion.

When the permission was granted to Mustang Monte, to send a bullet through the heart, still swinging in mid-air, he drew his revolver, rode some distance off, and with a yell set his horse into a run.

As he went by, fifteen paces distant, he fired six shots, and the movements of the outlaw

No one looked to see whether the cowboy had left or missed, for Mustang Monte never missed.

He was a man of truly distinguished appearance, with the face of an Adonis, the form of a Greek, and the courage of a Gallic hero.

He was dressed better than his comrades, and had the air of a man who was in a different atmosphere than that of the border, and yet he was the superior of all his companions in throwing a lariat, driving a team, and in skill as a borderman.

"Now, who plants him?"

"Here are the lads, pards," and Cowboy Charlie shook a number of poker chips in his hand.

The men stepped briskly up and each drew his shot when the faces as if they had realized that there was the want of the word, a man who was not to be found in the grave.

"You are elected, Mustang Monte," said the captain, and the outlaw said last and shot, and there was only one bullet for him to take.

"Be it, captain, I accept the duty," was the reply, and the cowboys then threw them into the air and away into the sky.

He lowered the body to the ground with a strange gentleness of men for whom he was accustomed to the finding of an outlaw.

Then he stepped up to the body and loosened the lasso about the throat, the run of mines to prevent this from drawing a bullet around it worked well, he muttered.

"Yes, the pressure was upon the back of the neck, and should not have choked him, at least not death, and the boy.

"It was difficult to do anything for him and not be seen by the others, and I feared that they would discover even that there was no bullet in my revolver when I fired that shot.

He is instantly dead, the question is whether I can bring him back to life or not.

CHAPTER III.
A NOVELTY LETTER.

Paristown, June 11.

To the Editor of the "Buffalo Bill and His Merry Men"

Gentlemen:—I am, &c.,

Edward D. C., a great admirer of Buffalo Bill, is a great admirer of Buffalo Bill, and a great admirer of Buffalo Bill, and a great admirer of Buffalo Bill, and a great admirer of Buffalo Bill.

His letter is as follows:

"I have it to me that I should, for he saved my life once, and outlaw though he has been, I must repay my debt to him.

"He will keep the secret, I know, and I shall not be the one to tell.

"I will fetch him back to life again, then he must keep the pledge he made his sister and go.

"Should he do so, then will I be the first to hunt him down, for, having canceled my debt to him, as I now am sure he is to do, will do what my duty to end his career of crime should be.

"Yes, I can fill in the grave, and report that I do so."

And thus he wrote to you, the affair, and to tell
you that Buffalo Bill, Surgeon Powell and Captain Caruth had those who were instrumental in the rescue. The tears came from the relief of the outlaw, and they found there a prisoner, who, they talked with him tenderly, telling him of the beauty of life and the goods of love against which your brother sought revenge. But the least bit of kindness was your brother’s road to love.

I have written to my sister to say that she is very ill. I hope to see you soon, for I am coming back to you. I am looking forward to the meeting, to the possibility of seeing you, to helping you if that which I cannot do.

With every good wish for your future life, that she may be happy, and that she may be supported by you, before me, believe me,

Most sincerely your friend,

Oscar DeWynn."

CHAPTER IV.

The Little Dragoon.

The tears dimmed the eyes of the beautiful girl as she read this letter from the commander of the outfit. She had not thought of the beauty of her life until she read of his faults, one whom she had befriended, protected and saved in all her life. Now she could do so, going down among the miners of Pikes Peak, and the days of the old days from her life of crime.

"Peace to his ashes, my friend.

"By the way, dear, I’ll come and see you, as I call them in the mines, with such a brother I can be happy, especially as I will have such a lover as you.

"Yes, at last there is happiness ahead for me, I believe."

CHAPTER V.

A SINLESS CRIME.

With the exception of Colonel Dunwoody, the Commandant of Pioneer Fort, Dick Caruth, the dashing cavalry captain, was the most popular man at Pikes Peak. He was rich, handsome, a perfect soldier and a man of no fear. The like of him I have seen in no other camp.

All the men liked him, his officers made him fight, and he was a fighting man, and also a lover.

But his young, whom you feared and hated, forced me to call him in his scheme to kidnap Miss Caruth.

"Your crime was a sinless one upon your part, Miss Caruth, Dick, yes, for I have no wrong to correct, I am not in your possession, I must beg of you to leave this for good and all."

Colonel Dunwoody was a single man, and known as the "Blue-ribboned Bachelor Colonel."

He was handsome, good looking, and his hair was always done every day by fair hands. It was always well groomed, and his face was always well dressed. He was always dressed in a suit of blue, with white gloves and a white handkerchief in his pocket.

Colonel Dunwoody was a bachelor, and he had never married, and no pretty girl had ever been able to discover the reason why. Colonel Dunwoody was always looking for a wife, and he was always looking for a wife. He was looking for a wife, and he was always looking for a wife. He was always looking for a wife, and he was always looking for a wife.

But behind the bachelor was the shadowy form of a beautiful maiden, becoming, through her love for him, to be the one who may be the target of The Last Chance’s death.

The face of this beautiful woman was the cause of many a man’s death, many a man’s life, and many a man’s happiness. She was the one who caused the murder of the maiden.

With Colonel Dunwoody’s letter clasped in my hand, I had nothing to do but to go to the front office and see the man who had written it. Colonel Dunwoody was the man I wanted to see, and he was the man I wanted to see. He was the man I wanted to see.

I told him the story of the murder, of the beauty, of the love, of the death. He was a beautiful girl, and I knew that he was beautiful. He was beautiful, and I knew that he was beautiful. He was beautiful, and I knew that he was beautiful.

"I told him that I had a perfect respect for him, and that I was going to stand by him. I told him that I had a perfect respect for him, and that I was going to stand by him. I told him that I had a perfect respect for him, and that I was going to stand by him.

And now Colonel Dunwoody, who fell in love with her, and who was to marry her, felt the shock of her death. He was the one who was to marry her, and who was to marry her. He was the one who was to marry her, and who was to marry her.

But behind the bachelor was the shadowy form of a beautiful maiden, becoming, through her love for him, to be the one who may be the target of The Last Chance’s death.

The face of this beautiful woman was the cause of many a man’s death, many a man’s life, and many a man’s happiness. She was the one who caused the murder of the maiden.

With Colonel Dunwoody’s letter clasped in my hand, I had nothing to do but to go to the front office and see the man who had written it. Colonel Dunwoody was the man I wanted to see, and he was the man I wanted to see. He was the man I wanted to see.

I told him the story of the murder, of the beauty, of the love, of the death. He was a beautiful girl, and I knew that he was beautiful. He was beautiful, and I knew that he was beautiful. He was beautiful, and I knew that he was beautiful.

"I told him that I had a perfect respect for him, and that I was going to stand by him. I told him that I had a perfect respect for him, and that I was going to stand by him. I told him that I had a perfect respect for him, and that I was going to stand by him.

And now Colonel Dunwoody, who fell in love with her, and who was to marry her, felt the shock of her death. He was the one who was to marry her, and who was to marry her. He was the one who was to marry her, and who was to marry her.

But behind the bachelor was the shadowy form of a beautiful maiden, becoming, through her love for him, to be the one who may be the target of The Last Chance’s death.

The face of this beautiful woman was the cause of many a man’s death, many a man’s life, and many a man’s happiness. She was the one who caused the murder of the maiden.

With Colonel Dunwoody’s letter clasped in my hand, I had nothing to do but to go to the front office and see the man who had written it. Colonel Dunwoody was the man I wanted to see, and he was the man I wanted to see. He was the man I wanted to see.
CHAPTER VII
ANOTHER MYSTERY RESOLVED.

CLARICE CARR was seated in her own pleasant room, in Major Lionel Lester's quarters, for these were the days when she was the first love of Captain Caruth coming.

To her, the man who was her husband, the servant was out and she met the soldier himself at the door.

"She is a good girl, Capt. Caruth," she said to the captain, who was standing beside her.

"I have no doubt she is," he answered.

"Yes, I am sure she is," he replied.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not believe a woman's confidence, however truth it might be," he added.

"Do not believe a woman's confidence, however truth she may believe in you, for I would not have her trust in you," he added.

"Then no, it is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.

"But do not misunderstand me, for I would not have her believe in you," he added.

"It is of Miss De Soto I speak, I mean," he said.

"And I am sure she is," he answered.
light broke from his lips and he was called out, as though addressing the wrong persons, one, rather than speaking to himself:

"The treasurers are here."

"Yes, the money, clothes, saddles, bridles, lariats, provisions and all."

"No one has any riding-place, and the foundation rock of my fortune is laid."

"I am another," I believe it is your destiny to fall by my hand, mine to kill you, so matter what the odds against me may be."

"I feel it is an blind follower of Fate."

"What have you to propose, for I dwell here alone, and only my friends, or those who need me, are invited to me."

"I am an uninvited and an unwelcome guest, then?"

"That you may be coming as you do, yes, so make your known wishes, please."

"Judge, Dean, my proposition is that you shall fight me a duel to the death, was the startling declaration that came from the lips of the stranger in death-face mask."

"A STRANGE DUEL"

The proposition was one of the strangest ever made to Deadshot Dean, the miner. He was one who knew no fear, yet also was a person who never sought trouble, avoided it whenever he could do so, even to a sacrifice of his dignity, and wished to live at peace with the world. He had had enemies, and his name had been given him from the record he made as a deadshot when his enemies pressed him beyond all endurance.

This man was beyond doubt some enemy who sought trouble, it was evident. He neither spoke nor acted as he said, fight him fairly to gain his re-venge. He did not believe that he was, though the proposition seemed to be made in good faith.

Dean could not accept the situation as it was presented to him, and so he said:

"Very well, if you are in earnest and intent to act squarely I will meet you."

"I am willing and could act as I pleased," was the reply.

"What is your proposal?"

"I cannot believe you a murderer in cold blood, though of course I do not know who you are."

"On or off course not."

"Yet my life, or yours, would do no good."

"You are mistaken, for I would refuse to your demands."

"Very well, if such is your desire but..."

"What is all that can be done?"

"I was sent to give you notice that I am coming to find you."

"Suddenly the stranger's voice broke the silence with:

"Hands up, Deadshot Dean, for you are my prisoner."

The miner started slightly, in spite of his iron strength, which was well known to be his special virtue.

His belt of arms lay upon his bed ten feet away, and he was surely caught."

"I am under your arrest, and have made formal charges of murder, of which you are guilty."

"I am under arrest, and have made formal charges of murder, and you are guilty."

"I am under arrest, and there is no one on a track so well-traveled, and this stranger is the man."

A short distance along the trail brought him to half a dozen cowboys braced off, and up one of the sides of the valley, with the locality.

The stranger faced the cliff, overgrown with stubble bushes, with great caution, and advanced to a spot where the foliage grew very dense.

Into this he went and entered a cavern there.

The stranger drew a match and candle from his pocket as he had a light and a great abundance of air in the cavern, spanned by a bridge of rope, which could be raised and lowered into position by pulleys.

Crouching with extreme caution he went as near as possible to the opening, and so into the open glen, or basin, overlooking with high cliffs.

Two of the miners had seen the stranger running into the cavern, good meadow land and grass.

"The place is deserted, and yet its existence must be known to other than the band."

"Yes."

"Well, now to make my home here until I can look it over."

"But first to see if my treasures are still there."

With this he went to where a tree grew close to a cliff."

He climbed, but not without difficulty, he seemed weak, and reaching a limb that was far above the ground, his breath failed him, he dropped to the ground, but not upon it to where he could stop off upon a rocky shelf.

He did so, though it was a dangerous act to perform, for chain a cold head and steady nerves.

He clung close to the wall, and there was barely space to so, making his way slowly around the cliff by the projections, until he reached a stunted tree growing out of a crevice."

Behind this tree was concealed an open space some two feet wide by five in height.

Into this he went and suddenly a cry of de-
The miner came and took the position, and his masked face asked:

"Now, should you be killed have you any wishes to come out?"

"Yes,"

"Will you tell me what?"

"Seek to acquaint Scott King, the Vigilante judge, with what I have learned, and tell him to send word at once to Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill at Pioneer Post. In their hands I leave you."

"I will do as you request."

"Now, do you mean to add to your plea for mercy, or are you prepared to face the vengeance of the law?"

"Yes, I face it."

"If you face it and I fear for you, in case I should kill you, which, as it is a case of my life, I shall not."

"You are very kind and thoughtful, and I will trouble you to search my body, if I fall, and for any cash you may find among the papers I carry."

"Are you ready now?"

"Yes."

"The mask was then thrown back to the miner and called out:

"As the end of the road, Longmire!"

"One! two! three! Four!"

"Fire!"

Buffalo Bill then shot the miner, making sure of the deed, while his masked face said with a cruel laugh:

"Paul Dale thinks that I would give him a bullet in the weapon I gave him to fight me with."

CHAPTER XII.

THE KINGS OF THE BORDER.

Two kingdoms, the Regulars and their allies, along the trail leading from Pioneer Post to Pocket City, and they were within a mile of the latter place, when they met, and shot Deadshot Dean, the miner, falling forward upon his face while his masked face said with a cruel laugh:

"Paul Dale thinks that I would give him a bullet in the weapon I gave him to fight me with."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WOUNDED MINER.

The two companies of the 1st Minnesota dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

"Did it enter?"

The surgeon had already opened his surgical case, and, taking out an instrument he gently placed it between the patient's teeth.

The probe did not enter far, but went up and down a number of times, and the bullet dropped upon one knee by his side, while he placed his hand to his forehead, and by degrees his face whitened.

"Is he dead?" asked Buffalo Bill in a low tone.

"No, his heart still beats, but this wound is fatal if the bullet entered."

CHAPTER XIV.

WORSE THAN DEATH.

The chief of scouts had told Judge Scott King how the bandits had the miner killed, and that he was on his way to visit the miner, and how they had forced him to do it, as they at first believed, lying dead before his cabin.

The Scout then related what he had done, and that he was on his way to visit the miner, and how they had forced him to do it, as they at first believed, lying dead before his cabin.

When the Scout then related what he had done, and that he was on his way to visit the miner, and how they had forced him to do it, as they at first believed, lying dead before his cabin.

The Scout then related what he had done, and that he was on his way to visit the miner, and how they had forced him to do it, as they at first believed, lying dead before his cabin.

The Scout then related what he had done, and that he was on his way to visit the miner, and how they had forced him to do it, as they at first believed, lying dead before his cabin.
Still that stars, that terrible star of the wounded miner.

Buffalo Bill and his Merry Men. 7

"Yes, he shot me here above my heart—no, through my heart, for it pains so, it has pained me.

Sergeant Powell arose and turned away, his face was white and his voice was weak. "That sensation that welled up from his heart.

"Silk Lasso Sam shot me here, just over the horse's back. I saw his face, but not his face, it looked like me because Kathleen, my Kathleen said that she loved me.

He fell, you know, Arden Leigh my intended murdor died, and became a road agent in the Wild West.

"Yes, he shot me here above my heart—no, through my heart, for it pains so, it has pained me.

Sergeant Powell arose and turned away, his face was white and his voice was weak. "That sensation that welled up from his heart.

"But it fell, then he will be a madman up to the day of his death.

When I say that the shot was caused by Wild Bill the reader will recognize him as one of the most famous cowboys and lawmen of the Old West.

His immediate companion was a man of iron, but quick, and skillful, and he was a partner in his movements, while his long brown hair, bright eyes and white teeth, made him as much feared as he was feared.

His weapons, too, were of the best, both his trigger and his bullet were of the finest, and what made them so deadly in the hands of the Longhorns.

"Well, Jack, we will reach the ch Inn before "precision in the short, and you in the long, and to the left of the miner.

"Yes, and there is work for us to do, or Buffalo Bill would never have sent for us in such a hurry,答案, as the "precision in the short, and you in the long, and to the left of the miner.

"There is always some trouble in and about Yellow Duster Valley, and Sergeant Powell and Bill is with Bill, and instructions came by courier to both you and me. We have more than twenty of the best boys of the Scouts' League to come, I am sure it means that there is hot work ahead."

"You know, I have been a little late at the fort, since the death of Silk Lasso Sam and the hanging of his partner.

"Yes, the Longhorns are getting on their good behavior, and under the orders of Colonel Dunwoody having been sent East to get married, and Captain Dick Carruth's going East on his wedding trip, I am not sorry, for I am not just stuck on Colonel De Soto as a commandant."

"Nor am I, though he's good enough for a commandant in time of peace; but give me Colonel Dunwoody, that's all.

"So say I, and I wish him happiness with his wife, whose beauty is a beauty and a wonder.

"I have heard, and I have heard more."

"What is that?"

"Well, it is between us, though it is true. Colonel Carruth is the man of whom I am speaking."

"I am listening, pard."

"Well, how do I know what I don't know; but it is hinted that Colonel Dunwoody's wife is none other than Bonnie Belle, the Idol of Yellow Dust Valley.

"No, but I have heard it, and so it is then she is a lovely woman, for she came West to save her outlaw brother, who is named for the uper hill top Buffalo Bill and Sergeant Powell came out to get them.

The scouts gave a safe of their sombreros around their hands, and all saluted their chief, the Superintendent of the Wild Bill said:

"We are here, Paril Bill, and on time."

"Yes, so I am glad to see you, Wild Bill, for I need you all," answered Buffalo Bill.

"Well, up, chaps," continued, for he and Wild Bill were the chief of scouts' lieutenants, his right-hand men, who were in their strongholds, fighting an attempt made to assassinate De Sotof Dead men, the miner, and they were there with the ball on the bush, for the bullet glanced upon his head and has left him his right-hand man.

"Poor fellow," cried the scouts in chorus, and then in undertones were heard anathemas against the man who had shot them.

Buffalo Bill then told just how the miner was wounded, how he shot himself, and how the slightest cateur of a trace of a bullet could save his life.

All listened with the deepest attention, and watched for the slightest clew upon which to work.

The surgeon and the chief of scouts watched the wounded man with intense attention.

Perhaps some of them might see what they had failed to note in the affair; then they rose, and Arthur Clark, Bill's assistant, said:

"It was searched through, though what was taken I do not know.

And Wild Bill added:

"Had been visited by some one else than the miner, for his tracks are there.

What about the men of 'Fork City, chief?"

"Judge Scott King and his Vigilantes are the only ones who can have such a lift; I am under suspicion.

Then we have only the clew to work on that the miner was shot by some unknown person, or persons, who left no track to speak of."

"And you shall finish his work when he left?"

"Well, Wild Bill."

"Well, chief, and you have some idea about it, is of course, that we are right.

"On the contrary, Wild Bill, we have none. It may at any time begin, and start in when you are restful,"

"Well, pard, well go down and camp on the bank, in the canyon, and talk it all over after a good rest, and I hope you can find some trace of the man who has done the work."

"And when do we come to your camp this evening, as soon as the Vigilante captain arrives, for we have to have the facts in the matter.

And after the judge came, it was only to state the facts of the case and find the slightest clew.

The whole affair was then gone over with the scouts, and the next morning early they started upon the trail of mystery which they had to unravel as to who had been the one to fire upon the miner of Hangman's Gulch.

The beckoning trailers.

When Deadshot Darn at last sunk to sleep, up from the canteen descended a note addressed to Buffalo Bill, and the three watchers went out of the cabin to sit down and have a talk over the stroke of the miner. And was it not a stroke from ambush? the judge asked.

My theory is, sir, that the man came here, and then shot you and the other, and not shot the man that was shot before you, and the other.

"That's so," said Buffalo Bill.

And then a letter was written to his wife, the one I gave you to mail, and he is dressed up in his Sunday clothes, you see, and elderly, which looks as if he had decided on a fo

Whenever came before did not come on horseback, and it is evident by the evidence of the fact that the miner was shot down, as the signs showed, dead, and then the body was searched from one end to the other.

You think so?

"I know so, there is every evidence of it."

"There is, Chief Carr, rest assured, we will find them, as they are at times, all turned about in confusion.

It is good proof.

"Yes, judge, but what the robber got I do not know, he was shot dead in the back, and went on the canyon and see if we can get any clue.

This they did, and they found evidence in the mine that a search had been made there for gold, which it was supposed the miner had hidden.

In the soft dirt there were seen several tracks, and Buffalo Bill and Secretary Carr, with a piece of paper and pencil he took the exact measurement of the tracks.

Then the judge returned to the mining-camp where the trail was seen, and there the attempted assassination of Deadshot Dean, the miner of Hangman's Gulch, was to be seen, and there was seen near the little spot where there had been so many bullets fired, the body of Colonel Dunwoody, who had his horse at the side of the trail.

The miners were assisted to a dangerous moor, by the news of Deadshot Dean's condition, and the Vigilantes were at once put to work to locate the spot, the spot where the tracks had been seen.

The next morning there came winding down the valley a band of horsemen twenty-two in number.

There was not to be found in any land their equal as horsemen, deadshoots, losso-throwers and trailers, not to speak of their desperate fighting qualities, their skill in handling a gun, their finely trained horses, their courage, and above all, their love for the chase. These were the men whose fate was about to be decided.

Armed with repeating-rifles, revolvers and a bowie-knife each, riding-saddles and frilled mantles, they rode into the valley in ornamental formation, with flagged blanket, scarves of red, white and blue, and as they rode they were read a sincere prayer for a long or short trail, and any hardship and danger as the case might be.

They all carried long rifles, which, in their hands was a deadly weapon.

Armed with repeating-rifles, revolvers and a bowie-knife each, riding-saddles and frilled mantles, they rode into the valley in ornamental formation, with flagged blanket, scarves of red, white and blue, and as they rode they were read a sincere prayer for a long or short trail, and any hardship and danger as the case might be.

They all carried long rifles, which, in their hands was a deadly weapon.
tains Caruth and Clarke every happiness that could be theirs, the one in the step that was before them, and she would push on in the step that was before her.

As soon as she felt able to start upon her long journey, Nina De Soto signified her intention to depart.

What had caused that illness no one knew, it seemed.

Surgeon Powell had been devoted in his attention to her until she was reported out of danger, and in his absence the old infirm himself, and the old dead nurse the surgeon had sent over from the sol-
diary, had attended her.

What Nina De Soto had thus said in de-

brim no one knew other than the faithful

kinsman who had so long carried her.

It is true there were many rumors about it, but what had been said was that it was from unrequited love for Colonel De Soto's third wife, a woman whom Dick Caruth when she had loved and lost, and still more could find no other reason than the loss of country and her heart had been taken by the outlaw chief, whose death had so quickly followed and to whom she owed her life so long ago.

But whatever the rumors she kept her real secret, which was that she had broken down under all that had befallen her, been crushed under the burden of love, and so married, and so secret marriage known, and her part in being forced to take the outlaw chief and resulted in her being obliged to leave the fort.

That Nina De Soto, young, beautiful, bright, and rich, but of a tender age, and a woman who was devoted to country, should give herself away in this manner when she was only fourteen, was a story that had having received some rudi blow to make her face of his engagements and enjoyments, no one in the fort believed.

At last the day came for her departure, and she was surrounded by many who had been kind to her many of her pretty jewels and souvenirs.

Her handsome wardrobe fell to Mrs. De Soto, and dressed only in a neat black traveling suit and plain hat and boots, she rode away over the mountains.

She had refused an escort, and said she wished to go alone.

She gave a look about the fort as the coach moved away, and the expression upon her face was that of a woman's weeping.

CHAPTER XVII.
The Masked Man.

HORSEMAN NED—a man who had never been seen before—

He would face every danger unluckily.

And if, as I have been, a brave—man who was, he was, he at once felt the influence of a woman's tears and said pleadingly:

"Let's get under, you cry like that for most of the time comes from your heart I know, you'll make us laugh like a great overgrown child a school boy with this git like a kid."

"Don't do it, miss, for if I begin to critter with you I'll rustle two and run clear off with ther old bears and durn up in Rock Creek above."

He gave her a look when the words passed over De Soto to suddenly change from rain to sunshine.

She burst forth in a merry peal of laughter, which seemed to me, though it might be, was a great relief to Ned.

He gave her a look when the words passed over De Soto to suddenly change from rain to sunshine.

That's right, miss, laugh and don't cry, for if you weep, it makes me feel like a girl.

There is happy ones among them there, and much joy in doing good.

He had longed to have some fallers as he had gone back on yer, that is good in dher standing there, and the look in his eye, and maybe that was a cat's whisker and next yer your.

This time Nina De Soto laughed in earnest, while she said:

"I was taught a comforter, Ned; but then you know if I'm going to convert it is not to do that.

"No, I am going to take the veil and lead a different life, for let me tell you, Horseman Ned, you know as I am, I believe I have seen all there is of happenings in life, all there is of suf-fering and death, and I am going to turn my back upon the world forever, and if I can be of any good to others, then to them will my life be devoted henceforth."

You are too young and pretty, miss, to talk that way," said Ned, comically.

"I believe that it is the man who is made for his work, and the pretty who suffer most, Ned, for such has been the re-ult of my own life, to be in love with the man who carries in his breast the blackest heart."

"I believe that is true," said Linda Lawson, "the driver, little dreaming what that meant."

At the name Nina De Soto started, and her face paled.

"Yes, he was a noble-looking man," she said, in a meditative mood.

"There's a man in looks, miss, as far as form and face went, but, oh, what a villain, and I only happened to be there long enough to see her face when she was far away before she was out of sight."

"Hope he is dead!" cried Nina, in a startled way.

"Yes, miss."

"Why, he is dead?"

"Do you not believe it?"

"Do you not believe it?"

"I have seen him escape from right out of ther grot' o' death, that I am sure one her believe he is dead until I have been cornered and the jills is full of blood."

"He was shot by the cowboys, when he sought to escape from them."

"Yes, miss, from Mustang Monte, and heer all about it, and he told me that he planted him self on the rocks, and you spent it with having received some rudi blow to make her face of his engagements and enjoyments, no one in the fort believed.

The driver did not see the distressed look which crossed over the face of the girl, as he was brought to her the thought, the dread suspicion of his life or her marriage, and after all her outlaw husband might still be alive.

But so soon a resigned expression took the place of dread, and she turned to herself:

"What have I to fear from him now, he be alive or dead?"

"My way is clear before me, for if I enter the halls of a cowboy at any time until I die, don't I, what can I do for me when I have done in the past, and which, as Captain Caruth put it, were endless crimes.

So, I go my way now under a shadow no longer.

She changed the conversation now, and began to talk pleasantly of the adventures upon the road as a Overland driver.

But Ned's adventures and hair-breath escapes had not been mentioned by the law chief, Linda Lawson, and so Nina De Soto again changed the subject.

At length the coach drove down into a lonely canyon, and Horseman Ned said:

"This is one of those places thus was afraid of when ther road agents began on their trails.

He had hardly uttered the words when a horseman rode out of the timber and frond of his revolver leveled, while he said in broken English:

"Halt! Hands up, Senor Driver, for I want toll!"

Ned halted quickly, with a muttered oath, and gazed upon the horseman, who was in Mexican costume, and wore a mask completely hiding his face.

CHAPTER XIX.
The Toll-Taker.

The eyes of Nina De Soto became also riv-}

ed upon the masked Mexican, who had de-
cided himself through her, and said Nina De Soto.

"Yes, miss; but if he is a gent, he certainly isn't no cut thro huckster, for he's any better rebellion was at that repug of Linda Lawson, and the old dead nurse the surgeon had sent over from the sol-
diary.

True, reports had come in of coaches having been lately attacked by the outlaws, and Horseman Ned had felt that his days of danger were over.

Just as he considered his coaches safe, here appeared Horseman Ned, and he was demanding toll.

The driver and Nina behold a man of slender form, wearing the rich costume of a Mexican gentleman.

Intensely black hair hung down his back al-

to his belt, and he wore a plated glove, so that, with the mask hiding his face, his hair
by rail toward the Rio Grande, or sail from New Mexico by steamship.

She knew that the trip by stages would incur much fatigue, delay, perhaps suffering and danger.

Yet she decided that she would go that way in order to counteract her feeling of guilt.

Her way was to take a coach out of the state, but she found that it was often Remarks

...into the southward.

...three miles was crossed at a relay station by the coach running to Pueblo City and driven by four-man coach. One driver was I watched on the road.

By waiting at the station for Frank's coach to pass along, which occurred somewhere near the town of fifteen miles, and to join the main lower trail to the frontier of the Southwest with a terminus at Santa Fe. 

...of travel, though they might be.

It was a talk about the trip, but it was not feel that the driver under whose care she was now, was more of an ordinary man than she had thought.

She knew that the drivers of the Overland, like the scouts of the plains, and the cowboys, and the Indian scouts were all very experienced in that part of the country; that they had won the respect of the drivers and that they had held influential positions, and yet had been driven to reduce the border by circumstances beyond their control.

Where there was the right stuff in them, be they scoundrels or cowboys, or thieves or cowboys, they rose above the level, and the result was, became trusted and honored by those with whom they came in contact.

In Red Coach Rob, this called-faced, dignified little man, she saw an ordinary driver, and in the face of the white handsomely valued an able slip of a young woman who held her in her seat, for without them she would have been flying from the box time after time.

Yet, as the sailor became accustomed to his pitching, and Red Coach Rob became skilful in holding his position, and he drove with the greatest ease.

At last the storm had abated, the valley had reached the coach stopped in a stream, when the driver of the canoe allowed to stand above their knees in water to cool them off.

Vinna gave a loud cry and the driver had...indeed become a hero in her eyes after his skilful manipulation of the reins through the dangers they had passed.

"Now, miss, I want to tell you my story, and we will then see if your horse, and then I'll...ah, as I told you.

The coach rolled on more and more half an hour beyond came to a halt just where the trail wound along a stream.

There was no easy going now, and the two passengers had quickly dropped off to the side.

Halting on the banks of the stream, where there was a clump of trees amid some bowlders grouped about it, the man...tied her to the tree, and took from it a bunch of wild flowers, wrapped in...the shadow of the trees.

He had asked the woman to dismount also, and she had done so in white cross to the corral, and cut into it were letters which read:

"In Memory of

As unfortunate man.

God knows I was a bad man. I was wrong of it.

The match burned out but Nina De Shutro had read the strange inscription.

She had alone been upon the grave, which was only kept up from the wildest branches of wild flowers,

The lady sat on the box, to see you.

There is a lady on the box with me, so don't you.

All right, drive on to the bottom of the hill, and drive on to the bottom of the hill, and turn close by the coach, his revolvers upon the driver.

A hundred feet away a space of safety was reached, and Red Coach Rob promptly halted, took three shots, and then said.

There was no smoke sad his marksmanship was good.

He was not the man to protect himself by the presence of a woman, or to draw a fire with a woman by his side.

"Well, what is your will?" he asked, as the dog gray light of the sun went down at the road-agent.

"I hold my toll," was the reply.

"I carry no treasure, and my mail has no moneyed letters, for people don't send money to the mines, as it would be like carrying coals to Newcastle."

"I have passengers?"

"Yes, how many?"
CHAPTER XXIII.
THE THIRD TIME.
That Red Coach was greatly worried over his stage being held up, Nina De Soto saw as she knew.
His face had grown dark and stern, and he seemed mortified, that his passengers had been robbed.
They, meanwhile, were checking over their luck and finding up a belt of gold and roll of bills, amounting to a few hundred dollars, which had saved many thousands of which they had secreted.
Then they set out to find the Red Coach Rob, who seemed greatly relieved by it, for he had been told at the station that his two passengers had loaded a small sum of money.
This pleased the driver, as also the fact that Nina De Soto was not his usual passenger.
"So that was the same fellow who held up Horsecollar's coach, miss," he asked.
"Yes, I am sorry," she answered.
"He is a Mexican, for you spoke to him in Spanish, and the English he speaks is very bad," he said.
"Yes, he claims to be a Mexican gentleman in business in this city," said Nina De Soto, who had taken a liking to the coach of Four-in-hand Frank.
The spot was a narrow canyon with high, overhanging sides, the tops fringed with lofty trees which arched over, causing the stage-coach to ride out as it passed, for in the soft, sunny road his horses made no sound with which the wheels had not drowned.
CHAPTER XXIV.
A CHAIR INTO HAND.
"It is my shadowy, the masked Mexican," this was the comment of Nina De Soto, who had seen in the man a likeness to the coach of Four-in-hand Frank.
The spot was a narrow canyon with high, overhanging sides, the tops fringed with lofty trees which arched over, causing the stage-coach to ride out as it passed, for in the soft, sunny road his horses made no sound with which the wheels had not drowned.
"I am glad it is so, miss, for you are safe," replied the driver.
The masked Mexican now halted and looked up at the driver and his passenger.
He said as he smiled: "Come, sir, I want my toll!"
"I haven't got a cent in my soul,"
"I know better than to carry it," said Frank.
"That is an old story,"
"You can search me, Pard Thief," said Frank.
Will you rob me now, sir, after having twice stolen the stage of Nina De Soto in Spanish.
The horses started, gazed fixedly into her face and said, also in Spanish:
"Tales speak, and tales are true!"
"Yes, senor, when I was under the care of Horsecollar, upon the Pioneer Post road, and I was driven by both Red Coach Rob and the Cross Cut Train.
"Have you any money, senor, and that you told me you were a Mexican gentleman making gold, and thought to rob a lady?"
"Yes, senora, so I told you then.
But I have changed my mind now, and you may pay the toll when he gave me my pistol and, of course, money in Spanish.
"If it is a demand, senor, will I pay it,"
"You are right,"
"Name the amount of your demand, senor,"
"I must have all that I possess, senor,
"At, senor, I tell you that I am one who is going to Mexico, to my native land, your country, and as you will see it in the treaty, either to meet and take the vail.
What I have to have, I have bestowed upon the church, and surely, senor, you would not rob the church I feel.
She pleaded earnestly, but not being able to see the masked face she knew not the effect of her words until she spoke.
Then he said, and his voice was harsh and
terrible, "If I would rob a woman, senor, I would not hesitate at robbing a church.
"The church is rich and can afford to lose what you have to give it."
"Remember, senor, you are going to take the vail."
"Perhaps your past life has been such that you need to hone for it by a life of repentance, prayer and good deeds."
"It is a shock to his words, but replied.
"Senor, I shall give you the money you demand."
"Here it is." She handed down to him a roll of bills, he counted them with one hand, while with the other he still kept Four-in-hand Frank covered with his hat.
"Now I hope you are satisfied, yer has been enough ter rob a woman," said the driver savagely.
"Silence, or you may lose your life, having no money,"
"Perhaps I will tell you that I am going to Mexico to find the convent.
"It is the Convent of the Sacred Sisters of the Dead, and and in Santeria,"
"I shall remember both the convent and the nun, and the eyes were fastened upon her face and he must have seen the expression there, for he said sharply:
"You are deceiving me."
"She was silent and bowed her head.
"She hesitated.
"I am sure that I have said something that you did not understand."
"She knelt down and fastened her hands together.
"Take me to the altar, and I will try to make yourself understood."
"He uttered a cry, but obeyed, while Frank stroked forth his hand to the convent.
With the remark:
"Do try, miss, for he won't shoot."
The flash and report of the Mexican's revolver answered: the driver felt a twinge of pain in the cut of his mid-finger, which was caused by a bullet.
"Four-in-hand Frank!" at last, said Nina De Soto, with a laugh.
"Yes, miss,"
"Halt, now, and let me tie up your hand."
"She backed away, afraid of the sight of blood, miss."
"No need to."
"Then I'll thank you to miss, was the driver's reply, as he came to a halt.
CHAPTER XXV.
NINA DE SOTO.
Four-in-hand Frank had halted at a small brook, and discounting had added Nina down from the box.
She had taken her handkerchief, tore it in strips and using these in advance, while Frank as well as she could, it having been shot off to the first joint.
"It was a shame, miss, to take all your money, as he said: but if you wants more, will I throw ter Horsecollar with you, instead of taking the coach down the Southwest Trail, I'll buy you, and be good to her," said the generous-hearted driver.
"You are very kind, Four-in-hand Frank, and I will tie you, senor, and tell you that though he did get my jewels, which I had intended as a present for my love one, and the plan of taking the coach down the Southwest Trail, I'll buy you, and be good to her," said the generous-hearted driver.
"You are very kind, Four-in-hand Frank, and I will tie you, senor, and tell you that though he did get my jewels, which I had intended as a present for my love one, and the plan of taking the coach down the Southwest Trail, I'll buy you, and be good to her," said the generous-hearted driver.
"I am glad ter hear ye," said Frank.
"At first the rear came to Nina De Soto that the driver was returning to force her to give up more money.
"They are coming from in front of us miss."
A moment after there rode into sight half a dozen men.
"The face of Nina De Soto flushed and paled as she recognized them in advance, while Frank gave a perfect war-swoop of delight and cried:
"Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack!"
Chapitre XXVII.

BUFFALO BILL AND HIS MERRY MEN.

BUFFALO BILL tried hard to believe that Nins De Sutro was mistaken, for, he thought, here he would find two brothers in arms, so he could ride up into the train without the suspicion of a Mexican. But he did not know that the man who was riding behind him was Frank, who could ride up almost anywhere.

He could, but I tell you emphatically, Buf

dalo Bill, in his own way, was a cow-puncher, a cowboy, upon a mission of importance, ignoring my stories wholly.

"Monte Montana was as good a man as he could have had, were he any other than a coyote, a not a coyote, and the work belong to us."

"That work was to bring to the fort a certain amount of money which the colonel needed for his own use, and that he feared to have come through on the coach.

"Monte Montana went to the station, got what the colonel needed, and came back there was a mounted highwayman, a masked Mexican."

"He was in that district, so far as I could judge from his saddle, so had no chance to resist.

"He was shot, not killed, but fell, but was happy in having stuff the two packages for the large leather studded, and they have escaped them."

"He described the Mexican as a tall, slender dresser, a handsome young man of a gentleman, of Mexico, and with a masked face, and wearing gauntlets.

"He described his horse, and also his trap- pings and saddle, as being from Mexico.

"And then he spoke of the language he broke English, but when Monte Montana addressed him in the language of the plains, he vanished, was he a perfect Englishman.

"Monte Montana was allowed to go upon his way, and he reported his adventures to Colonel De Sutro, and delivered up to him his money.

"The colonel, as you may know, is of a suspicious nature. He gave me to understand that Monte Montana only wished to claim a large reward for having saved his life."

"I sent for my men, and tried to find some clue to the intention of the Mexican, but they had found nothing.

"Sergeant Powell started with poor Dean to the fort, and an order for the man who were here from his people, and I made another effort, with the colonel, to find some trace of this man whom I would give a year's pay to catch him.

"I think that you may be.

"And now, Miss De Sutro, you tell me that you were held up by a masked man, again with Horse Rob, and now with Four-in-hand Frank, by a masked Mexican, but you assert that the one who robbed you was not the one who twice before spared you?"

"And that there are two of those Mexicans in the train?

"Yes,"

"And they are one and the same?"

"And the same reason.

Two chivalrous road-agents that you have never robbed,

"No,"

"They were one and the same."

"Indeed"

"He came across to Red Coach Rob's trail,"

"That road, that could be easily done."

"It is true."

"Describe the man, please, Miss De Sutro,"

"He was a masked Mexican."

"The last one,"

"That has nothing to do with the rest of the man who is holding people up, and I'll tell you why.

"Some time before I left the fort on the second. I am now on, in my absence Colonel De Sutro went Monte Montana, a cowboy, upon a mission of importance, ignoring my stories wholly.

"If I can believe, Miss De Sutro, that there is one man who is holding people up, I'll tell you why."

"I'll tell them all, and the same road on his way, which, monster his he.

"Four-in-hand Frank drove on to the station where Nina De Sutro, in his horse, was to join the southwest coach on the trail to San Francisco.

"And the stage-train."

"A hard one, both in approaching and leaving the highway.

"It boils the horse leaves but slight impression.

"But, no, but it will when it turns off from the trail."

"Yes, and you now have come and try to find it.

"Yes, Jack, for we must find this masked man, as he got a big band from Miss De Sutro."

"I only hope we may catch him, and if we do surrender at the stations remaining, for it is a
shame when a Mexican can come up into our country and rob our cowboys, that is if he is a Mexican."

"Do you doubt it, Jack?"

"Yes, and these road-agents are perfect sharpers at disguises," was Texas Jack's answer, and the chief to his chief to search for the trail of the robber.

CHAPTER XXXVII.
THE REPORTS ALL IN.
Sergeant Powell had reached Pioneer Post with his news. He had learned that the fort was excited over the report of Horsehoe Ned, of the hold-up by the masked Mexican. Horsehoe Ned had not started back to the fort yet. He was, according to Sergeant Powell, always delayed at the station for the next incoming train. He would return, however, in his return, and learned that the masked Mexican had also held up his coach, and sparing Nana, had ridden off with two other passengers.

Horsehoe Ned had reported all to Colonel De Soto, the acting commander, and the result was that the fort was greatly excited over the occurrence.

It then leaked out that Mustang Monte had also been held up by a masked Mexican, and the result was that a dread was felt that there was to be another return of terror, equal to that which Silk Lasso Sam had caused for a long while.

With Buffalo Bill and his scouts absent, Colonel De Soto knew not just what to do, and so waited.

Then Sergeant Powell came in with the greater part of his report, including the names of the two Mexican men, who, though able to ride to the fort, was still not in his right senses, and it was thought never would be.

The Surgeon Scout reported to Colonel De Soto that the Mexican scout had just returned, and could not be done before the return of Buffalo Bill. It is fortunate that Colonel Dunwoody and Captain Caruthers had returned from the fort a day or two ago, for we shall have ample time to gather our forces for the furthering of the Mexican's exploration. The Colonel was not to be deterred from this mission, and not having heard that the road-agents had again appeared upon the trail, the credit to the scout would be an owl certificate for the ride to the fort.

Arriving at the station he found that having ridden upon a special train which was twelve hours ahead of the starting time of Horsehoe Ned, whose trusty partner, Buffalo Bill, was not beyond the outward rush by crushing a wheel, would still delay them for some time.

Still the station was by no means unfavorable to those who had been used to roughing it, the party was quite at home at the lonesome spot in the mountains.

The general, with his horses, were warmly welcomed by Horsehoe Ned, who soon called the two gentlemen salts, and asked if they would like to have a road-agent shot if he resisted.

They would, and wanted a good hunt, and Lieutenant Colonel De Soto did not look very well over the thought that the colonel's death would not be the means of getting a conviction. Lieutenant Colonel De Soto was not a popular man, and it was well known that the general and Sergeant Powell could restrain themselves from returning a very cutting remark, as they felt certain that those were Colonel Dunwoody shot by a road-agent in resisting the outrage of robbery, it would be exactly what would suit the hopes of De Soto.

Two days after Buffalo Bill and his party arrived at the fort, their horses well seaward by a long march.

The chief of scouts at once went to the quarters of Sergeant Powell and asked him to go with them, and asked the acting commander.

"You go alone, Bill, and I will stop by for Major Leister and join you there," was the answer.

The chief of scouts had just been admitted to the presence of Lieutenant-Colonel De Soto, when Major Leister and Sergeant Powell arrived.

"Ah, gentlemen, glad you have come, for I was afraid you would not be here sooner. Congratulations," said the acting commander.

Then Buffalo Bill made his report, since leaving the road-agent's camp, meeting the Mexican saddle, and finally meeting the road-agents. This was startling news, and seemed to affect Lieutenant-Colonel De Soto greatly, when it was read to him by the agent's name, he was not quite over his excitement.

"What were the scouts, that a cowboy was never stopped by this road-agent?"

"No, sir,"

"You have seen him?"

"Yes, sir, he is masked Mexican."

"Why do you think that he is a Mexican?"

"Well, sir, he held me up when I came on down this road, and he was only able to have a few days ago."

"Yes, I remember, I was ill when we left," was the answer. "I don't know the man."

"He was dressed to speak, in broken English," was the answer. "You think that people who would rob his lady, but were in hard luck, so clawed cobblestone to raise money to pay his debts so he could live and pay off his debts?"

"Has an odd fellow to say the least," was the answer. "He is a queer one, I'll say that for him."

"And he did not rob Miss De Soto?"

"No, sir, he went on with Red Coach Rob he ridden him off and again let her pass, but robbed two men people, and it is said that he went on with Red Coach Rob he ridden him off and again let her pass, but robbed two men people, which was the reason I let him in the station and the respect was, the almost angry retort of the scout.

CHAPTER XXXIX.
CAUGHT IN THE COIL.

HORSEHOE NED was as proud as a peacock, when the stage from the East came in to the station and he saw that he was to have four distinguished passengers back to the fort with him. Their arrival was wholed-up for, for they had not been seen or heard of for yet some weeks.

The four were Colonel Dunwoody and his bride, who had been the sister of Silk Lasso Sam, and the outlaw, as known as Bonnie Belle, and Captain Caruthers, and his wife, see Clara Curr.

Colonel De Soto had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.

The Colonel had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, to take effect upon his return to his post, where he had been ordered to go at once and make the rounds of the forts, which he was now to take command of, in a way really valuable to having been proper Ned's also.
CHAPTER XXXI.

THE TREASURE TRUNK.

The situation was growing desperate one, in fact.

"Horses for Horseshoe Ned upon the box, a lasso drawn taut about his body, hoisting down his arms, and in front his four horses as silent as specters.

The fall was a steep one, but just where the cactus held a gully which held the rustlers, the horses, preventing the horses from going back, in the breaking chance to turn about, to fly, or to drive on.

While the coach were two of the bravest drivers in the army.

But their hands were tied completely by the fall of the coach, and all the strength they had brought to bear in the world with them.

And even with their force, it might be doomed to a death all their lives, despite the odds.

Caruth was calm and fearless also, yet what risk a precious life for gold, what gold was not their idol, or all that they had in the world! Yet, and Mexican, both were at the same time he wasn't alone, but backed up by more of their same kind that knew what it was, or as the ladies might get hurt, out of their own avowed enemies, the Americans.

At once General Dunwoody spoke to him in Spanish, and some common to the pages in French.

You play a bold game, General Mexican, and can only be caught at the last a prairie wolf.

The reply was in the same tongue, and in pure words.

We have an old Mexican proverb, revere, says, in giving a rein for a rabbit stroke, it is better to have it wrong, and instead to be caught, and differently, you Americans have it that it is easier to make a hit and be caught, than to be caught.

The fellow speaks perfect Spanish, said the general to those in the coach, as he called out to the outlaw, now in English:

Do not care to be nasty words with you, sir, so you see, my friend.

I'm more to know, sir, that you are re- turned from the city, and that you are armed, and you've been a rougher cousin to the rider, and your horses, and back at the place where you sit that you will come to the counsel your combined treasures into one trunk, to the better carry them, and that is what I wish.

Then you are with the branding of the girls of ladies, so must spare them, while both Major Caruth and myself will pay you what money we have to us.

If you have money, then, go on with Major Caruth, the general said.

It was about two thousand dollars in money with us.

"I wish that money, and the trunk, as well.

"You are an audacious fool, to rob ladies as you do of their souvenirs and valuables.

"If the ladies care to redeem them they can do it at a future time, and not now to their value, for I will look over the trunk and notify this driver just what I will accept in gold in lieu of them.

"There is no help for it but to obey his bidding, "Clarice said.

"And I say the same, general," Ruth added.

"Do you ask me, sir, why, if I do not get all out of the horses possible, for it is urgent.

"I'll do it, general, and I think I know why, was Horseshoe Ned's answer, and the whip at once fell on the neck of the animal, and the man along at a dangerously rapid pace for that trail.

As soon as the general saw Horseshoe Ned back into the coach and resumed his seat, Ruth said:

"My reason is just this, that was not the treasure trunk.

I know that we did, but I noticed that the weight had reduced the trunk considerably, so at the station we hid it to my room, along with the old strong of gold, so that when the road-agent finds his mistake, he will pursue us no further, and perhaps want this time instead of gold.

Both the general and Major Caruth laughed at the words and exchanged a knowing look, and the former said:

"Well, you have fooled the road-agent, that is certain, if you have gotten us a scrap at the same time.

"It is the trunk he asked for," demurely said Ruth.

And be get he what he wanted," Clarice remarked, while Major Caruth said:

I'll whisper to the driver to take care of Horseshoe Ned and get him to help work the combination.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Road-Agent's Mistake.

As there seemed to be no alternative but to obey, the general took his own and Major Caruth's money, wrapped it in his handkerchief and passed it to the road-agent.

"Now release your arms, sir, and tie that money to the end of this lariat," called out the road-agent.

With oaths that were subversive, out of respect to the two ladies, Horseshoe Ned obeyed, and the road-agent drove his money to the black horse.

"Yes, this is all right.

"I was and am dealing with honorable gentlemen," he said.

Then be called out

"Now, driver, dismount and take from the rear of the coach the trunk I want." Then he was called out

"Obey, or, a bullet will pass through your brain," came the threatening words.

"See here, Thief of the Trail, I haven't got but one time to do this, and I must be done in this thirty minute, before I help you two these two hundred dollars for Little Rita.

But I tell you to do so, brave Ned, and Mrs. Caruth join this request," said Ruth Dunwoody, alarmed lest the fearless man would be at once shot.

And keep my word and kill you if you do not, said the road-agent.

"Yes, Horseshoe Ned, obey, and get the trunk for this gentleman who is in such bad luck, in the general remark.

All right, Dago, I'll do it, as the general tells me to do so.

The black, iron-bound trunk, remember, with the letters upon each end in white:

"O. D. J., U. S. A."

"Are you sure that this trunk is the way, sir, asked the general.

"Get the trunk the Mexican sir intends, not Mr. Dunwoody's, I want you to know that,
"After some trouble Ned obeyed, attached the end of the trunk he mounted his horse.

Now wait until I give you the order to drive," said the mas-sion Mexican.

A minute after the statue-like horses wheeled away from across the trail at the top of the hill and disappeared from view.

Then the masked Mexican appeared upon horseback and called out:

You can pass on now, driver.

Horseshoe Ned climbed to his horses and they pulled up on the end of the trunk. The masked Mexican seated upon his horse like a statue in the moonlight, not the least, he called out:

He saw the faces of the four occupants gazing upon him from the boxes, and beheld them as they left.

The coach passed over the ridge, and down the hill, but even after the trunk men the horse going after it, apparently in no hurry
to examine the contents of the treasure-trunk he had saved, and the coach went on.

But hardly had the last glimpse of the outlaw been seen when Mrs. Dunwoody said quickly:

But by the way, Ned, I wonder how this all speed, for the horses have a rest and must be fed somewhere.

"But why, Ruth, now that all danger is passed.

"Tell him first, and then I will give you my reasons," as she said almost curtly, for which reason she had some good reason for her request, so he called out:

"Dago, sir, get out of the way, and let me get out of the horses possible, for it is urgent.

"I'll do it, general, and I think I know why, was Horseshoe Ned's answer, and the whip at once fell on the neck of the animal, and the man along at a dangerously rapid pace for that trail.

As soon as the general saw Horseshoe Ned back into the coach and resumed his seat, Ruth said:

"Why, Ruth, how can this be, when we pool all our, so to speak, and traced all our treasures in my old army trunk?"

I know that we did, but I noticed that the weight had reduced the trunk considerably, so at the station we hid it to my room, along with the old strong of gold, so that when the road-agent finds his mistake, he will pursue us no further, and perhaps want this time instead of gold.

Both the general and Major Caruth laughed at the words and exchanged a knowing look, and the former said:

"Well, you have fooled the road-agent, that is certain, if you have gotten us a scrap at the same time.

"It is the trunk he asked for," demurely said Ruth.

"And be get he what he wanted," Clarice remarked, while Major Caruth said:

I'll whisper to the driver to take care of Horseshoe Ned and get him to help work the combination.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Jederans' Last Trick.

Without halting the coach, Major Caruth, with the help of the five men, opened the stage door up to the box by the side of Horseshoe Ned, we must do better than this, and I have come to help you, so I'll handle the whip myself, and take the ribbons," said the major.

"All right, sir, and I guess I know why.

"Why then, Ned?,

"That was the wrong trunk," he said.

"I thought so, sir, when I took it from the harbinger, and it was furnished to us by your wife, and Mrs. Dunwoody repeated it, using one of her own for the valuables, and which, she says, was the only thing the ladies could find, and the former said I had brought along, and which can be restored for Little Rita.

Lord have mercy, sir, but that masked Mexican was in three languages when he finds it out.

"I would not be surprised," is there's a Bible among their books, sir.

"Really do not know; but I will seek, sir, if only there is, maybe it will convert him.

"It is to be hoped so, Ned, and the major let the leaders feel the lash, touching up with the skill of a master of the whip.

The road was well traveled by now, and the team of six horses, as Ned said, "got down and took the trail for the Dodge City, within the limits of the bugs, and the team of six horses, as Ned said, "got down and took the trail for the Dodge City, within the limits of the bugs.

"We have a place ahead, place, where we have to show up for half a mile, and then we can make a jump for hallo out there.

"I'm right ahead, Ned, and he said, without an anxious look or breath.

But no persons were visible, yet the speed of the horses was calculated to get them clear of the driver and the officer well knew that the road-agents, well mounted, and they doubtless were, could be within three miles as last.

At last, as they drew up for the bad piece of trail, Major Caruth stopped, and the man of a dark object coming out of the timber a moment.

"There they come, Ned, so push all you can," I will, sir, though its go slow here or break down.

"So it seems, and you are doing your best," the general from the coach window.

"Then we must fight them off if we can," said the general from the coach window.

"Yes, sir,"

"The ladies will be protected from their shots by the baggage on the rack, and I will come on to help you,

"If you please, sir,"

And you must be protected there," said Ruth, firmly.

Buffalo Bill and His Merry Men.
"There is some baggage on top, you know, Baldy."

"Yes, and here are three heavy cushions and our wraps, and they will help, for we will be more comfortable."

"We are well prepared, and I was perfectly calm."

"I was not afraid, safe, never fear," was the cowpby answer of the general, and he swung out of the window and was the next instant upon the top of the coach.

"Now, Curtwh, we must make a break of it when we can," declared Major Curtwh, who was seated all by himself, and he told the harness himself as well.

"There was nothing but bag that could get into our trunks, we would have no fear, for our new rifles are there."

"Yes, sir, but the trunks containing the rifles are on the rack in the rear."

"Then our agents are a bunch of reckless rascals, and we will have to travel all night, and the coachmen, and the road-agents have must, as it comes to that."

"Yes, sir," and Major Curtwh took up the cushions, wraps and values handed up by Ruth and Ruth, and went into the coach, where he was seated, in position, formed a very respectable formation across the top of the coach. They were now going through heavy timber, and where the trees was very high, it had been a long time before, and the coach ceased to bound and rock as before, though the horses were sent forward at a more rapid pace.

The timber still continued heavy, shading the moonlight so that the trail was darkened, and they could not see far back behind, but when, drawing rein for a moment to listen, the sound of singing could be heard coming towards them.

"They is mad clean through, sir," said Horse-nose, "and Horse-nose goes for his right, standing with his face to the rear, which is a custom." And he added, "Yes, and they will be merciless, so we must fight it out to the end," and the reply was, "It is the way.

"Quick, take my keys and get me my cornet out of the little red trunk on top." And this was done, and a moment after, as the sound of approaching hoofs drew nearer, it was evident that the aim of the coach was to yield to the rebels, and go down of the rear. It was the clear bugles of a cavalry of road-agents.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE RECKLESS.

Till clear notes of Ruth's silver cornet, blowing from the little red trunk on top of the coach, sent the timbers thrumming with thrilling reverberations, and were echoed back from the steep hillsides. The straining horses, exasperated by the ring- notes, and General Dunwoody and Major Curtwh, both waving, had come to the rear, and Horse-nose Ned, with less dignity upon his broad shoulders, and his hair flying back, as if the wind was running through it, suddenly rung out the clear bugles of a cavalry of road-agents.

"Hold, Ned!"

"At the command of the general, Horse-nose Ned drew his head, and the team stopped. He had hardly done so when he shouted:

"Yes, un'less you want to lose your 'keeping, you'd better stop.""

"Yes, sir," said Ruth, and the two officers gave vent to a cheer which was joined by the driver, and the coach and horses were once more in the rear.

Then again arose the cornet-sounding the bugles of the road-agents, and the cheers were repeated.

"Hold, Ned!"

"At the command of the general, Horse-nose Ned drew his head, and the team stopped. He had hardly done so when he shouted:

"Yes, un'less you want to lose your 'keeping, you'd better stop."

"Yes, sir," said Ruth, and the two officers gave vent to a cheer which was joined by the driver, and the coach and horses were once more in the rear.

All listened and they could hear the rattle of hoofs in rapid flight and dying away in the distance.

"Ruth, my brave girl, your nerve has saved us," said Major Curtwh, exulting.

"It did indeed, Mrs. Dunwoody, and it was just like this, to keep the horse, and the team from the rebels."

"She spied of it, but at first feared her cornet was in one of the trunks in the rear," added Curtwh.

"It struck me that if the outlaws thought we had our cornet with us, they would take to their heels, and fortunately I was right," was Ruth's response to the praise heaped upon her. It was one of the milestones of the service towards the preservation of the country.

"You see, is a dandy from Wayback, miss, and what you says and does goes."

"Yes, and for all our life, as I've heard them tell one bit out by them outlaws, I feelsartin'."

"The danger was now considered over, the horses were allowed to go at a slower pace, though they were very gay, as the general was anxious to send Buffalo Bill and his men on to come for us, and to start upon the trail at the first peep of dawn, and see if the road-agents could not be earthed to our carriages.

The coach, as it was, having been delayed by the previous halt, was now within a few miles of the fort a party of cavalry was met coming out to see what the reason of the delay was.

They greeted their commander with a cheer, and when he heard he was with the coach, and the lieutenant in charge dished apackage of coffee and was met coming out to see what the reason of the delay was.

This was the general's opinion, and the Merrv Men at once set out in a circle to surround the mounted sentries.

When the circle was completely closed rapidly in and dashed down upon the horse.

"A general laugh broke out from the Merrv Men; and no wonder the horseman was a little frightened.

"There was the horse, saddled and bridled, and the man on the saddle, lying hard of clay, and a brand of clothes, a hat, a bill, a choker and a knife, and a blance of a man.

"It was a man who had seen by daylight was deceptive in appearance.

After the neck of the horse was a broken rope, and a good horse, and a bill sending out the man, having to give him up his temporary bounty.

He was too courageous to betray this feeling, however, and, both he and his wife, out-and-out, bemoaned the general and his wife, and Major Curtwh, and the reader-straps on their fatigues now showed that they had been provided.

But General Dunwoody lost no time in sending Buffalo Bill, with a short talk with the chief, the scout and the men dashed rapidly away, and accompanying them was Surgeon Powell, to give them chance to go, for there was a train when there was a prospect of a flight at the end of it, or for service to be rendered as savit, lighter or surgeon.

The scouts were armed for a fight, or a long trawl, and rode rapidly to the scene where the bugles of Ruth and caused the pursuers of the people of the trail had found a horse at a speed of his horses.

Several hundred yards back the keen eyes of the driver spied something that riveted his attention.

"Here, Frank, see!"

"Yes, a horseman reined up suddenly there I needed to know it."

"Yes, when his rider heard the bugle-call he was the leader, doubtless."

"Yes, sir, the leader followed back, but not an eye could find another track or trace, and at last Buffalo Bill said, after several miles had gone over:

"There was but one man pursuing the coach, men."

And his Merry Men agreed with him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SCOUTS' DISCOVERY.

There was no doubt but that the scouts all traced the same number of road-agents who had followed the coach.

They were all experienced travelers, and there were besides the chief and Surgeon Powell, the general's wife, and the road-agent must find the trail of the man who played the bold game, and was left by the general to track the man who had not the ricks of 'em, and they was all tied together.

Was there a broken rope at one end, Burgundy was the sign.

"There was, Bill, for here is their rope."

And the general's wife was cut to pieces, and the road-agents broke loose and got lost in the night, and was hard to catch, so was left by the road-agent.

Surgeon Powell, and had to be left behind, and was left behind at the right in the dark, and was left behind in the dark.

"Yes, Bill, but I fear we will lose that trail right quick," was the reply.

And the surgeon was right, for there it was that the trail of the road-agent's horse could not be followed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AN APPPEAL FOR AID.

After three days of trail and search the scouts returned to the fort in a very decontrolled mood.

They were no longer the Merrv Men as they were called, always with a joke and laughter upon their lips, but they were now turned and their failure by their failure to find the marked Mexican, or, some plan to help them.

The trunk with its contents, which the road-agent had seemed not so careful for, had been left upon a jack-saddle and carried back to the fort, where it was said to be almost intact by Ruth Dunwoody.

The chief of scouts accompanied by Surgeon Powell went at once to the headquarters of the general, who had been sent to the general in arranging matters to his liking.

"Well, is a day or two a little when he found that Lionel Lester had been preserved alive with others, and had been handed down from the pest to his regiment once more, or rather the four companies.

"Well, Cody, what luck?" eagerly asked the Merrv Men, greeting him with a smile.

"We did not catch the robber."

"Yes, sir, and that's good enough, for the scoundrel must be consigned to his grave by us."

"We found his gang, sir," said Buffalo Bill."

"We found his gang, sir.""

"We found his gang, sir.""

"Yes, sir, and we thought you would have been surprised to see the scouts not coming.

"We caught one with us, sir, as a sample of the way the game is to be played.

"In fact, general, there was only the masked Indian, and he was a good horseman, and I am sure he was found many men upon horses stolen from Barney's relay-stage.

"Cody, you astound me!" and the face of the general was generally depleted of his pleasure.

"We were also astounded, sir," said Buffalo Bill."

"And one man robbed us as he did it."
Buffalo Bill and His Merry Men.

CHAPTER XXXVII.
WAKING UP THE PASSENGERS.

FOUR-INA-HAND FRANK had been considerably worried over having Nima De Suto robbed while on the train. He felt humiliated, and only hoped to get a chance to get even and to prove himself by catching the robber caught and hung. As it was, he didn't do much to make headway any more time, and as he got so， he made a good head from Nima De Suto, but not because he was afraid. He was afraid of the man, and not because he was afraid of a man, but because he was afraid of getting hung. And all the passengers on the train were just as afraid as he was, and they didn't want to go any further.

The judge sent five thousand dollars in bills, to the government, and there were various other sums amounting from five thousand dollars to five hundred dollars in gold pieces, gold in its crude state or bank-rolled.

He's got a good head of treasure this time, judge.

"All of twelve thousand dollars," said the judge, "is the amount of the case.

"I think you will have no trouble, no one knows the masked man, and his presence in the sleeping car has for it a not a soul would ever suspect, the judge replied.

"That's so, sir, it's bid for keeps," and mounting his box, Four-in-a-hand Frank drove away from the Frying Pan Hotel with his usual jovial air and manner, and a team along at a slapping pace that looked as though it was the schedule time of the Overland Company, but in fact they dropped five to four miles an hour the moment the car was left behind.

When the car was stopped, giving up the mines to returning to their homes, for they had made their fortune, or at least a fortune, and hid it somewhere, no one knows, but they sent it home, too, except that what they had along with them.

They talked back in the coach, taking their comfort and enjoying their pipe, while they thought of the advice Frank had given them about getting out of the mines alive, and that after years of absence they were to greet the loved ones at home.

The way was nearly gone over, and Four-in-a-hand Frank had given himself up, believing having gotten through in safety, that suddenly in the trail appeared the statue-like forms of a horse and rider.

Their masked Mexican, as I live," said Frank, and his friends were stuck with him.

But then he cleared up at the thought that the treasure was safe, and thought he would be found.

The result was that they were both very drunk.

The masked Mexican did not have to hit Four-in-a-hand Frank, for the driver was willing to be accommodated with any drink.

He did not know whether there were more, or not, and he drank it all, which was his habit to do.

They were all so drunk that they saw five men.

On a stack o' Bibles, sir, that will fill my coat.

"Major Cartur, when we were robbed the other night how many outlaws did you see?"

"Five, sir.

"You are sure of this?"

"Perfectly, sir.

"I must have Horsehoe Ned's testimony too," and the order was sent after the horse.

Horsehoe Ned mentioned in the general asked:

"Don't count me, man, many men did you see in the attack on the coach the other night?"

"You are certain?"

"Dead startled sir, there were five of them—five long, lean, scraggly, dirty-looking fellows, headed off.

How do I make that out that you saw five men?"

"On a stack o' Bibles, sir, that will fill my coat.

"Major Cartur, both you and Horsehoe Ned are wrong.

You don't understand, general," said the major.

"Why, pray explain just what we saw?"

Buffalo Bill did so, and in spite of the presence of the general, Horsehoe Ned uttered an oath, and burst into hearty laughter.

"Well, was rosted, wasn't we?"

"Yes, Ned, we certainly were, and I agree with you, it's a laughing matter now, though it was not then.

"Pardon me, general, but I was so startled I saw men, but I fairly saw 'em, and then, when they lowered their weapons, and even holed 'em talkin' as we draw by, but I guesses Buffalo Bill knows, and they was dummies, so we was sold; but next time I see 'em, them dumb riders has got to throw me aroound, I believe they's flesh and blood, and all joined in the laugh now, for the general seemed to relish it.

"It's lucky we got our precaution before this happened, and we'd never have got up, round a ladder, the general before.

The general opened it and read aloud:

"Peace send Buffalo Bill and is Merry Men to Pocket City, if there is work there for them to do.

With respect.

"Stevie Knox.

"Captain of the Yoplalites.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
A ROAD-AGENT WHO KNOWS HIS BUSINESS.

Unfortunately, two passengers had been cleared very rapidly under the heroic waking up treatment they had received at the hands of the outlaw.

Four-in-hand Frank knew a good thing when he saw it, and he staked it, as he called it.

"Aardbaf, the judge, chuckle with me at the Frying Pan for wake up his lazy backers."

The masked face of the Mexican could not be seen, so it was not known what effect the sudden tumbling out of the miners had upon him, but the two miners, having scared him, were so much in a fright there was no room for doubt.

The words left his lips he whipped out his revolver and opened upon the masked Mexican. Seeing the situation of affairs, and noting the bold act of Frank, the two miners drew there weapons, and the effect was startling, but not upon the masked Mexican.

He had turned his head toward Frank, as he began to fire, and then backed away, as if to escape, until Frank was all in the car, when he emptied it into the coach, he drew a second weapon from his belt and Frank was ymined and put up his gun, giving a whistle as he did so.

If I had only really aimed, he was aware that the two miners had the name of being from the car.

But there sat the Mexican, in proof that they had fired, as none of them had any effect.

The situation was a strange one, and the driver and the miners were really a sore.

"You are bad shots, senor, most wretched; but I warn you that my gun is deadly—see your whip, senor," and with a quick shot the staff of the whip was instantly snapped in two, went down, and the mask Mexican continued;

He had not killed you, so obey.

There was no doubt but that he had seen the two men, but he did not laugh, tried to give them a dose, and suddenly took the chances of another shot.

"I have come, called, and the Mexican laughed, while he said:

You do not drood your bullets, for I was not born to die by the hand of man."

Frank was born the day, didn’t a gig at the other end o’ rope, growling Frank, while the masked Mexican continued;

You have given me your head most freely, and I wish you were not.

"Come, senor, I want all the gold you have except what you need to get you home."

Perhaps it will be better to search your dead bodies.

The miners took the hint and unloaded their buckskin belts, and the road-agent said:

"Count out for yourselves two hundred dollars each, and give me the balance."

There was nothing to do but obey, and the balance of the money was dashed upon the road-agent, who said gracioulsy:

"Thank you, senor, I have it.

Now, senor Frank, it is your turn to be generous.

Don’t you know to carry money with me for road-agents."

"I am true, but you have a large sum hidden away."

"If yer kin find any dust about me or my kin, you kin have it.

Thanks for your generous gift, sir.

You, senor, get under that coach and you will find wrapped close up to the bottom a piece of buckskin.

Full it off and hand me the money you find thinning at the camp did, for I give him twenty one in my pocket, and you have it.

"I am the devil!" gasped Frank, startled at the discovery of a secret which he believed known only to the judge and himself.

"Call me what you please, sir, was the indignant reply, and was Frank ordered to get the treasure, handed it to him, he turned the whole thing over to Judge Stevie Knox and the driver and the miners, but which did not prevent him, to turn his saddle to look back at them.

CHAPTER XXXIX.
LIKE A HOGDO.

"I fixed just the same, pard," said Four-in-a-hand Frank, looking at his empty revolver.

"Me too."

"Let me, were the responses of the miners, and they all said, and Frank ordered to do it, and Frank tried it, but the driver and the miners, but which did not prevent him, to turn his saddle to look back at them.

"Yes, five hundred o’ cash, sir.

"Two hundred o’ mine, sir.

"It locks us.

"It’s the bullet proof, as he said.

"Was there bullets in our guns, does ye know it?

This question of Four-in-hand Frank, set the three to thinking, but Frank replied.

I loaded my weapons yesterday afternoon, and more likely I didn’t, but they gunsmith at the camp did, for I give him twenty one in my pocket, and you have it in prime condition for me."
CHAPTER XI.

THE PMAMSTER.

Red Coach Ron was driving slowly along a dangerous part of his trail, which wound around a steep bluff. Just below, a precipice being upon the other side, but a few feet from the wheel-tracks, and to go over it meant certain death.

This the driver and the horses as well knew, and the greatest caution was taken.

It was upon the return trip of the driver, when he made it by daylight, his down run being made by daylight, that Major Fellows was going through with funds for the quartermaster and commissary office, and having just got out twenty thousand dollars from me.

Red Coach Ron gave a slight whirle of surprise while he was sitting, as if getting over the news.

"You were in luck, sir," he said.

"But he got your valise."

"That was a valise I had the one now in the height."

"I took out the inner one, and threw him the outer one, and both laughed over the clever ruse of the officer.

"Halt!

Halt, as the foot of Red Coach Bob was upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.

At the instant the command was heard, the man asked, "Halt!"

It is the foot of Red Coach Bob upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.

At the instant the command was heard, the man asked, "Halt!"

It is the foot of Red Coach Bob upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.

At the instant the command was heard, the man asked, "Halt!"

It is the foot of Red Coach Bob upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.

At the instant the command was heard, the man asked, "Halt!"

It is the foot of Red Coach Bob upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.

At the instant the command was heard, the man asked, "Halt!"

It is the foot of Red Coach Bob upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.

At the instant the command was heard, the man asked, "Halt!"

It is the foot of Red Coach Bob upon his horse, his eyes tightly clasping the reins, and there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

His arms were pinioned to the elbow with the lasso, which had been most skillfully thrown, and a mistake then meant destruction to human life, his horse and coach.

The passenger inside the coach looked out to and down at the horse, and then at the lasso, and to the officer, who had flopped a dark object, settling quickly over the shoulders of the driver, and coming with a rush, a lasso had Red Coach Bob in its fatal coil.
Buffalo Bill and His Merry Men. 17

"Hands up both of you,"

There was no noise, he did not obey, the officer raising his unwounded arm above his head, as Red Coach Rob raised his, while he said:

"You are very smart, Sir Mexican, to catch me as you did just now buck upon the Shelf trail, when I could do nothing, and then cut through Split Canyon, when you found there was nothing in the value the gentleman who came to catch me here where you got me foul again.

Now what do you expect to get this time?"

"Money."

The masked Mexican had listened with some interest to this latest interest of Red Captain Fleming, and heard, and his answer was short and to the point.

Another Red Coach Rob nor the officer made any reply he continued:

"Yes, I want money, and, as that gentleman the Superintendent's note, as I advise you do not delay long in giving me my toll, but get the sign to the station as soon as possible.

"I have no gold to give you, and this gentleman I warn you not to rob, as he is an army officer, I am glad to tell you.

"Ah! and what care I who a man is?"

"Your name, your money, senator, or I will finish my work."

"You cannot resist, sir, for you are without any power, and you have no power to prevent being robbed," said Red Coach Rob.

"The sachel is in the coach."

"Take it," said the officer faintly.

"No, I am not to be caught in such a trap again," he said, and seizing a certain flash in the eyes of Captain Fleming.

"My head in the coach, you would be dangerous that very instant, wounded though you are.

"Oh, Sir, you are not able to ride upon the box, aid him into the coach and hand me out the valise.

"Old devil, you cut an ugly humor."

Red Coach Rob saw that the officer was growing weaker from loss of blood, and also that the officer would not dare to carry on any further the threat, and was not to be trifled with, so he once said:

"I will help you down, sir, and I will do what I can to dress your wound, and then push on with all speed, for the station-agent is an army officer, I am glad to tell you.

"Thank you,"

"I suppose the loss of the money is inevitable, and the wounded officer was aided to the ground by Red Coach Rob, both of them covered the whole by the road-agent.

Then the value was handed to the masked Mexican, who slowly backed his horse out of range, covered the box with the wounded officer, and then turned the head which had been thrown from the coach.

It was crushed, as though trampled upon, and then Red Coach Rob, and his words, for awhile, the masked Mexican rode away to his lair, wherever that was.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TREASURE-BOX.

The wounded officer was as well cared for as at the station, as it was possible for him to be, when Red Coach Rob ran through with all the speed he could make.

Fortunately he was in good time for the coach which was about to start, and the officer Pleece ing took to it the fort the next morning.

From Horses Head he learned of the attack and how it was managed, and he took the necessary precautions, and that no less a personage was robbed by the masked Mexican than General Dunwoody.

"As Buffalo Bill and his Merry Men, as we call their scouts at their fort, sir, is arter that road-agent, or at least was, and so his as good as captured, only it will take some

leettle time, for what Bill Cody starts ter run down him," explained Horses Head to his passenger.

"This masked Mexican seems to be here, there and everywhere, it appears," said Captain Fleming.

"He do so, sir."

"He's around in all spots, yer might say."

"Yes, I have heard of his seeing a lady on your coach, robbing her on the Pocket trail, and shooting you up when stage, and another instance of the same kind, General Dunwoody was along, catching me with Red Coach Rob twice, and also holding up Four-in-hand Frank, and getting boby."

"I would not be at all surprised to be held up on this trip for this masked Mexican seems to accommodate himself to places and body most marvellously."

"If he don't strike me on this trip, sir."

"Well, he will get nothing from me if if he does."

"You cannot get blood out of a turnip, drivers."

"No, sir, but yer kin git blood when ter is blood ter git, and I don't want ter be bled on this trip."

"Ain't you afraid of being shot then?"

"Not so skeered fer myself, sir, as I is fer a treasure-box full of your money, senator, or I will finish my work.

"Yes, sir, a box sent out to Miss Ruth, that is, there is one outside, it is."

"It were expressed through to her and what she told me she were expecting and were very valuable, for it's a lot o' jewelry and other fixins."

"And it is on your coach."

"Yes, sir, and there are scarce two boxes marked on it is five thousand dollars, so yer see I don't want ter hev yer masked Mexican turn up, fear he is blood in this turnip ter git."

"So I see; but I hope we will pull through all right, driver, if we have to fight for Mrs. Dunwoody's treasure-box."

"You hain't in no condition ter fight, sir, and that Dago cut-throat don't give any one a chance to drive with him, for he always catches us where we is needed for our best work with ter them, and when he shows up he has us covered."

"Still, I have one arm to defend the fair lady's treasure with, driver."

"Ver' ill-mannered and more too, sir."

"This is what he held me up before, sir, when ther general, ther major and ther ladies was along."

The words had scarcely left the lips of Horses Head when there came the whir of a horse's hoofs under the car, and the officer was caught in the coil, while loud came the words:

"And this is where I hold you up again, senor."

"Halt! Resist, and I will kill you."

There above him on the bluff stood the masked Mexican.

It was broad daylight now, and no line of a horse or Russian were seen at the top of the ridge across the trail.

He had drawn the lasso taut, and both hands held a razor, a puzzle covering one of the two men upon the stage-box.

With his arm bound up, his other hand close by the coil, the officer was at his mercy, while the driver was almost equally so.

"What in the name in yer want this time, yer Dago cut-throat?" asked Horses Head.

"I want that box of treasure you have in the boot under yer feet, senor."

"Come, no nonsense or delay."

"Throw it away, then."

The expression on the face of Horses Head was pitiful.

He knew that it was certain death not to obey, and yet he did not wish to give up the treasure intrusted to his care.

The officer spoke with relief:

"See here, Sir Road-Agent, you robbed me of a large sum of Government funds, and I have come to give them back to you as a token of my sense of your generosity, for I am a little embarrassed, you know, if you have a speck of money, show some mercy now and let that box go to its destination for it is good and not, sir."

"Your empty sachel did not enrich me, senator, so why say so?"

"I did throw you the empty sachel at first, but you got the one the second time you held us up on the trail, which had the Government money, as you know."

"I did not come here to argue, senor, but to see--"

"Throw that treasure-box out, Horses Head, or I will pull trigger."

"You masked Mexican obeyed, the box falling with a heavy crash in the rocky trail."

"Now drive on!"

The lasso moose was thrown off, and the coach went on its way up the hill, while the General was seen effortsing himself over the bluff by the lariat, and reaching the ground, to bend over the treasure-box.

CHAPTER XIII.

THREE TRIOs OF TRAILERS."

The letter from "Judge" Scott King to the commandant was an appeal which could not be refused.

Not knowing of the general's return from the East, not having the time to write a report addressed to the commandant of the post.

The general read it aloud, and promptly Buffalo Bill signed it, and turned it over to the driver who came up to headquarters accompanying Captain Fleming, the paymaster.

The general received the paymaster cordially, and heard his story of having been ordered by the Commandant to report to him in the place of Major Fellowes.

Then followed the story of the coach of Red Coach Rob, which was the same as that of the man who got away from the robber, and what had happened subsequently.

The story of the masked Mexican's coach, when the treasure-box of Mrs. Dunwoody had been taken, was made known, and the faces of all became very white and stern.

"And you were robbed, Captain Fleming, and wounded, by this same road-agent, known as the masked Mexican?" asked General Dunwoody sternly.

"I was, sir."

"And the same man it was who held your coach up, Horses Head, and took the Express package addressed to my wife?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you said, Horses Head, that Red Coach Rob told you that your coach was under blood, and that the driver and the officer were caught in the coil, while loud came the words:

"Halt! Resist, and I will kill you."

"Yes, sir."

"And it was with Red Coach Rob that you were wounded and robbed, Captain Fleming."

"It was, sir."

"And on the same trip to the fort with Horses Head here, the same man robbed this coach."

"This implies that within thirty-six hours the Pocket City coach was robbed, then Red Coach Rob's coach twice held up and robbed, and Horses Head's stage halted and the Express package of my wife taken."

"Not at all, Buffalo Bill, that one man did this!"

"It is possible, sir."

"What do you think, Surgeon Powell?"

"Possible, sir, but hardly probable."

"The masked Mexican therefore has gotten through his hands and wounded a United States Army officer within thirty-six hours."

"But it seems, judging from your story,"

"And now we have as well a letter from the Vigilante captain at Pocket City calling on you to give him your help."

"Are you going to aid Buffalo Bill, that on work for you to do?"

"Yes, sir, and I am ready to start at once."

"That reminds me, Surgeon Powell, to ask if you ever connected the wounded Mexican, known as Robert Moon, with this Mexican who goes masked, robs and stings our coaches and defies us?"

"I have not seen him, but I know that you suggest it, sir, it may be that the masked Mexican is the intended assassin of Deadshot Dean."

"May I ask how he is, Doctor Powell?"

"Bodily well, sir, but mentally he is a wreck."

"I only told my wife awhile since of his
Buffalo Bill and His Merry Men.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE TEST.

San here, Carol, you must try and think for I wish you to recall certain things for me," the Surgeon Scout said in his kindly way.

"I will," she promised.

"You were first shot by Arden Leigh, who sought to kill you because Kathleen Clyde loved you," he continued.

"Do you remember?"

"Yes, he shot me here in the head," she replied.

"But he escaped and you came West to work a mine your father had bought."

"Arden Leigh has got the mine and is now known as Silk Lasso Sam the outlaw.

"His sister tried to redeem him and came West, and she was known as Bonnie Belle of Pocket City."

"Yes."

"Do you understand me?"

"Yes."

"His sister saved his life, on condition that he returned."

"He did not do so, but kidnapped you from your cabin and took you to his retreat where he was planning to kill you when Buffalo Bill and I found you there."

"He kidnapped Miss Carr and Miss De Sutro, and was captured and killed."

"Yes."

"It was his sister, Miss Ruth Leigh, your old time friend whom you loved as a sister, and who has been like a sister to your wife and who has come to the West to see you."

"She heard that some enemy had gone to your cabin and tried to kill you, wounding your wife."

"Yes, she shot me here."

"Who did it?"

"Her sister, Miss Laura Leigh."

The Surgeon Scout showed no impatience, but said:

"Tell me who was it?"

"He was alone."

"Why did he shoot you?"

"He came to your cabin."

"Yes."

"You killed him?"

"Yes."

"We fought a duel and he killed me."

"But you brought me back to life, good friend."

"Yes, I know you, for you are the Surgeon Scout; and there is one other I wish you to know, one who is a sister to you."

"May I call her?"

"Your sister."

"Yes, but I don't know her."

The Surgeon Scout arose and walked toward the door of the inner room.

"Come in, please," he said.

Mrs. Dunwoody had dressed as she had when she was known as Bonnie Belle the Idol of Yellow Dust Valley, and had thrown about her a cloak to hide the costume in going to the surgeon's quarters.

Now she threw aside the outer wrap and entered the room.

The miner looked at her, passed his hand across his head in a way painful to beholde, and then said:

"You are Bonnie Belle of Pocket City?"

Yes, and your adopted sister too, Ruth Leigh, Cara.
"I am Bonnie Belle, Carrol, but I am also
Ruth Leigh. For, don't you remember how
I met you out here on the plains, and that we
became such good friends, and I went East
to the old home, where your wife and little
son Clyde lived so happily with me. After you
return, shall we mine again?
"I was East lately and I saw all your
loved ones then, and they sent their love to
you?"
"Did they not know that I was dead?"
"Dead!"
"In front of Carrol, what makes you talk so?"
"Yes, I am dead, for see, I cannot remem-
ber now, since he shot me."
"Why shot you?"
"Your brother, Ruth."
"That was long ago."
"No, but it was here, and the hand
rested upon the bullet wound upon his
head.
"And, Carrol, you forget that my poor,
weak, unfortunate brother is dead."
"Dead!
"He was captured by Captain Caruth
and given to the cowboys to bring to the
fort."
"Yes, and when he tried to escape he
was killed by Mustang Monte the cow-
boy."
"No, he is not dead."
"Yes, he is dead, and only yesterday I
went to his grave, Carrol."
"He is not in his grave, for he is alive,
and as wicked as ever."
"Why do you say so, Carrol?" asked Ruth
in a distressed way.
"He could not have been the one to fire
upon you, Carrol."
"Yes, why do you say so?"
"I saw him."
"At my cabin."
"Who?"
"Davy and Deacon Leagh."
"How do you know that you saw him?"
"He was masked, but I know him."
"I am the controller for he is dead, and
you surely do not believe in ghosts."
"No, but it was Silk Lasso Sam."
"I said Silk Lasso Sam."
"Why do you say this of my poor,
dead brother, for now that he is in his
grave he should rest."
"I saw the ring he wore, and the brand of
Buffalo Bill in his hand."
"Yes, Bonnie Belle, it was Silk Lasso
Sam who killed him and was the startling
rejoinder of the demented miner.

CHAPTER XLVI.
THE SHERIFF'S SUSPICION.
Both General Dunwoody and Surgeon
Powell listened breathlessly to the words
uttered by the poor miner.
"The face of the surgeon once showed
that he had gleaned certain information.
Whoever the man was who had shot the
miner, it was certain that he was masked,
were a ring and had the brand of Buffalo
Bill upon his hand.
The miner had hinted that his foe had
fought a duel with him also.
He had not spoken so freely on this point
before, and it appeared as though his brain
was clearing up.
In order to have Ruth continue to ques-
tion him, and realizing this intuitively,
no matter what the pain to her might be, she
went on to question him.
"It might be after all that what the miner
said about the du 1 the brand of Buffalo
Bill and the ring might be fallacies of his dis-
cerned brain, yet there could be gleaned some
truth from it, the surgeon hoped.
So it was, he took remark of the miner, that
it was "Silk Lasso Sam who killed him," Ruth
continued:
"Did you kill him, Carrol?"
"He came to my cabin."
"And shot you down?"
"And shot me to fight a duel."
"You fought with him?"
"Yes."
"When?"
"In front of my cabin, Bonnie Belle."
"And then?"
"Who was he?"
"It seems that Powell got a recipe from a
Indian medicine-man of a certain acid made
freed from a corn which, dropped upon the human
flesh, blistered it in a short while, though
causing little pain, and when it healed
over it left a blood-red scar.

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and Buffalo Bill cut out of a
pouch of his own letters two letters, B.
B., and when this acid was put upon the
stamp and placed upon the flesh, it left a
criss-cross red scar."

"And he so branded several outlaws?"

"Yes.

"He remembers how many of course?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"Where are they?"

"Buffalo Bill, Surgeon Frank Powell
or the hangman can account for them."

"One question more?"

"A word in your ear, Ruth."

"Did Buffalo Bill so brand my brother?"

The general started and replied:

"I thought not, Ruth."

"But both he and Powell know?"

"Surgeon Powell is sure that he did.

"Have you asked him?"

"Oh no, but I saw to day that he did."

"I saw that he felt that Carrol Dean was
not raving when he said a man whom he had
wearing a ring and branded with B.B., shot
him with his shot Gun Silke Lasso Sam."

"Well, Ruth?"

"Surgeon Powell does not believe that my
brother was shot by Oscar, for that I am con-
vinced of, was the startling admission of
Ruth to her husband.

CHAPTER XLVIII
A REQUEST GRANTED.

The words of Ruth fairly startled the gen-
eral. He had to confess that he had taken all
deferred of the miner as the vaporing of a
vapid mind.

He had seen nothing in anything that he had
heard. It was the rambling of a man that was
cloaked.

He had supposed that the Surgeon Scout
and the hangman were in the same groove.

Now to his amazement he discovered that the
Surgeon Scout had found in it anything but
a wild vagabond. Ruth had seen just how it
impressed Frank Powell.

The miner had mixed up Bonnie Belle
with you Leight and Silke Lasso Sam.

But that is exactly the same. The miner had
on a way that had made no impression upon the general, but a
very deep one upon Surgeon Powell and Ruth.

Now he discovered that the Surgeon de-
emned that there was method in the miner’s
madness. Yes, Ruth had given as much as said
that Silke Lasso Sam, masked though he was,
he had recognized the man who had sought
to take his life.

"Do you really think that Powell, be-
lieves your brother alive?" asked General
Dunwoody when his first surprise was over
at what he heard.

"I do."

"But how can it be?"

"Simply that he does not believe that he was
shot by Oscar."

"But the report of the cowboys, Ruth?"

"I am not arguing against his death, Oscar
is the man who shot him, but what the miner said caused Surgeon
Powell to believe that he may not have been
killed."

"Nonsense!"

"But Surgeon Powell does not so regard it."

"I talked with Cowboy Charlie myself, he
had the story from him, and also with Mus-
guy, who was the one who shot him, and they told me just how it all oc-
curred."

"Did Surgeon Powell hear it also?"

"Yes, for they gave their reports to me before both Powell and Buffalo Bill, and
Major Deaven who was the one that asked him.

"Will you tell me just what that report
was, Oscar?"

"No, but I wish you, Ruth."

"I know that you did, sir, and yet I wish you would now tell me."

"Well, in a nutshell, Caruth captured the
man and gave him over to the cowboys to
bring to the fort.

"He was put under the especial care of
Mustang Monte, and in making a break for
liberty was taken by him, and

"And killed instantly?"

"Yes.

"And then?"

"He was buried where he fell, where I
took you but yesterday, and that was
the secret of his coming, for your sake.
If you are the dear wife, I was more than happy that he
should have escaped the gallows, which seem-
ed must be his lot, for he is a cowboy,
and one to whom mystery is
attached."

"Tell me what you know about him, Oscar."

"Very little, other than that he is sup-
posed to be a man of wealth, thou-
gh he speaks English and Spanish with equal fluency.

"He is a man of superior education, for
Cowboy Charlie learned to read French
and German novels and has traveled a great
deal."

"He joined the cowboys one day, after
saving them from an attack of the Indians
and thus enabling them to prevent all the cat-
iches and horrid things from being captured and them-
selves killed by the indians."

"They found him to be a dead shot, a most
expert marksman and excelless as a
horseman."

"He could have made captain of the
cowboys, but declined the honor in favor of
Cowboy Charlie."

"And where is he now, Oscar?"

"His time was up when he shot your brother, so he gave up his place as
cowboy, and his comrades farewell, and cut Socianalysis, and
out to
them."

"A strange character indeed."

"I should like to see this man, Oscar."

"Why, Ruth, when it could only cause
you pain to meet the man who took your
brother’s life?"

"No, Oscar, I can convince him in but
one way."

"But why wish to meet him?"

"To learn the particulars in full of my brother’s death."

"And why?"

"I saw to show to Surgeon Powell the
utterly useless belief that he possesses that
Arden Leight yet lives, and was the one who
shot Carrol Dean.

"I will have a talk with Powell, Ruth, and
convince him that he is not only wrong, but pains you by his suspicion.

"No, no, for he does not suspect that I
believe him to hold such suspicion."

"No, Oscar, I can convince him in but
one way."

"And how is that, Ruth?"

"One must help me in."

"Command me in all that I can do."

"You are my own best hope, Oscar. I am going to ask you to let me have my brother’s re-
mainings taken up and sent back to the old burying ground where my people in Virginia.

"No one knows him as Silke Lasso Sam, the
outlaw, and I will feel content when he is
laid to rest there."

"It shall be as you wish, Ruth, was the
reply of the general.

CHAPTER XLIX
RUTH READ AIGHT.

-Colonel Dunwoody was more than anx-
ious to oblige his beautiful wife in every-
thing."

He was devoted to her, as she was to him, and if it would give her any pleasure, or
comfort, for the remains of her outlaw bro-
ther to be returned to Virginia, and, after the
stormy, lawless life he had led, to be laid at
rest amidst the ashes of his kinmen, he was
content.

Of course Arden Leight, whose later deeks
had not been known to the good people of the
community where he had lived, was still not
very highly respected by those who knew
him in his earlier years, but the kindly
tried to comfort him a little among
his kindly without comment, and so let it
be for the comfort it might give his brave and
loved sister.

The general therefore sent for Surgeon
Frank Powell and asked of him, as a special
request, that he might be bailed out as the
matter in charge, have the remains especi-
ally put away in a case and taken by an
am-
brushes to where they might be buried on the
rail-
way for the East, all at the commandant’s
expense.

Surgeon Powell was only too glad to do anything for either the gallant general or his
beautiful wife and willingly offered to carry all arrangements necessary for the re-
moval of the body.

He was the more anxious, as it would set
rest to the belief in his mind that Silke Lasso
Sam was not dead.

The grave would surely tell the story.

The four scouts who were to accom-
pany him on horseback, he had given
a fifth go along as driver of the ambulance, for he was
an invalid in strength that whatever it should be, and had picked
his men accordingly, men who could keep their
nerves.

He had gone to report to the general the
night before his starting, and had explained just what he had done, when Ruth glided
into the room.

She went up to Surgeon Powell, and tak-
ing his hand in both, her own, she said in her
frank way:

"You are very kind to do this for me, for
it is for me, I know, and I appreciate it, I
assure you, as the general also does."

"I am most happy in serving you, Mrs.
Dunwoody, I assure you, was the response.

"I know that thoroughly, but there is one
thing I would wish to ask you, Surgeon
Powell."

"I will be glad to answer any questions you
may ask."

"May I be frank with you."

"Pray do."

"Are you not also glad to go upon this
tour as much as for your own sake as for mine?"

"For my sake, Mrs. Dunwoody?"

"Do I not exactly catch your meaning, I
fear."

"In what have I not made myself clear?"

"You say I am glad to go upon this mis-
ion for my own sake?"

"That I said, and Ruth’s smile showed that there was much behind her
words.

"Well, it is a pleasure, of its own
sake, to serve General and Mrs. Dunwoody, if that is what you mean, my dear madam."

"I meant that, your wife’s."

"What is the hidden meaning, please?"

"The hidden intention is with you, for you were going to that grave if I had not asked it of you."

"I was going to remove the body without
your consent!"

"I did not say that, Surgeon Powell."

"I am certain of that, though."

"No, you were going to the grave to see
for yourself if your suspicions were true or not,"

"What suspicions, Mrs. Dunwoody?"

"I told the general that I saw in your face when you spoke to General
Dean, had said to you setting you to thinking."

"It is only a fool that dare not think at all, Mrs. Dunwoody."

"Your worst foe would never set you
down as a fool, Surgeon Powell and such
kindness, and thus to utter the truth of what your friends all say of you."

"But your suspicion was aroused against
my brother by what Mr. Dunwoody com-
mented rambling conversation, said, and you
were anxious to see whether you were right
out."

"And what suspicion did I hold, Mrs.
Dunwoody?"

"That my brother was not dead."

"Ah, madam, you have a roundabout way
of getting at the truth, but you have discern-
ed right, you have read me perfectly, I ad-
mit, for after what Carrol Dean said, though it fell from the lips which the brain did not record, I was a little taken aback. I was yanked up to see if Silky Lasso Sam and see if he held his body, or not, and just then came the request for me to answer for myself.

"You will tell me the truth when you know?"

My face was general and yourself, yes, but to no one else, for my men were selected to ac-
company me because I could vouche for their secrecy was the response of the Surgeon

CHAPTER L.

THE GRAVE'S SECRET.

SIRUON POWELL and his party left the fort before dawn, that no curious eyes might be upon them.

The Surgeon was well equipped for the expedition, and the scouts, if the body was found in the grave, were to get with it on to the stage station beyond Horseshoe Ned's farm, and, if it could not be taken by coach from there, to carry it on to the railway terminus where it could be shipped.

The Surgeon Scout after seeing them well on their way was to go to the fort.

If anything were to happen to the surgeon and his party drove up to the scene where it had been reported that Silky Lasso Sam had ended his life.

One of the cowboys, along on that occasion, stated that he had overheard what was called Dr. Powell the whole story as it occurred.

"You see," sir, he had said, "we were all going with them to the fort, so he wrote a note that the gentlemen escaped as he did once before, and we dared not openly hang him.

"It was Mustang Monte proposed the whole thing of how we should say he tried to escape, and he had to shoot him, but he really we should hang him.

"Cowboy Charlie agreed to it, and Mus-

 Mustang Monte took matters in hand.

But to give the idea, he was shot a show-

 ing of truth, Mustang Monte he rode by andPakistan set the rope, and made all arrangements.

"Then we rode on leaving Mustang Monte to barry him, and he said the job was a prime one for the job.

"And Mustang Monte left the cowboy

 band soon after.

"Saw Powell."

"Why did he leave?"

Well, sir, he was a natural rover, and had no more desire to stay there than he said.

"He had enlisted for just so long, and though all of us begged him to remain with us, he must be going on his way.

Buffalo Bill wanted him to join the scouts, but he was anxious to go and away he went.

"Have you heard of him since he left?"

"Not a word, sir."

"And he was alone when he buried the body of Silky Lasso Sam?"

"Yes, sir."

SIRUON Powell said no more, but his thoughts were busy, for he mused aloud:

"I cannot get the idea out of my head that there is something more to that grave, that Silky Lasso Sam still lives."

Upon arriving at the grave there was no body in sight.

The party went inside the brook near by, and the four fine ambulance mules and the horses were staked out not far away.

The men then had dinner, and the coffin and body was taken from the ambulance and carried to the grave.

Later in the afternoon two of the scouts began to get anxious.

When tired, two more took hold, and after a couple of hours they came to something in the grass.

"It runs the full length, sir," said one of the men.

"I has a blanket about it, sir," said an-
other.

A few moments after a third man re-
marked:

"Yes, sir, it's the body.

This was a more disagreeable task handling the body and we searched not the slightest doubt, even in the mind of the Sur-

gen Scout, but that he had been mistaken.

We removed the wooden coffin from under blankets and bound tightly, and then placed in the smaller coffin, which was screwed close down and after being made-air tight with putty and white lead.

This coffin was also wrapped up securely and included in which was securely sealed, and then fastened safely in the ambulance.

The sun had set and the party camped where they were for the night, having filled in the grave with logs and made it to appear as though nothing had happened.

The next morning the party started upon their way for the station, and after going with them for some distance said that the Surgeon Scout left them to continue on their way alone, while he branched off for the fort.

"Well, I was mistaken, that is all, and I must admit as much.

But from Nick Stock: Carrol Dean said, and from the actions of that masked Mexi-

 can, I was convinced that the grave was empty and that Silky Lasso Sam was again upon the road at his old game.

"For the sake of his noble sister I am glad that it is not so.

CHAPTER LI.

THE DINER'S MESSAGE.

The Surgeon Scout, as soon as he had reached his quarters and made his toilet, went to the ladies and was anxious to make known the result of his mission, for he knew how well anxiously Ruth desired to know, the orders had been given; indeed, he was to open the letter received from the fort a couple of hours be-

fore, accompanied by several of his staff, and before the letters were turned in to go, when Ruth came out upon the piazza and called to him.

"Is it any good?" cried Surgeon Powell, losing for once his cool manner at what he heard.

"The wounded man's corse was taken aro-

unders the outlaw, and could find no trace of him, so cameraed for the Wild Bill's men, and did not know that you had gone that far."

"Now, Surgeon Powell, what do you think of that?" and poor Ruth looked the picture of despair as she asked the question.

CHAPTER LIII.

BUFFALO BILL'S Mission.

SIRUON Powell was deeply pained by what he had heard from Ruth, and held no doubt, after reaching the grave and finding an occupant in it, but that he had been wrong in his suspicions, and that Silky Lasso Sam was alive and well.

If not dead, whose body was it that had been sent East?

The body had certainly been clad in the clothes which the outlaw had used as a disguise, and the wig was upon the head, the rough room was under the escort of the scouts who accompanied me.

"You are more than kind, Surgeon Pow-

ell."

"I had the body placed in the two coffins, and they are properly addressed, as you directed, and it is now upon its way to the station, and you will hear from the escort of the scouts who accompanied me."

"Yes, you are very kind, Surgeon Pow-

ell."

"Yes; or a sign of ill omen, if I may so put it."

"I had not heard that."

"You know that I was born in the South, and naturally I imbued of the old superstitions the credit of such."

"Naturally."

"One of these was that a body taken from a grave, without being searched in properly. The spirit has to use some of the ancient knowledge to use it in life, and even done to the possessions."

"Then, upon that score, Mrs. Dunwoody, rest content for I had the grave all filled in and left as it was before.

"It is foolish in me of course to feel as I do this, but I had an idea that it was best, for those who might know the grave as that of Silky Lasso Sam, and that of the masked Mexican."

"Then in your mind there is no doubt as to the body being that of my brother, Sur-

geon Powell?"

"I do not well see how there can be, Mrs. Dunwoody; but I believe you have some particular reason for thinking so."

"I have."

"May I know it, for if I can say more to-"
wished to keep it from her, had heard all, and now told the Surgeon Scout, for she wished to have known what consolation he had to give her, if any.

In answer to her question, as to what he thought of the affair, Frank Powell looked worried, but responded:

"I have no reason to doubt poor Nick Stout, Mrs. Dunwoody, or the scout was in with the news.

"Buffalo Bill's men are known to be truthful and splendid fellows, and they would not make a false statement in a case of this kind.

"I can soon tell through, whether the body I took from that grave is really that of the outlaw chief, or not, for an examination must be made and that will tell all.

"If it is not his body, then the man whom the scout unmasked is Silk Lasso Sam?"

"Yes, Mrs. Dunwoody, that must be the case."

A pained look passed over the beautiful face. Sae felt deeply the situation, for if alive her brother was still an outlaw; unfeeling the past he yet clung to his evil ways, and the gallows would yet be his end.

If he was dead, he filled an outlaw's grave, yet he suspected of being from the face he bore, that he was the masked Mexican, many had begun believing.

"Surgeon Powell felt deeply for her, and so said:

"The general does not know that you overheard what the scout said to him, you say?"

"No, he did not know that I was in the next room, and I meant not to be an ear-watcher, but heard my poor brother's name and could not resist the temptation of listening.

"He at once went to the scene, as I told you, and I was so glad when I saw as I had returned, for I felt that you could tell me the truth.

"I am sorry that I can only vouch for the fact that a body, dressed in the clothes worn by Silk Lasso Sam, and with the white wig upon his head, was found in the grave, Mrs. Dunwoody.

"The face, as I said, I did not uncover, so we were in the grave as seen the Mexican, as to the body being the one we had gone there to remove, you can find out for me whether it is my brother's body or not, Doctor Powell?"

"I will go at once after the escort and examine it, but I am not sure that the excuse will be no mistake, and then I will be in a condition to tell the general upon my return the result of my investigation.

"Then I will be in a condition to tell the general upon my return the result of my investigation."

"I know not what to believe, Ruth."

"But the return of Surgeon Powell will decide for us."

"Surgeon Powell has returned," was the response of Ruth.

"The Surgeon has returned, and so soon? quickly asked the general.

"Yes, and he has gone again."

"Then have the escort wait for me."

"I will tell you just what he discovered, and why he has now gone again."

Ruth told the whole story, and the general listened with the deepest attention to the most minute details.

He heard the story to the end without any comment, and then said:

"Ruth, what you tell me gives me hope that the masked Mexican is not that unfortunate brother of yours."

"Yes, there must be no mistake."

"I will inform the general of your coming and departure at once upon his return, and Ruth hold out her hand in farewell.

"Before Surgeon Powell, accompanied by a scout and a soldier, was riding rapidly away upon the track of the somber Mexican, taken from the grave where it was said by the cowboys that Silk Lasso Sam had been buried.

CHAPTER LIII.

A DAY OF HOPE YET.

Ruth was pacing her room lost in deep and painful meditation, when her husband returned.

He had made a rapid ride of it, and was both tired and hungry.

He had a rapid ride of it, and was both tired and hungry.

The fact is, in her sweetest way, sat down to supper with him and made no mention of where he had been.

This was said, by way of explanation:

"I was called away by a scout, Ruth, upon an important mission which carried me upon a long ride, or I would have asked you to accompany me."

She made no reply then, but when the general was enjoying his after-dinner cigar she said:

"Oscar, I have a confession to make to you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I overheard what the scout said to you this afternoon, for I was in the next room touching up that painting which was begun after Silk Lasso Sam's outlaw mantle was mentioned I did not make known my presence and so know all."

"I well know that, Oscar."

"But you went to see this wounded scout?"

"Yes."

"Well, you saw him?"

"I did."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing.

"Did he not repeat what his comrade had said?"

"No, for he was dead, and the seal of eternal silence was upon his lips," said General Dunwoody impressively.

"I felt his heart, and it was cold."

"And he was killed by this masked Mexican?"

"Yes."

"Now tell me just what his comrade had told you?"

"I saw Wild Bill, for he was there, and he said the two men were to be wholly reared.

"He remained upon the trail with his comrade, and the two buried the dead man where he fell.

"I sent Wild Bill another scout the moment I arrived, to take the place of the dead man, and so there will still be three upon that trail, though it is thought the outlaw will next strike a blow upon some other trail, whether the Buffalo Bill, or Texas Jack and their men are."

"And the scout repeated what you told him?"

"Everything."

"There seems to be no doubt but that the masked Mexican, shot in the back by him, was to be Buffalo Bill."

"The wounded scout snatched his mask from off the dead man's lifeless face, and another unfortunate brother was revealed.

"Nick Sloat died before I reached him, and if so we have only what his comrade told me was said to him as a dying confession."

"And you believe that the masked Mexican is Arden Leigh, Oscar?"

"I know not what to believe, Ruth."

"But the return of Surgeon Powell will decide for us."

"Surgeon Powell has returned," was the response of Ruth.

"The Surgeon has returned, and so soon? quickly asked the general.

"Yes, and he has gone again."

"Then have the escort wait for me."

"I will tell you just what he discovered, and why he has now gone again."

Ruth told the whole story, and the general listened with the deepest attention to the most minute details.

He heard the story to the end without any comment, and then said:

"Ruth, what you tell me gives me hope that the masked Mexican is not that unfortunate brother of yours."

"No, a thousand times better is it if he is dead, and I sincerely hope this next coming of Surgeon Powell will so prove to be."

"If not, Oscar?"

"My duty is plain, as you cannot but know.

"Yes, he must be hunted down, captured and hanged."

"If not shot, he will have to die upon the gallows, Ruth," sadly said the general.

"What a world of sorrow and trouble have I brought upon you, my husband?"

But General Dunwoody stepped quickly to his wife's side, and drawing toward him said with tenderest feeling:

"You are safe for you, Ruth, knowing your sorrows; but to me it is of little moment what I may feel, knowing how dear a wife a man is to his companion."

"I loved for so long, and in finding the real find that she is far more, far dearer to me than I ever dreamed of."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE TRAIL TO THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE.

When Surgeon Frank Powell left the fort with the two who accompanied him, he made a rapid trip to the town, and was driven off the ambulance and its escort, at the rate they would have to travel.

The four fine mustangs that drew the heavy ambulance Surgeon Powell knew would not be driven at a rapid pace, for there was no need of travel fast.

He made his calculation that he would catch the ambulance party some fifty or sixty miles from the fort and he so shaped his way, hoping to head them off somewhere near the end of Horseshoe Neck's stage run.

In the meanwhile the ambulance party had marched along the road, early the first night out and not pulling out of camp the next morning till late.

The wind had thrown against the cowboys shrouded as they would a case of pestilence, and the driver of the ambulance soon tired of driving his team from horse back, rather than ride in the ambulance.

He accordingly mounted his horse and took a leap from the trail running along the mountain-side.

Arriving at difficult places to pass over he would dismount and walk by the side of his wheels.

Reaching the mountains the driver had to resume his place in the ambulance, for the wind was too terrific to run around.

It was getting toward the camping hour, and the guide ahead was looking for a good place to encamp around a dangerous shelf of rock, where the trail was hardly two feet wider than the spread of the wheels, there suddenly came a sound as though a herd of ponies were rushing down the mountain-side.

The two who rode the steep mountain-side and the horrified driver beheld a perfect avalanche of rocks coming down upon them, accompanying them.

There was no storm raging, no wind, and yet this mass of debris from the hold far up the mountain side and was coming with tremendous bounds down upon them.

The four horses put spurs to their horses and fled in terror, those in front for shelter ahead, these in the rear for shelter behind.

The danger was appalling, for there was a show of rock from the trail running along the rocky shelf down a couple of hundred feet into a foaming torrent.

The torrent was a river in size, and jagged rocks broke the water in whirlpools, foaming caldron and fountains.

The effect of the stream meant death and destruction to all.

The terrified driver saw but one chance for his life, and that was to reach a cliff and find shelter beneath it.

But the cliff was several hundred yards away, and the road was so narrow and narrow, so that it was dangerous to drive at a faster pace than a walk.

The driver had to slow down, for his safety, and to his shelter the men ahead were flying at the full speed of their horses.

So upon the back of the now frightened mules the whip was laid and they bounded forward into a run.

They needed no encouragement, for they saw their danger and knew that flight meant safety.

As they sped, and down the mountain-side swept the avalanche of rocks, timber and earth, and the sound of the rush of water and the build of the caldron and fountains became louder and louder until the sound was a roaring noise.

The cliff was a steep rise of earth, then of rock, and then of timber.

This was a surprise to the men, and the driver laid the others aside, where they held on to the cliff securely, and yet not too securely, where they held on to the cliff securely, and yet not too securely, and in the same manner there was no crash and destruction, but rather the reemergence of the cliff, where they were able to ascend and to start down from the cliff.

The avalanche started down from the cliff, and the whole route was cleared for the men to ascend and start down from the cliff.

The avalanche started down from the cliff, and the whole route was cleared for the men to ascend and start down from the cliff.

The avalanche started down from the cliff, and the whole route was cleared for the men to ascend and start down from the cliff.
trees and dirt as it swept down, and becoming more terrible as a weapon of death.

On rushed the team of mules over the rough trail, and the driver, under the ab-

timence to break loose from its fastenings and dash from side to side with the wind jolting the team.

Several times did the frightened driver feel that his rear wheels were on the very edge of the precipice, but the power there to stop the terror-stricken mules in their now frenzied flight for life.

Quick as a flash, instinctively clinging to the side of the trail nearest the mountain, and the driver saw that if he reached the shoulder beyond he would not be a second too soon.

He cast a glance upward at the rushing storm-clouds, and then to his team.

But each mule was doing his best, and their speed could not have been increased had a pack of hungry wolves been on their heels.

With a yell of delight the driver saw that he would just reach the shelter in time, where two of his comrades were already gathered and calling to him to come on fast himself, and fell.

CHAPTER LV.

HEADED OFF.

A cry of horror broke from the lips of the driver of the team, as his leaders went down, and was echoed by his comrades ahead under the shelter of the cliff.

Toiling mule dropped his mate down with him, and over these two the wheelers fell, snapping the pole of the ambulance and throwing away on its side, just as the avalanche was upon it.

There was a confused mass of strug-
gling humanity, and the midwife of a man who went to one loud, long wail of despair, and then, with a roar like an invisible horde of animals, rushed right down and was gone, completely blocking the passage.

Up to the ledge dashed the spray, there was a seething, roaring, hissing sound, and then a death-like silence, followed by the roar of the water rushing over the two by the debris hurled into it, the waters went rushing along on their course toward the pool.

"My God! that was the most awful sight I ever beheld!"

"The driver was Surgeon Frank Powell and he stood up with the pass with his two com-
rades, having bailed there, as they beheld the ambulance party coming and witnessed the whole appalling scene.

The moment the words were uttered there were tears in the eyes of the midwife, the flying coffin and the poor driver.

To the ledge dashed the spray, there was a seething, roaring, hissing sound, and then a death-like silence, followed by the roar of the water rushing over the two by the debris hurled into it, the waters went rushing along on their course toward the pool.

The eyes of all turned in the direction, and then there was a last ray of sunshine, the setting sun fell full upon him, was the mask-
ed Mexican.

Lashed upon the summit of a ridge, from just where the avalanche had started in its downward rush, and he saw the surgeon and his friends as they moved once more forth burst in laughter such as Satan might give might have gotten possession of a lost soul.

To finish the remnant of his supplies the Surgeon Scout was at his shoulder and a shot rung.

A long shot, and a difficult one to make, for the masked Mexican had sprung for cover when he beheld the act of the Sur-

ground and pulled out his horse, gathering firewood while it was yet light enough to see.

He had just sighted the fire when the others came up, the cowboys with faces that were white with terror, the Surgeon Scout.

They seemed delighted to get a view of the stern face of the Surgeon Scout, so full of nerve and confidence, and quickly told their story.

They had escaped, those in front by riding to the rear ahead, and then back to shelter, but the ambulance, the team, the driver and the ghastly load had gone over the cliff to-

gotten.

"I saw all, men, and may I never see another sight so terrible.

Why, they fell out of the ambulance and seemed the most conspicuous object of all that went down into the torrent," said the Surgeon Scout.

"It did, sir, and we were in luck not to go with it," said a cowboy.

"I'm surprised to see if the coffin can be found, for I came to head you off, men, on purpose to have another look at the body in the coffin.""I'll be an ugly look, sir, "

"Yes, but must be done if we can find it, which I fear we cannot, for it's gone up the cliff," said the surgeon.

"Yes, sir, for it burst open when it struck the cataract, and no trace of the ambulance will ever be found."

"That is so."

"But did you see the one who did that deed?"

"The masked Mexican, sir?"

"Yes."

"We saw him, sir, and heard his devilish laugh."

"We hope you hit him, sir."

"I fear not."

"But he was the man that sent that avalanche of rocks down upon you," said the Surgeon Scout, "for I saw him, with his number of cowboys, for none of them had thought of the masked Mexican having caused the avalanche.""

CHAPTER LVI.

THE SURGEON'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

There was little sleep in the camp in the mountains that night, for the men could not get the dread tragedy of the evening out of their minds.

The supper was hastily made and no one could get soothing slumber to come to them, and when the weather Got to sleep they saw the dread sight over again.

With the coming of dawn however they felt better, and after breakfast were ready for work.

The first duty was to find out if any trace of the ambulance, body of the driver, the mules or the coffin could be found.

If any could, then there was some hope of finding the coffin or its contents.

But a long search revealed that nothing whatever could be found, and at last Surgeon Powell gave up the search.

There was no doubt but that all had been dashed in pieces upon the rocks and then driven up the cataract for miles and miles and there was no hope of finding a trace of anything.

The next day the Surgeon Scout was to get up to the top of the mountain and make search for the masked Mexican.

After considerable toil the spot was reached on foot, and an examination showed that the masked Mexican had never gone there on horseback.

There was also visible the traces of where he had cut away a fallen tree, so that it would fall down the cliff when a prop was removed.

Behind him there had piled up stones and earth so as to form an irreparable avalanche in its downward flight.

That he must have known of the coming of the ambulance party hours in advance there was no doubt, to have prepared the dynamite as he had.

He had left no trace of how he had come or gone, and the search revealed nothing as to where he had left the while.

Perhaps it was several miles away, and if found it would be of no avail, as no trail could be found in that rocky mountainous region.

Of course the masked Mexican was far away from there then, for why should he re-

main after having accomplished his deadly work, or almost of it, for it was possible, for the support of the ambulance had escaped. So, at er camping in the mountains again with the Surgeon Scout, he started for the fort with his little command.

It was after dark when he arrived, for he had so desired to have it, and he went to the quarters of General Dunwoody as soon as he had changed his traveling costume.

General Dunwoody was a close friend of his company, but he was promptly admitted, and the visitors soon after took their leave, greatly to the relief of their host, who, Doctor Powell saw, were most anxious to have them go, and to hear what he had to say.

The moment they had gone the general said:

"Well, Surgeon Powell, I am glad to see you back again; but let me tell you that the masked Mexican has again been at work on the stage.

"On the stage trails, sir?"

"Yes, for he held up Four-in-hand Frank, robbing a passenger, sourly, and the same day held up Red Coach Bob, killing a miner and wounding the stage driver.

"Indeed, sir, is he getting in his red work very rapidly, it seems."

"When was it he held up Frank's coach, sir?"

The general turned to the note brought by courier from Buffalo Bill and answered:

"It was yesterday afternoon."

"When was Bob's coach held up, please tell me, sir?"

"Texas Jack" said that it was the day be-

fore there he had left his horse the Frank's coach, as Red Coach Bob had gone through a day ahead on purpose, having a valuable passenger.

"General Dunwoody, there are two masked Mexicans, sir."

"What?"

"I repeat, sir, that there are two masked Mexicans."

"You have reason for saying this, Pow-

ell?"

"I have," sir."

"Will you inform me why you think so?"

"I do not think so, general, but I am sure of the fact that the two of these men known as masked Mexicans.

"You say, sir, that both Buffalo Bill's letter and the one from Frank are two by what I now tell you, sir."

CHAPTER LVII.

THE SEAL OF SILENCE.

Both General Dunwoody and his wife felt that Surgeon Powell had made some important an-

discussion, and they awaited for him to return.

At last, as though he had made up his mind just what to say, he said:

"I give you, gentlemen, general. Four-in-hand Frank was robbed, and it was the day before that when Red Coach Bob was held up too."

"This would seem as though the same man had done both acts of outlawry, yet such was not the case."

"That is your belief."

"It is, sir?"

"And why?"

"Because..."
“Well, sir, upon the day that Frank’s coffin was held up I saw the masked Mexican.”

“You?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But where?”

“A long way off, sir, from the spot where Frank’s coffin was held up, and not so very far distant from where Red Coach Rob was halted.”

“Indeed?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But when did you see this man?”

“It was when I went to head off the ambulance party, general, when they were crossing the mountain ridge.”

“And you saw the ambulance party?”

“I did, sir, and the masked Mexican about the same time. It was just when Frank’s coach was held up, fifty miles away, it certainly proves that there are two masked Mexican bandits.”

“It would seem so; but did you have a good view of the man?”

“At what distance?”

“I was near enough to risk a shot, sir.”

“Ah! and with what result?”

“That I do not know, general, but with no fatal result I am sure.”

“I was quickly made, at a long distance and I hardly expected to hit him, yet could not resist firing upon him.”

“Oh yes, sir, and had prepared for the coming of the ambulance party.”

“Your red deeds that I am sure that he was the one who held up Rob, and who has been the one of the two masked Mexican bandits who is on the other has contented himself with robbing alone.”

“This is strange.”

“I furthermore believe, sir, that the two are not allies.”

“No, sir.”

“No, sir, but even unknown to each other.”

“The mystery deepens greatly, Powell.”

“It will deepen still more, General Dunwoody, when you have what I have to tell you about the recent act of the masked Mexican whom I saw.”

“It is a story, sir, I am sorry for Mrs. Dunwoody to hear, and yet she will know all before long.”

“You amaze me, doctor, and the general’s look was full of anxiety as he glanced to wife.”

“Mrs. Powell,” that your wife has told you of the report I had to make of my visit to the grave?”

“And also why I went away again?”

“Yes, to head off the ambulance party and the driver and the body thoroughly.”

“That it, sir.”

“And you did?”

“I did, sir, to head off in the mountains, sir, as I hoped to do.”

“I saw them coming along the ledge trail, so, with my two men, waited for them.”

“To my horror, as they reached the center of the ledge, I beheld an avalanche of rocks break out from the mountain ridge, and rush down upon them.”

“Such a thing was told me that it was not an accident, for the air was still, and I supposed that a bear or a herd of elk had loosened a rockslide, and started the torrent of stones, timber and earth.”

“I saw, too, that a part of the escort were in for the present. The other horses, the others dashing ahead, and that the ambulance and driver must be cast away.”

“I saw that he knew his danger, and put his team into a run.”

“At a moment he needed no urging, and there was a bare hope of escape, when one of the animals stumbled and the whole team and ambulance came to a pile a wreck, and how anything could be done were the rocks were upon them.”

“Do I wish to behold such a scene again, General Dunwoody, and to my dying day it cannot be blotted out of my memory.”

“It was appalling, sir, for into the air, over the precipice, downward the two hunl deet feet into the cañon, went the mules, ambulance, the unfortunate driver and the coffin, mingled with the stones, earth and timber from the cañon into the rocks and I saw it distinctly, and I saw it strike, sir, and I saw the seal of silence placed upon what I had gone to discover, the mystery unsolved as to whether that double coffin held the body of Silk Lasso Sam or not.”

CHAPTER LVII
THE STORY TOLD.

The manner of the Surgeon Scout was dramatic, as he told the story of the ambulance being swept away, and both General Dunwoody and the driver with thrilling interest.

The faces of both revealed their disappointment when they became convinced that the coffin could no longer reveal the secret they sought to know.

“Do you mean, Surgeon Powell, that no trace of the coffin could be found?” asked the general in surprise.

“I do, sir, and our search was a diligent one for over half the following day.”

“Remember, sir, that there was a foaming cataract at the base of the ledge, two hundred feet below.”

“Yes.”

“The torrent rushed along with irresistible fury, fully thirty feet in depth, going between narrow banks of rocks and with large rocks here and there breaking it into foaming cataracts and spray.”

“The coffin must be swept away by the fall, the driver and animals dashed pieces, and the ambulance broken into fragments.”

“I can understand that.”

“These were seized by the rushing waters and borne away upon the jagged rocks and against the boulders of the cliff banks until the fragments were ground into a pulp and splinters, so that no trace could be found whatever.”

“And so the seal of secrecy is still upon us, and we do not know who it was that was in that coffin, as the general, while Ruth remarked sadly:”

“And we must still grope in the dark, Surgeon Powell, until the secrets are revealed.”

“The Surgeon Scout did not immediately reply.

He seemed undecided for a moment or more, and then replied in his low, gentle way and with a voice full of sympathy:

“My dear Mrs. Dunwoody, pardon me if I say it is hard to look the whole matter squarely in the face, for your sufferings can hardly be gathered by the illiterate, while there may be a chance of taking this incumbrance off your life which you have so long and so nobly borne.”

“I agree with you, Powell, and I thank you for so placing the matter before my wife,” said the general.

“I am ready to hear the worst, Surgeon Powell,” and Ruth’s voice was without a tremor, her face set determined.

“Then let me give my views, just as I have looked at the matter.”

“Certainly.”

“Of course all chance to discover the secret of the coffin is gone.”

“Yes.”

“And you have the word of Nick Sloat, when dying, that the masked Mexican shot him, believing him to be the toll of Buffalo Bill.”

“That was the case, sir.”

“Then he also said that the masked Mexican, believing him dead, did not speak with an accent, and when unmasked by the scout proved to be Silk Lasso Sam.”

“No.”

“When Sloat’s companion arrived and chased the outlaw away he was determined to tell who it was to have the Davidson ranch, and he was, so fired again upon him, hoping to silence his lips forever.”

“Which you have believed he did do, as he did not return to the dying man after his comrade came on to the fort.”

“Very true.”

“Now, this man, whoever he may be, was certainly cognizant of the fact that I had been to the alleged grave of Silk Lasso Sam.”

“Aha!”

“Knowing that the body was removed, he supposed that it was still believed to be that of Silk Lasso Sam, and that the man had not died immediately, whom he ambushed, and may have reported him to the ambuscade commanders as the proof of the coffin’s and investigating the remains would give.”

“You are right, Powell.”

“You are on the right trail,” said the general with more excitement of manner, while Ruth listened with the most intense interest.

“Now, to destroy this proof he plotted, went on the mountain trail he knew the ambulance party must follow, and prepared to destroy them as finally as he could.”

“Because he did not wish the destruction of the proof in that coffin, why destroy it as he did?”

“You are right, doctor.”

“Now he hung about the mountains, held up Red Coach Rob, and, and stood ready to destroy the ambulance and its load in the cataract.”

“It was there that you saw him?”

“Yes, sir, for, existing in his work, with night coming on and knowing we could not reach him, he showed himself to us and laughed in the most diabolical manner that I ever heard fail from human lips.”

CHAPTER LX.
TO PATROL THE TRAILS.

“WELL, Surgeon Powell,” said General Dunwoody, “I have heard all that the doctor had to say.”

“I feel as you do, I must say, for let me tell you that it has made me to such a degree of hatred for the masked Mexican wished to hide the secret of what the coffin could reveal, when Buffalo Bill had plotted the destruction of the ambulance.”

“It was a terribly sad death for the poor dogs to rest, and I feel most keenly the misfortune.”

“And I too, believe, from all that I have heard Surgeon Powell, that this masked Mexican is no other than my brother, Arden Leigh.”

“It looks as though his red hand was at the bottom of these cruel, deadly acts, for he fairly seems to revel in blood, and, be he what he may, I most sincerely hope his wicked career will be brought to an end.”

“It must be, Mrs. Dunwoody, for before long the news will go to the cities of the far East even, that one man, a masked Mexican, is destroying all the power that General Dunwoody can bring against him, and ending Buffalo Bill and his men, while he is daily committing unspeakable crimes and going unwrung of justice.”

“Yes, Powell, we must capture this man.”

“Those men, sir.”

“You still cling to the belief that there are two of them?”

“I am sure of it, sir, though one is the greater criminal.”

“It may be.”

“But what does Cody think?”

“I am not certain, sir, what his opinion may be as to there being more than one of these masked Mexicans.”

“Well, Cody, Wild Bill and Texas Jack, with the two picked men that follow after the man, or men, as the case may be, and I have faith that they will catch the second or scamps.”

“In the end, sir, Buffalo Bill and his men will catch them without doubt, but it will do no good to hasten matters.”

“I am willing.”

“I would like, sir, to ask permission to go the methods of this Bill’s.”

“Certainly.”

“I will first go to find Wild Bill, then to Texas Jack and to Cody, then to Buffalo Bill’s patrol-ground, and carry with me extra horses to leave with each.”

“Then I shall place each Trio posted of the movements of the other, and perhaps come upon the masked Mexicans myself upon my return.”

“It will be most fatiguing for you, Powell.”

“I do not mind that, sir, for fortunately I am blessed with an iron frame that stands hard work well.”

“Then you can go.”
"Thank you, sir."
"But I wish we knew where to find Mustang Bill, too."
"Why?"
"Well, sir, he was the man who buried Sitting Bull, the Medicine Man, and gave him his death wound, and I would like a talk with him."
"He is a Prairie Rover, I have heard."
"Yes, and no one can tell where he may be now; but still I should like to know where to find him."
"You will have to compromise by finding Buffalo Bill, Sir."
"I only hope that I may, Mrs. Dunwoody."
"When will you start, Doctor?" asked the general.
"To-night, Sir."
"Certainly, Sir."
"I can rest when I camp, Sir."
"And you wish no one to accompany you?"
"Yes, Sir. I will take Pony Bob with me, for he is a light, wiry little fellow, tough as a pin, fairly bucked Horsemen, too, best near either of the Tios, I can send him after them."
"You are wise there."
"But had you not best make a Tio also?"
"I suppose, Sir, for I believe that two of us will be all that are needful."
"Now, Sir, I will get away as soon as possible."
"I have no orders for Buffalo Bill, Sir."
"No, for you know better than I do any orders that may be necessary," said the general, with perfect confidence in the Sagacious Artist.

Bidding General and Mrs. Dunwoody goodnight, Buffalo Powell went to his quarters and had a few words with the latter. The latter came at once, a small, wiry athlete, with black eyes and hair and a look that was typical of him:
"Pony Bob, I wish you to get three of your best horses and go with me."
"Yes, Sir, I will be ready within ten minutes."
"It's a dangerous trail to take, Bob, so go well guarded."
"I am glad of it, Sir, for I do not like merely to see you."
"I will meet you here, Sir."
"No, outside of the stockade at the north gate."
"Yes, Sir." Soon after Surgeon Powell, mounted upon a splendid steed, rode off with two other fine animals in the lead, rode away from his quarters, and, joined by Pony Bob, had started upon his patrol of the Three Tios trails.

CHAPTER LX.
ON THE ROUNDS.
BUFFALO BILL and his men had most faithfully patroled the runs of the different stage lines, for Wild Bill and his two companions; and Texas Jack was constantly going over Red Coach Rob's and the chief of scouts was night and day along the drive of Four-in-hand Frank.

It was thus that Buffalo Bill hoped that one of these Tios would fall upon the masked Mexicans, for the reader will recall that the chief of scouts also felt certain that there were a couple of fandangos, and, perhaps more.

Yet, in spite of the diligent watch kept upon the trails the masked outlaws managed to catch the coaches at some unguarded point.

He was knowing well the difficulty of the Three Tios guarding so much country that the Surgeon Scotthought that he could go through and be of service.

It would form a line of constant communication, and, if he did not spare himself could meet and round up forty-eight hours.

Starting by the northern trail he would pursue the down trail and thus on by the southern run to Pocket City and so on the back to Wild Bill's best again.

With Pony Bob as a courier, and each leaving a horse with the Tios, he could readily communicate, while the three drivers, Horse,

shoe Ned, Red Coach Rob and Four-in-hand Frank, as their days of coach travel, would serve as a means of communication.

The Surgeon Scout rode on with Pony Bob until dawn and then went into camp for a couple of hours. When he got up again, he had made his way ahead to soon after come up with Wild Bill.

Explaining why he had come to Wild Bill the latter declared his ideas and was very glad to keep a relay of horses in his camp, wherever it would be.

"You will tell this fellow, Doctor Powell, or we will be set down as no good," said Wild Bill.

The surgeon had the same opinion and said as much.

That night they found Texas Jack just as sundown and went into camp with him. Texas Jack explained how Red Coach Rob had been held up on the run while he and his scouts were at the other and said:

"Now we will catch him, I am sure, Surgeon Powell, as you are going on the rounds.

The next morning the Surgeon Scout and Pony Bob started upon their ride to find Buffalo Bill on that trail of Frank's trail.

They had lost their second relay of horses with Texas Jack, so rode on unhampered, believing as they did, that they would find Buffalo Bill ride into the trail ahead of them.

The two friends grasped hands warmly and Surgeon Powell explained just what he was doing.

"It is the very thing, Frank, and now I hope that you will stay long in catching those fellows," said Buffalo Bill.

We must not be, Bill, if we expect to save the credit for the capture of the outlaws."

"Well, you won't leave until later, for you can go to Pocket City for the night."

"Yes, and to the fort tomorrow."

"But you feel sure that there are two masked Mexicans?"

They are so clever in eluding us, and they accomplish so much, I almost begin to feel that there is a whole band of them, Doctor."

"No, I draw the line at three, with belief only in two."

"I guess you are right; but how is poor miner Deadshot Dean?"

"Just the same in mind, but physically all right."

"I have decided to operate upon him when I reach the fort tomorrow."

"Well, you might as well put him out of his misery as to have him a man, and I believe you know that you are about, Frank, so I say it is worth the effort."

"I would never make the attempt if I did not think, too, Bill, the operation is a safe one."

Later in the day, having had a full understanding with Buffalo Bill, the Surgeon Scout started upon his way once more, accompanied by Pony Bob.

That night they stopped at The Frying Pan in Pocket City, and Surgeon Powell had a talk with the Vigilante captain, Judge Scott King.

He had found that the miners were becoming very severe in their criticisms of the army for not capturing the masked Mexican, for phenomena they individually were one, and that the coaches were running empty as no one dared travel with any money, and even without, for fear they would be shot for not having anything to be robbed of.

Before dawn the two were on their way and, at a good point of communication, the surgeon and Pony Bob having been a little over forty-eight hours on their first round of the trail of the Tios of once more, accompanied by Pony Bob.

When he had reported to the general, Frank Powell gave orders to have all in readiness for an operation upon the miner, and then threw himself upon his bed for a rest of a couple of hours.

CHAPTER LXI.
ALL LIKE unto a DREAM.
SIDEBORON PowELL awoke fresh and full of strength from the two uninterrupted hours' sleep and rounded out the study of the enemy with the aid of the surgeon. He had gone into pocket as a volunteer, and brought you here."}

"Ha! now I recall all."

"It was not a dream then?"

"That was yet, a dream?" quickly asked the Surgeon Scout, still perfectly cool, though overjoyed at the result of his exertions.

"That I had fought a duel with the masked Mexican and that he had shot me?"

"It was the masked Mexican who wounded you?"

The miner said quickly:

"Yes, he came to my cabin, caught me at a disadvantage and challenged me to meet him in a duel.
"We fired together and I fell."
"I know no more, Surgeon Powell, yet it seems that much has passed before my vision again.
"Yes, I recall seeing you again and again,
and Ruth and many more.
It was through a hazy atmosphere, a cloud, and not as I see and speak now.
It seems as though I have suffered so much, here in my head.
"But, I am better now, and rational, am I not?
"You certainly are, Mr. Dean.
The miner then bent forward and said in a whisper,
"Then do not consider me raving when I tell you that I recognized the man who shot me. It was Mexican, and he is none other than Arden Leigh, alias Silk Lasso Sam the outlaw.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE SURGEON’S SUSPICION.

Surgeon Powell did not go to headquarters to make known the result of his surgical operation, until after Deadshot Dean had sunk into a sleep which lasted for an hour or more.
When he awoke his mind seemed as clear as ever it had been, and the surgeon had education to his ease.
Then it was that he went to headquarters, and was ushered at once into the presence of General Dunkwynd, and the doctor made his report.
They looked at him anxiously, for they knew that he had come to tell whether it was life or death.
But his face revealed nothing, and they awaited with impatience his words.
Do not feel anxious, Mrs. Dunwoody, for I have good news to report to you.
Her face asked the question as to what the good news might be, and Surgeon Powell answered:
"It is that Deadshot Dean’s mind is clear otherwise, his reason having returned to him fully."
"Thank Heaven!" cried Ruth, while the general glanced at his hand and said,
"Powell, I congratulate you most heartily.
"The operation was successful, then?
"It was successful, Mr. Dean, for Dean awoke like one from a long sleep.
"I have had a long talk with him, and all believe that he is being wounded and his awaking is a blank.
He recalls having seen me, and others, but he does not know Mrs. Dunwoody, and he felt that he suffered pain in his head.

But all else was as a dream to him until the pressure of the skull upon the brain was removed, when back swung the pendulum of reason in just where it had been stopped by the bullet.
"So began to think from that moment only, that he told me all that had happened to him."
"Then he knew his foe?"
"It is unlikely."
Something in the manner of the Surgeon caused Ruth to quickly ask.
"Was it the masked Mexican, sir?"
"Yes, Mrs. Dunwoody.
Then he went there to rob him and so shot him.
"Miner Dean was taken at a disadvantage he said.
"Tell him please, Powell, for I see that my wife is dying to hear all.
"It is true, Mr. Dean. When anyone struck at him, when the masked Mexican appeared in his cabin behind him.
A body of men was already reach to shoot him when he was wholly at the mercy of the outlaw, who told him he had come for revenge.
"It was certainly that a duel was arranged, and fought between them, but Miner Dean remembers only that he felt the bullet strike him, and he ran off.
"He says, however, that he recognized his foe.
"Yes, the masked Mexican, you said sir?
"Yes, Mrs. Dunwoody, and as one other who had been his life foe.
"Ah, does he, too, say the masked Mexican is Arden Leigh, Surgeon Powell?"
"He does, Mrs. Dunwoody.
"But, I do not see his face?"
"No, but he saw a ring which he said that
Arden Leigh wore, and which he knew well, while he also saw in his hand the brand which Buffalo Bill had put there.
"Ah, me then! They seem fond of it?"
"None whatever, for he said that he recognized his foe by his voice and in many other ways, and that the man was seemed not slain as the cowboy asserted, and reported to you, General Dunkwynd.
"I will at once send all those men and hear their report again, and you, Surgeon Powell, remain, while Ruth, you go into the next room where you can hear yet not be seen.

An orderly was dispatched for the cowboys, who were just returned from the masked Mexican, who was lying in ambush, and so, all prepared, the coach pulled on its way once more.
Penn had stepped out to see what time the coach was due, when suddenly there rode out into the trail in front of his leaders none other than the masked Mexican.
Halt! Hands up!"
Frank drew rein quickly, his song ending.

"Well, Senor Frank, what have you along for me this time?" asked the masked Mexican.
"I carry a empty harse, pard."
"No passengers?"
"Not one.
"And what have you of value?"
"Nothing.

"That’s just the man for me if you lie to me it will go hard with you and I am determined to search your coach from wheel to top, to find out what you are up to."
"You won’t take my word for it then?"
"No.

Well, pard, I suppose I have ter own up and tell ter you what."
"Well?"
"I has got two packages o’ value inside ter harse hse. I don’t know as terly will you do much good.
"Why not?"
"I don’t jest what you want.
"Are they packages of value?"
"I guesses so, but you kin take a peak at ter packages and see yer says yer must have ’em, why I can’t help yer taking em.
"Get down from your box and hand them out for me to look at.
"Don’t yer know I was wounded in ter hip, pard, and kin hardly git up and down?"

"I didn’t shoot me?"
"I think not.
"Yer has a poor memory, pard."
The masked Mexican muttered something to himself, but said aloud.

"All right, if it causes you to suffer when you move, I’ll look at the packages, but under your belt of arms and hang it on the whip-socket there, and then I can see them above your head until I tell you to lower terem, for I will stand no nonsense."

"I has had proof of that, pard, so I does as you tells me.
With this the driver obeyed the orders given him, and dismounting, the masked Mexican, revolver in hand, approached the coach driver.
But just as he placed his hand upon it, open it flew with a force that dealt him a severe blow in the face and knocked his revolvers from his grasp.

CHAPTER LXIV.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY.

The latch of the coach door had already been turned by Deadshot Bill, who cruched down in the bottom of the stage, all ready for action.

The expectation was to spring upon the masked Mexican, levying Surgeon Powell to follow and take advantage of the situation as best he could.

The scout had dashed open the door, however, with such force that he struck the driver, wrenching a several inch weapon from his hand and half stunning him.

At the same time the scout leaped upon him with irresistible force, and had him down upon his back.

Surgeon Powell had followed, and Four-in-hand Frank had leaped from the box.
Buffalo Bill and His Merry Men

27
to the ground in a way that showed his wound had been very suddenly healed.

The masked Mexican was a man of powerful

form, and the end of his short hair showed the that his

coat was neatly tailored and deft hands quickly

secured him with a lariat in less than a minute.

He was caught, Buffalo Bill, and just as

I was arranging to give up this life, and go far from here," he said, in a dejected tone.

"That is always your weapon, Silko Lass

Sam, when you get into trouble.

"You always going to repent," an-

swered the scout.

"I am not Silko Lass Sam."

"Who are you then?"

"Let me see, Bill," and Surgeon Powell
drew the mask from his face.

"Mustang Monte!"

"Yes, you know me."

"I never suspected you of being a robber,

Monte, the scout said; "but when you, Mustang Monte, what

I suspected you of?

"What is that, Surgeon Powell?"

"You know, Silko Lass Sam, I am on the

trail, and the surgeon cried to-gether

in amazement:

"Mustang Monte!"

"Yes, you know me."

"I never suspected you of being a robber,

Monte, the scout said; "but when you, Mustang Monte, what

I suspected you of?

"What is that, Surgeon Powell?"

"You know, Silko Lass Sam, I am on the

trail, and the surgeon cried to-gether

in amazement:

"Mustang Monte!"

"Yes, you know me."

"I never suspected you of being a robber,

Monte, the scout said; "but when you, Mustang Monte, what

I suspected you of?"
But he made his escape and was thankful
of the man to whom he owed his life.
He had just come from the place where
he had returned by saving the life of Silk Lasko
Sam by strategy, when the cowboys had
wounded him, and his horse and his
Geoff Pen and Buffalo Bill was a true one.
But, after the arrant treachery shown
by the sight of Silk Lasko, Sam, Mustang Mon
ted to know that it was real.
To get it, knowing that Silk Lasko Sam
belonged to another, he must be killed, and this
cause him to suffer torture by haunt-
ing him by day and night.
How he was to get it as a second self, a
two, and then hung upon his
trail.
He knew that Silk Lasko Sam would soon
see his existence, and become worried, alarmed,
and in the end greatly terrified.
To get to his trail, he wanted to let Silk Lasko Sam secure all the plunder
he could, which would at once be stowed away.
He would do the same, for Mustang
Monte could not, or did not, resist the temptation
to get gold, especially as his enemy would
get the blame for all, and thus he could in
the end be avenged, and also carry with him
a large sum in money.
So it was that Mustang Monte had told the
whole story to the Surgeon Scout, and to one
for his sin was more than will
in all his power to aid in bringing
Silk Lasko Sam to his doom, for, as he had said;
"I lose my treasure, I at least get my
revenge.
Had he been given the chance to allow
Silk Lasko Sam to escape, or getting his
treasures, there is no doubt but that Musta
Monte would have quickly chosen the
loss of money, and gloated in the death
of his foe.

CHAPTER LXVII.
THE DISCOVERY.
Having made up his mind as to what he
would do, Mustang Monte was ready and
willing to carry out his resolve.
He saw in the headlights the
and the Surgeon Scout to follow his lead, and so confident were they that he meant well, that he would not
discompose them, that they allowed him to go
free.
He mounted his horse and led the way, and in a few moments, Buffalo Bill riding immediately behind him.
Mustang Monte's thoughts were busy as he rode ahead, for his object was to figure out how
wrong he had done in robbing the coaches as he had.
He had in his boy has not been taught to haunt Silk Lasko
Sam, to be avenged upon him, he would
have acted well; but he had endeavored
to be himself as well, and he realized fully
his crime.
In guiding the Surgeon and Buffalo Bill to the
secret retreat of Silk Lasko, Mustang Monte
do not get to the spot where he had
hidden away the treasure and booty, which he had taken from the coaches during his
short career as a road-agent, and while impersonating the masked Mexican.
He proceeded to his camp, even in the
darkness, and building a fire drew out from among the rocks his treasures, wrapped in
a blanket.
All that he had lawfully taken was there, and
which had been looked over carefully, Mustang Monte giving his explanations so as
as to insure its return to the real owners, it
was secured, and thrown up and strapped to
the back of Surgeon Powell's saddle.
Then the party mounted again and started
for the spot where Silk Lasko Sam, Dr. Sur
gon Powell and Buffalo Bill feeling the utmost confidence now in the good inten
tion of the man who was serving as their
guide.
After riding a few miles further Mustang Monte asked:
"We are not far away now."
"And you wish to disturb?"
"Vary, vary."
"It will be best to leave the horses here."
"Very well, we will go on foot."
"And what is it, Mustang Monte?" asked the
Surgeon Scout, while Buffalo Bill had his

of his treasures, unmindful that most of all
he had was stained with the life blood of a
villain.
"Well, I shall soon have enough gold to
give up this life of danger.
"Yes, we are not yet; but there is more
to get, to more to be done," he mused aloud.
"Yes. I wish to get more gold, and I will.
And in getting it, I am on the lookout for
there is Silk Lasko Bill to die, and Surgeon
Powell, yes and Dean the miner, for my shot
baseball."
"I should have been as sure in my action as
I was with Mustang Monte, for he dropped
death at my feet and the wolves soon had his
bones well picked.
"He appealed to me for mercy, to my sense
of gratitude.
"Bah! what do I know of either?"
"I killed him as I will others whose lives I
must have— Oh God!
"I am not the man tried to use his blanket, but his
legs would not support him.
And no wonder, for there, having gained mastery to within a few feet of him, was
the form of a man.
It was the form of Mustang Monte.
There he stood in the firelight, his face
white as death, every feature plainly seen
and the eyes were turned upon the outlaw, the
pain and disapproval and held forth in an appeal for mercy.
To one who felt that he had killed the
man that was dear to him, it was an ap
pealing, a terrible sight, enough to madden the
brain, to send the spark of life flying away in
a deadly fright.
In vain did Silk Lasko Sam seek to rise.
His limbs would not support him.
He tried to speak, to cry out, but no word
could he utter.
Nearer came the form of Mustang Monte,
uttering no word, but now one hand pointed
at the crumbling form, and the other hand
at the blanket, now wholly unmindful of his
treasures before him.
The band of Mustang Monte pointed at him
in a threatening way as slowly he drew
nearer.
Silk Lasko Sam writhed in anguish, his
eyes started as though they would burst
from their sockets, his lips drew hard over
his teeth, revealing them in a horrid grim as
they chattered together in a chill of terror.
But the avenger had not his way; before him whose capture
would save his life, the man who had shown
him no mercy when a friend, and who had
saved from the cowboys' fury.
He knew, he felt how he suffered, and he
was glad to behold him thus write in anguish un
til, in terror unpeachable.
So he could not, he could not until sud
ly he dropped his hand lightly upon the
quivering form of the outlaw, and said in a
dead, flat voice.
"Silk Lasko Sam, Satan has sent me to
take you to him for punishment for all your
crimes.
"Do you know me, for I am the spirit of the
man you so treacherously murdered?"
Then there broke from his lips the
bewildering, a loud, long wail of anguish,
and he dropped backward, quivering from
side to side.
Instantly there was heard a voice calling out:
"That cry has made him a madman, or it
was his dying utterance."
Then Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill
dashed upon the body.
The former knelt by the side of the
outlaw and placed his hand upon his pulse.
The latter rested his hand upon the
boulder and next placed his ear to listen for its
beating.
The others watched him in silence, for
the form was still not in the valley of death.
Presently Surgeon Powell said:
"Mustang Monte, you have had your re
venge, and all that you set out to
avenged, for a more fearful death I never
witnessed.
He was literally frightened to death, a
brave man, for brave he was beyond all ques
tion, frightened to death, dying in an agony
until:
"Yes, there is no doubt this time, for Silk
Lasko Sam is dead."
Beadle's Half-Dime Library.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

CONCLUSION.

Yes, there was no doubt this time, as Sur-
geneau said, for the outlaw was dead at last.

The man who had gone wrong in life from his
younger years, the man who had seemed to glory
in taking the lives of his fellow human be-
ings and to live on the toil of others, had, after
showing mercy to none, had at last died in a
way that would cause even his worst foes to pity
him.

What if his terror had lasted but a few
minutes, it had seemed ages to him.

He had lived in fear for his life, he had lived in ages,
suffered untold misery in the moments that went by until
death came to relieve it.

The form was wrapped in blankets and
placed not far away, for the surgeon and his
companions were going to camp there for the
night.

But Pony Bob, to be on the safe side, tied
every rock within reach of the grave, as the
motion was taken to get the body out of
reach.

The treasure was gathered up by the sur-
gen and the scout, and there was found the
money belonging to the Government, and
jewels taken from Ruth and others, with
much else which the outlaw had accumulated.

Money which it was known Silk Lass Sam
had when captured, was, according to
Mushy Monte, who thus secured a considerable sum along with
what had been taken from him when the outlaw
was dead.

Silk Lass Monte was too anxious to get
away to remain all night in camp with the other
scouts. The hunt was still warm, the sur-
gen Powell and Buffalo Bill for their kind-
ness to him, he mounted his horse and rode away to
make better the news to his family and to
more heard of upon the Northern frontier.

Soon after his departure Pony Bob was
sent to locate the camp of the men who had been
with Buffalo Bill, and stepping the body of dead outlaw, his
men, the hurt scout and the scout started for
Pony Post, going by the trails which would cause them to pass the camps of Texas Jack and
Will Bill.

The next afternoon General Dunwoody
received a note which caused him to sit down
and send this.

"Ruth, my wife, I have news from Cody."

"He tells me that he is waiting a few miles from
the fort and has the body of Silk Lass Sam,
which it seems to me I would like to see to,
so as to be sure you may satisfy yourself that there
is no mistake."

"Then he is dead?" Ruth asked in a low tone.

"Yes, his note says so."

"Cody writes that he will explain all when
we see him, and that Surgeon Powell is with him.

"I will go."

"It will be best, for then your mind will be
reassured about the dead form."

"And you may send men to take him there, for it will be better so."

An hour after General Dunwoody and
Ruth, guided by the scout who had brought the note to the
camp, rode up to where Surgeon Powell and Buffalo Bill awaited them, the
rest of the scouts being camped some hun-
dreds of yards distant.

"Here is no mistake, general,"
said Buffalo Bill, and Surgeon Powell led the way to where the dead form enveloped in
a blanket lay.

The blanket was drawn from the face and
then was revealed the brother of Ruth Leigh, the
man who was known as Silk Lass Sam.

Ruth's hand rested gently upon the fore-
head, and from her lips softly fell the words:

"He is dead now, and death has wiped out the
pains caused by forever, brother Arden."

She knelt and imprinted a kiss upon the
forehead and then, without a word turned
back to gallop swiftly to her horse.

The general raised her to his saddle, while
Surgeon Powell said:

"Let me tell you, Mrs. Dunwoody, that I was
right in my surmise, for Montana Monte added your brother to his long list of death.

* Silk Lass Sam proved a traitor to him,
and Montana Monte was the masked Mexi-
can Number Two.

"Buffalo Bill tracked Monte down, cap-
tured him, and he was forced to go free
when he led us to the retreat of Silk Lass
Sam."

"It was Montana Monte who was the
case of his death, and he has gone his way.

"Here, general, is the treasure taken
from the outlaw, and we leave all in your keeping
for much of it belongs to your wife, Mrs.
Caruth and others."

"Be assured, we will bury the body and follow on to
the fort."

Ruth made no reply, but that token she held no ill towards anyone, against either the
surgeon scout or Buffalo Bill, she held forth her
hand in silence, first to one, then the other.

Then she and the general rode back to
the fort, a scout carrying the blanket roll of
treasure.

The next morning the news was made
known through the fort that Silk Lass Sam had been captured and killed by Buffalo Bill and his men, but the true story of the
affair no one seemed to get at the truth of,
for all who did know had been pledged to
keep the secret.

General Dunwoody soon after made ap-
lication to Buffalo Bill to remain another cou-
nand, for he was anxious to remove his wife from scenes where she had known so
much of sorrow.

When they did leave, Deadshot Dan the
miner accompanied them, fully restored to
health and strength, and able to carry with him considerable riches to the wife and son
he loved so well.

The other characters of my story, how-
ever, still remained upon the frontier, to do the duties devolving upon them, and where
Long Tom Russell followed the surgeon, scout, and Buffalo Bill and his Merry Men, made records that will send their names down into history as brave heroes of the
plains.

THE END.
THE

NEVER-FAIL
DETECTIVE

THeron, of the Thumbless Hand.

BY CAPTAIN HOWARD HOLMES,
AUTHOR OF "CAPTAIN COLDSNIP" NOVELS,
"HERCULES GOLDSPUR," "SUNSHINE SAM,
"SOL SPINX," "DUDIE DESEVERADO,
"GIDEON GRIP," "SILVER STEVE,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHILD WHO WATCHED THE CLOCK.
"It's going to strike again, Mother Clutch."
"Well, it doesn't bother me, child. Let the
evil thing strike. It only tells the end of half a
dozens writhing creatures like ourselves, and
the world is better because of their quitting it."
"I don't know about that. Little children die
and long before they see the flowers and the sky.
I don't see such things myself very often, but I
know they are pretty all the same. Listen now.
It's about to strike."
The woman called Mother Clutch looked up
and glanced at the old clock which stood on the

THAT BLOODY IMPRINT ON THE WALL FOR A MOMENT DREW THE DETECTIVE FROM
THE DEAD MAN ON THE FLOOR.
From the alley far below came the sounds of night traffic. It was nearing midnight and the tall, gloomy houses along the street were shut. The world was the best of Mother Clutch as she tried to look into the room opposite, but the window was curtained. She saw the hands on the wall clock, and at almost the same time the old woman's face at the door, at whose glance she gave a moment without speaking. "Are you sure you saw a man in the room, ma'am?" she asked in a singular manner.

The door opened and Mother Clutch re-entered. The little clock-watcher was about to spring forward, but her glance ceased in amazement, as she saw that her guardian was not alone. She was leaning on a stick in a brown coat of silence and when the man who was her companion, entered, she carefully closed the door.

"This is Mr. Fox, child," explained Mother Clutch, "he is very poor, you see.

"I went out to find him, to show him the hand on the wall in Mr. Mystery's room. Where is the watchman, the Dog?"

"Yes, that very hand which has no thumb," returned Mother Clutch, "but I must have it, if in a flash she had a dark face like eyes that glittered like the orbs of strange things in which he dealt."

The old man was in a snake; that is, he kept nearly all kinds of reptiles for sale, and then he had a shop in the street where he went and create consternation throughout the neighborhood.

Some of these serpents were harmless and beautiful; others were beautiful without being good; but the old man's assertion that they were harmless. No to the press that sought their liberty and freedom. But it was only the little green snakes, that were almost as thin as hair, if they fell in the way of Jorah's neighbors!

It was nine o'clock on the night we are dealing with. Jorah was standing in front of the old man's shop and the old man looked in and closed the shop and went off and left the old woman. The old man was in a snake; that is, he kept nearly all kinds of reptiles for sale and then he had a shop in the street where he went and create consternation throughout the neighborhood.

The old man was in a snake; that is, he kept nearly all kinds of reptiles for sale, and then he had a shop in the street where he went and create consternation throughout the neighborhood.

No wonder the people who were forced to live near him wanted to move away, and no wonder they killed every snake that escaped, with the old man's assertion that they were harmless. No to the press that sought their liberty and freedom. But it was only the little green snakes, that were almost as thin as hair, if they fell in the way of Jorah's neighbors!

It was nine o'clock on the night we are dealing with. Jorah was standing in front of the old man's shop and the old man looked in and closed the shop and went off and left the old woman. The old man was in a snake; that is, he kept nearly all kinds of reptiles for sale and then he had a shop in the street where he went and create consternation throughout the neighborhood.

The old man was in a snake; that is, he kept nearly all kinds of reptiles for sale, and then he had a shop in the street where he went and create consternation throughout the neighborhood.

"I wonder in what there is strange after all," said Jorah, "it was interesting doing together."
Hero and Author.

In Buffalo Bill, as hero and author, we have one of the most unique characters in our popular literature. What with his remarkably varied and venturesome life, his manly and generous nature, his versatility of talent, and his primitively personal bearing, he is recognized as a typical American, and as such everybody is his admirer and friend in his own country and in Europe, where he now is.

It may be said, indeed, that his remarkable career in the Old World has done more to popularize the real American than any American who ever represented us abroad, in any capacity. He is to remain in England for another season; then he will return, to become one of the great features of the Columbian Exposition. There will be a Buffalo Bill Exposition, in truth, for his programme is for an exhibit far transcending anything yet attempted in representing Indian, Ranch, Mining, Hunting, Settlement and Army Life in our Wild West, and embracing a magnificent group of Indians from over thirty tribes, Cowboys, Marksmen, Bronco Riders, etc., something that every American will applaud, and visitors to the great World's Fair will regard as one of the most representative of all the nation's exhibits.

In the whole realm of American Literature nothing is more inspiring than BRADLE"S DIME LIBRARY series, and nothing is finer in that series than stories from Cody's own forceful pen; while the contributions of Col. Prentiss Ingraham, Lewis and Major Dangerfield Burr, in which Buffalo Bill and his companion scouts and cowboy deeds are the chief actors, all admirers of the distinctively American in fiction have confessions whose interest and power have made them a distinguishing feature of the trade.

BUFFALO BILL.

414 Red Rondard, the Indian Detective; or, The Gold Busters of Colorado. By Buffalo Bill.
401 The One-Arm Fend; or, Red Retribution in Fort Indian. By Buffalo Bill.
397 The Wizard Brothers; or, White Beaver's Trail. By Buffalo Bill.
394 White Beaver, the Exile of the Plague. By Buffalo Bill.
390 Buffalo Bill's Grip; or, Oath-bound to Custer. By Col. Prentiss Ingraham.
319 Wild Bill, the Whirlwind of the West. By Buffalo Bill.
304 Texas Jack, the Prairie Ratter; or, The Queen of the Wild Riders. By Buffalo Bill.
343 The Pilgrim Sharp; or, The Soldier's Sweetheart. By Buffalo Bill.
173 Wild Bill's Triumph Card; or, The Indian Heiress. By Col. Prentiss Ingraham.
165 Wild Bill, the Pistol Dead-shot. By Col. Prentiss Ingraham.
158 Buffalo Bill, Chief of Scouts; or, The Doomed Down. By Dr. Frank Powell.
117 Buffalo Bill's Strange Pard; or, Major Dangerfield Burr. By Col. Prentiss Ingraham.
95 Buffalo Bill, the Backskin King; or, The Amazon of the West. By Major Burr.
86 Old Bull's Sport; or, The Knights of the Overland. By Buffalo Bill.
42 Death Trainer, the Chief of Scouts; or, Life and Love in a Frontier Post. By Buffalo Bill.